

Chapter 9

Amelia POV

I did it. I told Damien the news I'd been so excited to share with him just days ago, forcing it out instead in desperation and fear at my husband's back as he walked away. And he didn't even hear me. 1

And then room was empty.

He left, I thought, devastated. Just left. I couldn't believe it.

I knocked on the door. "Hello? Is anyone out there?"

"Yes," said Lydia's voice, very close on the other side of the door.

I jumped and stepped back. Damien had made it clear I wasn't to be mistreated in any way, but the memory of Jeremy's rough treatment made me hesitate.

"I - um, where is Damien?"

"Alpha Damien had to leave. He has much business to attend to."

He did, I knew. But now every time I heard that I couldn't help but think of Claire and her baby, which were also "pack business" I was supposed to just accept and deal with.

"Do you need anything, Luna? Are you hungry?"

Her words brought me some relief. Though I knew she would never be my friend, her tone was respectful. Lydia had definitely learned a lesson from her predecessor's punishment.

I sighed, feeling a grumble in my stomach. They'd fed me at the hospital,

but my body was burning calories overtime to grow this new life inside of me.

My life was in shambles, and I didn't know now when or how I'd be able to make my way back to the human realm. But I could still take care of my baby.

"Yes, please. A lot of it."

I spent the rest of the morning pacing, staring out the window.

Beyond the yard the woods stretched around the house, so deep and lush. It was late summer, and everything was still in full bloom. I longed to get out of the house, escape this terrible situation, and find a little peace and quiet in the woods, like I so often had as a lonely child back home.

I imagined forming a rope out of the bedsheets like I'd seen in the movies and ran through the woods.

A fantasy, maybe. I knew the woods in this realm could be dangerous, full of rogues either on their own or in the groups that sometimes band together to form a thin semblance of a pack.

And while I wasn't quite desperate enough - yet - to try climbing down on a rope made out of our sheets, I began to realize escaping through the woods might well be my only way out of this place.

Passing between the werewolf and human realms wasn't difficult, but it still wasn't as easy as taking a stroll down the road. If I couldn't get to my car and drive to one of the pass-through points, cutting through the woods to get to the train station was probably my only option.

The very idea of it made me shiver, and I wrapped my arms around myself.

Was I desperate enough to try this?

Then I actually did get a visitor, though not one I'd ever actually want. It was Victoria.

"Ugh, it stinks of human in here," she said. She waltzed to a window in her sky-high heels and pushed it open. The deep fresh smell of the woods drifted inside.

"What do you want, Victoria?" I said. I had no idea why she was here, but I was sure it wasn't to keep me company. I braced myself for whatever awful or hateful thing she had to say.

She smiled, clearly delighted to be the bearer of bad news.

"As you know, Claire comes from a highly respected pack family. Her father was the previous Beta, her brother is the current Beta. A pureblood pedigree, unlike some people."

Her snotty attitude would have been funny if I wasn't starting to get an uneasy feeling in my stomach.

"As such, her parents have decided they don't want their pregnant daughter to be seen without a proper title. She is carrying the Alpha's heir, after all. She deserves to be shown respect within the pack."

Her smile widened.

"So Damien has issued a decree. You will be stripped of your title and become the Alpha's human companion, kept tucked away out of sight at his estate. Claire, meanwhile, will be given the title of Luna and play the role of the Alpha's wife. The way things should have been all along."

Stunned, I struggled to take all of this in. He'd issued a decree, already? So now the whole pack would know of my humiliation.