

Alphas Bride 161

Chapter 161 - Whitewashing [Bonus ]

"Alpha Damon, don't you think you went too far?", Alpha Richard asked while gesturing at Cassie's swollen face.

Damon gave Talia a reassuring smile and his arm snaked around her waist to pull her against him firmly before he turned to respond to Alpha Richard.

"Too far? Less than a week ago, your daughter rampaged in my packhouse, and she was labeled as hostile. I warned you that if she gets close to me without authorization, she will be treated as an enemy, and you said that you will make sure she understands what she did wrong. It seems that letting her go with a warning was not effective because here she is today, attacking again. How would you deal with an aggressive individual who is a repeat offender?"

Alpha Richard cursed internally. He was unable to come up with a proper response because everything Damon said was right.

The increasing audience was unsettling and they all knew that Damon banned Cassie from entering the Dark Howlers pack one week ago. No one here saw how Cassie ended up with that swollen cheek, but it will be difficult to make a case for Cassie's innocence considering her previous offenses. Damn it!

Alpha Richard would love to drag Cassie away and forget about this, or at least to buy some time and discuss with his advisors how to handle this issue, but with all the people watching, if he retreats now, he will lose face. As an Alpha, he can't stand down and he needs to protect what's his, even if that's a troublemaking daughter like Cassie.

In front of others, he needs to defend her, and he will deal with her later. In private.

"Cassie is not just anyone.", Alpha Richard said to Damon. "She is my daughter. Hitting her is the same as hitting me or my pack."

"Really? I didn't see it from that perspective. It seems that I still have things to learn from my seniors.", Damon said thoughtfully.

Alpha Richard smirked victoriously. Didn't Damon admit that he was in the wrong? Was it that easy? His smirk froze when Damon continued.

"Are you saying that Cassie represents you and the Steelbite pack? Are her attacks the same as yours? Should I see her action as your pack attacking mine? Is this declaration of war, Alpha Richard?"

Alpha Richard stood rooted in the spot while Damon's words echoed in his head. How did things escalate to this point? Did Damon say... war?

Just the thought of a war against the Dark Howlers pack made Alpha Richard weak in the knees.

Wars can be fought amongst warriors, but he would be an idiot to start something like that because, for every warrior from the Steelbite pack, Damon has at least ten of his. The Dark Howlers pack is the biggest pack in North America and their military forces are proportionate to the size of the pack.

The other way for packs to settle disputes (wars included) is when two Alphas duel. In that case, the winner takes all, including the life of the loser, and Alpha Richard knew that it would be suicidal to challenge Damon to a fight.

Cassie opened her mouth to speak, but she swallowed her words when her father squeezed her arm harshly.

'Didn't you make enough damage?', Alpha Richard spoke to Cassie through their mind-link.

'But daddy...', Cassie whined. 'She hit me first. That's the woman from the photo. She was with Damon at the Summer Solstice festival, and she was in the packhouse when I visited.'

Alpha Richard thought that this might be interesting, and he wanted to confirm, 'Is she the one that got you banned from the Dark Howlers pack?'

Cassie threw a glance at Talia while wondering if Talia is the Omega who was stealing food and spoke on the cell phone in the living room... the one that Cassie slapped. They looked alike, but the clothing, hairstyle, and makeup were completely different, and this woman (aka Talia) didn't seem like Omega. If she is, she wouldn't be able to stand tall next to Damon when everyone else is sweating with a submissive posture. Even Alpha Richard had difficulty resisting Damon's aura, and Damon didn't even exert his full power.

'I'm not sure. I don't think so...', Cassie responded.

'Waste!', Alpha Richard hissed. 'Keep your mouth shut. If I hear another word from you, you will be grounded for life!'

An Omega brought another icepack and Alpha Richard snatched it and passed it to Cassie. If Damon took it to soothe another Talia's invisible wound, it would be too much.

Alpha Richard pushed thoughts about Talia to the side. It didn't matter if Talia is the girl from the rumors or not, because he had more pressing matters to deal with. Damon accused him of starting a war and if he doesn't find a way to extricate himself from this situation, it will be a disaster.

Yes, many of the Alphas from the audience wish to topple Damon but none of them will dare to act on it openly. Alpha Richard found himself under the limelight now and he was aware that he is on his own. No one will help him.

Besides, assuming that Talia is the mysterious girl Damon was hiding, by appearing here, she is not hidden anymore, and any advantage Alpha Richard could have by finding details about Talia's and Damon's relationship is useless.

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"Alpha Damon...", Alpha Richard called. "Let's not allow our emotions to pull us into something we can't take back. This was a misunderstanding between two women, there is no need to drag our packs into war over it."

"Misunderstanding?", Damon grumbled, and his eyes swept over the audience. Other than Omegas, he spotted the worried faces of hosts, Alpha Magnus and Luna Alicia, and curious faces of Alpha Edward, Alpha Maddox, and many others.

"Alpha Richard...", Damon called. "As an Alpha, you should know that in these events, we represent our packs. Cassie attacking my date is the same as you attacking me and my pack."

Alpha Richard swallowed a mouthful of air. "This is all my fault for not teaching my daughter well."

Damon cocked his eyebrow questionably. "So, it's your fault? Do you want to take punishment in her stead?"

"Punishment?", Alpha Richard repeated. "Can't you overlook this? This was just a squabble between two women."

"No, Alpha Richard. This was NOT a squabble between two women, because my woman didn't participate in it. Your daughter was the instigator, the attacker, and she even hurt my date...", Damon took Talia's hand together with the icepack she was holding, indicating that she was injured. "You are an Alpha for much longer than I am and I'm confident that you know how to look at the whole picture. By attacking me, Cassie disrespected me and you as well. She made a fuss at this grand event hosted by the Lightclaw pack, which is obvious proof that she doesn't put them into her eyes. Does Cassie think she is above everyone present here?"

"Are you neglecting that you hit me?", Cassie asked in a shaky voice while pressing the icepack on her cheek.

"I hit you?", Damon asked Cassie like he heard about it the first time. "How much I remember, you were the one running this way and I raised my hand defensively. You walked into it. I would never hit a woman."

Talia looked at Damon and if not for the audience, she would laugh at his outrageous whitewashing.

She realized that Damon has an uncanny ability to twist things to fit his narrative and he was doing it with a straight face. This was another side of Damon she got to observe.

Even Alpha Richard who clearly saw Damon slapping Cassie couldn't find words to refute what Damon said.

Alpha Richard cursed Cassie silently. If she listened to him, none of this would happen! If not for the audience, he would give her a good slapping himself.

Chapter 162 - More Special Than Everyone Else

Alpha Richard raised his arms toward Damon, palms up. "This is a grand event for the Lightclaw pack and we shouldn't cause a bigger commotion here. How do you suggest we resolve this?"

Damon shook his head. "Do you expect me to resolve your problems? You said that it's your fault for not teaching Cassie properly, so I want to hear, how will you fix it? If you don't have a plan, this behavior will repeat. I don't need to remind you that this is Cassie's second time to assault one of my people, right in front of me."

Alpha Richard exhaled in frustration. It was obvious that Damon was aiming for something. "What do you suggest?"

"Do you agree that Cassie should be punished?", Damon wanted to confirm.

Alpha Richard nodded curtly. "Of course. Such behavior needs to be disciplined. Since Cassie's offenses are against you, I want you to decide how she should be punished." So that we can be done with this.

Alpha Richard was convinced that Damon won't do anything extreme in front of him and with all the audience watching.

Damon thought for a moment before turning to Talia. "What do you think?"

Talia was caught unprepared. Why was he asking her that? So many people were observing the scene with interest!

But Damon's gaze directed at Talia was filled with determination and confidence and she realized that Damon was giving her a chance to vent her frustration. This was his way of telling her that he's got her back and that no one is allowed to bully her. She liked that.

Talia glanced at Cassie who was staring back at her with so much malice that if a look could kill, Talia would be sliced into a million pieces.

Talia thought that if not for Cassie's father being an Alpha, Cassie wouldn't be more than a rowdy nobody who is trying to make herself look better by bullying others.

This whole spectacle was only because of Cassie's background.

If Cassie was an Omega, or if Talia was without Damon's protection, no one would bat an eye at the unfolding scene no matter what happened, yet now they were all silently watching, waiting.

It was the injustice of little people bearing the weight of other people's grudges, and Talia got an idea for an appropriate punishment for Cassie.

If they could remove Cassie's special identity, that would be perfect.

"She is acting like a criminal and she should be treated as such.", Talia said and turned to Damon. "What do you do with violent people who exhibit a pattern of attacking others without being provoked?"

Damon nodded faintly. "Dungeon it is."

Cassie's eyes bulged out in shock, and she wanted to protest but the words failed her. Is she really going to the dungeon? Surely, Damon was joking. Right? RIGHT!?

"Alpha Magnus...", Damon called. "Can you arrange for Miss Cassie to be escorted into your dungeon? Since this incident happened on your territory, we will meet after the party to determine the duration of her imprisonment."

Alpha Magnus glanced nervously at Alpha Richard, but the latter already said that Cassie should be punished based on how Damon decides so he waved at his warriors who were waiting nearby. "Take her away..."

When Cassie realized that it's happening, any leftover traces of refined Miss were gone. She screamed profanities and trashed while calling her father and Damon, but there was nothing she could do against strong warriors who dragged her away with ease.

With that, many of the spectators returned to the party.

"Alpha Damon...", Alpha Richard called in a shaky voice. Cassie going to the dungeon was a big shame for the Steelbite pack because all this happened right under his nose. He had to try something. But... what can he do?

