

Alphas Bride 211

Chapter 211 - Sparks Of Their Bond [Bonus]

When Damon told Travis that Talia shouldn't wake up, Travis understood it as: Damon had no intention to move.

How on Earth was he supposed to check his injuries?

Without any other options, Travis got scissors and started cutting the bandages.

The moment Damon's skin was exposed, Travis frowned in confusion, and then his eyes nearly bulged in disbelief.

"What is it?", Damon asked when he noticed that Travis was not moving.

"The wound... it's gone.", Travis said.

Damon didn't think much about it. "You did a good job and I heal fast."

Travis didn't deny that he did a good job, but... "No one heals this fast."

This was not the first time for Travis to patch up Damon. Damon has a history of brawls that left him in need of medical assistance, and he also faced rogues many times.

Even with Damon's stellar Alpha healing, Travis expected it will take days for the wounds to completely heal. Considering that wolfsbane was involved, it was very likely that a Damon won't be able to avoid scars, but... there was nothing.

Travis moved swiftly to cut another layer of bandages and he gaped at the revealed patch of perfectly smooth skin.

If he mistook the location of the first wound, there was no way he would mistake the second one because there was a bundle of cotton soaked in medicine, and now that he removed it, Travis confirmed that cotton had smudges of blood which definitely meant he got the right spot.

"You don't seem pleased that I'm fine.", Damon said, and Travis was not sure how to respond to this.

"I need to do scans and confirm the level of healing..."

"Later.", Damon cut him off. "Talía is sleeping."

Travis exhaled helplessly. "OK. Then... I will leave you to it. Call me when she wakes up so that I can check on your condition."

Travis wanted to leave, but his legs stayed rooted in the spot as he looked at Damon with a complex expression.

Travis did the bloodwork and surgeries, and he knew very well that Damon was in a wretched state. If Damon was brought in just a bit later, his life would be in danger, yet Damon seemed to be perfectly fine. No matter how Travis thought about this, he couldn't explain it.

"I'm glad you are awake, Alpha.", Travis said and glanced at Talía. "Talía came around about one hour ago and the first thing she asked about was your condition. When I told her that I need to check on her before she can get out of bed, she got angry and demanded to see you. I didn't know Talía can be so fierce."

Damon grinned happily and Travis bowed slightly before leaving the room.

Damon cradled Talía in his arms, and he pressed his lips against her forehead while taking a deep breath that filled his system with the addictive sweet citrusy scent of freesia.

He had so many questions for Talia.

Why was she in the forest?

His vision was getting blurry at that time, and unless he lost consciousness for a moment, Talia moved at a lightning speed and Damon definitely saw two rogues flying backward like a tornado swept them away.

Was that Talia's doing? It shouldn't be because werewolves don't have such abilities. Maybe he was hallucinating due to wolfsbane.

However, his wolf told him that Talia healed them, and that's definitely not normal. Or was his wolf talking about healing because of the mate bond?

Damon pushed all those thoughts away and focused on the fact that they were together.

He was confident that Talia was exhausted and traumatized, and there was nothing better for recovery than a good sleep, in the arms of her mate.

Damon wanted to sleep also, but somehow, he felt energized.

He mind-linked Caden. 'What's the status?'

'You are awake!', Caden exclaimed, and then he quickly proceeded to answer Damon's question, knowing that Damon was probably not in the mood for chit-chat. 'When the closest patrol arrived, four rogues were dead, and you and Talia were unconscious. For two rogues, it's obvious how they died based on bite marks, but the other two are funky. Every bone in their bodies was broken. How did you do that?'

Damon looked at the little woman sleeping in his arms. 'Stop messing, Caden, and continue with report...'

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Talia woke up and before opening her eyes, she lazily stretched over Damon, and then her arms wrapped around his torso.

The sparks were still there, dancing over her skin wherever she touched his body, and she wanted to maximize the touching surface because it felt amazing.

Talia took in a deep breath of Damon's addictive scent of the forest and dark chocolate and smiled.

"Awake?", Damon's deep voice sounded from just above her head, and she nodded in response.

It took her a moment to realize that the beeping came from the machines, and there was the scent of antiseptic and... Talia's eyes snapped open at the thought of the pack hospital and Damon lying unconscious and wrapped in bandages.

Talia looked at Damon in panic and then she nimbly slipped to Damon's side.

Damon frowned in displeasure due to Talia moving away, he really enjoyed the feeling of her body pressing on his. Or did she hate him now?

While she was sleeping, Damon went through the incident in the forest several times. The mental image of Talia on the ground with four rogues around her, one holding a knife close to her face... he wanted to go back in time and rip all four bastards to pieces. How dare they touch his mate!?

Damon was worried that Talia's attitude toward him will change. He killed rogues in front of her, and his bloody maw was a gruesome sight. But she was sticking close to him, and that should be a good sign.

Talia was nervously looking at Damon's torso that was now mostly devoid of bandages.

"I'm sorry. Did I hurt you?", Talia asked.

"You didn't. As you can see, I'm fine. How are you feeling, kitten?"

Talia blinked once, twice, and then her chin shivered and tears started streaming down her cheeks. "Oh, Damon... I was so scared..."

Damon rubbed her back gently. "It's OK. The rogues are gone."

She punched his arm weakly. "I was not scared of rogues. I was scared that I will lose you. There was a knife, and they were shooting and..." She whimpered. "So much blood... Your blood... What would I do without you?"

Damon smiled at the silly girl who was more worried about him than about herself.

"I'm sorry.", he said eventually. "I should have been more careful."

Talia shook her head. "No. I'm sorry. I will never go to the forest again."

He knew that she won't fulfill that promise. The forest was all around them, and what kind of a werewolf can resist going to the forest? But her words reminded him... "Why were you there?"

Talia didn't want to tell him. Lisa was already hurting and directing Damon's anger at the heartbroken girl would be too much.

Talia believed that Lisa didn't hate her. After all, Talia barely interacted with Lisa. How can you hate a person you don't know? Lisa's mental state was not stable, and she was only projecting her anger and dejection on Talia. Lisa would do that to anyone, and Talia was only in the way.

"Can we talk about it later?", Talia asked and buried her face in his chest.

"Sure." Later was fine.

Damon chuckled at the silly girl who was rubbing her cheeks on his chest happily, and he froze when he realized that his cheeks were tingling with the familiar sparks.

It was faint, but he could definitely feel it.

What was that supposed to mean? How much stronger did the bond get if he could feel the sparks without actually touching Talia?

He looked down at her and a crazy idea hit him. "Kitten, do you feel something when you touch me?"

"Feel something?" She definitely felt many things. "Like what?"

"Like... something more than just skin-to-skin sensation."

Talia paused. Was he on the same medications? "Do you feel it also?"

"Feel, what?" It was Damon's turn to ask.

"I don't know...", Talia said. "It's like a small electrical current that tingles wherever we touch, and I can't stop myself from wanting more."

Damon's eyes widened. She can feel it. She can really feel the bond!

"Kitten, do you know what you are saying?"

"I know, it sounds crazy. It's probably due to medications..."

"No, no!", Damon interrupted her excitedly. Seeing that she was completely off the mark, Damon decided to guide her toward the right answer. "Kitten, how much do you know about mates?"

Talia remembered Lisa's words, how Talia is only temporary entertainment for Damon because she is not his mate.

"Why are you asking me that?"

"Answer me.", Damon insisted. "How do two people know they are mates?"

Talia could see he will not give up easily, so she answered, "Their wolf announces it."

"What else?"

"There is the scent and attraction and...", Talia paused.

"And?", Damon urged her to continue.

"The... sparks of the bond."

Damon waited as her expression changed, reflecting Talia's internal fight between facts, desires, and insecurities. After a few endless seconds, she looked at him questionably.

"Didn't you say that my scent is special?", Damon asked, and Talia nodded in confirmation. He continued, "That special, is only for you, kitten. I know you are attracted to me, and this..." He touched her cheek with the tips of his fingers. "Are the sparks of our bond."

Talia's honeyed eyes opened wide to the point of hurting. "What are you saying?"

"I am saying that I feel the same. The only thing I have, and you don't, is the confirmation from my wolf."

Talia inhaled a shaky breath. "Mates..."

Chapter 212 - Dispelling Doubts

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Thank you very much!

Damon looked at Talia with sparkles in his eyes and his heart expanded from happiness.

She knows.

Finally.

But why was she frowning? What's up with those negative emotions?

"Kitten? What's wrong?"

"Are you sure this is not a mistake?"

Damon shook his head at the silly girl. "There is no mistake, kitten. We are mates. My wolf told me even before I saw you."

"So... you knew we were mates when you came to the attic in the Red Moon pack?"

"Yes."

"And when we met in the kitchen before that?"

"Yes.", he responded reluctantly, hoping that she won't bring up their encounter before that one because it involved Macy sucking him off.

Of course, Talia didn't want to think about Marcy between Damon's legs, even though that image flashed in her mind.

"And that's why you brought me to your pack?", Talia asked.

"OUR pack.", Damon corrected her before adding, "It was either you come here, or I move in with you to the attic. You must admit that this is more comfortable."

