

Chapter 114

AMELIA

"Are you sure that we can proceed with basic mapping?"

I glanced at the project engineer, who had been poring over a computer-generated picture of the project I had in mind for the last few minutes.

It looked doable to me, but for some reason, he was skeptical. I mean, it was not every day you'd start a massive project like this, but he had to have a little faith in me.

I stared out at the vast expanse of land. I had been on site with him from the first day. He saw the newest tract of land that had been levelled and was ready to be developed. Why was he not as excited as I was?

"Yes, we can," I said in response to his question. I waved a hand to indicate the entire place. "Because this is a government project, the owners of the land in question will be compensated. This is not a private project where we will require them to sell the land to us. I am sure the city will adequately compensate all the landowners. You don't need to be scared of a lawsuit or whatever is going on in your mind."

"Yes. Yes. I'm sure you are right," he said, nodding and mopping his brow at the same time. "And I must say, the suggestions you gave to improve the plan I made will go quite nicely."

"I'm sure they will." After all, I had spent half of two nights planning and writing them down. "How much more land do you think we'll need to finish this? Have you gotten an exact estimate?"

"Yes. Yes. I have. There's a possibility....."

From the pocket of his coveralls, he drew out a sheet of paper covered with figures and began to explain the scale of the project while I took in every word.

Engineer Sam was easy to work with and, most importantly, patient. I would not stand an impatient man, especially on these projects.

".....Once we have concluded that, I think—"

"Amelia!" A sharp voice cut through the air like a knife, making me flinch.

The familiar voice was female and, from its tone, was pissed at me for some reason.

The engineer and I turned at the same time to see a woman, whom I immediately recognized, approaching me.

She looked aggressive. The handbag she held tightly by its straps at her side moved back and forth as she walked. It wasn't the perfect sashay I remembered, but she only managed to waddle toward me.

For the first time, I saw that her usually perfectly styled blonde hair was mussed, and some of it looked dull and uncombed. Even the clothes she wore looked like they had been quickly thrown on.

I frowned, surprised and taken aback. What could cause the always immaculate Lucy to seek me out when she looked like that? Also, she looked like she was due. According to the news making the rounds, she was rarely seen in Noah's company these days as she preferred to stay home and put her feet up because of the baby.

"Amelia!" she called again, a look of pure hatred marring her features.

I looked beyond her to the distance, where I was sure security guards were stationed. To get to where I was, she had to have passed them.

The big question was how she managed to get past all those officers who were under strict instructions not to let anyone or anything unrelated to the project in.

About a second later, I answered my own question. It was her bulging stomach, of course, which was easily the most noticeable part of her. No one, not even the guards, would want to say no to an irritable pregnant woman demanding to have her way.

And God knows the lies she must have fed them. She seemed to share that charming similarity with Noah.

Lucy stopped in front of me, panting, eyes flashing in anger. The engineer, sensing the tension, started forward. I gave him a little nod, indicating that I could handle this. He then withdrew with the papers.

"How did you know where I was?" I asked the still-panting, Lucy. "Are you stalking me now?"

"Noah won't stop ranting about your stupid project, so how could I not know where you were?" She spat. "And I would not stalk you even if I had all the time in the world and nothing to do."

"I see," I crossed my arms over my chest, the very picture of unconcern. "You wanted my attention. Now you have it. What do you want... here of all places?"

"You bitch," she snarled in the same high-pitched voice she had used to call my name. "Stop pretending already! You know damn well why I'm here. Did you think I wouldn't have the guts to call you out? Huh?"

Judging by the way she looked, she had some sort of problem. I just couldn't begin to fathom what it was and why she thought it had anything to do with me. Also, frankly, I did not care what it was.

I was tired of her and Noah's bullshit. The marriage got too crowded, and they kicked me out. But somehow, they could not stop seeking me out. Perhaps they both shared an obsession with me, and I wouldn't blame them.

"Look-" I snapped my fingers impatiently. "I have loads to do, as you can see. As I'm sure you have already figured out, if you have eyes that, I have no idea of what you're talking about. Look around you; this is no place for you, and I say this with the best intentions. Now I strongly suggest you leave here at once. Leave before you attract the attention of my bodyguards, who might handle you roughly."

