

Chapter 127

AMELIA

With a slightly shaky hand, I pulled out a handkerchief and dabbed at my sweaty brow. I had been taking deep, steady breaths for the past few minutes, but it had done nothing to alleviate my nervousness. I didn't think any woman had been this nervous to tell the father of his child that she was pregnant. Damian was unwittingly making my nervousness a hundred times worse the longer he stayed away. What was he still doing up there anyway?

I straightened and straightened the placemats on the dining table for what felt like the umpteenth time. And then I heard his approaching footsteps and immediately stood straight.

"Where's the food?" Damian said cheerfully, standing just inside the door and looking around.

"In a- in a minute," I said. "I wanted you to come down first. I didn't want your food to get cold."

I stumbled into the kitchen and stumbled back out. My hands trembled so badly that I almost dropped a dish cover on Damian's foot.

"Sorry. Sorry," I apologized as I caught it in time.

"It's fine," he said.

I was sure nothing like that would happen again, but just moments later, I accidentally tipped the glass of water over as I was about to sit down. I reached for it at the same time Damian did.

"It's fine. I'll get it," he said. "You seem to be awfully clumsy tonight."

As he mopped up the spill with a napkin, he looked at me curiously.

"Are you alright?" he asked tentatively. "You're acting all out of sorts today. You're not usually this... unsettled. Is anything the matter?"

I laughed a little. "Clumsy, you mean? I'm fine. Very fine. There is no problem at all." I blurted. "Besides, it's not every day you get to spill your ex-husband's secrets on TV."

"Really? What did you do?"

I licked my lips and dug my fingers into my thighs, hoping it would make me feel less tense as I recounted what happened to him.

When I finished, he was gawking at me with a mixture of awe and displeasure.

"You really did take a huge risk going after Noah like that at the mall. What if he had done something to hurt you?" He shook his head. "Anyway, he got what he deserved, and I'm sure he will stay away from you. He's already ruined, and nothing can save him."

I smiled. "Anton's friend really outdid himself. I'm so tired of being the bigger person. Noah deserves to be hurt for everything he has done."

He nodded, taking my explanation, and then he began eating. The anxiety settled immediately, almost like it was waiting for our conversation to end.

I managed to take a spoonful of my meal. It stuck in my throat like sawdust, not going up or coming down. After chasing down the lump with a large swallow of water, I pushed the food around on my plate. My appetite had flown out the window the moment I decided to tell Damian about the pregnancy, and it showed no signs of returning.

"Amelia?" I blinked, a little startled to see Damian's hand on my arm. "You looked like you were lost in thought. I was telling you the meal is delicious. As always."

"Oh, thank you. It's your favourite, so I took extra care in making it."

Damian nodded, sparing me a suspicious glance before devouring his meal again. I slowly took out the pregnancy test report that I had put in my purse, which was sitting on the ground next to me. I agitatedly tapped the test result against my thigh under the table.

I could not afford to stall anymore. I had to take the bull by the horns and tell Damian. But how? How could I break such news to him when he was dead set against having kids? The situation alone was enough to drive one crazy. And I was definitely losing my mind.

I opened my mouth to speak, but Damian's hand fell on my arm.

"Now, I'm sure of it," he said quietly.

My heart stopped for a second and restarted.

What was he sure of? Had he found out somehow?

"What are you... talking about?" I asked, keeping my tone light.

"I am sure that something is bothering you. Since I walked through the door this evening, it has been obvious that something is off." He dropped his fork into his plate with a clatter. "Now out with it. I'm listening."

"I have something to tell you," I blurted out.

"Go ahead," he said softly. "Tell me what it is. I'm all ears."

"First off, I don't want you to freak out with what I'm about to tell you. I know that you'll probably hate me after this, but I've been dying to tell you the truth. Despite what you may think, I only found out right after you asked me about it. I did not lie to you. You have to believe me. I didn't lie."

"Amelia, you are getting me all worried now. What is it? Talk to me. Please. Whatever it is, I can take it."

I took in another breath. I wasn't sure he would be able to take it.

Damn! This was even harder than I thought. At this point, words failed me. I knew that if I opened my mouth to explain again, I would end up rambling. I pulled out my hand from under the table and held out the folded sheets of paper to him. He frowned at it, then at me.

"What is this?" he said.

"Open it," I said breathlessly.

I watched his fingers unfold the paper, and his eyes roamed the paper, scanning its contents. When he reached the end, he remained very still, and his eyes bulged out with shock.

"Y-you're pregnant?" he asked. It sounded like a question but was also an unbelievable statement.

"Yes," I breathed. "I am. I know you don't want a baby. I know this, but I badly want to keep this baby. I cannot lie."