Talia was not sure what to do with this information. She was remembering how Damon came into the attic, and how he held her, and then he sneaked out of the Red Moon pack in the attic, their short stay in the hotel, and her arrival to the Dark Howlers pack, and there was also an inevitable thought about... "If you knew we were mates, why did you allow Cassie to come? Was that to show me my place? Did you want me to know how you can have any..."

"Stop.", Damon interrupted her. "I didn't invite Cassie to come. Steph told me that Cassie was on her way, but I was overwhelmed by the fact that I found my mate, and I forgot about her."

Talia noticed that Damon often forgets women who are buzzing around him, and she couldn't figure out if that's his idea of being cool or he really has memory problems. Whichever it was, it put her in an awkward situation.

"You forgot that Cassie was coming, but you definitely noticed when she arrived. Why didn't you tell her to leave? Or did you enjoy the scene when she accused me of stealing food?" Talia vividly remembered Cassie clinging onto Damon's arm who just stood there and didn't do anything to clarify the situation. "With Cassie's personality, even if she didn't accuse me of stealing stuff and slapping me, she would find some other way to get on my case."

Damon's stomach was full of painful knots. "You have no idea how sorry I am for allowing that to happen. I thought that if I ignore her, she will leave in a few days. I didn't want Cassie to suspect we are mates, because she would target you and spread the word about your importance, and at that time you were so fragile. I was protecting you."

"Protecting me? With lies? Why didn't you tell me?"

"Would you believe me?", Damon responded with a question. "Even with the sparks, you are doubtful."

"I don't doubt we are mates, but I doubt if the Moon Goddess made a mistake."

Damon could feel Talia's insecurities and he did his best to dispel them. "You are beautiful, smart, kind, and amazing in every way possible. Since I laid my eyes on you, no other woman exists for me."

"Is that why you rejected Marcy as your Luna?"

"No. I went to the Red Moon pack with the goal to reject her, but just saying I was not willing wouldn't work, so I had to go there and play along like I'm considering it.", Damon said without missing a beat. "Kitten, don't do this. There is a reason why we met and why I fell for you. You are my other half and I am yours."

"You are saying those things only because of the bond."

Damon cocked an eyebrow at Talia. "Would it make you feel better if I said that I fell in love with your ass? Or with the way your nipples harden in my mouth?" He chuckled at her outraged expression. "I feel in love with your soul, and that is why everything about you is perfect, for me. You are my mate, my moon, my Luna. No one else can fill in that position."

Damon reached to hold her cheeks and Talia moved away despite delicious sparks that danced over her skin the moment his fingers touched her skin. When Damon is that close, she can't think about anything other than getting closer.

Talia could feel his dejection, and this time she knew he didn't like her refusal of his touch. Her instinct was to comfort him, but she had to say what was on her mind.

"I can't, Damon. I have no idea about leading a pack or managing a household. I am weak. I can't even take care of myself. I'm not the Luna you need."

Damon was not willing to give up. "I'm fine with the way you are right now, and regardless of the new things you learn and how you redefine yourself, I will be fine with that also. I will believe in you until you believe in yourself."

"What if that never happens?"

"Then, I will believe in you forever."

Damon felt Talia's defenses melting and he leaned closer for a kiss, only to be met with Talia's fingers pressing against his lips, preventing that kiss from happening.

"You can't make such promises.", Talia said. "You don't know what will happen in the future."

Damon took Talia's hand in his and placed it over his chest, pressing with his palm firmly. "Do you feel this, kitten? My heart is beating for you. We will take this slow and announce it to our people whenever you are ready. I can promise that no matter what, I will be by your side. We will figure it out, together. The only question is, are you willing to stay by my side?"

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Talia was not sure how to cope with the changes this day brought. That morning, she thought of herself like someone who is borrowing temporary patches of happiness by being with Damon. After hurtful words from Lisa, Talia searched for solace in the forest, but then her soul cried when she rogues hurting Damon, and now he told her that they are mates, and he was talking about their future, together.

Could she be his Luna? The Luna of the Dark Howlers pack? She didn't think so.

But then... if someone told her a few weeks back that she will get to see this side of Damon, where he was anxiously waiting for her response, she would call that person a liar.

Somehow, Damon had the power to make impossible things possible. He took her out of that attic, and he gave her a life she only dreamed about and supported her requests to do things on her own, to learn and grow, and now he was talking about forever... the two of them.

Regardless of anything, Talia was aware that she was completely in love with him.

Can she stay away from him? Absolutely not.

As Talia's emotions reflected her thoughts, Damon had a feeling that a kiss is a go, and he leaned to peck her lips once, twice... "It's amazing with the sparks, isn't it?", he murmured.

"Yes...", she breathed. It was the first time to have that lips-to-lips contact since she started feeling the sparks, and her lips were tantalizingly numb, yet super sensitive at the same time. She really wanted to feel more of it, and Damon didn't let her wait for long.

"Don't worry about anything, kitten.", Damon spoke between kisses. "I will take care of anything you find overwhelming. I only need you to say that you are mine. Are you mine?"

"Yes.", Talia responded with a smile and looked into his icy-blue eyes that were reflecting a myriad of emotions.

"I am Talia Blake. The only one who can call herself Mrs. Blake. As for anything else... give me time."

Damon thought how that was acceptable. "We have all the time in the world."

Damon felt a big load falling off his chest. The secret was out, and Talia accepted him as her mate.

Part of him feared that she might reject him, but now that the danger passed, he was able to fully immerse himself into Talia's presence.

The next thing will be marking. Should he do it right now? Or should he wait for his wolf to awaken from the slumber? They waited for so long, that an additional day or two won't make much difference. Probably.

He really wanted to bite her.

Talia latched herself onto Damon, voluntarily losing herself in his embrace that was enhanced by the delicious sparks that made her feel alive. Everything he did was amazing, yet she really wanted more.

Their kisses quickly turned hungry.

Damon tugged on Talia's hospital gown, exposing her body for him to feast upon, and her soul hummed in pleasure at the sparks that converged at her core.

The machines were beeping loudly, but both Damon and Talia were lost in the haze of their arousal and didn't notice anything out of place until the door of their room flew open and Travis stormed in.

"Ah!", Talia screamed while pulling the cover higher to conceal her breasts.. Yes, Damon's torso was obscuring Travis's view of Talia's body, but that only made it more awkward.

Chapter 213 - Back From The Pack Hospital [Bonus]

Damon realized that noisy machines were attached to him, and he yanked the cables from his body, making the whole room fall into deafening silence.

Travis stared at his feet and pretended not to see Talia scrambling to cover herself, but Damon's vicious aura was difficult to ignore.

Damon was ready to jump on Travis and hurt him badly, but Talia was holding onto him, and Damon didn't want to expose her by moving away.

Travis was unsure if it was safer to leave or stay, and before he could decide, Damon growled at him.

"Why are you here?"

Travis hesitated. It was obvious what Damon and Talia were about to do, and the fact that Damon's increased heart rate caused machines to go crazy, confirmed Travis's guess.

Travis knew that he interrupted something that shouldn't be interrupted, but with the alarms ringing, he thought that Damon was in critical condition, and the poor doctor was already here. Now what?

"You are awake. I need to check your condition.", Travis said stoically.

"Check later!", Damon snapped.

Seeing that Travis stood rooted in the spot, Damon thought about sending the good Doctor to survival training in the mountains. He could join coach Keith and the soccer team.

Travis's instincts told him not to oppose Damon, but he needed to do his job. How can he persuade a horny Alpha to listen?

Travis got an idea... "If your results are fine, you can go home."

Damon's frown deepened. He was fine, more than fine, until Travis showed up.

"I want to go home. We should get checked...", Talia said to Damon in a whisper. She wanted confirmation that Damon's wounds truly healed and that there are no side effects from wolfsbane.

Damon closed his eyes and exhaled sharply. "OK." He waved at Travis impatiently. "Hurry up! And get us some clothes..."

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"I never saw anything like it. This is amazing!", Travis exclaimed while looking at Talia's and Damon's test results.

"Is that a good amazing?", Talia asked while trying to figure out why was Travis so excited. She was behind the privacy screen, putting on a t-shirt and pants that nurses brought for her to change into.

The clothes she was brought in were dirty.

"If I didn't examine you myself earlier today, I would assume that you were not hurt at all.", Travis responded.

"Since we are good, we can leave. Right?" Damon was eager to leave and maximize his time with Talia. His mate. Now that she knew they are mates, there were so many things for them to do. Like sex, talk about babies, sex, her Luna ceremony, sex...

Travis really wanted to do more tests, but he could see that Damon's displeasure was growing with every moment of silence. "You can leave. But come back tomorrow for another..."

"We will come when we get time.", Damon cut him off and turned to Talia who stepped out from behind the privacy screen. "Let's go home."

Talia looked at Damon who was wearing only a pair of shorts and then asked Travis, "Don't you have a t-shirt to give him?"

"I don't need it." Damon was used to walking around topless. It was nothing new. Besides, nudity was normal for werewolves.

Talia narrowed her eyes at him. "Really? Then, I will remove my top."

Damon couldn't believe it. "What?"

Talia pursed her lips stubbornly. "If you can go out like that, so can I."