"Yes?", Damon asked.

"Cassie is just a silly girl."

"A girl.", Damon repeated. "I don't separate people on young or old, male or female, and I don't care about rankings."

Alpha Richard frowned. "You treat everyone equally?"

"No. In my eyes, there is Talia and then there is everyone else.", Damon responded with a smirk. "So if you were wondering who the girl from the festival was, here she is. And her name is Talia. If you want to know anything else about her, feel free to ask her directly. There was no need to hire mercenaries."

Damon narrowed his eyes at Alpha Richard who was now drenched in sweat.

Alpha Richard knew that some of the guys on his payroll were captured at the Summer Solstice festival, but he didn't expect that Damon will call him out just like that. Spies are everywhere, and sometimes they get captured. It's not a big deal. But looking at Damon up close while barely breathing due to Damon's suffocating aura, Alpha Richard realized that this is a big deal.

"You see, Alpha Richard", Damon's voice went down by an octave. "In their desire to find out more about the girl who was with me, those thugs nearly ruined the festival my pack members painstakingly prepared. We had a lot of guests. If anyone got injured, I would need to bear the responsibility, and if that happened, it would take much more than putting Cassie in the dungeon to pacify me. I hope that you and your daughter learned a lesson. Stay away from me and my people, and stay away from Talia, unless you are willing to risk a war."

Damon clicked his tongue. "If you want to go there, I will accept your challenge for the duel. There is no need to involve our warriors. Don't you agree?"

Alpha Richard gulped audibly.

"Good.", Damon said. "Now, unless you have anything else, I believe we are done here."

Alpha Richard lowered his head and slowly moved backward a few steps, before turning and leaving the hallway, in the opposite direction from where the party was held. He was never so humiliated, but there was nothing he could do other than put his tail between his legs and retreat. For now.

"I apologize for the inconvenience", Damon said to Alpha Magnus and Luna Alicia who both responded how it's not a problem, and then they left.



Damon glanced at the back and nodded at Maddox, silently thanking him for being there. He knew that Maddox was waiting to see if Damon will need assistance. The two of them supported each other more than once.

With that, only Damon and Talia were left in the hallway (and a few non-important Omegas who were performing their duties).

"Are you OK, kitten?", Damon asked Talia.

Talia smiled foolishly at Damon while his words echoed in her mind, 'In my eyes, there is Talia and then there is everyone else'.

Doesn't that mean she is special? More special than anyone else?

Damon was still looking at her expectantly, and she got on her toes and kissed him on the lips, right there, in the hallway.

"Does this mean we are ditching the party and going back to our room?", Damon asked when Talia inched away.

Talia released a long breath. Right. The party. How could she forget about the party?

She giggled. "Not a chance. We traveled here and got all dressed up for the party. This kiss was just a thank you for making sure that Cassie doesn't go unpunished."

Damon's lips lifted into a smirk. "Alright. If I get a kiss is for sending someone into the dungeon... what do I get for a severed limb? Snapping a neck?"

Talia rolled her eyes at the cheeky Alpha. Did he think that his reward will increase if he increases the punishments? And he didn't really think about mutilating (and killing) for real. Right?

Talia didn't want to go there. She was already getting goosebumps.

"Let's go to the party. We will really be late at this rate. Kalina said that Luna Alicia got some smoked sausages from Poland for this occasion, and if we don't eat those, we will be sorry..."

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'If any of you dares to approach Alpha Damon and provoke him, I will kick you out of the pack!', Alpha Edward's angry voice sounded in the minds of Marcy, Nora, and Luna Layla.

'What happened?', Luna Layla asked. She was with Marcy and Nora, chatting with some other ladies in the garden.

'Cassie from the Lightclaw pack just earned herself time in the dungeon because she crossed Alpha Damon, and they barely avoided a war.', Alpha Edward responded. 'He is not in a good mood, so stay away from him. Remember that we are here for the new Luna. Focus on that and keep everything else for later.'

Luna Layla had a concerned expression, Marcy was indifferent, and Nora paled.

"What's up with you?", Marcy asked Nora. "Why do you look like you've seen a ghost?"

Nora plastered a fake smile. "I know Cassie and I am shocked to hear that she is in the dungeon."

Nora was glad that security spoke to her before she returned to the room, so Marcy was oblivious about what happened. When Nora entered the room, she greeted Marcy without revealing that she went to Alpha Damon's room and that she saw Damon's date in a bathrobe (aka Talia).

The security warned Nora not to go into the residential area of the packhouse unless she is invited, and based on how calm everyone around her was, that didn't reach Alpha Edward.

#### Chapter 163 - The Event At The Lightclaw Pack (1)

Damon and Talia followed one Omega to their seats, and Damon was pleased to confirm that his request was fulfilled.

The table that could seat six people was set only for him and Talia. Perfect.

The six chairs were around the table, but only two had nametags in front of them. One said, "Alpha Damon" and the other one was "Mrs. Blake".

Talia thought that she will pass out. What was Damon thinking?

She swiftly flipped the card with "Mrs. Blake" to conceal the text, and she chanted internally that it's not a big deal because everyone knows him as "Alpha Damon" and not as "Damon Blake". Besides, how many people looked at those fine cursive letters on a tiny nametag?

Damon didn't ask with whom they should be seated, but as part of his RSVP, Damon made a list of people who shouldn't be nearby, and that list included people from the Red Moon pack, the Steelbite pack, as well as a number of Elders.

It's not that Damon wanted to hide Talia. Quite the opposite.

Damon wanted to use this event for everyone to see that there is a woman in his life who is more than a fling. In his opinion, as long as they don't confirm that Talia is his mate, they won't attack her, but he didn't want Talia to be invisible either.

With this move, Damon will silence anyone who is trying to sneakily get information on Talia (like Alpha Richard), and it will allow Talia to make her debut without attracting too much attention.

The incident at the festival told Damon that his enemies were set on finding out who Talia is (among other things), and he knew that many are targeting him since he ascended his current position as an Alpha. Due to that, it was only a matter of time before they find out about Talia, and like this, it's happening on his terms.

This is as far as Damon's plan went and he wanted to enjoy this evening with Talia, as for anything else... he will deal with it tomorrow.

Omegas were quick to bring drinks and appetizers.

Talia observed bite-sized pastries that were filled with a variety of small sausages, mushrooms, ham, and some were wrapped in bacon.

Damon put one of each on the plate for Talia to taste with, "See which one you like the most, and then you can have more of that..."

Talia glanced nervously from her plate to Damon. "Is it OK for you to do this?"

Damon cocked an eyebrow at her questionably and she clarified, "There are people watching us."

Damon tapped the tip of her nose with his index finger. "What people? It's just the two of us here." Seeing her shocked expression, Damon chuckled. "You need to learn to ignore non-important people. Now eat before it cools off. Or do you want me to feed you?"

Talia swiftly stuffed one random pastry in her mouth.

Damon putting food on her plate was already too much, and if he feeds her as well, her heart won't be able to take it. Maybe he can ignore the so-called non-important people, but Talia was painfully aware of gazes burning into her skin from all directions.

She decided to focus on Damon.

Talia watched Damon as he picked food for his plate and then his right hand found her left one and their fingers interlaced. This time, the intimate gesture happened on the table, for everyone to see.

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"That was quite a performance. You should have done it here, in the garden, for everyone to see.", Maddox said while taking a seat at the table with Damon and Talia.

"It was not much. Cassie was asking for it.", Damon responded to Maddox.

Talia's eyes widened at the sudden appearance of Maddox because images from earlier that afternoon flashed in her mind: Maddox naked on top of a woman.

Talia tried to suppress those images because they were inappropriate, and she still remembered how Damon tried to erase them.

Maddox hummed ambiguously and then turned to Talia. "Hello, Talia. You look lovely."

Damon let out a low growl which overlapped with Talia's weak 'thank you', and Maddox raised his hands defensively toward Damon.

"There is no need to get aggressive. I was only complimenting your girl."

When Maddox said, 'your girl', Damon calmed down.

"If it makes you feel any better, Damon...", Maddox chuckled. "You also look lovely."

Damon grimaced sarcastically but he was surprised by the growl that escaped him. Why did he do that?

It seems that the mate bond got stronger again, and Damon wondered how far it will go. Will he see any guy who talks to Talia as competition?

Damon wanted to discuss this with his wolf, but what if his wolf takes over and Damon pounces on Talia while disregarding the audience?

Maddox ignored Damon's grumpiness that started from the moment he joined them at the table, and he turned to Talia.

"So, Talia, what do you think about this party?"

Talia was not sure how to respond. If she removes the scene with Cassie, they just got here.

But Maddox was looking at her expectantly, and she had to say something.

"Alpha Maddox..."

"Please", Maddox interrupted her. "Call me Maddox. We are all friends here."

Talia remembered Maddox saying something similar earlier that afternoon to the woman who was under him. 'Call me Maddox when I'm inside you...'

There was no way she will call him like that.

Instinctively, Talia snuggled closer to Damon, seeking protection.

"I wouldn't dare call you so casually, Alpha Maddox.", Talia said.

Maddox pinched the roof of his nose. Just a few days ago, Maddox was at the Dark Howlers pack and even though he and Talia were not bosom buddies, they were able to hold a conversation, and now she was looking at him like he has some contagious disease.

"Why are you so distant? Did this caveman forbid you from talking to guys?" Maddox was obviously referring to Damon.

Damon wanted to complain about the caveman reference, but Talia was sticking closer to him with every next Maddox's word, so Damon got distracted.