"You're pregnant? Actually pregnant?" he repeated. He was obviously still in shock, trying to process what I had just told him. He didn't sound angry. Yet. But he would be right after he realized what it meant. "You mean... I'm going to be a father?"

"Damian-"

He slowly rose to his feet.

"I'm going to be a father!" he exclaimed.

I watched him with some trepidation. This was not at all how I had envisioned this moment or believed his initial reaction would be. Now, I couldn't tell if he was happy or upset.

I wished he would just come out with it so I could know the worst I was to face. The suspense was killing me. As I watched him, I noticed his expression began to change as he paced.

Perhaps he was beginning to realize the implications of me getting pregnant. Any moment now and the row would begin. I shrunk in on myself, waiting for an explosion that never came.

Damian's eyes glistened with unshed tears as he closed the distance between us and went down on one knee before me. What was happening?

"I also want to tell you something," he said in a voice made gruff by emotion. "In my office three weeks ago, while I was deep in thought, I realized that I had everything I had ever wanted. Do you know what else I realized?"

Initially, I didn't respond, obviously swept away by shock. But when I finally snapped back to reality, I shook my head slowly. "No. What? What did you realize?"

A part of me screamed the answer: He had gotten his uncle's company and everything he wanted, so he didn't need me anymore. Our contract would come to an end, and I would never see him again.

But those words never came from him. Instead, he took my hand and caressed it gently.

"I realized that I felt that way because of you, only because of you." He admitted.

Damian's face blurred, then doubled and tripled. I quickly blinked back, the tears pooling in my eyes.

"I don't really... understand," I said softly.

"I'm saying that several times, I have imagined coming home to this big house if you leave. I imagined going back to my old routine before I met you. All I could think was that I would return to a silent, large, cold house. It would not be home anymore."

"Damian, what are you saying?" I choked, tears streaming down my eyes.

This wasn't real. This was just a dream or a hallucination. None of these would happen in real life. None.

But his voice made it real, and the sincerity in his eyes reached my soul.

He shifted closer to me, still on his knees. His voice was low and honest. "Amelia, you're the home I have been trying to find my entire life, the peace I thought I could never have. You are my home."

"Then why did it take you so long to realize this?"

"I guess I've been too independent for too long. I tried so so hard to convince myself that you deserve someone better than me, which you do, but when you were going to leave me, within a few weeks of therapy, I realized something else that changed my entire perspective."

"What?" My voice was barely audible now.

"I can be that man, the one you deserve." He tenderly took my hand and placed it on my stomach. "I mean every word I'm saying. I can be the kind of man who will love and appreciate you, the one who will be by your side forever, worshipping you for the rest of our lives. You've made me become the most loyal and romantic person. And I don't regret it all. This is the man I was born to be."

Covering my face with my hands, I sobbed. I bit my lip to keep myself from flat-out bawling. "I can't believe I spent all this time hiding the truth from you, scared that you'll ask me to get rid of the baby." My body trembled as I cried, too many emotions jolting through me. It was.. overwhelming. "I thought you'd never love me."

"I know." He looked up at me, his eyes soft with unshed tears. "I wouldn't blame you at all if you hate me already. I have been despicable, more than despicable, in what I have done and what I have said to you. Still, I want you to know that you have changed me in more ways than I thought possible. Sometimes, I can't recognize myself, the new and better version of myself that I've become thanks to you. You have given me a reason to strive to be better, to find joy in this life."

And then it broke- the wall I had erected over my emotions. I cried out, my hands on my belly as the sob ripped through me. Damian put his arms around me and held me to him tightly.

"I know I have been selfish. I was a coward when I met you, too scared to commit to the best thing that had happened to me because of my ego and past. But I should have thought of you, of us, and of the future we could possibly have. Even if you don't want to be with me any longer, all I want is for you to be happy and-"

"Oh, shut up," I wiped my face. "You know very well I can take care of this baby alone, that I can live without you." His face saddened. "But I don't want to. I've tried to stop loving you many times, but I couldn't stop. I guess my heart is stubborn."

He cupped my face, searching my gaze with delicate eyes. "Does that mean you'll be my wife for real this time?"

Through tears, I nodded, "Yes. It's all I've ever wanted."

"I love you, Amelia," he said, his voice muffled by his face in my hair. "I promise to love you always. I will make you happy for the rest of your life. It's all I will ever do. I love you."

He vowed with all his heart, and I knew it; I felt it. Taking me into his arms, he kissed me with all the passion of a lifetime and the promises of forever.

When he finally pulled away, he pressed his hand gently on my belly. "I'm so happy that we are going to have a baby together, a tiny miniature of you... and of me."

I smiled, "I'm happy too. You're going to be a wonderful father. I'm sure of it."