Talia clutched the edge of her t-shirt like she wanted to remove it, and Damon was quick to hold her hands.

Damon guessed that Talia was bluffing. She is shy and there was no way she would walk around exposed, but Damon knew that Talia was trying to make a point and he had no intention to anger her.

"Travis, find me a t-shirt.", Damon said, and Travis hid his laughter behind a cough.

Travis wanted to tease Damon. The almighty Alpha found his match, but Travis knew that if he says that aloud, he would get punished, so he kept that for himself.

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Talia and Damon returned to the packhouse in time for dinner.

Before entering the packhouse, Damon stood in front of Talia and looked at her seriously.

"I need to tell you one thing.", he said. "Maya and Caden know we are mates."

Talia stared at Damon in disbelief. "You told them and not me?"

"I didn't tell anyone. The two of them guessed based on my behavior.", Damon quickly said in his defense. It was the almost truth. They guessed, but Damon still told Caden. Talia didn't need to know this small detail.

Talia was curious. "You acted differently with me?"

"I brought you home, arranged for you to stay on the third floor, cared about your wellbeing, and modified my schedule so that we can spend time together. I never did that before, for anyone."

Damon wanted to say that she can ask Maya, but he was aware that Maya could blabber about his previous behavior, and that could backfire big time.

"I know I made mistakes, kitten. And I will probably make more. Now that you know we are mates, I hope you will tell me when I mess up something. I was an ass who never cared for a female. You are my first."

Talia liked that she was his first in something, but she had a condition, "I need you to promise that you won't hide things from me. If something is related to me, or us, I want you to tell me."

"I can do that.", Damon said and made a cross on his chest with his index finger, to indicate his sincerity.

"And no double standards.", Talia added. "We are equal. If you can do something, so can I. If you want to walk around half-naked, think if you would be OK with me doing the same thing."

Damon nodded in agreement. "Anything else?"

"That's it. For now.", Talia said.

Damon glanced at the front door of the packhouse. "Steph and Lisa don't know we are mates. Do you want to tell them?"

Talia paused at this question. It was not only about Stephanie and Lisa but about everyone else. Damon said how he hid the fact they are mates in order to protect Talia and she wanted to know what changed that now he was eager to announce it. But she could guess how that would be a lengthy conversation, so she decided to keep it for later.

Talia didn't think it would matter if Stephanie knew, but Lisa... "Let's take this slow. To be honest, I'm still processing the information."

Damon had no intention to rush Talia into anything. He was waiting until now, and he can wait a bit longer, however... "We should at least say we are in a relationship. It will send a message to other women who are..." Damon's voice trailed when he saw Talia glaring at him.

Talia remembered Cassie, Marcy, Ashley, Heather, and numerous other heated gazes directed his way, and Talia's dejection swelled.

How Talia saw this, if Damon was not promiscuous, there wouldn't be so many women buzzing around him. And being an Alpha is not a justification. Axel and Tony also have Alpha bloodline and they are not shagging everything that has two legs and is wearing a skirt.

"No", Talia said with determination. "I don't want you to use me as a shield against women who want to crawl into your bed. Clean your own mess."

"OK", Damon agreed immediately. He felt Talia's irritation and didn't want to add to it. They will talk about it later.

Talia thought they are about to get into the packhouse, but Damon was holding her hand and he didn't move while his intense gaze was focused on her, so she had to ask, "Anything else?"

Damon smiled a little. "Welcome home, kitten."

Talia's heart swelled. Home. Somehow, that word had a different meaning because now she knew they were mates.

Talia always craved for a place where she would be accepted, a place where she would feel safe, a place where she could always return, a place where she could be herself... but that place was not a building or a spot on the map. It was Damon. He was her home.

Talia stepped close to Damon and wrapped her arms around him. "It's good to be home."

Damon let out a laugh full of joy while gathering Talia against him.

If someone told him that he will be this happy just because a female accepted him, he would call that person a liar, but here he was, holding his kitten in his arms, feeling her body pressing against his, and he was absolutely happy just because she was hugging him back. It was surreal.

"We should go inside", Damon spoke into her hair. "The others are waiting for us."

Before Talia could respond, Damon scooped her into his arms and carried her into the packhouse, princess style.

It would be romantic if his hand was not squeezing her ass.

Talia glared at Damon, but he grinned and wiggled his eyebrows mischievously.

She burst into giggles at his silly behavior. Butt-squeezing or not, they both survived today's crisis, they were together, and she was happy.

Talia's giggles stopped abruptly when she realized that Damon was carrying her straight into the dining room from where voices could be heard.

Chapter 214 - Nothing Is Off-limits For Talia

"Good evening, everyone!", Damon said cheerfully while walking into the dining room with Talia in his arms.

Talia stopped her futile struggle to get out of his hold. She couldn't believe that Damon was acting like nothing was out of place.

She wanted to smack him or bite him or say something nasty, but she knew it would only make things worse, and probably spur him to do something even more outrageous, like spanking her.

Talia comforted herself that Damon moved his hand from her ass and his hold on her was decent.

"Sorry for being late, we got delayed in the pack hospital.", Damon said while lowering Talia to sit in her chair carefully, like he was handling a delicate porcelain doll.

"Don't worry about it.", Caden responded. "We are glad you could make it. If you stayed overnight, Steph would send you food."

"The food in the pack hospital is not the best.", Stephanie said in her defense. She was ready to send food, thinking that Damon and Talia won't eat well there. Talia doesn't eat much, but Alpha's appetite is something else.

When Damon sat in his spot, Talia nervously glanced at the faces at the table.

Maya and Caden were munching on appetizers, like their eyecatching entrance of Damon carrying Talia was a totally normal thing.

Lisa was fiddling with her phone while pretending not to see Damon and Talia. She was angry that her mother made her work in the kitchen, and compared to that, Talia was being carried like a princess. Where is justice?

Oblivious to Lisa's dejection, Stephanie was looking at Talia with all concern in the world.

"Are you alright, dear?", Stephanie asked Talia. She assumed that Damon was carrying her due to injuries. "We heard that you bumped into rogues in the forest, and you got hurt. Maya said it's not serious, but if it was not serious, why would Damon stay there with you?"

"I'm fine.", Talia responded. "Doctor Travis wanted to ensure all tests were done before he discharged me."

"Good, good...", Stephanie said. "Since everyone is here, we will bring food to the table." She turned to Lisa and gestured toward the kitchen, and Lisa stood up and followed after her mother.

Once Stephanie and Lisa stepped out, Maya spoke to Damon through the mind-link that was open only for Maya, Damon, and Caden.

'Are you well enough to carry Talia around?'

Maya didn't want to risk Lisa or Stephanie overhearing them, and if Stephanie notices that the trio is talking through the mind-link, she will know they are hiding something.

Both Caden and Maya were aware of Damon's state when they left the hospital. Damon contacted Caden to ask for updates, but Caden didn't see him in person, and now that Damon showed up energetic with Talia in his arms, the Beta duo was utterly confused.

'I'm perfectly fine.', Damon said.

'How is that possible?', Caden asked.

'I'm not sure.', Damon responded honestly. 'The mate bond boosted my healing.'

Damon didn't want to say that he suspects Talia healed him. Just how them talking with their wolves was a secret, if Talia can actually heal others or blast them away with a thought, that shouldn't be publicized.

Damon saw that both Maya and Caden looked at him suspiciously, ready to ask more questions, Damon decided to give them something, 'Talia knows we are mates.'

Maya's face lit up. 'Really? When are you going to announce it?' She was mentally planning Talia's Luna ceremony from the moment Talia arrived at the Dark Howlers pack.

'Not yet.', Damon said. 'Talia wants to keep it low-key for now. Don't push it because she needs time to adjust to her status before others start treating her as my Luna. Talia is aware that the two of you know.'

Maya turned to look at Talia with a grin on her face, happy that she doesn't need to pretend to be oblivious in front of Talia anymore.

"Hey!", Talia protested. "It's obvious you are talking about me." She turned to Damon with a pout. "You promised no secrets."

"Sorry. Habit.", Damon said quickly. "Caden and Maya were just saying how they are happy we are fine."

"Riiiiight", Talia drawled while eyeing the trio cautiously, but she was happy. Somehow, sitting next to Damon, with Maya and Caden at the table, was relaxing and the overall atmosphere was welcoming. It was a good feeling, and the fact that Damon held her hand, made it better.

Stephanie and Lisa entered the dining room, and everyone's attention was drawn toward the steaming dishes.

"I made something light when I heard you will be coming from the pack hospital...", Stephanie said while placing a bowl with chicken gnocchi soup close to Talia. The soup was paired well with freshly baked breadsticks, and it all smelled divine. Talia's stomach rumbled.

Lisa was not happy to be the one serving food, but she didn't dare to make a scene. She already argued with her mother several times, and she understood the stances of Maya and Caden from when they warned her to treat Talia with respect, and now that Damon was here, pouring soup in Talia's bowl, Lisa knew that if she raises a fuss, it will backfire big time.

Two trips later, all the food was on the table and Lisa finally got to sit and help herself.

