

Alphas Bride 291

Chapter 291 - Meg And Kai (6)

"Thank you...", Kai's deep voice broke the silence.

Meg didn't get it. "For?"

"For being the best mate one could wish for."

Meg looked up at Kai and the pure sincerity in his boyish grin created a mix of emotions inside her.

He was so amazing that he called her the best, despite her flaws, and Meg wondered... was she worthy of him?

Meg never looked down on herself. Even when she plastered a fake smile while complimenting guys who won only because she was holding back, Meg had the confidence that couldn't be shaken.

However, this was different. This was not just any guy. This was her mate, Kai from the Midnight Guardians pack. But more than his impressive physique, handsome features, his status, or anything else that he is, it was about what he did.

Kai gave her his first time and his first kiss and Meg didn't do the same. He was sweet and unspoiled, yet she felt dirty.

Sure, being a virgin doesn't mean much in the society of werewolves. They start shifting in their teens, so everyone saw plenty of flesh, and when that combines with their lustful nature, the most difficult part is to wait until the eighteenth birthday.

The unwritten rule is that underage girls shouldn't be touched and that guys should wait until they are mature enough to indulge in carnal pleasures with the milestone being their eighteenth birthday, but not everyone is following it. After all, the sweetest fruit is the forbidden one.

However, Meg knew that the Midnight Guardians pack was different.

As much as Meg was confident in herself, all that dwindled when compared to Kai's brilliance.

"What's wrong?", Kai asked. Their mate bond allowed him to feel her dejection rising.

Meg pressed her lips into a line. She didn't want to voice her thoughts. Did Kai figure out that he was not her first? Considering his inexperience, probably not. Will he connect the dots later? Will he hate her then?

"Hey...", Kai called with concern obvious on his handsome face. "Are you not happy to be with me? Did I do something wrong? Tell me so that I can fix it."

Meg's heart cracked. The more he tried to comfort her, the guiltier she felt. "You did everything right, Kai. It's me. I fear that you are too good for me."

Kai's expression was full of love when he asked, "Are you doubting the Moon Goddess?"

"What?"

"The Moon Goddess made us mates, Meg. And that means we are perfect for each other. I have no idea from where you got that I'm too good for you, but whenever such nonsense comes to your mind again, remember that you are my other half. If you are not good, that means I'm not good either. As long as we can be together, I won't care if we are good or bad because being with you makes me feel complete."

Meg was dazed by his sweet-talking, yet he spoke eloquently like he was stating well-known facts. "You are doing it again."

"Doing what?"

"Proving how amazing you are."

Kai chuckled. "I was just speaking my mind. Feel free to do the same, Meg. Good or bad, I want to hear it all. There is nothing about you that can make me think less of you."

Emboldened by his words, Meg thought of getting that burden off her chest. It's better to come clean right away than later. Right?

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"What if... there is a man?", Meg said in a small voice while observing his facial expressions.

Kai's brows came together in confusion. He didn't know what Meg will say, but he definitely didn't expect her to bring up... "A man?"

Meg nodded. There were few of them, but she decided to stick to one. "In my life. A man."

Kai's expression darkened as he understood that the man reference is related to someone who is romantic and possibly intimate with Meg.

"You have a man? Break up with him or I will.", Kai growled dangerously.

"No, no...", Meg panicked. "In my past."

Kai's whole face contorted into a grimace as he struggled to contain his possessive green monster. He was never jealous in his life, and this caught him unprepared.

He had to get a grip on himself, and he needed to do it quickly.

Meg was telling him something and if he ended up exploding into a rage, there was a good chance Meg will start keeping secrets from him. And he didn't want secrets, not between the two of them.

Meg groaned as Kai's hold on her tightened to the point of hurting, but she didn't want to tell him to let go of her. She would take any punishment as long as he forgives her past indiscretions. Is that even possible?

Kai released a slow breath and dispelled the killing intent that swelled within him.

His firm grip became softer as he composed his thoughts.

"If it's in the past, I don't want to know about it.", Kai said eventually.

Kai cursed himself internally. Just a minute ago he told Meg that he wants to know everything, good or bad, yet he was already backtracking on it. Kai was familiar with the ways of the other packs, and he knew that werewolves start dating in their teens, and that's normal. His pack was the odd one.