Maddox realized... "It's about this afternoon. There is no need to be awkward about it. Everyone is doing it."

Maddox noticed that Talia got flustered and he gaped at her. "Don't tell me... You never..."

"That's enough!", Damon seethed at Maddox.

Damon swallowed the caveman thing and he thought that Maddox might apologize for his naked performance that sullied Talia's eyes, but now Maddox only made it more awkward.

"Unless you can hold a decent conversation, I suggest you leave.", Damon said to Maddox grimly.

Maddox looked at Damon with confusion obvious in his expression. What is a decent conversation?

Maddox suspected that there is something between Damon and Talia when he visited the Dark Howlers pack during Summer Solstice.

Talia attending this event with Damon was strange enough because Damon never openly dated a woman and now it seems that Damon didn't touch Talia.

Maddox didn't get it. What kind of Alpha can be with a woman for days (or is it weeks?) and not get handsy? That goes against their nature.

Talia's eyes were darting randomly while trying not to look at Maddox and she spotted Mindy.

"Maybe I should go and chat with Mindy so that you guys can talk.", Talia said to Damon in a small voice.

Damon didn't want to talk to Maddox, but the latter pretended not to see Damon's non-verbal signs that he should leave.

"You want to talk to Mindy?", Damon grumbled at Talia. "Are you sure she is a good friend and won't take advantage of you?"

He was obviously not pleased that Talia was thinking about leaving his side. And it was Mindy's fault that Talia saw the nasty scene of Maddox's bare ass.

Seeing that Talia's mood dropped, Damon chided himself internally. Yes, he wanted Talia next to him, but he didn't want Talia to think that he was restricting her. Mindy was only a few tables away.

Damon inched closer and kissed Talia's temple. "Go and have a chat with Mindy, but don't forget to come back to me."

Talia thought for a moment before giving up on that idea. "Maybe I shouldn't. Mindy told me that I need to stick close to you so that some woman doesn't steal you from me."

Damon perked up. "Mindy said that? Listen to her and stick to me closely. Mindy is a smart woman. We will keep her."

Talia was not sure if she heard him right. Did he just say that they will keep Mindy like she is some pet?



Talia remembered that there was more... "Mindy also said that you slept with half of the women present here."

Damon's face fell. "I changed my mind. Mindy is not smart. Unfriend her and stay away from her."

Maddox stifled a laugh. "Don't blame my sister for telling the truth."

Damon glared at Maddox. "Why are you still here? Don't you have anything better to do?"

"No, not really." Maddox was busy with the woman under him, but he clearly remembered Damon's outrage while covering Talia's eyes and pulling her out of Maddox's room. "I can't think of anything more interesting compared to figuring out what made you turn into a chaste guy. How long will this last?"

Damon put his arm around Talia and held her close to him as if he was afraid that she might run away, and he spoke to Maddox, "Why do you think that this is temporary? Is it so difficult to believe that I found a woman who makes me want to leave my fickle days behind?"

Maddox's eyebrow twitched. Fickle days? That's an understatement.

Chapter 164 - The Event At The Lightclaw Pack (2)

It's not that Maddox wanted to draw a wedge between Damon and Talia.

Maddox was trying to understand what possessed his friend of many years.

Damon and Maddox are collaborating as Alphas of their respective packs, and they are also close on a personal level. Considering their Alpha nature to dominate, they aren't buddy-buddies in a normal sense because they clash often, but they flipped many skirts together and Maddox can confirm that Damon is

the most promiscuous Alpha of their generation. Damon never tried to twist that fact or to change, so this was odd.

No matter how Maddox looked at it, there could be only one catalyst for this shift in Damon's behavior.

"I must congratulate you, Talia.", Maddox said.

She was afraid to find out more, but she had to. "For?"

"I have known this guy for a long time", Maddox said while gesturing toward Damon. "He never cared about someone's opinion to the point of trying to conceal his nature. Until now."

Damon closed his eyes and let out a long breath.

Damon was irritated, unaware that Talia was floating in pink clouds which echoed Damon's and Maddox's conversation.

She clearly remembered that Damon insinuated how him being with Talia is not temporary and that he wants to leave his womanizing in order to be with her, and Maddox even said that Damon cares about her. Is that possible? She was not daring enough to believe in those words, but it all sounded nice.

Talia never saw herself as worthy. Why would she? For two decades she was at the bottom, bullied, weak, wolf-less, hoping to become invisible, yet here she is now... at the fancy party, in an elegant dress, with Damon's arm around her and Damon even appeared to be upset because he was worried that she will think badly of him.

Talia glanced at Damon, and she could see that he was distressed. Was it because of what Maddox said?

Damon's eyes snapped open when he felt Talia's palm on his cheek.

"Don't be upset, Damon.", Talia said softly. "I told you that as long as you treat me well, I won't leave."

Damon held his breath while processing Talia's words. Was she comforting him? Can she be any sweeter?

Damon put his hand over Talia's which was on his cheek, and he turned his head to kiss the inside of her palm.

"I won't disappoint you, kitten...", he murmured into her palm.

Damon's icy-blue eyes met Talia's honeyed ones and they were locked in a silent exchange of emotions and vows unspoken. With every passing moment, the energy between them became tangible; it was an invisible pull that urged them to get closer.

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"Are you going to start making out?", Mindy asked when she took a seat at their table, popping Damon's and Talia's invisible lovey-dovey bubble.

Talia jerked into reality and swiftly sat facing forward.

Damon frowned at Mindy for spoiling the moment, and Talia looked flustered like a child who was caught stealing candy.

Mindy realized that her comment was tactless and she smiled apologetically while asking, "Is it OK for me to sit here?"

"If you don't mind being fed dog food and drown in a public display of affection.", Maddox said with amusement while gesturing toward Damon and Talia.

Mindy ignored Maddox's attempt to get her to tease the couple. She was hoping to secure that seat for herself for the rest of the event because it appeared unoccupied.

Yes, Mindy knew most of the people present, but that didn't mean she liked them.

Mindy had a good opinion of Talia and she wanted to find out more about the mysterious girl who was creating waves inside the Dark Howlers pack and beyond, from Talia staying in the packhouse, becoming the MVP of the tournament, to the freshest rumor that she tamed domineering Alpha Damon.

An additional bonus in getting close to Talia is if Damon and Talia are more than a fling because Damon is a walking fat bank account and Mindy would always welcome more donations to the charities she is working on.

It's not that Mindy didn't want to get close to Damon, but getting too close will only put her in the same bucket with other Damon's conquests and Mindy didn't want that to stain the reputation she built over the years, so Mindy makes sure that everyone knows their relationship is kept at a professional distance.

"They put me at the table with some daughters of Alphas and I can't stand them.", Mindy explained.

Maddox chuckled at Mindy's words. "Your father is an Alpha also."

Mindy made a face. "Well, we are NOT all made the same." She was irritated that Maddox was chatty while Talia and Damon were silent. It's their table, and they should say if she can stick around.

Mindy looked at Talia expectantly. "No objections to me sitting here. Right?"

Talia glanced at Damon who shrugged, indicating that it's up to her.

"No objections.", Talia said happily.

Talia found it refreshing to have Mindy there. Like this, she didn't need to pick between chatting with her friend and being close to Damon.

Seeing Mindy and Maddox, Talia remembered their company during the festival. "Is Axel here also?"

Damon cocked an eyebrow in disapproval. Why was she asking about some random guy?

"No.", Mindy responded. "You should know that it's rare to see people from the Midnight Guardians pack. They are called mysterious for a reason."

Subconsciously, Talia leaned closer to Mindy. "Really?" She wanted to know more.

Mindy didn't know much. "Alphas might know more, but we regular folks are limited to many rumors, including the ones that no one knows exactly where they are located or the size of the pack."

Talia thought how that's fascinating and probably exaggerated. Aren't werewolves territorial? Others must know where the borders of the Midnight Guardians pack are so that they don't wander there accidentally.

How is it possible that the whole pack of werewolves stays hidden with the current technology? Can't they track them with GPS, satellites, or something like that? Or maybe they live in some cave, underground, but... it all sounded incredible.

The more Talia thought about it, the more she wanted to call Axel and ask him if his offer for her to visit the Midnight Guardians pack was still valid.

Can she go on her own?

Will Damon want to accompany her?

Talia shook those thoughts away. Damon is a busy Alpha, and she was getting carried away to think about visiting the Midnight Guardians as some kind of a vacation the two of them can take.

When did she get so bold to make plans for the future that include Damon?

But... wouldn't it be nice, to go on a vacation, just the two of them?

It didn't need to be anything fancy. Forest, tent, campfire. Maybe next to a lake. Damon could catch an animal or two so that they eat meat, with his skills, Talia was confident that hunting is a piece of cake for Damon. She would gather edible plants... In the evening, they could share a sleeping bag...

Talia was lost in her daydreaming, and she didn't notice that Mindy and Maddox started chatting and that Damon was feeding her.

Once her plate was empty, he resumed feeding her from his.

Damon looked at the silly girl next to him who absentmindedly opened her mouth whenever something touched her lips.

How can she space out in the middle of the party with Damon sitting right next to her?

Damon got an idea.

An array of dips and sauces complemented appetizers to add a zing of flavors, and Damon took a piece of artisan flatbread with prosciutto and dipped it in the chili sauce before offering it to Talia.

Just like many times before, Talia opened her mouth and accepted his offerings.

Talia's lips enclosed the spicy flatbread inside her mouth, and she chewed it once, twice, and then Talia's eyes opened in horror, and she swallowed contents from her mouth on a reflex which caused blistering heat to coat her throat.

