

Chapter 10

"Don't worry, Amelia. You'll still get to live in the big fancy house, and see to your Alpha's more...basic needs. Claire won't mind having a parasite living quietly in the basement - a space I've heard you're quite familiar with - as long as you remember your place," she hissed.

"I don't believe you," I muttered, still trying to absorb the information. "Damien would never allow this. It's - it's just not true."

Victoria smirked and pulled out her phone. "Oh no? Where do you think your precious 'mate' is right now?"

She stepped closer, holding out her phone so I could see a picture.

It was Damien, sitting next to Claire. A banner behind them read "Congratulations!" and there were party decorations everywhere. It was a baby shower. 1

My husband was attending Claire's baby shower. While I was locked up here. Hidden away like - yes, like a parasite.

Between the party and the decree, the entire pack would know what was going on. They would already have accepted Claire as the new Luna.

Victoria put her phone away and made mock soothing sounds. "Aw, poor Amelia. Did you really think this would play out any other way? Did you really think you had a chance?"

"He's still my husband," I said. "He's my mate!"

"Or so he told you. How would you know, human? All you had to go on was what Damien told you. My brother can be a very convincing liar. Or haven't you realized?"

She watched to see if I understood what she was saying, but I didn't. She rolled her eyes.

"Parties like this take weeks to prepare for. Damien knew key pack members would be invited to the shower, just as he knew he'd release his decree on the very same day. He's been lying to you this whole time. He set it all up around you without you even knowing it."

She stepped closer, looming over me.

"He put all the pieces into place, so you wouldn't suspect or get frightened and do something stupid to ruin things. He wanted to slowly boil you like a frog - until you couldn't resist anymore."

She stepped back, looking around the room. "And here we are! A frog in a pot, the water getting nice and hot. It's beautiful. Masterful work on Damien's part, it really is. Oh, and..."

Victoria reached into her purse and pulled out a paper. "You'll need to sign this. It states that you renounce your role as Luna, and accept the position as companion. It also states you'll give a public declaration, acknowledging this change."

I stared at the paper in her hand, my shock giving way to disgust. Damien really was doing this. He was ruining my life, our life, and the life of our child.

And yet - what choice did I have? It was clear now why Victoria had been sent to see me. She wouldn't hesitate to use force to get me to sign.

Still, my heart twisted. A public declaration? That wouldn't just be horribly embarrassing - it would let the entire pack know that they had a human among them that was only a companion.

Companions weren't common, mostly because few humans lasted long in the werewolf realm without the actual protection of a mate, or marriage, or some royal decree. I'd had all three of those things, and still my life had been miserable.

I could only imagine how much worse it would be as a companion.

Careful to avoid Victoria's gaze, I took the paper and pen she handed me. And then I signed my position in the pack - my safety - away.

Victoria laughed as she took back the paper. "An excellent choice, Amelia. I'm sure Damien will be pleased his little pet was such a good girl."

As she waltzed out of the room I clenched my fists tightly and felt my breath coming quicker. Rage was beginning to bubble and boil up inside of me.

I am never going to make that declaration, I told myself. The shame and humiliation would be beyond belief. I won't let my child grow up in disgrace like that.

And that's when I realized there really was only one way out of this mess.

Alone in my room, I took a deep, steadying breath.

It was time to act.

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