Chapter Two. Replacement

Ruby:

Liam

Alex.

My perfect family. We will all be together forever.

I woke up with a dull ache in my head, realising I had been dreaming and groaning in pain. Letting out a loud curse, I felt a bandage wrapped around my head, which was a physical reminder of how I had escaped death.

I felt so empty—hollowed out by grief and loss as the weight of the news and the memories of the past event pressed on me. I slowly recollected the series of events, and it was as if I had died twice in just a day. The death of my child had already pushed me to the brink of insanity, and now the cruel inability to bear the rejection of my mate has intensified my agony.

The shattered fragments of my heart, already scarred by the loss of my mate's love, seemed to crumble further. The vivid recollection of his unexpected animalistic behaviour clawed at my soul, each memory like a sharp sword ripping through my chest.

The love and mate bond that had once been a source of warmth and comfort now became a haunting and scary memory, tormenting me with the realisation that what we had shared would forever remain a nightmare.

I lay there looking lost, staring into the empty space as I wallowed in self-pity, hoping to wake up from this unexpected nightmare.

"It's all just a misunderstanding," I muttered, trying to comfort myself.

Liam will come back to me. He will beg for forgiveness, and we will all go back to the happy family we once were. We will have as many children as he wants, if possible.

My stomach rumbled in hunger. I didn't even care to stand and source food, as all I could think about was Liam, my mate, and when I heard a knock on the door, I ignored it, deeply lost in my disastrous world.

My grandmother entered the room, her eyes filled with both concern and love, and that's when I realised that I was no longer in Diamond Heart Pack, where my mate ruled as the alpha with me as his Luna.

I was far away from home.

Did Liam kick me out while I was unconscious? No, he wouldn't dare. He loved me.

"No, he does not love us," I heard my wolf's distant voice say.

"Here, dear," my grandmother said, bringing me out of my thoughts. She handed me a cup filled with a traditional medicine she had brewed. I remembered how she gave it to her sick patients while I was little, who had been knocked out for days.

How long had I been asleep? Did Liam ever come to find me?

My grandmother was the healer of the sapphire moon pack, which was little compared to that of my mate's. In our world, we had four packs that were the strongest, but the diamond pack was the strongest of them all and most powerful, and no other pack could ever compare to or match its strength.

The scent wafted through the air—a mix of herbs and healing properties. I took the cup with shaking hands, grateful for her care, and drank the concoction carefully so it wouldn't spill. The warmth spread through me, a soothing balm to both body and soul.

Yet, as the comforting effects settled in, so did the flood of memories. Tears welled up in my eyes, and I began to cry, the pain of loss overwhelming. My grandmother sat beside me, watching me cry my soul out silently, pouring out my emotions, and at this point, I was grateful to have her in my life as her presence gave me reassurance.

She was the only family I had left, as both my parents disappeared mysteriously without a trace. She gently placed a hand on mine, giving me a look of empathy I never wanted to see from anyone, especially her.

"It's okay to grieve, my dear. Let it out. You have been asleep for days, so I am sure you have a lot of emotions bottled up inside you." She said it softly as the weight of my rejection and the loss of my baby pressed heavily on my chest.

"I loved him so much, and now it's all gone." I whispered through my tears.

"I know you did; even a blind man could see that." Grandmother comforted me, bringing me closer to her chest in a loving embrace, and in that tender moment, I let the tears flow, each drop carrying the weight of heartbreak and the beginning of a painful healing process.

"Sometimes, dear, healing begins with acknowledging the pain. Let yourself grieve." She added that it made me sob harder as I remembered all my loving moments with my dear mate.

Liam and I were childhood sweethearts. I never foresaw us breaking up; we once swore to each other that only death could break us apart, but now everything was over in the blink of an eye.

"I'm here for you, my sweet Ruby. You aren't alone," she said softly.

Yet I felt lonely as the weight of the double loss was an anchor pulling me deeper into despair, and the only thing that could ever pull me out of this was Liam or my child magically appearing out of nowhere and into my arms.