Talia waved frantically in front of her mouth in an attempt to cool herself. Her eyes darted over the table, desperately looking for a beverage to wash the scorching fire from her mouth. Somehow, the heat was increasing and Talia was on the verge of crying.

Damon grabbed her hand and before she could object, his lips covered hers.

It took less than a second for the heat in her mouth to be soothed with Damon's tongue which carried the flavor of the dark chocolate, and her eyes fluttered to close at the delightful new taste of the spicy chocolate.

Talia was lost in Damon's scent of the forest and his flavor of the dark chocolate, and the sensation of his lips moving against hers while their tongues danced in sensual movements.

Damon cupped Talia's cheeks gently and kissed her unhurriedly and thoroughly, enjoying every sigh that escaped her lips right into his.

Talia was faintly aware of their surroundings and that people were watching, but she couldn't extricate herself from the sensation that was impossible to describe with words. However, she knew that she could stay forever, just like that, with Damon all around her.

Damon's and Talia's make-out session attracted many eyes. Some stared at them with jealousy, some with malice, and some in disbelief.

Werewolves are promiscuous in general, but in these events where high-ranking members are gathered, there is a certain unspoken rule of conduct with restraint, and Alpha Damon didn't show much of it.

Chapter 165 - The Event At The Lightclaw Pack (3) [Bonus ]

Due to the landscape of the garden, not everyone was able to get a clear view of Damon and Talia.

However, news and gossips were spreading faster than wildfire, so the ones who didn't see the couple directly, heard that Alpha Damon was shamelessly kissing the woman who came to the party as his date.

Just kissing was not much, but when all was put together, it was a big deal.

First, Alpha Damon appeared with a woman (aka Talia) by his side, and that NEVER happened before. And it's not just that they arrived at the Lightclaw pack together and are sharing a room, but they also walked side-by-side with Damon's arm around Talia's waist in a possessive hold.

Second, Alpha Damon sent Cassie (aka the princess of the Steelbite pack) to the dungeon. Some said that she got a beating, and her swollen face now resembled a pig. That happened in the presence of Alpha Damon's date (aka Talia) and considering that everyone knows how Cassie is cuckoo for Damon, they could assume with high certainty that Cassie insulted Talia and that Damon's action was in defense of his date.

Third, Alpha Damon was openly showing affection by feeding and kissing the mysterious woman, and he was smiling and holding her close and doing all the lovey-dovey things he had never done before.

When Mindy said that Damon slept with half of the she-wolves present (from the younger generation), she was not exaggerating.

Those misses knew very well that Damon was acting out of character. It was common knowledge that Damon would never show affection in public and the ones fortunate to capture Damon's interest for one night, experienced that even in private Damon wouldn't treat them with love and care. Yes, there was kissing and caressing, but only to the point of getting a release, and after that it was, 'dress up and get out'.

Since all of them got the same treatment, they comforted themselves by saying how that's his nature, but this... just what is this?

Considering that werewolves are prideful and possessive, it was natural for them to be jealous of Talia.

They didn't understand, how can an unknown woman capture the attention of Alpha Damon, the most desirable bachelor among werewolves?



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Alpha Magnus stepped on the elevated stage that was set for the occasion with Luna Alicia, Tony, and Kalina.

"May I have your attention, please...", Alpha Magnus spoke into the microphone. It took a few seconds for the chatter to simmer down, and he continued, "As you probably know, my son, Anthony, the next Alpha of the Lightclaw pack found his mate. I want to take this opportunity to introduce you to the future Luna of the Lightclaw pack, Kalina..."

Applause covered his next few words and Kalina waved at the people and at the camera.

Since not everyone could attend in person, the speech portion of the event was live-streamed so that members of the werewolf society can attend virtually.

Talia looked at the stage decorated with flowers and streamers, and four people on the stage dressed in elegant clothing, and Talia thought how it looks like a prince is announcing his upcoming wedding. Well, it was not far from that.

Luna Alicia also said a few words, and then it was Tony's and Kalina's turn, and after a big round of applause, the official part of the evening was over for guests.

Several photographers approached the stage and Tony, Kalina, and Tony's parents posed for the official photos that will be used in WW Magazine and several other publications that will cover this event.

Omegas started milling among tables to clean up the mess from appetizers and make space for dinner.

"What do you think?", Damon asked Talia while gesturing at the stage and overall surroundings. "Is it too much, or too less?"

Talia had no idea how to answer this. She saw a number of parties while at the Red Moon pack, but this was the first time for her to attend one.

Damon wanted to hear Talia's inputs so that he gets an idea of her preferences.

They won't have a ceremony to announce Talia as his future Luna, but there will definitely be a party where Talia will become his Luna.

That party will have a ceremony where Talia will officially become Damon's partner and the Luna of the Dark Howlers pack, and she will establish the full mind-link as one of the leaders of the Dark Howlers pack.

In Damon's head, everything was great, and the only thing missing was for Talia to say 'yes', but he was also aware that he will need to approach the shaman, Gideon. There was no one else qualified to conduct the ceremony.

Seeing that Talia was silent, Damon asked his next question. "Are you having fun so far?"

Talia smiled. "Everything is wonderful." Because you are by my side.

Talia enjoyed immensely that Damon's arm was around her, and she wished to snuggle closer.

Maddox snorted while looking at Damon and Talia. How he saw it, the couple was obnoxiously sweet and there were invisible hearts floating around them.

Maddox was about to say something, but his mouth opened in outrage when Mindy pinched his thigh harshly under the table.

'What was that about?', Maddox snapped at Mindy through their mind-link while rubbing the spot that throbbed painfully.

'Keep your snarky remarks to yourself.', Mindy said. 'I know that so far you and Alpha Damon blabbered without filter, but if you don't want to anger him, you should control your urge to make fun of them.'

'How did you know...?', Maddox didn't finish that. Mindy is his sister, of course, she knew what he was about to do. 'Do you think Damon will be angered?'

'Don't you see that he cares about Talia? If you continue messing with them, Alpha Damon might mess you up.'

Maddox frowned. 'He can try.'

Mindy rolled her eyes. She never understood their macho-showdowns that lead nowhere other than the hospital. Maddox is bulkier than Damon, but whenever those two ended up in a scuffle, it was Maddox who needed medical help.

'The outcome of the fight doesn't matter. What matters is that you might anger him and spoil the ongoing collaborations. Is cracking a few jokes worth it?'

Maddox arched his eyebrow thoughtfully and he heard Mindy's voice in his head, 'To understand how important Talia is, let me tell you that Tony was asking Alpha Damon about the Luna ceremony for Talia, and he didn't deny the possibility.'

Maddox looked at Mindy suspiciously. 'Seriously? This Damon? Damon who swore that he won't get hooked up?'

Mindy smirked knowingly. 'Yes. The same Damon who said that he won't have a girlfriend yet look at him now. You should know better than anyone that Damon doesn't behave like this with his hookups. And considering how long Talia is staying in the packhouse, this is definitely nothing casual. Keep that in mind...'

"Can we join here?", Kalina's question interrupted the mind dialogue between Maddox and Mindy.

Damon and Talia also looked at two newcomers, Kalina and Tony.

Mindy gestured toward the free chairs, for Kalina and Tony to sit. It's their party, who is she to stop them?

"Aren't you sitting at the main table?", Mindy asked while glancing in the direction where the largest table was set up with lavish flowery decorations. Alpha Magnus, Luna Alicia, and a number of Elders were seated at that table.

Kalina puffed her cheeks. "I paid my respects to everyone who was on a must-greet list, and to be honest, I don't know anyone who makes me comfortable."

If not for her mate bond with Tony, Kalina would escape from the moment Luna Alicia presented her with a silky peach-colored gown which is totally not Kalina's sport-ish style, but because of Tony, Kalina sucked it up and put on a princess style dress. It even came with a tiara that had pink sapphires!

After the speech and photos, Kalina paid respects to the Elders of the Lightclaw pack. She smiled and pretended not to see their condescending looks while telling herself that this is just temporary, one evening, and she will talk about this with Tony later. He can't expect her to do this all the time, right?

This evening, so far, was suffocating, and spending some time with Talia and Mindy will be like a fresh breeze.

Tony welcomed Kalina's suggestion to sit at the table with Damon, Talia, Maddox, and Mindy.

This event has more than a dozen Alphas, but only Damon and Maddox are from the younger generation. Everyone else is much older and they are talking with Tony like he is a child.

Tony was painfully aware of his inexperience, but he still had his pride and a will to learn. That's one of the reasons why Tony hoped to establish good relationships with Damon and Maddox.

Omegas just finished setting the table with salads and soups when the reporter from WW Magazine approached the table.

"Can I take some photos?", he asked while his camera pointed at Tony and Kalina, but his eyes were gravitating toward Damon and Talia.

"Sure.", Tony responded. "Just hurry up. We want to eat in peace, and you should grab something to eat also."

The reporter bobbed his head excitedly and started clicking with his camera fervently. He was pointing at Tony and Kalina, but at an angle while hoping to capture Damon with his mysterious date.

The reporter is a werewolf, and he knew who Damon is. Getting a photo of Damon with his date will be huge!

Seeing that reporter is not very good at being sneaky, Damon pulled Talia to lean completely on him. "Come closer, kitten, so that the man can get a good photo of us."

Photos!? Talia held her breath while panicking internally, but she obeyed. She didn't want to cause a scene because of the people watching.

The reporter nearly squealed from joy. He just got permission from Damon to take their photos!

Chapter 166 - The Event At The Lightclaw Pack (4)

At one table in the back...

