

## Chapter 112

NOAH

THREE DAYS LATER

A call came in just as I was mulling over the events of the past few days. I muted the television in the living room just before taking the call. The voice at the other end was female, but the phone number was strange and unfamiliar.

"Mr Noah Allen?" she asked.

"Speaking," I said.

"I'm calling from the Health camp hospital..."

I sat up quickly. My heart was pounding so hard and loudly in my chest that it quite drowned out the nurse's words. The Health camp hospital was where I did the DNA test about three days ago.

I had dragged Lucy there, tired of all her lies. I knew it was the only way to prove I was the father of her baby, and she was only trying to push the pregnancy on Jason or whatever his name was because he was wealthier.

Even though that greatly angered me, there was nothing I could do. I could only blame Amelia for ruining everything for me.

The nurse went on talking, but I cut in.

"Please, repeat what you just said," I told her.

"Okay. I was saying the DNA test result is out. You can come pick it up anytime."

I forced myself to speak past the sudden lump in my throat as I asked, "What does it say?"

"Pardon?"

"What does the result say?" I repeated.

"I'm afraid that I cannot disclose such confidential information over the phone, Mr Allen," she said huffily. "To know the test results, you must come to the hospital. Have a good day."

She hung up. I sat staring at the phone for a moment. What a fucking bitch. I paid for the test, so why couldn't I get the result over the phone?

I was on my feet the next moment, tearing up the stairs to Lucy's bedroom.

"The test results are out," I gasped, holding the door open. "Let's go."

Lucy shook her head.

"I can't go," she said, and I noticed her hands were clamped over her distended stomach. I was about to ask her why the hell not when she said, with a tear I felt was false, slipping down her cheeks, "I'm having serious contractions. I can't move."

"How convenient!" I snarled. "The test results are out, and you suddenly can't move an inch? What next, Lucy? Will you tell me the baby is coming right now? You had better hope for your sake that I get there and find that the baby is mine. There will be hell to pay if it isn't."

"But I've already told you that it's possible that you are not the father." She spat. "You can't change what has happened. Your denial will not automatically make the baby yours or change his DNA."

I glared at Lucy, wanting nothing but to go over to her bed and slap her. She couldn't move because of her contractions but could move her mouth incredibly well.

Instead, I turned away and stormed out of the house. I got outside and barked an order to the driver to take me to the hospital immediately.

I could not remember the drive to the hospital. All I was conscious of was a feeling of eager anticipation that almost made me ill. There was a persistent debate in my head about whether the baby was mine or not.

But somehow, I was confident that the baby was mine. Lucy was only spewing lies about her relationship with Jason. I would be a father, and Amelia would rot with her dry womb.

I tore through the reception hall immediately after I got to the hospital. I even bumped into someone on my way to the receptionist's desk but ignored them. I beat an elderly-looking man who favoured me with a scowl to the receptionist.

"Good after-" she began.

"I'm here to collect DNA test results," I interrupted, cleanly cutting through the bullshit of greetings. "Where do I go?"

"Please go down the corridor to the nurse's desk; someone will attend to you shortly."

A cold-looking nurse asked me to wait at the nurse's desk while she contacted the doctor.

"He's with a patient," she said after their phone conversation. "I'll send you right in the moment he tells me to."

And so I waited there for the longest ten minutes of my life before she told me I could see him. If she had wasted any more time, I might have barged into the doctor's office out of anxiety.

The moment I stepped through the door of his office, the seated doctor said, "Please, have a seat, Mr Allen."

I sat ramrod straight in the chair he had indicated and asked, "The DNA test results... where is it? What does it say?"

"All in good time, Mr Allen. All in good time. Meanwhile, I must say that it is quite rare to see men demanding for a fetal DNA test."

I gritted my teeth. What was with the people in the hospital? Didn't any one of them ever give a straight answer? Couldn't they see that this was important, or were they trying to irritate me?

"Just go straight to the damn point," I snapped. "I didn't come all the way here for you to lecture me on the history of DNA tests. If I need that, I have a phone and a stable internet connection. Please, fucking tell me what the result says."

"Please, calm down-"

"Don't tell me that! Tell me what I need to know and tell me now. Did I pay you for the result or a history class?"