Stephanie is an amazing cook, and everything looked, smelled, and tasted great, but Lisa couldn't enjoy her mother's cooking. How can she enjoy it when Damon was feeding Talia? And he was even blowing gently every time to disperse the steam so that Talia doesn't burn her mouth. Needless to say, Tony never did anything like that for Lisa.

Maya and Caden observed the situation during dinner. It was obvious that Damon and Talia were smitten with each other and not paying attention to anyone else, and the Beta couple knew that it would get much worse after Damon marks Talia.

The mark will give a boost to their mate bond and they will completely be consumed with each other, and that will last for some time until they get used to their new normal.

Seeing how much Damon was hovering around Talia, Maya could imagine that after marking, the couple won't come out of the bedroom for a week, or a month... maybe longer.

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When they were close to finishing their meal, Caden asked Damon in an official tone, "Alpha, can we have a minute in the study before you retreat for the night?"

Damon was not happy to part from Talia, but based on Caden's demeanor, he guessed it was important.

"Can I join?", Talia asked. She didn't want to part from Damon.

While working as Damon's assistant, Talia already knew many important things related to the Dark Howlers pack, and she didn't think it will be a problem.

Before Damon could answer, Lisa spoke, "Beta wants to talk to the Alpha. What makes you think you are qualified?"

"Lisa!", Stephanie snapped.

Everyone looked at Lisa in disbelief and Lisa realized that she blurted out her thoughts. Luckily, she didn't say all of it.

Damon's inquisitive stare made Lisa break into a cold sweat.

It took Lisa a moment to force a smile and say, "Why are you looking at me like I said something strange? When ranking members discuss pack matters, others can't join. I was informing Talia about the rules since it's obvious that she isn't familiar with them."

"It's not up to you to determine if Talia can join Alpha or not. This is not the Lightclaw pack, Lisa. We have different rules.", Maya said and turned to Talia. "While guys are talking, I would like to have a chat with you, Talia. In private. If that's OK."

Talia glanced at Damon, silently asking him what to do, and he responded with a shrug and, "It's up to you. Nothing is off-limits for you."

Talia had a feeling that Maya's invitation for a talk was just an excuse to provide privacy to Damon and Caden, and she didn't want to push for it. Besides, Damon promised that if it's related to her, he won't keep secrets.

"I will see what Maya wants, and meet you in our bedroom later.", Talia responded to Damon.

Damon didn't object. He took a note that Talia said OUR bedroom. It sounded perfect.

"It will save us time. When I get back, I will tell you how my talk with Caden went..."

Lisa made a face like she swallowed a fly. She was just pointing out Talia's lack of qualifications, yet Damon said the opposite. How can nothing be off-limits for Talia? She is just an Omega, a wolf-less she-wolf.

Lisa is Beta's daughter, her wolf is healthy, yet Tony never included her in anything pack related. How can Lisa accept this? Why was Talia getting special treatment from everyone while Lisa was being neglected?

As a child, Lisa was the princess of the Dark Howlers pack. Later, Lisa became Tony's girlfriend, the princess of the Lightclaw pack. Throughout her life, everyone treated her with respect and was eager to please her, yet now she was nobody who works in the kitchen and is serving food.

Lisa felt like trashing the whole place while screaming her lungs out, but she used the last bits of her control to swallow her grievances and not allow them to come to the surface.

Chapter 215 - Two Private Talks

After dinner, Stephanie and Lisa got busy with cleanup, Damon and Caden went to the study, and Maya led Talia into the room that Maya and Caden are sharing.

The moment the door closed behind Maya, Maya wrapped Talia into a hug.

"I'm happy for you, dear.", Maya said to Talia. "How did you find out you are mates? Did Damon tell you? Or was it your wolf? Tell me. I want to know!"

Talia was flustered with this sudden hugging and all the questions and before Talia could say a word, Maya pulled her to sit on the sofa and she looked at Talia expectantly.

Talia released a long breath in defeat. "I don't feel my wolf's presence, so I don't think she is back. However, I can feel the sparks when Damon and I touch. I thought that it's due to some medication, but then Damon put that in the context of scent and attraction and..."

Maya listened with interest. Normally, werewolves meet and bam, it happens, but this was different.

"Damon told me that you figured it out on your own.", Talia said when she finished her story. "Is that true?"

It's not that Talia doubted Damon, but she was curious what hints Maya picked up that revealed Talia was Damon's mate.

Maya was happy to talk after weeks of keeping secrets. "I suspected that you are special when you came out of the trunk. And then Damon opened the door for you to enter the car and he was making sure you were comfortable while sleeping."

Maya laughed at Talia's confused expression.

"I know, those are simple things, but Damon would never bring a woman with him, or act like a gentleman." Maya opened her mouth to say how in addition to that, Talia is not Damon's type (a mature, curvaceous woman with plenty of experience), but Maya closed her mouth without saying those words, knowing that Damon might skin her alive.

After hearing Maya's explanation, Talia asked, "Is that why you called me to your room now?"

"I wanted us to clarify this, and to let you know that whatever you need, I'm available to help. And also..." Maya paused. "Is Lisa giving you a hard time?"

Talia was alerted. "What makes you think so?"

Maya didn't want to say that she overheard Lisa ranting about Talia in the kitchen. That was not important. Whatever happened already was Caden's part. Maya's role was to talk to Talia about the future.

Maya chose her words while speaking, "Lisa is struggling to accept the reality where she is not Tony's partner, and she is not the future Luna of the Lightclaw pack. Because of that, she is bitter and angry. Considering your position, I fear that she might target you."

Talia nodded in understanding. "I know that even if Lisa says mean things, she is only trying to release her frustration and it's not related to me."

"Don't let your guard down.", Maya warned Talia. "You are not the cause of her predicament, but that doesn't mean she won't try to harm you. If Lisa does anything to upset you, I need you to speak up. Fight back or tell us about it and we will teach Lisa a lesson. She had a pampered life so far and is heartbroken, but those are not giving her a free pass to be a bitch."

Talia nodded in agreement, but Maya had a feeling that Talia didn't understand the severity of her situation, so she added, "Now you know that you are Damon's mate, the future Luna of the Dark Howlers pack. Keep that in mind. Even if others don't know you and Damon are mates, it's obvious that Damon values you. If anyone bullies you, they are disrespecting Damon and the pack."

Maya was pleased that Talia's expression changed. Just as Maya guessed, even if Talia allows others to bully her, she will stand up for Damon.

"Alright!", Maya exclaimed. "Now that we got this out of the way, there is one more thing..."

Talia watched as Maya dashed into the closet and she returned with several skimpy garments in her hands.

"I never wore these", Maya said. "Look, the tags are still on. Pick one or two. When we get a chance, the two of us can go shopping for more."

"What should I do with this?", Talia asked while suspiciously eyeing a see-through babydoll. That night dress didn't provide any coverage.

"Now that you know you are mates, you should make it special. This spark will set the stage for the rest of the night...", Maya said in a singing voice, and her eyebrows wiggled suggestively.

Talia's face exploded in fierce blush. "I can't take this."

"Yes, you can.", Maya said sternly. "Pick one, or I will pick for you. Don't worry about returning it because Damon will probably rip it into shreds. I use these as disposable garments. Oh, tomorrow we can get negligees and costumes like a sexy nurse or a slutty maid. Caden loves cosplay, and I'm confident that Damon will get fired up when he sees you in it..."

Talia was not sure how to respond to this. Any more fire and Damon will set the whole packhouse ablaze.

Maya stood up and started swaying her hips in slow motion. "When I do this, Caden goes crazy... he loves a good chase so I run and he needs to work for it..."

Talia stared at Maya without blinking. Was she supposed to run around in those see-through garments?

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In the study...

Damon's face was dark as he watched a video showing a scene from that morning. It was Talia and Lisa in front of the study. There was no sound, but it was obvious that Lisa was not friendly because their minute-long interaction ended with Lisa bumping Talia with her shoulder, even though there was plenty of space to pass. It was intentional.

Damon forgot that they have video surveillance in the hallways and public areas of the packhouse and around it. They installed it shortly after Damon became Alpha and as he stabilized his position, they stopped checking it.

"After this, another camera shows that Talia went straight into the garden, and from there, she headed into the forest where she met rogues.", Caden said. "In the hospital, Talia told Maya that she went for a walk, but Maya didn't buy it. It was Maya's idea to check the surveillance and see if we can find something out of place."

Damon remembered that he asked Talia why she went into the forest, and Talia didn't mention it was related to Lisa.

Damon knew that Talia is not a person who would engage in arguments. Actually, he saw firsthand how Cassie bullied her and Talia endured without talking back and based on what he saw in the video, this was a similar situation.

Damon didn't get it. He understood that Lisa was hysteric because Tony dumped her, but how did that relate to Talia? If Lisa was his ex, he would understand her hostility toward Talia, but considering that he and Lisa never crossed the line and that Lisa was obviously enamored with Tony, Damon was confused.

Did Lisa and Talia have some interaction he was not aware of? Talia didn't know that Lisa ate food Talia made for the two of them. Or was there something else?

"Did you talk to Lisa to clarify this?", Damon asked.

"No. I wanted to show you this and also to tell you that Maya and I overheard Lisa talking to Steph. Lisa has trouble accepting that Talia shouldn't be treated as an Omega."