'Are you OK with this?', Nora's voice sounded in Marcy's head through the mind-link.

'OK, with what?', Marcy responded with a question while pushing the food on her plate.

'Your future husband is entertaining some nobody.', Nora said.

Nora couldn't believe that Marcy showed no interest in investigating the situation or going to greet her future fiancé (aka Damon).

Nora was unsuccessful in seeing Damon earlier that afternoon and Alpha Edward warned them to stay away, but Nora had a feeling that if Damon sees her in person, he might ask her to stick around. After all, if she managed to get intimacy from Damon right under Marcy's nose in the packhouse of the Red Moon pack, why couldn't she do it again here, regardless of who Damon's date is?

However, Nora was not completely confident and that's why she wanted to tag along with Marcy, but with Marcy being indifferent, Nora was stuck sitting at the table.

As for Marcy, she knew that Nora was instigating her. Did Nora really think that Marcy will fall for that trick?

But what Marcy didn't understand was, what was Nora trying to accomplish? Even if Marcy went there and made a complete fool of herself, it's not like Nora can take her place; not as Damon's (future) fiancée, and not as Alpha Edward's daughter. Nora can't be that stupid to sabotage Marcy without getting anything in return, right?

'What do you expect me to do, Nora? Did you forget what my father said?'

Nora rolled her eyes. 'Come on. You are his daughter. He won't kick you out of the pack.'

'True. My father won't go that far, but Alpha Damon might send me to the dungeon.', Marcy said matter-of-factly. 'You are the one who told me what happened. I have no intention of being a cellmate to whatever-her-name-is.'

Marcy came from Europe less than a month ago, so she didn't get a chance to meet Cassie, but the news spread fast, and Nora and Marcy knew what happened in the hallway, even though they were not there.

'That woman used some witchcraft to come here with Alpha Damon and get his attention. Everyone is laughing at you.', Nora snapped.

Marcy cringed. Witchcraft? Really? 'Let them laugh. That woman won't last. A week from now, I will laugh while announcing my engagement to Alpha Damon.'

For the first time since coming from Europe, Marcy was glad that she was the new face and that she didn't know people present. It was easier to ignore them.

Was Marcy OK with this? Of course, she wasn't! But what were her options? One was worse than the other, and the safest thing was to stay put and wait for this torturous evening to end.

This was Marcy's first major event outside the Red Moon pack since she came from Europe, and Marcy was pissed that instead of strutting around with her head held high, she needed to lay low.

Yes, she should go and greet Damon, but she was determined to postpone that as much as possible.

Marcy's priority was to befriend Kalina. That's why she came here.

Marcy couldn't leave early without angering her father, but if Alpha Damon leaves, Marcy will have a good excuse as to why she didn't greet him. As for that woman who is latched to Damon, Marcy will show her who is worthy to be by Damon's side, if she dares to show up in front of Marcy.

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Talia shivered suddenly as the malice toward her nearly took physical form and it gave her goosebumps.

"Are you cold?", Damon asked while rubbing Talia's shoulder and upper arm.

"No." She was not cold, but she couldn't explain why she shivered. It was like something icy formed in her heart and caused discomfort.

"Are you sure?", Damon's brows came together in concern. Yes, it was a warm summer evening, but Talia didn't have her wolf and Damon was not sure how her body temperature was regulated, but he definitely felt those goosebumps under his palm.

He got an idea.

"We are done with food, how about dancing?"

They still didn't have dessert and Omegas were refilling trays with a variety of snacks, but the official part of dinner was done.

Talia stared at Damon. Did he just ask her to dance? She kind of danced in the Shifters nightclub, but that was packed with people and the music was loud and upbeat, and this was jazz. On top of that, Talia didn't see the dancefloor or people dancing. Will they be the only ones?

"I don't know how.", Talia said weakly. She really had no clue how to dance to this slow music.

Damon chuckled. "Me neither. Come. It will warm you up and help with digestion, and when we return, we can have dessert."

Damon could see that Talia was hesitating, but he didn't want to let her wiggle out of this.

He glanced at the four people at their table. "We are going to dance and will be back in a bit."

Before Talia could figure out what to say to avoid it, Damon was already holding her hand and leading the way.



To Talia's horror, they were going to the stage where Alpha Magnus held his speech when he introduced Kalina. It was elevated, for everyone to see! Talia saw two other couples who were dancing there, but the stage provided enough space for at least fifty more couples, and those two definitely didn't provide any protection from all the gazes directed their way.

"Nervous?", Damon asked Talia with amusement in his voice.

Talia nodded in small jerky movements.

"Don't be. Just relax and follow my lead.", Damon said and pulled her closer to him.

Damon put Talia's hands on his shoulders and his palms pressed gently on her back. With small nudges, he was telling her which way to move.

Damon smiled. "You are doing very well."

Talia narrowed her eyes at him. "You said that you don't know how to dance." It was obvious that Damon knew what he was doing.

Damon took Talia's hand into his and he made her twirl once, twice, and then he pulled her back toward him.

"It's been so long since I danced, that it doesn't count.", Damon said, and seeing Talia's questioning gaze, he explained, "My mother taught me. I didn't see the value in dancing, but my mother insisted. Every time we had a pack event, she would drag me to dance. She said that I need to practice because once I meet a special girl, I will want to dance with her."

Damon leaned closer and murmured close to Talia's ear. "It's more than a decade since I danced last time. You are the second woman who made me come to the dancefloor."

Talia's heart fluttered, making her lightheaded.

Did he just say what she thought he said?

"I... I...", Talia stuttered. "I didn't make you come here.", she blurted out.

Damon chuckled. "Are you sure? I had an inexplicable urge to dance with you, kitten. This is another first for me. With you."

Before Talia could respond, Damon made her twirl again, and then he pulled her toward him where she nestled in his firm embrace and they moved together, following the beat of the slow jazz music.

Talia was not sure if she was dizzy from all the twirling or from the unexpected intimacy they shared on that stage, for everyone to see, but she knew that no matter how dizzy she gets, Damon won't let her fall.

Back at the table...

"Alpha Damon is a good dancer", Mindy said.

Maddox was also looking that way. "We went out together so many times, but this is my first time to see him dancing."

'He changed for Talia. Do you think that Alpha Damon is serious? Will he make Talia his Luna?', Mindy continued through their mind-link so that no one can overhear them.

When she didn't get a response, Mindy turned to see Maddox holding his phone and recording a video of Damon and Talia dancing.

After capturing about ten seconds, Maddox lowered the phone and started typing swiftly.

"What are you doing?", Mindy asked while peering at Maddox's phone.

Maddox moved his phone before Mindy could read the lengthy text message he was working on.

"Sending this to Axel.", Maddox said.

Mindy didn't know that her brother was so close to Axel. Are they gossip-buddies? No, her brother has no filter, but he doesn't engage in gossip. "Why?"

"Axel showed unusual interest in Talia and since you forbade me to poke Damon about it...", Maddox looked at Mindy and wiggled his eyebrows mischievously.

Mindy rolled her eyes when she realized that her brother will make Axel do his dirty work. And it's not because Mindy said so, but because Maddox found a scapegoat who can dig out the information and Maddox will just watch from the sidelines.

Is this childish behavior befitting a powerful Alpha who is leading a pack?

But Mindy knew that her brother has a lot of work, and he is under constant pressure and stress, and it's rare for him to relax and be playful.

She shook her head helplessly. "One day, you will find a girl who will move you, and then I will encourage Alpha Damon to mess with you."

Maddox glanced at Tony, with the hope to get some manly support, but he saw that Tony was completely focused on Kalina.

Maddox made a face. It was a familiar scene, mated couples who are so much into each other that they don't notice anyone else.

It's not that Maddox is against mates, but he is in his mid-twenties and doing fairly well. The idea that a woman will show up and flip his world upside-down was unsettling. At the same time, Maddox was curious to experience ultimate infatuation with the woman who will make all others insignificant, and they will be absolutely focused on each other.

An invisible lightbulb lit up above Maddox's head. Couples who are into each other... infatuation... isn't there one couple that fits that description... right there on the stage, dancing?

Chapter 167 - The Event At The Lightclaw Pack (5) [Bonus ]

When Damon and Talia left the stage, Talia was floating.

The two of them danced for some time, Talia didn't pay attention to how many songs passed, but she clearly remembered Damon's firm hold, their bodies touching occasionally, and then he would twirl her before enveloping her in his solid embrace that came with her favorite scent of the forest and the dark chocolate, and... it was the best thing ever!

On several occasions, Damon moved close, so close that she could feel his breath on her lips, and Talia was sure that he will kiss her, but he only smiled a little, and his tease made butterflies in her stomach go crazy.

"Do you like dancing with me?", Damon asked as they walked to their table. He could feel Talia's joy, but he still wanted to hear it.

Talia nodded earnestly. "You are an amazing dancer."

Damon chuckled. Praise from Talia made him swell with pride. "Only because you are my partner, kitten."

Damon enjoyed Talia's slightly flushed expression and he took a mental note to set up the mood for dancing once they return home. It could be in the bedroom, with less clothes, and... he was getting aroused.

When Damon and Talia reached their table, they saw a scene of Mindy and Kalina standing up.

Mindy glanced at Talia. "We are going to the ladies' room. Do you want to join us?"

Talia thought for a moment. Her bladder told her that she could go. It was not urgent, but better now with a company than later on her own, because asking Damon to accompany her might be too much, and going alone could bring trouble.

