

## Chapter 0050

The poisoning accusation caused quite the commotion. Your father, Margie, and Robert all came over to see what was going on and support me.

At that point, I was in a horrible position. If I admitted that I had tried to drug Cecilia, it would have brought tremendous shame to your father and to our pack. In addition, because we were in another pack's territory and the werewolf council was present, I most likely would have been subject to very severe punishment."

I paused to take a deep breath and wipe more of my tears from my face.

"What did you do next, Mother?" James asked. I could tell that he was trying to be gentle with me, but he was also becoming more and more afraid of the direction that this story was going.

I looked down at my hands, and then resumed the story in a whisper.

"I did not know what to do, and I was panicking. I decided to do the only thing I could think of, which was to adamantly deny putting anything in the strawberries.

But then Cecilia's mate stepped forward and suggested that I prove that I had done nothing wrong by eating the

strawberries myself. It sounded like a reasonable solution, but as you know, I am extremely allergic to strawberries. In fact, that was one of the reasons I thought that the strawberries would be a perfect food to use to dose Cecilia, because I knew I would not mix up the plates.

I honestly told Cecilia's mate that I could not eat the strawberries because of my allergy. That got me out of having to eat them myself, but then your father --who had complete faith in me-- suggested that the strawberries be tested instead. He also proposed that Cecilia, her mate, and my accuser be required to apologize to me publicly once the test results cleared me.

I was touched that your father was taking my side over Cecilia's, and yet it made me feel even more desperate. I obviously could not let the strawberries get tested.

Then an idea hit me. I complained to everyone that testing would take too long. As an alternative, I suggested that Margie --my best friend and our pack's Beta female-- could eat the strawberries on my behalf.

At first, Margie hesitated, so I mind-linked her. I reassured her that everything would be fine."

I paused again, taking yet another moment to wipe my tears.

"Like your father, Margie trusted me completely. So, after receiving my mind-link, Margie did not hesitate anymore. She quickly ate all three of the strawberries that I had placed on Cecilia's plate. Cecilia and her mate were still

suspicious, but after Margie ate the strawberries and nothing happened to her, they were forced to apologize and let it go."

And now.. the worst part of the story... I would have to look away from both James and Nick for this part...

"I should have immediately confessed to Margie what I had done, but I was feeling embarrassed and ashamed. I also really thought that the worst thing that would happen to Margie was the laxative effect, which she was likely to blame on regular food poisoning. And I told myself that I did not put much of the laxative in the strawberry anyway, and so there was only a small chance that Margie would even feel it.

Had Margie been a normal werewolf, I would have been right. In normal werewolves, wolfsbane laxatives work just like regular laxatives in humans. In small doses, the laxatives soften their stool; in higher doses, they merely make them miserable and uncomfortable for a while without any long-term damage.

In wolfsbane laxatives, the amount of wolfsbane added to them is very small, just enough to get past the healing tendencies of our wolves.

The problem.... The... The problem is that in p-pre..."

I struggled to finish the sentence.

"Mother?"

“The problem is that in pregnant she-wolves, any amount of wolfsbane is dangerous to a pup, especially in the early stages of pregnancy.

And... Margie was pregnant. It turns out that she and Robert had discovered that she was pregnant with a son just a few weeks before the conference. She was waiting to tell Randall and I, because she wanted to make sure that her pup was healthy, and because Margie was still a little hurt that I had delayed telling her about you. 1

But they had already told both sets of parents, they had already started setting up a nursery, and they had already agreed on a name: Tyler.

I promise you both that I did not know that she was pregnant. Had I known, I would have handled everything differently. I did not find out until Robert mind-linked your father in a panic, explaining that Margie was really sick and he was really worried about her because she was pregnant.

When I found out, I immediately confessed the whole thing. Your father called Dr. Hyder who came to help immediately... but it was too late. Margie miscarried Tyler that night.”