Damon gestured toward the paused video that showed the scene from that morning, Talia standing in the hallway after Lisa left. "Does Lisa treat all Omegas like this? Even if she believes Talia is Omega, this is not acceptable."

Caden shrugged helplessly. "She came from the Lightclaw pack. You know they are different. Anyway, I only wanted to let you know about this. Maya and I warned Lisa to treat Talia with respect, but it seems that she didn't take our words seriously. Actually, based on this, I can conclude that it only increased her indignation."

Normally, they would punish such behavior, but considering that Lisa is Stephanie's daughter, Caden and Maya didn't go beyond verbal warnings.

Stephanie was loyal to the Dark Howlers pack from before they were born, and they all respect her.

Damon understood that it's up to him to decide on what to do. Well, there was only one thing.

"Thanks for showing me this, Caden. I will talk to Lisa."

Damon really didn't want to talk to Lisa, but what were his options?

He told himself to calm down and investigate first.

Talia obviously didn't want Damon to find out about this, and he wondered if she didn't want him to worry or maybe Talia wanted to handle this herself. In any case, he didn't want to risk that Lisa escalates and draws a wedge between him and Talia.

Talia just found out they are mates, and even though she can feel the sparks, Damon was aware that Talia still doesn't feel the bond to its full extent and things between them were still somewhat fragile.

Chapter 216 - Talk To Lisa [Bonus]

In Lisa's room...

As soon as she returned from the kitchen, Lisa lathered her hands in a thick layer of moisturizer. All that water and dirt from dishes and cleaning the kitchen was ruining her perfect skin.

Once she settled down in her room, Lisa took her tablet and was checking online sources for the latest news related to Tony and Kalina. She knew that she shouldn't do that because it only increased her dejection, but it was like a deadly addiction she couldn't extricate herself from.

Since Lisa returned home, she is on her own. No one understands her. Those few who spoke to her said how she will get over it eventually and that she should move on, but Lisa didn't know where to start. Everything she knew was taken away from her and she was lost.

It didn't take long for Lisa to give in to her demons that whispered how she was suffering injustice, she was set up, everyone was mocking her, how nobodies like Kalina and Talia get Alphas to dote on them while Lisa was stuck in her room with only her misery for company.

Lisa gritted her teeth at the photo of Tony and Kalina who were gazing at each other lovingly, and there was a zoomed-in part of Kalina's neck that had reddish patterns, a clear indication that Tony's mark was forming on her skin.

For everyone, that mark signified that Kalina belongs to Tony, but for Lisa, that was a symbol of Tony being out of her reach... Lisa will not be the Luna of the Lightclaw pack. It's official.

Lisa knew that in two days Tony and Kalina will be in the packhouse.

Can Lisa stay in her room obediently and pretend not to exist when Tony and Kalina are enjoying their life? They will be one floor above her... only one floor.

Lisa's fury swelled. In the world of werewolves, staying on a higher floor signifies higher status, so even during this visit, the placement of their rooms will remind her that they are above her.

After a short knock, the door opened, and Lisa angrily whipped her head in that direction to see her mother.

"Why are you...?", Lisa's question directed at Stephanie was cut-off halfway when Lisa saw that Damon was one step behind Stephanie.

Damon wanted to talk to Lisa, and from his experience of dealing with hysteric women, Damon knew that he shouldn't be alone with Lisa. That would give her an opportunity to make up stuff. That's why he asked Stephanie to accompany him.

Lisa's room was on the first floor. It was a bedroom large enough for a twin-sized bed, a desk, a chair, and there was a sofa next to the wall. A sliding door was concealing a closet.

Rooms on the first floor didn't have their own bathrooms, but they shared one bathroom with three showers, three sinks, and three toilet stalls.

Those rooms were designated for Omegas who were maintaining the packhouse and staying there full-time, but since Damon took over as the Alpha, all those Omegas moved away, and Stephanie moved from the suite on the second floor she shared with her mate, to one of these bedrooms. With her husband gone, Stephanie didn't want to stay in a suite that was for the high-ranking members of the pack.

Seeing that Stephanie came to her room with Damon, Lisa quickly stood up to greet them. She guessed that it's important because Damon had never come to her room before.

"Please, sit.", Lisa said while gesturing toward the sofa.

Stephanie glanced at Damon who waved at her to go ahead.

"I will stand.", Damon said and stuffed his hands in the pockets of his pants.

Damon waited for Lisa to sit before saying, "I came here to address two things. The first one is about the guests that will be here in two days. Tony will come with Kalina. Are you prepared to face them, or do you have other arrangements?"

Lisa's brows furrowed. That morning, she went to the study to talk to Damon and see if that visit can be postponed (indefinitely), but Damon was not there, and then the next thing she heard was that there were rogues, and Talia was in the hospital and Damon was with her... and Lisa didn't get a chance to talk to Damon about this.

"So... they are coming?", Lisa asked without concealing her disappointment.

Damon glanced at Stephanie. "I thought you told her about this."

"I did.", Stephanie said quickly. "But Lisa didn't respond if she will be here or if she will be somewhere else during Tony's stay."

Damon nodded in understanding and turned to Lisa. "Well? If you want to leave, I will arrange a place for you. You need to tell me now because the time is running out. Do you want to stay somewhere else

in the pack? We don't know how long they are staying, but it's safe to assume that it won't be less than one week. If you don't have friends where you can crash for such a long time, Maya can arrange for you one of the apartments that Omegas are using. Or do you want to go to your aunt's? Or... pick a place. I will book for you a room in a hotel. It will be fun."

"Fun.", Lisa repeated. "Outsiders are coming, and you are sending me away. How can that be fun?"

"No one is forcing you to leave, Lisa.", Damon said. "However, Tony is coming here on official business, as the next Alpha of the Lightclaw pack. If you stick around, we can assume that you will cross paths. Can you stay cool in his presence, and not make things awkward for Tony, Kalina, or anyone else?"

Lisa was dejected. She always got what she wanted, but now Damon spoke with finality, and it didn't seem it will work how she imagined.

Damon was welcoming Tony who discarded her, and even his newly-found mate (aka Kalina). And considering that Stephanie was forcing her to work in the kitchen, will she end up serving them food? Lisa was used to being served, and if she needs to serve her ex and his mate, that will be degrading!

But if she leaves, that will be admitting defeat.

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Lisa is a prideful she-wolf, and she was not willing to run with the tail between her legs but staying didn't seem like a good option either.

Why can't Damon just tell them not to come?

Where was that Damon who would buy her ice cream and chase away other kids so that Lisa can go on the swing?

It seems that the doting Damon was reserved for Talia only, and Lisa had difficulty accepting that.

"Can I tell you in the morning?", Lisa asked.

Damon shrugged. "Sure. You have until breakfast, or I will assume you don't need me to make arrangements for you. However, if you decide to stay, I will warn you not to make a scene, otherwise, there will be consequences. We can't put our personal grudges in front of the interest of the pack. As someone who is living in the packhouse, you need to think about our guests first and don't embarrass them or me. Do you understand?"

Lisa pressed her lips into a line and nodded.

"Good.", Damon said. "I came here for one more thing. What is your relationship with Talia?"

At this, both Lisa and Stephanie stiffened, and Damon didn't miss this. It's not that he doubted Caden's words, but seeing the reaction of mother and daughter confirmed that there is something going on... something he won't like.

"My relationship with Talia?", Lisa asked.

Damon cocked an eyebrow at Lisa. "This morning the two of you met in front of the study. Care to tell me about it?"

Lisa got defensive. "What did Talia tell you?"

"It doesn't matter what she said. I want to hear from you.", Damon said.

Lisa was not sure if this was a good thing or not. She saw with her own eyes how Damon was being lovey-dovey with Talia, but now he was here, asking for her opinion, so she assumed that he probably values whatever she had to say.

"I went to your study, to talk about Tony's visit, but you were not there. On my way out, I bumped into Talia. She offered me to convey the message, but then she started talking about how you are busy and that I shouldn't bother you with nonimportant things."

Lisa mixed in truth with some lies and she gauged Damon's expression, but he didn't move, so she became uneasy.

"Did I cross the line?", Lisa asked. "I know that Talia is your assistant, but she didn't seem to be very professional."

"Talia is assisting me. As for being professional, you should keep in mind that she started recently and is adjusting to her new role. In the near future, I will be giving her more responsibilities."

Seeing that Damon was not scolding her, Lisa decided to push things a bit further. "I am not sure if Talia can handle more. She is stumbling with simple things like being polite and showing respect."

Chapter 217 - Talk To Lisa (cont.)

"Respect is earned, Lisa.", Damon said. "You can't expect others to respect you if you are not giving them the same in return. Everyone is doing their best to contribute. I know that you just returned and are still adjusting. Things here are different compared to the Lightclaw pack. I am glad to hear that you are helping Stephanie in the kitchen. Do your best and you might take over her responsibilities."

Lisa couldn't believe this. Telling Omegas what to do in the packhouse is one thing, but who the hell wants to work in the kitchen?

Suddenly, an invisible lightbulb lit up above Lisa's head.