Talia was aware that her evening was undisturbed thanks to the protection Damon's presence provided, but surely, as long as she doesn't wander to an isolated place, no one would dare to bully her. This is a high-profile event, and after the incident with Cassie and this dancing, everyone should know that she is with scary Alpha Damon even if they didn't see them sitting together at the table.

Talia glanced at Damon, silently asking for his opinion, and he leaned closer to say in a hushed voice, "Don't wander alone."

"I won't", Talia assured him and went after Kalina and Mindy into the packhouse.

'PAK!'

Maddox clapped suddenly, to get Damon's and Tony's attention. "Now that the girls are gone, how about we go to the bar?"

Damon frowned in disapproval. Tables are where couples are sitting and people who want to eat and chat, while the bar area is for mingling.

Yes, normally Damon and Maddox would go to the bar because that was the perfect position to observe women who were looking for company, but why would Damon want to go there now?

"They will be back in a bit.", Damon grumbled.

Maddox made a face. Why can't Damon consider his position? Damon has a date, but what about Maddox?

Mindy is his sister, and if Maddox keeps on sitting with Mindy, the only entertainment he will find for the night will be one of the Omegas that are working at the event, and there is not much honor in bedding an Omega. They are so... submissive.

Maddox likes them submissive, but he prefers first to break them, so his desired woman is one with a Beta bloodline who has just the right amount of spunk. Yes, Maddox enjoys seeing those women bending to his will.

It's not that Maddox couldn't go to the bar on his own, but it's always better in a company. Damon and Maddox usually get drinks and comment on women until they make their picks.

"Girls can take a while because, for them, the restroom is much more than just doing the business. By the time they fix their hair and makeup, we can have two drinks, probably more.", Maddox said. Seeing that Damon was still not willing, Maddox changed tactics. "You can pick one of those fruity cocktails that girls like for Talia. She will appreciate that."

Damon's frown eased, and Maddox knew that he got him. Next, he turned to Tony. "How about you? Coming?"

Tony was delighted that Maddox included him.

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Talia, Kalina, and Mindy didn't expect to see a line.

The restroom next to the event hall had three stalls and three sinks, and there was a small sitting area.

More than a dozen women were waiting. Just as Maddox said, women didn't come just to relieve themselves but they were taking their time with fixing their hair, makeup, and wardrobe. Some of them were chatting, treating the restroom like a women-only lounge.

One woman was dabbing with a paper towel a dark red wine stain on her green gown. That won't come out like that, but she was trying to salvage her gown and the evening.

"When we are done, let's wait for each other outside...", Mindy suggested and Kalina and Talia agreed. It was crowded inside.

"How are you handling the pressure?", Mindy asked Kalina.

Kalina exhaled helplessly. "Since you asked me that question, it seems I'm not handling it well."

"Just pick your battles and you will do well.", Mindy said. "You can't win them all and don't fight more than one at the same time..."

Talia listened to Mindy advising Kalina and she understood that Kalina was not happy with her current situation.

It seems that just finding a mate doesn't guarantee happiness, even if that mate is a future Alpha.

Considering that Kalina and Tony were smitten with each other, and their smiles were genuine, Talia concluded that any issues Kalina was facing were coming from someone else. Tony's parents? Pack members? Social pressure?

Talia knew about social pressure because she was on pins and needles while hoping not to embarrass Damon. When Damon was next to her, she found safety, knowing that he will take care of everything, but now that she was away from him, Talia was nervous.

Two older ladies started chatting with Kalina, and Mindy used an opening to skip the line for the restroom. Other women also turned to Kalina, and Talia followed Mindy's example focusing on why they came to the ladies' room.

When she was done with her business, Talia washed her hands and reapplied lip gloss while wondering what to do next.

Kalina was still surrounded by the women, and Mindy was on the other side, chatting with one posh woman, something related to charities.

Talia concluded that this might take a while and she contemplated if she should go back to their table or wait outside, where they agreed previously.

Seeing that a few women looked at her curiously, Talia decided to move immediately.

Talia didn't want anyone to approach her and start a small chat and this restroom provided semi-privacy which made some women bolder than they would be normally. The last thing Talia wanted was to end up in a confrontation with a woman who covets the position of Damon's Luna, or Damon's hookup, or Damon's anything.

In Talia's opinion, the hallway was safer because it was open, and Damon told her that there are security cameras.

Talia waved at Mindy while going out and Mindy gave her a nod, acknowledging that she saw her. Talia understood that Mindy will join her as soon as she is done chatting.

In the hallway, Talia found a spot where she was not in the way, yet not hidden either, and she waited for Mindy and Kalina to come out.

People moved through the hallway and Talia did her best not to initiate eye contact. She was good in diminishing her presence, but right now she was standing in a fancy gown and even if she stopped breathing, she would be a beautiful striking statue.



In order to ignore people who were stealing glances at her while passing, Talia closed her eyes and imagined Damon... his intense gaze... his smile that makes her heart skip a beat... and she was lost in daydreaming.

"Well, look who is here...", a familiar female voice pulled Talia out of her daze, and she turned to see two women approaching her.

Marcy and Nora.

It was Nora who spoke and the way she looked at Talia was a giveaway that Nora wanted revenge for Talia slamming the door in her face earlier that afternoon.

But Talia was more concerned about Marcy who was looking at Talia with surprise, confusion, and then hostility.

Marcy was vexed. She finally went to meet Kalina, and she was pleased that she managed to avoid Damon, only to hear from one of the Omega servers that Kalina went to the restroom. That's why Marcy and Nora came here.

Marcy didn't expect to bump into Damon's date (aka Talia) here. She didn't recognize her as the Omega from the attic of the Red Moon pack, but she was painfully aware how that's the woman who was dancing with Damon for everyone to see. The woman who caused everyone to look at Marcy like she was wearing a green hat.

How can Marcy hold her head high, as the princess of the Red Moon pack, as the future Luna of the Dark Howlers pack, when her husband-to-be is being lovey-dovey with some other woman? The other woman who was right here... in front of her.

Marcy took a deep breath and told herself not to create a scene, but she was not sure if she will be able to control her emotions and Nora's hostility was tangible.

Chapter 168 - The Event At The Lightclaw Pack (6) [Bonus ]

Talia looked at Marcy and Nora approaching her, and she chanted internally Damon's words how she should treat everyone equally regardless of who they are.

That's right. Talia was never in the Red Moon pack. She doesn't know who Marcy and Nora are. Even if they suspect who Talia is, they won't have proof. It's that simple.

Nora stopped in front of Talia and scrutinized her from head to toe and Talia released the breath she was holding when she realized that Marcy was looking at her with blank enmity.

Talia remembered Marcy's words from about two weeks ago, while she was hitting her. Marcy was saying how she is the future Luna of the Dark Howlers pack and that Damon is hers and based on that Talia guessed how Marcy is not a she-wolf who would share a man, even if that man is Alpha Damon.

However, why did Nora come on her own to their room?

Something was fishy and Talia wondered if she can take advantage of it.

"Can I help you?", Talia asked while her eyes moved from Nora to Marcy.

Nora snorted. "Are you pretending that you don't know who we are?"

Talia gave a long inquisitive look at Marcy and then moved to Nora.

"I know who you are.", Talia said. "You are the woman who came to my room this afternoon demanding to see Damon."

Marcy froze in a frown and Nora's face fell.

'BINGO!', Talia screamed in her head.

"Do you still want to see him, or was your visit related to a matter that should be discussed in private?" Talia glanced at the door of the ladies' room. "This is for females. I can assure you that he is not in there."

Nora snorted, irritated that Talia just spilled a big secret. If Marcy tells Alpha Edward that Nora went to Damon's room, Nora might end up in trouble.

"Who do you think you are?", Nora asked.

"You approached me, shouldn't you introduce yourself first?", Talia responded with a question.

"This is Marcy Redmayne, the future Luna of the Dark Howlers pack.", Nora said smugly while gesturing toward Marcy.

Talia nodded in understanding and then glanced at Nora. "And you are her spokeswoman?"

Nora's eyes narrowed into angry slits, and before she could say anything, Mindy's voice came from the side.

"Marcy and Nora from the Red Moon pack." Mindy stood next to Talia. "Are they bullying you?"

"No, no...", Talia said quickly. "Actually, I'm not sure. They just got here."

Marcy blinked at Mindy while wondering who she is.

Marcy was still processing the information that Nora went to Damon's room earlier that day. Marcy remembered that Nora went for a walk, and she was not in their room for some time. Just how much is Nora working behind her back?

"We were just saying, hi, Mindy.", Nora said stiffly when she saw that Marcy turned mute.

Mindy sneered. "I'm sure you did." She knew Nora very well, and Mindy didn't like her.

"Is there a problem?", Kalina asked while approaching the four women. She was new in the pack, but technically, Kalina was the host, and she couldn't stand on the side and watch an obvious unpleasant situation.

"It seems that Alpha's and Beta's daughters from the Red Moon pack want to bully Lia.", Mindy said with a straight face.

"I hope not.", Kalina said. "Lia is my dear friend and anyone who bullies her can't be part of our circle."

Talia smiled gratefully. No one ever stood up for her like that publicly, making her feel like she belongs to a group.

Well, there was Damon, but he is a scary Alpha and in a league of his own.

Talia remembered Olivia who was amazing when they were alone, but when in public and someone bullied Talia, Olivia would lower her head and pretend that she doesn't know her. Talia thought how that was as good as it gets, but now that she saw Mindy and Kalina standing up to her, Talia's heart swelled.

"Thank you.", Talia said to Kalina and Mindy.

