

## Payment To the Alpha by Ms.M Chapter 19

Nobody spoke.

There was a dead silence and a stiff tension clouding the office. I was nervously fiddling with my fingers.

A few moments passed causing the tension and silence to grow stronger. Stronger to the point where I could almost hear my heartbeat.

"So, let's start," James broke the silence with his dark and serious voice, causing me to shiver. All eyes turned to him.

Natasha was the first to speak up.

"Lydia was three years old, roaming around in the woods when one day she stumbled onto our territory. The guards brought her to me and Carlos. She was just a little girl, there wasn't a scratch on her body and when she came to us the first thing she did was run up to me and wrap her tiny arms around my neck, then she fell asleep.

We started calling around different packs to see if anyone missed their little girl. We were met with dead ends wherever we called until a phone call was made to us, from the half-moon pack. Their alpha told us that they had been attacked by rouges and that Lydia's parents were killed, however she did have an uncle who was left to take care of her.

We arranged a meeting at our pack grounds. The second we told Lydia that her uncle Mitch was coming to take her home, the little girl who hadn't cried since she came here, who was strong enough to make it on her own in the woods for goddess knows how long, broke down in tears and started shaking from fear.

We were oblivious to what it was that had Lydia all shaken up at the mention of her uncle but we decided to go through with the meeting as planned while keeping a close eye on them as we do." Natasha stopped and looked over at Lydia who had tears rolling down her cheeks that she was trying to wipe away hoping nobody would see.

I realized when Lydia looked up and our eyes met that I had a few stray tears myself. I wiped them away with the back of my hand and sniffled before looking back at Lydia. She held so much pain in her eyes at the mention of her background.

After everyone took a breather and were okay, Natasha continued.

"After about 6 days of having Lydia staying with us, the day came where it was time to give her up. I hadn't realized just how attached I was to that little bundle of joy and energy until I was dressing her and thinking how it was the last time I would do that. The last time I would hold up two dresses and she would pick the one she wanted to wear.

The last time that she would try and put her shoes on by herself but stumble and fall, her lips would pout and she would cross her tiny arms over her chest telling the shoes how stupid they were and I would take them, kiss them and tell her that they're nice now before placing them on her feet.

Carlos came into the room and Lydia ran up to him. He held her tight and looked me in the eyes, both our eyes glistening from the unshed tears we were trying our best to hold back. We knew it was hard enough for her as it was for us and didn't want to make it worse by showing sadness.

We went out to meet them in front of the pack house. Mitch was waiting there along with the Beta of their pack. As soon as he saw Lydia, he came up and ripped her from Carlos. 'Why must you always cause trouble? Now you're parents are dead and I'm stuck with you, perhaps you'll grow up to be useful, make me money'. Those were Mitch's words to Lydia, his first words to his 3 year old niece, he whispered them to her stupidly thinking we wouldn't listen in. He put her down and started walking towards their car. He turned around and screamed at her to hurry up.

Lydia stood there, watching her uncle and then looking back at us with her big blue eyes. She gave us a smile when I knew she wanted to cry. 'Be strong, bye mommy, bye daddy.'"

By now all of us girls were balling our eyes out. Natasha couldn't continue, her hands were over her mouth and she was sobbing, snot came out and her eyes were waterfalls, the whole time.

Lydia was hugging her from the side while also crying but more timidly. Amber was also a mess with tears rolling down and blowing her nose in a tissue. James, Damon and Alex were seething in anger. Probably wanting to kill her uncle, but I could see their sadness too, they were as touched. And me, I wasn't keeping it together anymore. She is my best friend... how could I not know any on this? How... I don't even know what to say.

"I'm okay... I'm sorry, I just...let's continue," Natasha blew her nose and took three deep breaths before continuing.

"She hadn't called us by our names, she had asked us what to call us and we told her our names but she refused, she said it didn't feel right. So she called us Piff and Puff because we were nice and funny. She said that when she figures out better names she will call us by those. And then she said it... We both stood frozen, our mouths open and our eyes wide as we watched her tiny legs carry her towards that monster. When she had almost reached him he turned around and yanked her by the arm, hard, and screamed for her to hurry up. In that moment I saw black and Carlos did too. My body acted before my mind got a chance to react. I flicked my hands and had him up in the air with Lydia safe on the ground. I used my magic to stop his oxygen intake and saw how he started to suffocate.