"I was thinking about it. Contributing."

"You did?", Damon asked, surprised by Lisa's enthusiasm.

Lisa nodded. "I know you have a lot of work. That's why you hired Talia. I can help you."

Damon was not sure where this was going. "You can?"

"Absolutely!", Lisa exclaimed. "I have a Beta bloodline. I am fit for that role."

"Are you offering to be my Beta?", Damon wanted to clarify. Did Lisa just volunteer to be Damon's second in command?

"I know that I'm inexperienced, but if Talia can learn, so can I.", Lisa said confidently.

Damon poked his cheek with his tongue while trying to wrap his head around this sudden turn of events. Damon wondered if he ever gave any hints to Lisa that he trusts her or her abilities, or if she was overreaching.

"I never said that you can't learn, Lisa but... I already have a Beta. Caden and I spent many years together and he earned his right to watch my back. He is loyal and reliable and when I'm facing rogues who want to sink their fangs into my throat, there is no one else I would trust to be by my side."

Lisa looked at Damon stubbornly. "Caden is only one man. Yes, there is Maya, but everyone knows that she became Beta only thanks to Caden, while I have Beta blood..."

"That's enough!", Stephanie interrupted Lisa and turned to Damon. "I apologize, Alpha. Lisa crossed the line."

"No. No.", Damon said quickly. "Don't apologize in her stead. Lisa is not a child. She can speak for herself and bear the consequences." He turned to Lisa. "Do you know what are duties of a Beta? Beta is not a

job opening anyone can fill, and just a bloodline is not enough. To be a high-ranking member, you need to act like one and train like one. Show me you are made for that role. I expect perfection and consistency, and then I will consider giving you a position that will fit your performance. Is that clear?"

Lisa didn't like that Damon asked her to prove things in advance. They know each other since they were kids, and her father was a Beta to his father. Shouldn't that be enough? "Does all that apply to Talia also?"

"Yes.", Damon responded without missing a beat, and Lisa's temper flared.

"And what did the wolf-less she-wolf without any background do to deserve your consideration other than warming your bed?"

Stephanie stood up abruptly, but Damon raised his hand, indicating to her to sit back down, his stern gaze not leaving Lisa who spoke with an inflated sense of importance.

Damon couldn't believe that Lisa said that about Talia. He suppressed his rage and responded.

"You are right. Talia is a wolf-less she-wolf without any background who came here only a few weeks ago. However, during that time, Talia managed to make the whole soccer team of the Dark Howlers pack kneel in front of her, she was the MVP of the tournament, she made friends with high-ranking members of other packs, and everyone in the packhouse admires her spirit to learn and improve. What's less known is that Talia contributed to our warriors and secured us a tribute from the Steelbite pack. She did all those on her own, without her wolf, without any background, and without warming my bed. Talia didn't rely on a man to achieve a fake status that would dissolve the moment I step out of the picture."

Lisa frowned at Damon's words. Did he just throw a jab at her?

Damon's expression turned icy. "Talia is selfless and resourceful, and I guarantee that she will have my support for retaliating against people who treat her like trash. Is that understood?"

Lisa pressed her lips into a line.

"Good.", Damon said without waiting for Lisa's response. "If you want to be a high-ranking member of my pack, show me you can do it. Make people respect you by using your own strength. I don't care what bloodline you have. I want to know what you are made of, and unless you can stand out on your own, you will be an Omega. Talia is working as my assistant, but she doesn't shy from working in the kitchen or setting up beds, and she is not looking down on anyone. Talia gives the same treatment to an Omega and to an Alpha. Instead of thinking about Talia as inferior, you should learn from her. Don't mistake Talia's lack of action for weakness because you will regret underestimating her."

Damon saw that Lisa was staring at him blankly and he snapped his fingers in front of her face. "Did you get this?"

Lisa involuntarily lowered her head, even though Damon didn't use his Alpha aura to suppress her. His tone was enough for Lisa to get a glimpse of the greatness she will never reach.

"Yes, Alpha.", Lisa said.

"If I get a whiff about you giving a hard time to Talia or anyone else in the packhouse, I won't hesitate in punishing you because disrespecting people who are close to me is equal to disrespecting me. You should thank your mother that this ended with only a verbal warning, but there is a limit to how much that protection will stretch. I am well aware that Tony found his mate and left you hanging, but shit happens, and you need to deal with it. Bullying is not the qualification a high-ranking member of my pack should have, and I won't tolerate malicious people in my packhouse."

With that, Damon left Lisa's room and Stephanie scurried after him.

Lisa jolted when the door closed behind Damon and Stephanie, leaving Lisa on her own.

Lisa pressed her lips into a line so firmly that they hurt, and bitter tears started rolling down her cheeks.

Why did Damon reprimand her?

Why was everyone against her?

She plopped on her bed, face first, and the fluffy pillow muffled her angry screams.

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Damon walked down the hallway with Stephanie two steps behind him.

Yes, he heard Lisa's screams, which started a second after the door closed, but Damon didn't care about it. Damon had no pity for hysterical women who are throwing tantrums and venting their anger on others... others like Talia.

"Alpha Damon, I'm sorry..."

"Don't!", Damon cut her off.

He didn't want to lash out at Stephanie, but he didn't want to leave it at this either.

Damon wanted Stephanie to understand that Lisa touched his bottom line and if Lisa doesn't retreat, it won't end well. Actually, if not for Stephanie, Damon would send Lisa packing, just how he sent Cassie.

Damon turned to look at Stephanie. "I know that this morning Lisa and Talia clashed and because of that Talia ran into the forest and ended up bumping into rogues. What Lisa said that happened was not the truth. You know Talia, she would never be rude or disrespectful. If I was ten seconds later, Talia would be captured or dead, yet Lisa doesn't feel a bit of regret for what she did."

Seeing Stephanie's confused expression, Damon patted her shoulder. "I'm not blaming you, Steph. But I want you to know that Lisa is walking a fine line. She needs to scale down her diva attitude. I don't approve that she has an issue with Talia, and I can't force them to be friends, but I won't tolerate

hostility either. You know why I removed everyone from the packhouse a decade ago. The pack is watching and the discord in the packhouse sends ripples in every direction. I am not insisting that Lisa moves to live with other Omegas only because of you and as long as she doesn't cause trouble, she can enjoy the privileges this packhouse provides. However, if Lisa makes a scene, especially in front of our guests, I will be forced to take action and use her to set an example."

Stephanie lowered her head. "I understand."

"As for Talia...", Damon paused. "You know in what state Talia was when she arrived here. She made great progress in healing physically and mentally and I won't allow anyone to pull her backward. If Lisa gets on Talia's case again, I will ask Talia to decide on Lisa's punishment, and considering Talia's kind nature, I will add to it. No one gets to bully my people, and Lisa is not an exception."

The truth was that Damon didn't know what happened in front of the study that morning, but he knew Lisa lied and that was enough for him to be angry. Yes, he could use his Alpha aura to make Lisa spill out everything, but he didn't need to hear the details in order to know that Lisa bullied Talia. And he also knew that Talia didn't tell him in order not to upset him. In a way, she was protecting him.

Damon felt like a loser.

So much for a mighty Alpha.

He was supposed to protect Talia, yet she ended up being bullied under his watch. Again.

How can he face her now?

Chapter 218 - A Small Token Of His Love [Bonus]

Instead of going upstairs, Damon went to the garden.

This was the day when Talia recognized him as her mate, and even though he was eager to hold her in his embrace, Damon didn't want external factors to spoil their time together.

He wanted to calm down before joining Talia and shake off the bitter taste that his interaction with Lisa left behind.

It's not that Damon cared much about Lisa, but Stephanie was a different thing.

If it's up to Damon, he would send Lisa to do some hard work in a place no one will recognize her, as a lesson to learn some humility, but out of respect for Stephanie, he couldn't do that.

Stephanie was one of the few people who stood by his parents, and who supported him wholeheartedly after they were gone without succumbing to power-hungry madness. Out of gratitude for Stephanie's years of service, Damon hoped that Lisa will snap to her senses and that Damon won't need to resort to drastic measures.

Damon was irked that Talia didn't tell him about Lisa giving her a hard time, but he also knew how that's not Talia's style.

Talia didn't want him to worry, and she definitely didn't want to put him in a position to choose sides between her and anyone else.

Talia is not the one to make a fuss which is a stark contrast from Lisa who is throwing tantrums like she is suffering the greatest injustice because Tony found his mate.

Damon looked up at the moon that was rising above tree canopies and for the first time, he thought how maybe the Moon Goddess really has a plan for everyone.

If Lisa ended up as the Luna of the Lightclaw pack, that pack would be miserable.

Luna should be kind and compassionate, a mother figure to every pack member, accepting her children unconditionally despite their flaws, guiding them in the right direction, scolding them when needed, and fighting for them when someone wants to harm them... someone like Talia.

Damon's heart swelled at this thought. Talia will be an amazing Luna, and the Dark Howlers pack will be lucky to have her, and she is his.

Damon's attention moved toward the lit-up windows of the third floor. Talia was there. His mate.

He wished for the power to fly so that he can be up there on that balcony in an instant.