"I never heard of you.", Talia said to Marcy. "You are the future Luna of the Dark Howlers pack? Unless I hear that from Damon, I won't believe it. As for you...", Talia looked at Nora. "It seems that the warning from security was not enough, and I will need to tell Damon that you disturbed me again. As Beta's daughter, you should know that it's not your place to meddle in Alpha's business, and as Damon's date, I am Alpha's business."

Talia plastered a stiff smile on her face and walked away.

Mindy looked after Talia and silently adjusted her assessment of the latter who knew how to put those two in place. Talia was not intimidated by Marcy's and Nora's status and Mindy approved, but she wanted to add something.

"Miss Marcy, I heard that you came recently from Europe so maybe you don't know some traits of Alpha Damon. Any woman who previously claimed to be associated with Damon didn't find a good ending, and the last woman who tried something funny in front of Lia is now in the dungeon." Mindy gestured toward Nora. "Your Beta companion should inform you of that. After all, Nora is familiar with many future and current Alphas. Intimately."

Mindy linked her arm with Kalina's, and the duo walked away in the direction where Talia went, leaving behind Marcy and Nora.

Mindy didn't know if Nora slept with Damon, but Nora's reputation of sleeping with high-ranked people was well-known and considering Damon's reputation, it was not farfetched to assume that those two rolled in the sheets.

Unfortunately for Marcy, Mindy's comment hit dead center.

To make things worse, from the corner of her eye, Marcy noticed several women observing the scene. Since when were they watching? Marcy was not sure, but they definitely heard Mindy's last comment.

From the beginning of this blasted event, Marcy was pretending not to hear whispers about Damon and his date, and Marcy turned a blind eye when the happy couple danced on the stage for everyone to see. At that time, Marcy thought how embarrassment can't go worse than that, but now Nora proved her wrong.

Marcy gritted her teeth and turned to Nora robotically. "Are you so set to get me in the dungeon, or killed? Will you be happy if everyone ridicules me?"

Nora frowned. "What did I do?"

Marcy exhaled in frustration. "That WAS Kalina! The future Luna of the Lightclaw pack. The woman I am supposed to leave a good impression on. How can I leave a good impression when you embarrass me like that? Just wait until my father hears that you went to Alpha Damon's room on your own..."

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Two turns later, Kalina and Mindy saw Talia who was leaning on the wall.

"Are you alright?", Mindy asked while walking to Talia in haste.

Talia let out a long breath. She was brave until just a few seconds ago, but now that the immediate danger is gone, Talia felt her legs shaking.

"I'm fine, it's just...", Talia stopped talking. She couldn't tell Mindy and Kalina the truth. No one should know that she came from the Red Moon pack and that she was bullied, and that Marcy beat her up, twice.

"I'm not used to dealing with such situations.", Talia said.

"You handled them great.", Mindy said and Kalina nodded in agreement.

"Nora is a horrible person, full of herself, and it seems that Marcy is not much better." Mindy hesitated before saying, "You know that there are rumors how Marcy will be Alpha Damon's Luna, right?"

Talia nodded. She knew that very well, but... "I will believe what Damon tells me."

Marcy came as a topic between Damon and Talia more than once and every time Damon assured Talia that he is not interested in Marcy. Talia didn't understand why Damon doesn't make that clear to Marcy, like some public statement that will shut down the rumors; surely he could find a way to reject her without causing a war between the two packs, but Talia still chose to believe that Damon had his reasons, and she hoped that his reasons are not to deceive Talia.

Talia couldn't understand why her anxiousness was increasing. And it was more than just anxiousness, there was some fury that bubbled inside her and she needed to calm down.

"The two of you go ahead without me.", Talia said.

Mindy didn't approve. "Where are you going?"

"Not far. I will find a secluded spot in the garden and get some air. I don't want Alpha Damon to see me like this. He already sent one woman into the dungeon..."

Kalina and Mindy exchanged glances and Kalina said, "Don't wander far away. Stay close so that no one gets funny ideas like those two."

The moment Talia left the packhouse, she took a right and went beyond the area where tables were set.

She passed a row of tall thuyas before stopping. Talia could hear the music and indistinct chatter and she looked longingly at the scarce trees in the distance.

If this was the Dark Howlers pack, she would go into the forest and walk barefoot on the soft grass. That usually calmed her down. But now she couldn't leave because this was not home, and she didn't want to leave and make Damon worried.

Talia pressed her hand against her chest where her heart was thundering. What's going on? She should be happy that her encounter with Marcy went well and this... why was she so uneasy?

Chapter 169 - The Event At The Lightclaw Pack (7)

While Talia was uneasy at the edge of the garden, at the bar...

Damon and Maddox were looking at an older man who joined them a minute ago, instantly creating a stifling atmosphere.

Before the man appeared, Tony was summoned by his father, so only Damon and Maddox got to face this man who looked at them with displeasure.

He was glancing at both Maddox and Damon, but Damon had a feeling that the guy came for him.

"Elder Parker, to what do we owe this pleasure?", Damon wanted to be done with whatever the man had on his mind.

Elder Parker is working with Alpha Edward on setting up Marcy as Damon's Luna, and Damon knew that the old guy didn't come for a drink. After all, as an Elder, Elder Parker doesn't roam around to approach youngsters unless he has some important business.

"I hear you came with a date.", Elder Parker said to Damon, going straight to the point.

"So?"

Elder Parker narrowed his eyes at Damon. "Shouldn't you be with your future Luna?"

"You mean, the woman you chose to be my Luna?"

"I am only reminding you that you shouldn't offend people unnecessarily. You don't have a Luna and some of us are willing to help you find a suitable candidate.", Elder Parker said casually like he was discussing the weather. "The Dark Howlers pack is big, and you have a small number of people managing it. Luna will help you, and the right one will bring valuable allies. Your current situation is not optimistic.



Without enough people in charge, the pack members are restless, and they might leave or rebel. Imagine what will happen if you lose one of those few people you are currently relying on. Hm?"

Damon was boiling on the inside. What crap was the old fart selling? This was an obvious warning that if he doesn't listen, they will cause him trouble.

Damon also knew that Elder Parker was not working alone.

There were others watching carefully and if Damon loses his temper, they will sabotage him, somehow.

Besides, he was here with Talia and if he causes a scene, he will spoil her fun. He really wanted Talia to have a good time.

The good thing in the current situation was that Talia was not nearby to hear Elder Parker's words.

"Thank you for your warning, Elder Parker. I'm confident you are aware that my engagement with Marcy from the Red Moon pack is not set in stone and that we are working toward figuring out what works. Now if you would excuse me, this is a party. If you want to discuss business, I suggest you schedule an appointment. It's not advisable to have serious discussions over drinks." Damon nodded curtly and walked away from the bar.

Maddox was one step behind Damon.

"They are not even pretending anymore to care about you.", Maddox said to Damon.

Damon exhaled in frustration and didn't respond. There was no point in saying anything but he was grateful for Maddox's silent support. Just by standing by Damon's side, Maddox was announcing whose side he will take once the shit hits the fan.

Everyone knew that Elders and some Alphas are trying to set up Damon with the candidate of their choice to be Damon's Luna. That was not a secret.

People in power want more power, and Maddox was not immune to various plots, but his parents were there to shield him from many schemes while those leeches were coming at Damon on a pretense that he is young and without guidance from seniors, and they were offering their so-called help.

So far, Damon was taking them lightly and he would scheme to refuse the bride candidates in various ways, but now it was different. Now there was Talia, and he didn't want her to be involved in these unsavory games.

Damon was royally pissed after talking with Elder Parker, and he feared that the old guy might extend his reach toward Talia.

Damon froze in place when he observed that only Kalina and Mindy were at the table, and he rushed those last few steps until he got there.

"Where is Talia?", Damon asked grimly. Did Elder Parker get her already?

Mindy responded. "She is somewhere in the garden."

Damon's eyes flashed dangerously. "Why?"

"She said that she wanted to get some air.", Kalina said.

"What for?" It was obvious that Damon was losing his patience.

Mindy and Kalina exchanged concerned glances and Mindy exhaled before spilling the beans, "On the way out of the restroom she bumped into Marcy and Nora from the Red Moon pack."

Damon shoved his hand into his hair.

He thought that the uneasiness he felt was because of Elder Parker, but now it seems that was Talia's.

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Talia was walking in circles while trying to shake off or at least understand negative emotions that refused to leave her system. Actually, it was getting worse.

She bit her lower lip nervously while wondering if she stayed here for too long and she reached into her purse to get her phone. It was no use to check the time because she didn't know when she arrived there, but she was contemplating between going back or maybe calling Damon to tell him that she was fine.

Was she fine? She was not sure, but she was confident that he would be concerned about her when he saw Mindy and Kalina returning to the table without her. But... some time passed. If he was worried about her, why didn't he call or come to find her?

Talia returned the phone in her purse and wondered if she was too rash to come here. Surely, she was supposed to return to the table right away.

It would be better if she didn't come to the party at all. Why did she think that she will fit in here and have a good time? It was obvious that all good time was tied to Damon and for that, she didn't need to come all the way to Colorado and make him spend money on the dress and shoes and...

Talia's thoughts stopped when she heard steps approaching her and some male voices.

It was two men, chatting, and based on their swaying, Talia could guess that they drank more than they could handle.

Actually, the party was quite lively. After dinner, people started mingling and drinking, but Talia was sticking to Damon, isolated in their lovey-dovey bubble and she didn't notice anyone else. Until now.

Two men halted their steps and observed Talia with curiosity.

"I didn't expect to find a woman here.", one man said and bowed a little. "I am Gordon. General from the Frostfang pack, and this is my friend Bence. And you are...?"