"I'm not leaving," she fairly screeched. I sighed internally. I had really been looking forward to a stress-free day after the talks with Sam, but by the looks of things, I would not get what I wanted. "I'm not afraid of them, and I'm not afraid of you either! If I could survive Noah, I can survive anything!"

"Good for you," I clapped and chuckled. "I'm not interested in your trauma. You relieved me of that asshole, and I'm glad you're eating his shit."

"Oh, you have the guts, Amelia. Who do you think you are? Do you think you're better than me? Driving your fancy car, giving fucking fake speech on TV, you're nothing!"

"Look, Lucy-"

"You snitched on me to Noah. I know you did. You just couldn't get over your failed marriage, and you decided to ruin my plans. You really are so envious of me that you would snatch every chance of happiness I get!"

"Huh?"

"Don't pretend, bitch! Don't act dumb. I can see right through you. You were still so jealous of me even after you married your good-for-nothing new husband. You were still so pained that you told Noah that I was seeing Mr Thompson."

Mr Thompson. The name rang a faint bell, but I couldn't figure out even the shadow of a connection between me, him, Lucy and Noah's relationship. It was all very confusing, and every word out of Lucy's mouth made it more so.

"You are not making any sense," I said. "If you weren't pregnant, I would have suspected that you had a little too much to drink. Since that isn't the case, I'm forced to think that you have completely lost your mind."

"Liar!" she screamed, her voice breaking. "I know what you did. Admit it. Own up to your shit. I was almost lucky. I was almost there. My baby."

I sensed from her tone and appearance that she was simply frustrated and looking for someone to vent on. She was forcing back her tears, and I didn't need anyone to tell me she was hurting.

My first instinct was to send her away, but the fact that she was heavily pregnant gave me pause. I took a deep breath, willing my baser instincts to take a back seat.

"Alright. Now take a moment to calm down and tell me exactly what happened."

For one moment, it looked like she was going to hit me. Then her lips wobbled, and she burst into tears.

"I- I have nowhere else to go," she wailed. "Nowhere. I don't know what to do or- or where to go from here."

"What about Noah's place? You have been staying with him, haven't you? Why can't you go there anymore."

"I... can't." She wiped her eyes, which still didn't stem the flood of tears running down her cheeks. "Noah did a DNA test. He has already probably found out that the child is not his. He will kill me if he sees me."

Words ultimately failed me at that point. I gaped at Lucy in shock. Did I hear her right? Noah was not the father of the baby?

My mind whirled with all the implications of that fact. If Noah had not fathered Lucy's child, that meant he had ended our marriage for nothing. It had been ruined over a lie that Noah had believed.

While still shocked, I felt a flutter of something that felt like hope because there was a strong possibility that if Noah hadn't been the one to get Lucy pregnant, the problem of infertility could lie with him and not with me.

The thought of this sent chills down my spine, but I forced myself to focus on the situation at hand. In front of me was a miserable Lucy, and I had to figure out what to do in this awkward situation.

When I looked at her, I just felt a mix of pity and disgust. Queenie had been right, after all. There was no level to which Lucy could not stoop if it meant getting what she wanted. Taking over her best friend's husband was bad enough, but doing it by lying to everyone about the paternity of the child was more than worse.

I really wanted to just hate her but my heart felt something more than that. She didn't deserve anything from me.

However, she came to me, and I had to do something or get rid of her one way or another.

"Lucy," I licked my dry lips. She raised her tear-streaked face and gazed at me with a mixture of defiance and shame, shame that I would upbraid her for ruining my marriage with a lie. "Lucy, tell me who the father of the baby is. Do you know him? Can he help you out in this condition?"

She opened her mouth to say something but didn't get any further than that. Her mouth stayed open. Her eyes widened in alarm, and she her lips started to quiver.,

"Lucy, what's wrong?" I said, moving forward.

She covered the distance between us by taking a shaky step forward and grabbed my arm. It was then I noticed the liquid flowing down her legs and her frantic effort to remain standing. I kept staring, also frozen in that instant, out of shock and panic.

"Amelia," she gasped, her voice laced with fear. "My water just broke. The baby is coming."