Damon decided to talk to Talia about Lisa. It was obvious that Talia wanted to conceal this issue from Damon, but Damon didn't want to allow it. He was supposed to be Talia's pillar, someone who will protect her, and how can he protect her if she is concealing her hardships? He will expose what he knows and ask Talia if there is more.

Damon could see himself cradling Talia in his arms and asking her all those questions and she would answer between kisses he will shower her with.

Next, Damon wanted to probe into mysterious things he witnessed in the forest with rogues.

Did she really move so quickly? Did she fling two grown men into the air with her sheer will? Did she heal him?

And why the heck was she going into the forest on her own when he told her not to? How could she forget his warnings about rogues? He could have lost her, damnit!

Damon exhaled helplessly while wondering if Talia is so brave or just reckless. In either case, her safety was giving him a headache. Should he demand that she always sticks to him?

Having Talia in his visual range will definitely come with its set of benefits.

Damon's legs moved toward the entrance of the packhouse, as his need for Talia overtook his senses, but he stopped abruptly in front of a big rose bush that offered him a perfect red rose with small streaks of pink which shone silvery under the moonlight.

Damon plucked the rose with a foolish smile on his face while imagining Talia's reaction when he presents her this small token of his love.

Love.

If someone told Damon a few weeks ago that he would think about love and wooing a woman while being absolutely smitten himself, Damon would call that person a liar and probably throw him into the dungeon, but here he is... with a rose in his hand, walking in large strides toward the third floor of the packhouse, ready to meet the woman who is gentle like the spring breeze, yet has the power to shake his world completely.

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Damon paused in front of the bedroom door. He was nervous.

Yes, he entered this room numerous times, and he met with Talia before, but now she knew they were mates, and they will have sex. Lots of it.

His insides trembled from the anticipation of what's coming, and just thinking about Talia made him hard.

Damon adjusted his hard-on, blew into his palm to check his breath, and then ran his hand through his hair to tidy it up.

Should he knock? Ridiculous, it's his room. He and Talia are mates and there are no secrets between them.

Damon slowly turned the doorknob and his ears perked up when he heard a soft voice from the other side. Talia.

Damon opened the door just enough to peer inside. His eyes settled at the sight of Talia on the sofa, talking to two plush toys, aka Blackie and Cinna, who were arranged in a sitting position to face her.

"...I hope Damon won't scold me too much for going into the forest. I was reckless and it got him hurt. If something happened to him..." There was a small pause. "But no matter how angry he is, we don't need to think about moving. Daddy Damon won't kick us out when he finds his Luna, because it seems that's me..."

Damon's heart cracked as the weight of Talia's emotions washed over him.

Guilt. Joy. Relief. Love. Excitement.

How can he scold her for being reckless after this?

Just the amount of Talia's relief gave him a glimpse of stress she was suppressing because she feared that he will find his mate and abandon her.

He chided himself for not telling her earlier they are mates. Sure, she wouldn't believe him, but he should have kept on trying until she believed it.

Damon was confident he was protecting her, but now he knew that his way of protecting Talia caused her pain. All the words how she was special didn't mean much because he didn't tell her clearly they are mates.

"When did you get here?"

Talia's question pulled Damon out of his thoughts.

"A second ago.", Damon responded while hiding the rose behind his back and walking inside. "Sorry that I got delayed. Did you miss me?"

Talia's cheeks got a rosy tint. "Yes." She always missed him when he was not around. "Was it serious?"

Damon realized that Talia was asking about his so-called pack-related talk with Caden. "Nothing that can't be fixed."

Damon wanted to talk to Talia about Lisa and much more, but he decided to do it later because bringing up Lisa will ruin the mood and Talia was already apprehensive.

He was standing one step in front of Talia now.

Damon got down on his knee and presented her the rose. "This is for you."

Talia's eyes widened and a brilliant smile bloomed on her face.

"Thank you.", she said a bit breathily.

Damon watched Talia as she put the flower under her nose to take a whiff and he wished for the power to stop the time because the image of Talia beaming from happiness was perfect.

"Should you be kneeling?", Talia asked.

"You are the only one who can bring me down to my knees, kitten.", Damon said with a smile that made Talia's heart skip a beat. "You are my mate, and I will do anything to make you happy. Do you believe me?"

It's not that she didn't believe him, but... "You don't need to do anything. Just stay safe and... be mine."

Damon's smile widened. She could ask him for literally anything, yet she asked for so little.

If it's anyone else, Damon would suspect that she was just putting on a facade, because no woman can be this innocent and pure, but the bond allowed him to sense Talia's feelings and they confirmed her sincerity. Can she be any sweeter?

"I am already yours and always will be.", Damon assured her.

Talia looked into Damon's icy-blue eyes that reflected a myriad of emotions and she bit her lower lip nervously. He brought her the rose and was kneeling in front of her while professing his love, and she felt that she was lacking in expressing herself.

She inched closer and gave him a small kiss on the cheek. "Thank you for the flower. I would like to do something for you."

"Sure.", Damon responded right away.

Talia stood up and gestured for Damon to sit on the sofa. "Do you mind waiting here for a minute?"

Damon had no idea what she was up to, but he sat on the sofa obediently and watched as Talia dashed into the closet.

Chapter 219 - Talia Is Taking The Initiative

While waiting for Talia to return from the closet, Damon wondered what she was up to.

Talia said that she wanted to do something for him, and he hoped that it included two naked bodies. His and Talia's.

He remembered massaging oils that Talia brought after her spa outing with Maya a few days ago. This seemed like a good opportunity to use them. He moved a bit to adjust his hard-on. Thinking about Talia's oily body under his palms made him hard instantly.

Damon's gaze was drawn to two plush toys that were now looking at him and his mind drifted more than a decade into the past to a memory of his mother who was sitting while Damon combed her hair.

"You will know the true character of a person based on how they treat the ones who are below them, when no one is watching...", his mother said.

During those hair-combing sessions, Damon's mother would listen to whatever Damon had to say, and sometimes she would impart him with bits of wisdom.

It's been a while since he missed his parents, but now he really wished they were here. He would introduce Talia to them proudly and Talia would get two more people who would dote on her.

Damon smiled at the thought that Talia would definitely get along well with his mother. Talia gets along with everyone. She is so kind, that even toys get good treatment.

Well, Talia is kind, and Damon... not so much.

With one flick of his wrist, Cinna found herself on the floor.

Damon would do anything for Talia, but that plush toy reminded him of the lecherous coach who brought Talia to a secluded spot by the lake, and... Damon didn't want to think about it.

If Damon didn't fear that Talia would be heartbroken, the wretched toy would go with the bastard coach into the barren mountains and stay there forever.

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In the closet...

Talia looked at herself in the full-length mirror and thought how this might not be a good idea. How can she get out like this?

Maya said that Damon will love it and that for a guy there is no better treat than to see his woman like this.

Talia was inexperienced, but she didn't want to let Damon do everything and this was her attempt to show initiative.

Talia was wearing a red babydoll-style garment that was made out of lace which reached just below her behind, exposing her slender legs completely. Small lacy designs covered her nipples and crotch area, a delicate red bow was between her breasts, and everything else was sheer. Yes, she was wearing a dark red thong, but that didn't cover much either.

Scandalous.

The more she looked at herself, the more Talia's resolve crumbled.

She turned sideways and bent a little, only to see her butt cheeks peeking under the lacy hem of the sheer fabric.

Talia didn't get it. Was this nightwear or underwear? In any case, it didn't provide any warmth or coverage. It was more for decoration.

She gave herself another look and confirmed that this won't do. She was not brave enough to walk out of the closet wearing only this for Damon to see.

However, Talia told Damon that she will do something for him, and at that time, Talia thought about wearing this, but... now what?

Talia froze when she realized that there was a figure at the door of the closet, staring at her. Damon.

His eyebrows were so high up that they nearly reached his hairline. And something else was up but in his crotch area.

Damon realized that Talia was taking a lot of time and he came to see if everything was OK because he could feel her anxiety building up.

He expected to see many things, but this... just what was this?

It was not his birthday, yet he felt like there was a present in front of him. The best present ever. Talia even had a red bow between her breasts, but the best decoration was her intense blush that contrasted her bold outfit while painting the whole picture of a good girl gone bad.

The visual was so captivating that Damon stood rooted in his spot, and he would definitely get a nosebleed if most of his blood didn't pool in his crotch area. He was on the verge of fainting. Can a person die from extreme arousal?

They stared at each other for an unknown measure of time, and Damon was first to break his daze with a grin and, "Are you trying to seduce me, kitten?"

There was no need for Talia to do anything other than exist, but the fact that she dressed up like this told Damon she was willing, and that made his cock throb painfully in need to merge with Talia.

Of course, Damon saw numerous women in a variety of provocative outfits, but none of them was able to set his soul on fire how Talia can. She was smart, kind, shy, sometimes fierce, unaware of the power that brewed inside her and oblivious to how beautiful she was inside and out, and she always had a

smile for him that had the power to light up his day. Damon knew that no woman ever will be able to move him like that because this was Talia. His mate. His everything.

Damon's brain function was reduced to the desire to jab his rock-hard cock into her sweet pussy and to stay there until they die of old age.