"Talia.", Talia responded automatically.

Bence narrowed his eyes at Talia and spoke with a slur, "I know you... You are the woman who was dancing with Alpha from the Dark Howlers pack." He grinned. "What happened? Did your Alpha find another woman?"

Gordon made a face. "Be tactful."

They were both intoxicated, but Gordon was in visibly better shape.

Bence snorted. "Tactful? Everyone knows that women fall for Alphas faster than they can pick them up. This was no different."

Talia didn't refute anything. She did fall for Damon, after all.

Gordon looked at Talia apologetically. "I apologize in his name, Miss Talia. He drank..."

"Pft!", Bence interrupted him. "What Miss? Why are you apologizing? Don't you see that she is no one? If that Alpha appreciates her, he wouldn't leave her alone, and if he is serious, he would mark her. Her neck is clean. Maybe it's waiting for me to mark her. After all, a woman who can get Alpha's attention must have some good skills in bed..."

'POW!'

A fist came out of nowhere, connecting with Bence's face and producing bone-cracking sounds while sending him flying. Bence fell on the ground like a ragdoll.

Damon turned toward Gordon and he punched him in the face before Gordon could react. Gordon stumbled backward and before he could stabilize himself, Damon's knee got lodged in his abdomen and then Damon elbowed him in the back of his neck.

Talia stared at Gordon who was sprawled on the ground without moving a muscle, and she wondered if Damon killed him. But then... it's not easy to kill a werewolf. He is just unconscious. Probably.

"What did I tell you about wandering on your own!?", Damon squeezed through his teeth and Talia pressed her lips into a line guiltily.

Damon panicked when he realized that Talia was on her own after meeting with Marcy and Nora. Who knows what could have happened? How can he find her when her scent is so faint due to those damned herbs she is taking? But then he remembered to use his phone and track her via GPS.

How come every time she leaves his sight he finds her with some sleazy guys sticking to her?

Before Talia could figure out how to respond to Damon's question without angering him further, she found herself in Damon's embrace.

"Kitten...", he called with desperation in his voice. "If anything happened to you..." Damon choked on his words and gathered her tightly against himself.

Talia's heart cracked. Why was she so sad?

Chapter 170 - The Event At The Lightclaw Pack (8) [Bonus ]

Talia never saw Damon act in such a violent manner, but somehow, she was confident that under all that rage is a man who was concerned about her, and he wouldn't harm her.

Talia's arms circled around Damon, and she buried her face in his chest.

Talia is not a crybaby and there was no reason to cry, but her eyes were prickling with tears that threatened to fall and she couldn't explain all the conflicting emotions that raged within her.

Anger, sadness, relief, joy... contradictory, but they were all there, making her want to sob and laugh and break something, and Talia pushed herself further into Damon, seeking comfort. He is powerful and knowledgeable, and she hoped that he can disperse her emotional storm.

Every time Talia inhaled Damon's addictive scent, her heart calmed a bit and she remembered that she messed up.

If she didn't come out of the ladies' room to stand in the hallway, Marcy and Nora wouldn't approach her, and she wouldn't get upset and come out, and there would be no need for Damon to search for her and those guys wouldn't get a beating... It was all her fault.

"I'm sorry, Damon", Talia said in a small voice.

"How many times do I need to tell you that I don't want to hear your apologies? If you are truly sorry, don't do it again. Don't leave me..."

Talia didn't want to leave him. She only wanted some space to think and calm down.

Is that why he was upset? Because he thought that she left?

How was she supposed to know that her desire for space would end up with two unconscious guys, and... It was all a mess, but somehow, in Damon's embrace, Talia found peace.

If Talia remembered that Damon's proximity comes with this calm, she would go to him right away instead of going to find solitude. How could she forget that Damon has the power to shut down all the noise?

Damon let out a long breath and he wondered if he freaked her out. "I didn't mean to teach those guys a lesson in front of you, but when I heard that bastard talk trash, I lost it. Did I scare you?"

Talia shook her head, indicating that she was not scared, but... "The guy who was talking trash was drunk. The other guy was apologizing, yet he got more beating."

Damon thought for a moment before responding.

"Being drunk is not an excuse for bad behavior. No one gets to disrespect you. No one.", Damon said sternly and glanced at Gordon (aka the guy who got more beating). "As for this guy, he is guilty by association."

Talia was speechless. Touched, but still speechless. Damon justified beating up a guy who was not at fault, other than being there.

Now that Talia thought about what happened, Gordon probably brought his drunk friend here to sober up and not make a scandal at the party, and they both ended up meeting Damon's fists.

Damon didn't want to talk about it anymore. Those two guys were not important.

Damon buried his face in the crook of Talia's neck and took a deep breath that filled his system with the sweet citrusy scent of freesia.

He heard that drunkard saying how Talia is no one, that Damon abandoned her, and that she is not important because Damon didn't mark her.

Damon placed a small kiss at the base of Talia's neck, right where his mark should come, and Talia released a shaky sigh while fisting his shirt in an attempt to stabilize herself. That was such a sensitive spot.

"Kitten", Damon murmured, and his lips moved against her skin. "I really want to mark you. Right here..." He licked the spot and Talia's legs gave in. Thanks to Damon's embrace she didn't fall down.

"Can I?"

Talia's mind was spinning. Did he ask her something? "What?"

Damon lifted his head to look at Talia. "Will you wear my mark?"

Talia stared at Damon in disbelief, confident that her ear malfunctioned because there was no way that he said what she thought he said.

What's up with that emotional gaze? She could drown in his icy-blue eyes but... was Damon nervous?

Did he ask about marking her? Like mark-mark?

For werewolves, marking is forever. It's more than a marriage, it's a lifetime commitment that strengthens an existing mate bond or creates one if it doesn't exist.

This outrageously handsome specimen who smells of the forest and dark chocolate just asked her if she would be willing to wear his mark? Was she dreaming?

"Do you know what you are saying?", Talia asked breathily when she found her voice.

She wondered, how much did he drink? Or did he eat something funny?

Damon couldn't believe that Talia was doubting him. If this was any other girl she would jump on him already, but this was not just any girl. This was Talia and she was worth it. She was the only one worth it.

Damon nudged her nose with his. "I know that you are the only one who can be Mrs. Blake, the only one with whom I want to dance, the only one with whom I can see myself in the future. I will not do it without your permission, but..."



Damon stopped talking and he let out a long breath as he observed Talia's face. She was practically non-responsive.

He thought that after she agrees to marking, he will tell her about potential consequences to her wolf and warn her about the pain that will come when he injects her with his venom, and probably recommend that they seek advice from the pack doctor or the shaman, but how can he talk about any of that while she was paralyzed?

"Blink twice if you can hear me.", Damon said.

Talia blinked twice and Damon smiled helplessly.

He couldn't believe that he was asking for permission to mark his own mate. As an Alpha, Damon was used to claiming what he wants, and everyone bows to his will.

Alphas mark their mates on the same day they recognize each other, yet Damon ended up suppressing his wolf at the back of his mind so that he can resist the urge to sink his teeth into Talia's neck, and not give in to the maddening arousal which storms his system whenever Talia is nearby.

If she could feel the bond, this would all be so much easier, but without the bond, he needs to win her heart, her mind, her trust... So much work, damn it!

Damon cupped her cheeks into his palms and looked into her honeyed eyes while saying, "I had many firsts with you, kitten. And this is the first time I want to mark someone. I am not playing. Think about it." And get used to the idea that we will be together forever.

Talia's lips stretched into a smile that reached her eyes.

The idea of Damon marking her was too fantastic and it was floating at the top of Talia's mind, just how oil stays above water, but she definitely heard the part where Damon said that he was not toying with her.

Talia's arms moved around Damon's neck, and she got on her toes and Damon eagerly welcomed her kisses.

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"Don't let me disturb you...", Maddox grumbled while checking the condition of two poor guys who were unfortunate enough to be on the receiving end of Damon's anger.

Maddox knew that Damon was agitated after Elder Parker approached them, and then it got worse when Mindy said that Talia met two women from the Red Moon pack which caused Damon to fiddle with his phone for a few seconds before dashing away.

Maddox didn't understand the situation, but considering Damon's state, Maddox thought that he should follow him.

Maddox was right behind Damon, but without knowing where Damon was going and with the guests crowding, Maddox lost him, and it took him some time to track Damon in the ocean of various scents.

When he finally found Damon, Maddox was not sure what to expect, but it was definitely not the scene of Damon and Talia making out with two unconscious guys around them.

Damon inched away from Talia with difficulty.

"Thanks, Max.", Damon said. "Please, take care of them."

Talia's eyes widened in horror. How come she didn't realize that Alpha Maddox was there? Did he see them making out? Definitely. Oh, God! Now what?

Talia stuck closer to Damon while hiding her face in his chest, hoping that she can merge with Damon's body or maybe turn invisible because facing Alpha Maddox was too embarrassing.

Damon smiled at the silly girl in his arms, and he tightened his hold on her.

Maddox looked with a confused frown as Damon scooped Talia in his arms.

"You are leaving me to clean up your mess?", Maddox asked in outrage.

"Talia is upset.", Damon said with a straight face. "I need to comfort her. Tell Mindy and Kalina that Talia is out for the night. If they want more girl time with Talia, they can have it in the morning."

Maddox's lips twitched. He couldn't believe this! Did Damon just turn him into some messenger?

And what comforting!? Talia was fine! It was obvious that they were going to get frisky!

But then... Maddox remembered Talia's shy behavior that hinted at the possibility that she was inexperienced in pleasures of flesh so... maybe... ah, who knows?