I wasn't planning on stopping, until I felt something pulling my dress, I looked down and saw Lydia standing there with a smile on her face. I thought she would be scared but she wasn't. 'mommy? I'm hungry'. Those words brought me back and I quickly let go of Mitch and looked at Lydia as he fell to the ground. I told her to run into the kitchen and ask the staff to make her whatever she wanted. When she left I went up to Mitch who was now on his feet and used my magic to throw him back into a tree. 'Don't ever touch my little girl again'. With those words he left and we raised Lydia as our own, under the radar."

"How didn't I know?" James looked befuddled and squinted his eyes as he asked Natasha his question.

"You did. We always talked about her, but we called her Anna. We didn't want anyone knowing her name because we didn't want her to ever be put in harm's way or risk someone coming for her if they knew how much she meant to us. Only the pack knew."

James shook his head and stood to his feet. He walked over to the big window that was also a mini bar and poured himself a glass of scotch.

"I'm sorry James, but we were scared of losing her, you of all people should understand." Natasha looked at James and pleaded, I could tell he meant a lot to her as well.

"What do you mean?" I couldn't help myself but be curious about what she meant.

"Carlos and I can't have a baby. Or well, I can't have a baby. So having Lydia made us whole in a way. We were finally a family."

I looked over at Lydia who still had tears rolling down her cheeks, but her breathing was under control and she looked calmer. She looked up at me with determination.

"It's time you knew your story and ours,"

I stiffened upon hearing her words. Fear slowly creeping up my spine. I felt an arm around my shoulders that quickly made me calm and I felt safe and warm. I looked to my side and saw that James and Amber had switched places without me realizing it. For that I was grateful. Only James could bring me the comfort I needed at this moment.

"I was thirteen years old about to turn fourteen, when mom came to me one day and told me about a situation and asked me if I could help. She told me about a girl who was turning thirteen and who needed protection. How this girl was really special and was going to do great things in the future, but for now was just living a normal life like any other human. However she didn't have many people around her to love her, her family never cared for her. So mother asked me to go there, live there and be her friend. So I did.

When I enrolled at school I saw you sitting in the cafeteria alone reading a book and for some reason my heart broke, because I knew what you were going through. I went up to talk to you and you immediately greeted me with open arms.

You were so sweet and kind regardless of how you were living. And that time when you punched Stephanie in the face and broke her nose for picking on that loner girl, was when I realized that you and I were going to be close.

So, without a second thought I called home and told my parents that I was going to stay. It was only supposed to be a year but I couldn't leave, I couldn't leave you, and then you met Liam. I could tell he was a dick but you were head over heels in love with him-" a low growl escaped James' lips making me confused. Was he jealous?

"So I stayed. I looked after you and you became more than my friend, you were my sister."

"So I was a charity case? A business arrangement?!" The tears were yet again streaming down but this time it wasn't because I felt sad for anyone, I felt angry, betrayed. At this lie of a friendship.

"NO! No Avery, I mean- maybe in the beginning but I could've said no when mom asked me to come to you but something just felt right about it. And our friendship was true, maybe not how we met but how we felt and what became of us was all pure love and friendship I promise. Avery you are my sister, my friend and my family and I'm so sorry that things turned out like this. I wanted to tell you the truth but I couldn't! Your parents knew what I was and that was why they never approved of our friendship because they were afraid that it would get in the way of their plan.

They thought I was sent to mess things up. But I was sent to protect you and to keep you safe, not only from other wolves but from your parents as well.

I saw how you were living. And I promised you something in our first year of friendship remember? That no matter where life takes us or what happens we will always be friends. We will always have each other and you can always count on me.

I'm so sorry Avery. Please"

Lydia was kneeling in front of me, holding both my hands with her own and staring me deep in the eyes.

"Why didn't you tell me the truth?"

She tried smiling through the tears and sorrow. I could tell she was afraid of losing her friend. Of losing me.

"Because it wasn't my truth to tell,"

