

## #Chapter 3: A deep betrayal

Amelia POV

A buzzing lled my ears, and it took me a moment to realize I was about to pass out. I shook my head, took a step back.

“What? What are you saying?”

Obviously feeling bolder now, Claire stood up a little taller, ran the hand on her belly in a circle, tossed her long blonde hair over her shoulder.

“That’s right, Amelia. I’m carrying Damien’s child. He needs a werewolf to bring his heir into this world, and obviously I’m the best one to do it.”

“Damien...cheated on me? With you??”

“Oh don’t be silly. It’s nothing as dirty as that. All we needed was a little of his DNA, a little of mine and, well, here we are.” She smiled, obviously pleased with herself. Then she stepped closer, speaking only so I could hear.

“But listen, human. You may be the Alpha’s mate, but you’re not one of us, and you can never carry an heir. Even Damien’s family knows that. It was his own mother and sister who brought this idea to me.”

Everyone knows Damien wants a child, of course. For a werewolf nding a mate also means preparing to start raising a family. And as an Alpha he also needs an heir to be raised up to Council member.

But...this? Could Damien’s mother Samantha and his sister Victoria really have come up with some twisted kind of plot like this?

“No,” I said, taking a breath, trying to consciously slow my frantic heartbeat. I felt like my whole world was sinking away, and I needed to nd an even footing. “I don’t believe you, Claire. You’re just making this up.”

“Don’t be such a child. You know how important family is to werewolves, and especially to Alphas. As a Beta’s daughter my blood is far more royal than yours. And Damien and I grew up together - everyone has always said what a perfect match we would make. How powerful our children would be. Don’t you see?”

Her eyes glittered as she sneered at me, and I felt my shock begin to melt into anger.

“You stupid human. I am the one who will fulll Damien’s needs. I am the one who will carry his heir.” Suddenly she shrugged and stepped back, into the circle of waiting doctors. “It’s what he wants. Who am I to say no?”

The doctors escort Claire down the hallway, leaving me standing there alone.

I’ve always known Damien’s family weren’t thrilled with him taking a human mate, and the assumption that I can’t carry an heir is a part of that. But I had tried so hard to please my mate as well as his family, serving the pack tirelessly.

But it didn’t matter, did it? I was still a stupid, worthless human. I thought they had accepted me. But in the end they went behind my back and arranged this whole horrible thing.

I stormed out of the hospital, heading straight to Damien’s oce to confront him. The only reason I didn’t oor it on the drive over was the thought of keeping the baby safe. No matter what else was going on, I needed to keep him or her in mind.

But I was still fuming when I strode into his oce, throwing the door open so that it banged against the wall.

Damien took one look at my face and hung up the phone he’d been talking into. And any hope I had that this wasn’t true, or at the very least wasn’t something he’d been a part of, disappeared. I saw it in his face, and I knew he could tell that I’d found out.

He stood up and hurried around the desk, trying to put his hands on my shoulders.

“Amelia, it isn’t what you think.”

“Oh really? So what exactly is it?”

He lowered his hands and drew himself up. “I haven’t cheated on you, Amelia. You need to understand. I need an heir, and I agreed that Claire is a suitable surrogate. That’s all this is.”

I stared at him. He said that like it was an inconvenient change of plans for the weekend, a minor disappointment I needed to get over.

“You ‘agreed.’ So this was something you knew about and went along with?”

I guess I had been holding onto hope after all. Maybe, I don’t know, somehow his DNA had ended up in Claire’s hands without him knowing it. But that hope just died too, and behind it a deep pit of betrayal and agony started to open.

I put my hand to my stomach, feeling sick. My mate, my husband, was going to allow a woman who clearly had feelings for him, to carry his child. Because she was a werewolf, one who had high status in the pack. Higher, apparently, than the pack’s own Luna, since I was just a human.

He’d planned this and kept it from me - for what, weeks? Months? How long had I been a fool, thinking my husband actually loved and respected me?

I had so many questions, but the biggest one came out rst. “Is this because you want a divorce?”

It’s the only thing I can think of. He wants me to leave, wants to replace me with someone who deserves to be Luna, and deserves to be his mate. How foolish of me, to think a human could ever belong in this world.

“No, Amelia. I love you. This is just...think of it like a business deal. That’s how I’ve thought of it. I knew it didn’t have to affect our relationship.”

I stared at him, and it was like I could actually physically feel my heart cracking into pieces.

“Wouldn’t affect our relationship,” I said. “Damien, Claire is now the mother of your child. She is going to be raising that child, your heir. You’ll be with her and the baby - they’ll be your family. What will that make me?”

I was already barely accepted as Luna of the pack, and actually treated with the respect a Luna deserves by very few. How could he not think about the slights and outright insults, the direct challenges and subtle disrespect I dealt with every single day? And about how much worse that would get if he had a child with someone else?

If Damien had a new family, a proper werewolf family, my life would become nothing but humiliation, or worse. And what about the baby I now carried? What kind of life would it have?

My own childhood had been dicult. I was orphaned at a young age, and though I’d been adopted by a kind family unable to have children of their own, by adopted father’s one night stand - and the illegitimate child that came from it - had torn my new family apart. Would my baby have to deal with the same situation?

What’s worse, Damien knew about my childhood, how I felt about cheating and dragging children into the dysfunctional mix. He knew about my scars, yet he was dragging me down into a nightmare that felt so awfully, terribly familiar.

Trembling, I lowered the hand from my stomach and balled my sts, willing my voice not to shake.

“Damien, either Claire leaves with the baby forever - or I will.”