

#Chapter 4: I want a divorce

Amelia POV

Damien's eyes turned cold, and his expression hardened. "That's ridiculous, Amelia. You of all people know what kind of stress I face, and the difficulties of leading a pack. I need an heir, and Claire can provide one. It's as simple as that."

As I looked up at my mate and his hard expression, I realized something I'd never seen before. Or maybe, something I hadn't wanted to accept:

To Damien, having an heir was far more important than our love, our bond.

No matter how hard I loved him, how much I tried to serve the pack - it would never be enough.

What kind of man had I married?

A sudden noise in the hall drew my attention, and a whirlwind burst into the room.

It was Claire, with Damien's mother Samantha and his sister Victoria. She rushed to Damien's side, tears streaming down her face.

"Please, Damien, don't listen to her hateful ideas! I won't terminate this pregnancy, and I won't be separated from my child. A baby needs its mother!"

Damien comforted her, giving her more care in one brief moment than he had to me during our entire conversation. I'd known Claire had feelings for my husband, but now I wondered, did he have feelings for her?

"Don't worry, Claire. I already said, your child will be born safely. Besides, your father and brother have done so much for the pack as loyal Betas. I could never drive out any member of their family."

Claire looked up at him. "I'm your family now too, Damien. Me and this child I carry."

I felt sick all over again, looking at them. They made a beautiful picture, two gorgeous royal werewolves. Of all the emotions I was feeling, embarrassment began to creep in the strongest.

I'd been such a fool.

Samantha and Victoria seized this opportunity to turn on me, corner me, block me from Damien's view, cut me away from that picture-perfect family portrait.

"Amelia, you're just going to have to deal with this. After all, it's your fault Damien has been passed over by the Alpha Council. If he had a real mate he'd already have an heir by now," said his mother.

Samantha was a lot like Claire, gorgeous and cold. I wondered, before, how a man as loving as my husband managed to survive being raised by someone so cold-hearted. Now I realized he was a lot more like her than I ever knew.

"Honestly I don't see why you're being so dramatic," Victoria said, eyes glittering. Oh, she was loving seeing me so hurt and upset. She always reminded me of a viper, always ready to strike.

"Victoria, this doesn't involve you," Damien warned, but she waved that warning away.

"My brother needs an heir. Claire can make that happen. It's as simple as that. You're being very stupid, Amelia."

"Stupid, and selsh," Samantha added. "A petty, spiteful child throwing a tantrum because she isn't getting what she wants."

"I said enough," Damien said, loudly enough to get the attention of both of them.

But it was too late. The rest of my heart was already cracking and shattering into pieces.

Selsh? Petty? Spiteful?

I thought about everything I'd given up for Damien, my life, my family and friends, the entire human realm, just to be with him. And I thought about the life I'd endured here, a place full of people who had never fully accepted me.

I'd given my heart and my life to Damien and his pack. I'd been alone and lonely, my mate the only island of comfort in a sea of foreign politics and hierarchy. I had dedicated myself to being the best Luna I could be.

And that was even before I submitted my body to month after month of fertility treatment, to the pain and discomfort, to having my hopes dashed time and time again. For him, my mate. For his pack.

And now Damien and his family were trampling all over my dignity. Worse, they were acting like there was something wrong with me for not going along with it.

Heartbroken, but no longer willing to blindly submit myself to pack politics and pack rule, I straightened my shoulders, looked beyond Samantha and Victoria. Ignoring Claire, I spoke quietly but firmly to Damien:

"I want a divorce."

Damien frowned. "Stop being so unreasonable, Amelia," he said coldly, an Alpha clearly expecting to be obeyed. "This really doesn't have to be that big of a deal. This is what's best for the pack."

But I refused to back down.

"If Claire and her child stay... You know what kind of situation I grew up in. This kind of thing only ends in tragedy. I refuse to allow children to grow up in a toxic environment like this."

Damien's eyes narrowed, and he studied me sharply, nally noticing I held something in my hand. "Children?"

Dr. Wyatt's report! I'd forgotten it, and now I might have said too much.

If Damien knew I was pregnant, things will get more complicated.

But I'd meant what I said - no child should grow up in an environment like I did, not even Claire's.

If ending the relationship was what I had to do to keep that from happening, then it's what I would have to do.

Ignoring the curious looks of the women in the room, I turned and hurried away. I needed to get home and pack.

Damien POV

Amelia hurried out of the room, just as a fascinating suspicion began to tickle at my mind. I started to rush after her, but Claire continued to hold me, and my mother and sister blocked my way.

"Damien, you need to listen to me," my mother said. "This is for the best. You knew she could never truly be a Luna to this pack, or a mother to your children. Now it's time you listen to some sense!"

"I've listened to your 'sense,' haven't I?" I retorted. "I've gone along with this whole surrogate scheme for months, keeping it secret from my wife - my mate."

"And you were right to do so," my sister chimed in. "Look at the tantrum the human just threw. It's ridiculous. Come on, Damien. You know Claire is the better match for you. Let Amelia go."

"Then we can make Claire the official new Luna, and everyone will be happy," my mother added.

I saw the image my family was painting: The Alpha with the Beta's daughter as my Luna, and mother of my child. Claire was a werewolf, and, since she was from a Beta line, very likely she will give me a relatively strong pureblood child. And since she'd been raised in the werewolf realm, she understood the complexities of pack life and even Council business better than Amelia could as just a human.

All I had to do was let this all unfold the way they planned. Then I'd be a father, and a member of the Alpha Council.

All I had to do was let my mate, the love of my life, walk away.

I shrugged off Claire's clinging hands, pushed past my mother and my sister.

"Not a chance," I said, and hurried home.

I hurried home, hoping Amelia would have calmed down enough to listen. If I could just make her see that this was about politics - that it really was just business - surely she would see the sense in my decision. As an Alpha, I had responsibilities I had to handle, and making sure I have an heir is one of them.

But when I got home, I found Amelia packing. And I realized she was serious about leaving.

I grabbed her arm as she marched past me to throw more clothes into a suitcase. She yanked her arm away.

"Don't touch me, Damien. Don't you dare."

"Amelia, be reasonable. Darling, come here."

I took her arms in my hands and stepped closer. I tried to give her a kiss, to remind her of our bond and calm her worries, but she turned her face and stepped away from me. Just a step, but it felt like a million miles.

"Amelia, listen - "

Just then my phone rang, and I answered out of habit. It was my duty to always be available to the pack.

But it wasn't the pack - it was my mother, calling from the hospital.

"That little scene in your office upset Claire so much she fainted. It may have triggered complications with the pregnancy. Damien, you need to get down here. The baby is in trouble."

I hung up the phone and swore, torn. I needed to talk sense into Amelia, make her see that this had nothing to do with her, or with us. I was her fated mate, nothing could change that.

But Claire is carrying my child. Mine. I can't just ignore that.

"Damn it, Amelia. I have to leave - but this isn't over! And you're not leaving until we talk about this."

Before she could stop me I grabbed her and carried her down to the basement, ignoring her struggles, telling myself it was for the best. We could deal with this, we could get through this, I just needed her to stay put.

I called one of the staff to watch the basement, make sure Amelia didn't leave. Then I carried her down into the basement, plunking her down on a sofa. I knew my voice was cold when I spoke to her, but she needed to understand that there was no way we were anywhere near nished:

"No one loves you more than I do, Amelia. You'll stay here until I can come back and we can talk. Until then - don't even think about running away."