Talia swallowed a mouthful of air. Damon's hungry gaze made her nervous.

"Turn around. Let me see you.", Damon's low voice sent vibrations through Talia's body that somehow converged at her core.

Per command, Talia slowly moved, and she hoped that her thundering heart won't jump out of her ribcage. She was confident that Damon can hear it.

Damon's hum of approval came from only an inch behind her, and Talia stiffened. She didn't realize at what point he closed the distance between them.

Damon didn't touch her, but Talia could feel Damon's energy splashing against her back that made her hairs stand on ends. He was dangerous, lethal, and she felt an overwhelming urge to submit to him, but even stronger than her impulse to submit was pride that swelled within her because this exquisite specimen of an Alpha was hers.

Damon was her mate. For real.

The powerful, scary, domineering, caring, passionate, moody, playful, and outrageously handsome Alpha who came with an addictive scent and solid embrace was hers.

Talia felt like pinching herself to confirm she was not dreaming.

Talia craned her neck to meet Damon's endlessly icy-blue eyes that stared at her with intensity like he can see into the depths of her soul.

"Is it working?", she asked in a whisper.

Damon didn't get it. "Hm?"

"You asked me if I'm trying to seduce you.", Talia reminded him, and Damon released a sexy low chuckle in response before wrapping his arms around her and pulling her to lean on him.

Talia felt his erection low on her back, and he murmured close to her ear, "It's working, kitten. The desire to feel your sweet pussy milking my cock is maddening."

Talia was not sure what was more outrageous, his words or the fact that her arousal swelled, but everywhere they touched, addictive sparks danced over her skin, and she really wanted to feel more, much more of it.

Damon loosened his hold when he felt Talia's body rotating to face him, and he eagerly welcomed her kisses.

Damon smiled into the kiss when he realized that her hands moved to unbutton his pants.

He thought that he was the impatient one, but the scent of her arousal was a confirmation that she craved for him, just as much he craved for her, and he loved that Talia was brave enough to take initiative.

Damon suppressed his urge to have his way with Talia right there on the floor of the closet. This was her moment and he wanted to see how far she will take it.

Chapter 220 - Feeling Each Other's Emotions [Bonus]

Talia's anxiousness disappeared as Damon's emotions washed over her.

She was not sure from where they came, but she definitely sensed admiration, approval, and desire, and she knew that no matter what she does, he won't take it against her.

Talia grabbed the waistband of his pants and pulled it lower while getting down on her knees and Damon held his breath while wondering if she is going to do what he thought she will, and then it happened.

"Hiss..."

Damon hissed when she took him into her mouth that was warm and soft and moist, and her tongue moved over his tip, sending sensational sparks that clouded his mind in pure lust.

The cataclysmic sensation took him by surprise and his legs gave in, making him hold onto Talia's shoulders to steady himself. It was that good.

Talia felt the pressure as Damon leaned his weight on her, and she realized that she can't hold him. He was heavy and her position was not the most comfortable one.

"Come down...", she called, and Damon plopped on his knees without delay, groaning the moment her lips reconnected with his cock that was aching for her touch.

Damon's pants were bunched around his ankles, preventing him from sitting all the way down and he didn't want to interrupt Talia, so he ended up sitting on his heels with his body leaning backward as he supported himself with his hands on the floor.

The sight of Talia down on her all four, leaning to suck him off with her snowy-white ass perked up in the air was mind-blowingly sexy. He really wanted to reach there and give her a squeeze or maybe spank her a bit, but his hands were busy supporting him, and his current position prevented him from moving and he ended up staring at the ceiling and letting Talia do with him whatever she wanted.

Talia looked up at Damon to see his blissful expression and she felt a sense of accomplishment. She did that.

Talia moved on instinct, emboldened by his reaction.

She sucked and licked, taking him into her mouth every time a bit more and she remembered the sensation of him reaching into her throat, so she did that as well and Damon rewarded her with a hearty groan.

That powerful and majestic Alpha was absolutely at her mercy, and she enjoyed the power she had over him.

Talia loved various sounds he released depending on what she did, and his arousal affected her, making her want to do more for him as her body tingled with faint numbing electricity.

"Talia... Talia...", Damon chanted in the rhythm she set, and she heard his erratic breaths that told her he needed just a bit more. But what could that more be?

She remembered some advice Maya gave her, and how quickly Damon moved when he held her hair in the shower, so she sucked harder and her head bobbed faster, and she reached with her free hand and gave his balls a squeeze.

As per command, Damon's body buckled as he cursed under his breath, and Talia gasped when his orgasm washed over her, making her nearly come herself. She struggled to stay focused while licking him, not willing to waste a single drop of that delicious dark chocolate.

The moment Talia let go of him, Damon plopped on the side and kicked those damned pants away. That was the closest thing he ever got to bondage, and he didn't like the feeling of being restricted.

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After catching his breath, Damon looked at Talia who was sitting on the floor next to him with a flustered expression.

"Are you OK?", Damon asked, and she responded with a nod.

Damon focused on Talia, but the only thing he could sense was arousal. It took him a moment to understand, "Did you feel my orgasm?"

Talia's eyes widened. Did she?

Damon grinned. "Our bond is getting stronger, kitten. I can feel your emotions, and you can feel mine." He leaned closer and kissed her shoulder. "I'm glad you know how good you make me feel."

Before Talia could respond, Damon pushed her down with his body and hovered above her.

"I don't know if I can wait until your wolf awakens fully before I mark you." Actually, he wanted to wait for his wolf to recuperate. The old guy was still sleeping, and Damon knew that he wouldn't want to miss the marking.

Damon leaned closer and kissed the base of her neck, where his mark will come. "Will you wear my mark, kitten?"

Talia inhaled a shaky breath. This was not the first time he asked her that question, but this time she knew he really meant it.

"With pride.", she responded.

Damon's heart swelled. Her consent meant the world to him.

"I can't find words to express how happy I am right now. Close your eyes and feel my emotions, kitten. This is what you do to me."

Damon smiled when he saw changes in Talia's expression, and he knew she felt his desire to ravish her body in every way possible.

"You will see how good it feels with the sparks of our bond. I hope you had enough rest and food because I'm not letting you go until morning."

With the corner of her eye, Talia saw scraps of red fabric flying to the side and she understood those used to be her garments. She didn't feel or hear any tearing, but she knew that she was completely naked and at some point, Damon removed his t-shirt.

Damon's kisses and caresses came with a life-altering dose of sparks that made her soul hum in pleasure, and he was right... Everything was so much better with the sparks, but what also enhanced her pleasure was the knowledge that Damon was her mate, and they were two halves of a whole. Damon was her other half.

"AHH!", a loud moan escaped her lips when Damon flicked her clit with his tongue and her whole body shivered because she nearly orgasmed the moment he touched her down there.

"Don't suppress it, kitten...", Damon growled. "Let me hear you scream my name."

His lips latched around her pleasure bud, and he sucked on it harshly, and Talia's eyes rolled at the back of her head as the ecstatic sparks jolted every cell in her body and she came apart within seconds.

She thought that he will let her go or at least give her a breather, but Damon continued sucking and licking and he even pushed two fingers inside her and she struggled to get enough oxygen into her system.

Her whole body shook violently as another wave of pleasure crashed on her, before the first one subsided, taking her to another level of high she never experienced before.

"Da... Dam... Da...", Talia blabbered unintelligently between gasps for air while he assaulted her pleasure centers with mighty strokes of his tongue that moved in perfect sync with his fingers that thrust inside her, and then her core tightened for a moment before she exploded into a mind-shattering orgasm.

"AH! DAMON!"

Damon hummed in satisfaction, finally slowing down, but still not letting her go completely because he enjoyed profusely her every ecstatic quiver and he lapped the juices her body released like they are the best delicacy he ever tasted.

Damon crawled on top of Talia, and she blinked to focus her sight on his handsome face that grinned at her.

"How was it?", Damon asked.

"I thought you can feel my emotions.", Talia responded.

"I can, but I want you to remember it."

She could feel his erection prodding at her entrance down there and she bit her lower lip in anticipation of what's coming while holding onto his shoulders firmly.

"Remember how that felt, kitten...", he murmured between kisses that he arranged on her neck.

"Because what's coming is even better. After tonight, you will worship my cock, just how I'm worshipping your pussy."

Her body was humming in the aftermath of her orgasm, and she was caught unprepared when that familiar push and stretch came with sparks that set her insides on fire.

It was almost like her first time, with the difference that there was no pain. Only pleasure.

Damon watched Talia's expression as her eyes lost focus, and he grinned victoriously before he jabbed himself inside fiercely for those last few inches.

"Oh, God!", a breathless cry escaped her lips.

"Not God, kitten.", Damon said and started rocking his hips. "This is me. Just me. And I am yours... Only yours... Forever..."

Damon's every move tugged on Talia's soul as he murmured sweet words close to her ear, and Talia clawed his back in her desire to bring him closer because no matter how close they were, it was not close enough.

With their bond strengthening, Damon and Talia could feel each other emotions that amplified the other, and they were lost in their lust and pursuit of carnal pleasures right there on the floor of the closet on the third floor of the packhouse.