"I could understand his pain, Granny; I lost our baby. It's my fault, grandma; I failed him as a mate. You know how much he has always wanted a child, so his position as the alpha would never be questioned forever, and I couldn't give him that." I sighed.

"Stop saying such silly things, child, before I make a portion that would seal your mouth forever. Don't you ever blame yourself for losing a child? It's not your control, and you should be thankful that you didn't die."

"I wish I did. I lost both my mate and our baby. I have nothing to live for anymore." I confessed, my words heavy with sorrow, and my grandmother smiled sadly, placing a gentle hand on my shoulder.

"Give yourself time. Healing takes time."

Healing doesn't exist, and I got to find out in the days that followed. I wandered through the pack lands like a ghost as everyone gave me the look of pity, making me aware of the fact that my sad news had travelled around the pack.

My grandmother was always by my side, trying to comfort me with words like, "You're stronger than you realise, my love. The pain will ease with time." But I knew better deep within that this was something I could never heal from and not accept as the reality of my shattered dreams lingered.

"I can't bear the emptiness," I admitted, walking back into the house after trying to take a stroll. The pity looks I kept getting from her pack members made me feel more miserable and embarrassed, and tears streamed down my face.

My grandmother hurriedly dropped the cup in her hands and embraced me. She felt like a haven, which managed to soothe the ache I was feeling within.

"You don't have to bear it alone. Lean on me, Ruby. I will help you find your way back to yourself." She said leading me back to my room. It was unlike the large master bedroom Liam and I once shared, but it was comforting.

I lay on the bed like I always had as the weight of grief and memories pressed on, and just when I was about to close my eyes, I heard a soft knock on the door, and I gazed up to see my bodyguard, Andrew, entering the room.

Ever since he had carried me to the hospital, I had never seen him, but my grandmother had mentioned how he brought me back to her pack while I was unconscious as a result of hitting my head on the concert table.

A part of me didn't blame me if he decided to forsake me and fail to fulfil his oath to protect me, as, just like me, he was also a victim in this situation.

His eyes softened with concern as he saw the tears staining my cheeks.

"Luna," he began, his voice filled with an unusual urgency, "there's something you need to know. Alpha Liam is getting married to another woman, and he intends to make her Luna immediately."

The words hung in the air, a cruel twist to an already devastating tale. My heart, already shattered, seemed to crumble further at the news of his swift decision to move on.

The tormenting thoughts swirled in my mind, and a haunting question lingered: would Liam truly take another woman, especially after we had lost our baby just a few days ago?

I could remember the sound of her laughter filling the hospital room while my mate choked me almost to death. It was a sharp contrast to my pain, which fueled the seed of suspicion and doubt in me.

Dread settled within me as I grappled with the possibility that the woman he had brought into my hospital room, the one who had callously laughed at my suffering, could be the same one he now intended to marry. The betrayal cut deeper into my soul, the wounds of his rejection, and the startling revelation that my perfect world had been turned upside down washed over me as I realised that I had been abandoned.

By my mate and childhood love.

"Why?" I managed to choke out, the pain and confusion evident in my voice. Andrew sighed, a mix of sympathy and frustration in his expression.

"I don't know, Luna. The news just came in, and I thought you should be informed."

The room felt like it was closing in on me, and the walls were echoing with the weight of

betrayal. It suddenly felt like I was getting choked up. I looked at my grandmother, her eyes mirroring the sadness I felt within.

My world had shattered, and a new wave of heartache crashed over me. The realisation of his quick replacement plunged me into a deeper abyss of sorrow.

What made everything feel worse was when I realised the effect of Liam's decision on me. When a Luna leaves her position, she gets demoted to the lowest of all ranks, which is an omega.

Once I sign the contract of resignation, accepting the leave my mate and accepting his rejection. I would have no choice but to be forced to live as an omega forever. It felt like a final blow to my already-shattered world.

It was better to die than for a Luna, who was once high-ranking and at the top of the food chain, to become the lowest of the lowest.

In my world, death was better than being an omega.