Kai could handle anything other than the idea of Meg having someone else in her heart and mind, and the mental image of another guy embracing her was making his heart shatter into a million pieces, no matter when it happened.

What if it happened yesterday? What if that man is waiting for Meg's return to the Lightclaw pack? Is that why she asked to visit her family? So that she can sneak out with that guy while her family keeps him occupied?

"If it's in the present, deal with him or I will. As for the future..."

"My present and future have only you in it.", Meg said quickly, and Kai's heart ached when he felt her insecurities.

But he was glad to confirm that whatever man she mentioned was in the past. It's not now.

Kai felt stupid. He wanted to know everything about Meg, but now he realized that he can't handle the truth.

It was obvious that Meg was more experienced and if he was not from the Midnight Guardians pack, he would have many girls in his past also. Only the Moon Goddess knows how many times Kai relived himself (Kai lost count a long time ago), and if not for his locked abilities, he would probably search for a woman on those occasions instead of doing it with his hand.

Kai knew that they were products of their environment, and he shouldn't chastise Meg for being born and raised in a different pack.

The mood was ruined, and Kai blamed himself for that. The only good thing was that he was still embracing her and she didn't try to escape his hold.

Kai had a desperate need to start another topic because Meg's emotions were fluctuating.

Chapter 292 - Meg And Kai (7)

An invisible lightbulb lit up above Kai's head when he remembered one thing. "I heard that your grandfather was a Beta."

Meg tilted her head so that she can look at him. He was right, but... "Who told you?"

"Nate and Greg were talking during training this morning.", Kai said.

"Is that a problem?", Meg asked apprehensively.

Kai shook his head. "No. I want to ask you..." Kai made a dramatic pause before continuing, "Will you accept to be the second Beta of the Midnight Guardians pack once Axel takes over as the Alpha?"

Meg blinked while wondering if she heard him right. "Second Beta?"

Kai hummed in confirmation before explaining, "The Midnight Guardians pack is led by two Alphas. Those are Axel's parents, Alpha Isaac and Alpha Sophia. My father is a Beta and so is my mother. However, my mother decided to focus on her hobbies so my father does most of the work officially while she assists him when needed. That is similar to how Caden and Maya are functioning here."

Meg nodded in understanding. In the Lighclaw pack (and many others) only men hold positions while their female partners are mostly for decoration regardless of what they are able to achieve. Maya is one of the rare females that holds a high-ranking position.

Seeing Meg's nod, Kai continued, "Once Axel takes over as the Alpha, my parents will retire, and I will be Axel's Beta. In our pack is common that partners share duties and responsibilities, as long as they are up to it. Normally, I would ask you this after I mark you, but considering your bloodline and your aura, I can confirm that you have Beta qualities, so I'm asking you now... are you up to it?"

Meg needed a moment to process this information. "Does that mean I get to train with you?" And there will be no need to do it secretly?

Kai smiled. Her expression told him she was willing. "You will get to train with me, eat with me, work with me, sleep with me, and anything in-between will be with me. I will teach you everything you need to know. We can start slowly and you can pick up responsibilities you are comfortable with. The only thing I need to know is if you are willing."

Meg's heart swelled with warm and fuzzy feelings. Kai didn't want to discard her. He wanted to spend time with her. He wanted to spend ALL of his time with her. She really liked that.

Meg cocked an eyebrow cheekily. "You will teach me stuff? What if there are things I can teach you?"

"I will be honored to learn from you.", he responded without missing a beat. "After all, we are equals."

Meg's smile mirrored Kai's. Spending her nights and days with Kai sounded fantastic. And he said they are equals.

Was it normal to be this comfortable with a man she just met? But there was nothing she could do about it. Other than being outrageously handsome and hers, Kai was patient and caring, he didn't take it against her that he was not her first, and he was not intimidated by the possibility that she might best him in something. He was the fantastic mate she always wished for, and he was much more than that.

"I would love to be the second Beta of the Midnight Guardians pack. With you.", Meg said dreamily.

Kai was relieved that the previous awkward atmosphere was dispelled.

The only things in the air were happiness, anticipation, excitement... lust. A lot of lust.