When the doctor sighed, it gave me a very bad feeling. He pushed aside some papers in front of him and put aside a single envelope.

"I'm sorry, but I don't have good news," he said, shaking his head sadly. He steeped his hands together and levelled me with a stare. "The cheek swap taken from you doesn't match the DNA of the fetus. That means-" he quickly added, seeing that I was getting impatient again. "-that you are not the father of the baby."

It took a few seconds for what the doctor said to sink in, and I could feel the room spinning in those few seconds. It was as if reality had shattered in an instant.

My mouth went dry, and I found it hard to breathe. Each breath felt shallow and strained. No. It wasn't possible.

My world had been shifted off its axis, and I was hanging off the edge. Every detail around me sharpened, yet I struggled to focus on one thing.

My mind was screaming, but my body was fixed in one spot. Everything seemed surreal, like a bad dream that I couldn't wake up from.

Then reason set in. Perhaps the doctor was telling me this because of how rudely I had just behaved to him. Or maybe he had made a mistake and was talking about someone else's results. That had to be it because there was no way the child Lucy was carrying wasn't mine. No way in hell! And after all, I hadn't seen the results yet, had I?

"The test result," I murmured, stretching my hand out for it.

The doctor leaned forward. "What?"

"The test result... I need to see it."

"Oh."

He carefully placed the envelope in my hand. I tore it open in haste to get the sheet of paper out. Holding it open with two shaky hands, I quickly read through it, and then, at the bottom of the page, I saw that what the doctor had said was true. I was not the father of the child.

I checked the name at the top of the result, and it was mine. It wasn't a random name; it was mine. Which meant the result was mine.

I found myself slowly rising out of my seat. The doctor was saying something, but it was like listening to a poorly tuned radio. Again, the room spun, and I fell, but a strong pair of arms steadied me. All the sounds in the room came back to me in a rush.

"Please, try to be calm," the doctor said softly as he supported me until I stood upright. "It's not the end of the world. These results have shattered many people, but they manage to get over it. There's still hope for you to repair your relationship with your wife, and through therapy, I'm sure you will forgive her for cheating."

I felt tears I was powerless to stop cascade down my cheeks. I felt a sharp pain in my heart and clutched my heart. Was this how heartbreak and betrayal felt like?

"But it is the end," I said between sobs. "I have lost everything, everything because of this pregnancy. I divorced my ex-wife because she couldn't give me a child, and-" a vision of Amelia's face rose in my mind. "AMELIA!" I screamed over and over again till I felt hoarse.

I couldn't believe I had foolishly lost Amelia forever over this and was only realizing my mistakes when it was already too late to fix them.

"I realize how disappointing this must be for you." He placed a hand on my shoulder. "But have you tried doing a fertility test for yourself? You can find out the real reason your ex-wife was unable to conceive, and you can start treatment if there's a problem."

I took my hands off my face at once.

"What the hell are you implying? I am not infertile," I barked.

"I didn't say you were. All I'm saying is if you have difficulty getting women pregnant as you seem to be doing, then I think it is necessary that you take the test just to be a hundred per cent sure where the problem lies."

"I don't have a problem," I yelled. "I have told you that I am perfectly capable of getting a woman pregnant." I slammed a fist on the table as a thought occurred to me and shot to my feet. "In fact, I know what is going on here. You took money from Lucy so you could alter the test results." I banged on the table again so hard that the startled doctor jumped backwards. "Do you realize you could lose your license for this?" The doctor simply stared. "You are a disgrace to the medical profession. How dare you try to change the results?"

"Mr Allen, you are being absurd. No one bribed anyone, and I certainly did not alter the results-"

"Liar!"

"Listen to me, please. I still advise you to go for the test. There's still time for you to—"

"I AM NOT INFERTILE," I bellowed.

My hands closed on a paperweight. I threw it at the doctor. He ducked in time, and it smashed against the wall. He ran around his desk, snatched up his coat, and called security. The door was pushed open before I could get my hands fisted in his coat. Two security guards stormed in and grabbed me by both arms.

"Let me go," I screamed. "Let me go! He changed the test results! He did!"

"Throw him out," the doctor ordered. "And make sure he doesn't return."

While kicking and struggling, I was dragged out of the doctor's office.