Kai cupped Meg's cheek with his palm and leaned to kiss her lips. Once, twice... and then he pushed her to lay on her back and he got on top of her, and both of them forgot about their previous idea to shower.

They will do that later.

Now Kai wanted to fuck Meg thoroughly until she forgets about any man from her past. He was determined to engrave himself into her body with his every thrust because she is his. Completely.

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Meg opened her eyes drowsily at the sensation of floating.

Kai was carrying her into the bathroom.

How many times did they make love? She lost count. The last thing Meg remembered was that they were cuddling and... did she fall asleep? It seems like it.

Meg leaned her head on Kai's shoulder and smiled helplessly when she realized that his erection was poking her behind.

Her man was insatiable.

Meg's stamina was always enviable, but Kai defeated her in every way possible. Was that the outcome of Kai holding back his urges for two decades?

She was too tired to think about it.

Kai stepped into the tub that was full of warm water and sat in it with Meg in his arms.

She settled between his legs and used his chest as a pillow, too tired to move. Luckily, the tub was extra-wide, so there was space for both of them even if they laid side-by-side.

Kai took a sponge from the side and squirted some body wash on it before he started gently washing Meg's body.

She tilted her head up to allow him better access to her neck and she moaned as the sponge moved down her collarbones. He made circles around her breast and then created a path toward her navel, and at some point, he released the sponge and started caressing her with his hands.

Like a child who found a new toy, Kai found every part of Meg's body fascinating.



He teased and pinched her nipples, enjoying the sight of them hardening and the soft moans that Meg released. Did she know that those sounds were making his cock twitch?

Meg couldn't believe how her body reacted to his touch. She was exhausted only a few minutes ago, yet now her body hummed in arousal and need to for release.

Kai looked over Meg's shoulder down, and the sight of her breasts half-submerged into the water rising and falling as she breathed was mesmerizing.

He cupped her breasts and gave them a squeeze.

"I can do this all day and not get bored of it.", he murmured close to her ear, and she laughed.

Meg tilted her head to look at him. "I am yours, Kai. What's mine is yours. Feel free to do whatever you want. I hope you will never get bored of me."

Kai's smile reflected in his eyes as he leaned to kiss her lips. He sucked and nibbled on them, and his hands were not idle either as the sparks of their bond danced wherever they touched.

He caressed and washed her abdomen, her legs... moving slowly down the inside of her thighs until his fingers nearly touched her flower... almost there, almost... and then he moved back up.

Meg's body arched in need of that additional stimulation, but Kai would always pull back at the last moment, refusing to touch her where it counts.

"Kai... please...", Meg whimpered.

"Please, what?" He pretended not to know.

Meg knew that he wanted her to speak naughty and she had no problems doing it.

"I want you big cock in my pussy, Kai. Now."

Kai's eyebrows shot up at her words. He will need some time to get used to his risqué mate, but he didn't hate it. Not even a little bit.

"Let's go to bed."

Meg shook her head and pushed herself away from him. "Here."

She leaned to grab the opposite edge of the tub and Kai gaped at Meg's perfect ass that was sticking out of the water with her pussy below it, right there for him to see.

It was all glistening with water and bubbles and Kai extended his arm because he needed to touch her down there.

Meg rocked her hips against his hand.

"Yes... yes... just like that...", she breathed.

Kai scooted closer and grabbed her hips, rotating them so that she perks up her ass.

"Ah!", a lustful moan ripped from Meg's chest, and she looked down to see Kai under her with his face buried between her legs.

Most of his body was underwater but even with the extra-wide tub, he was definitely at an awkward angle, however, that didn't stop him from caressing her clit with his tongue in mighty strokes that didn't waver.

To Kai, Meg tasted like honey, the addictive kind, and he hungrily devoured the juices her body released. He couldn't get enough of it.

"Kai... Kai..." , Meg called breathlessly, and she clutched the edge of the tub as her body shook in ecstatic waves that crashed on her body, threatening to burst her into a million pieces. Surely, a person can't perish from too many orgasms. Right?

Her mind was spinning, and she didn't hear the splashing sounds as Kai got on his knees behind her with urgency.

And just when she thought that he gave her a breather, she felt pressure and a stretch and the otherworldly friction as he entered her from behind.

Kai marveled this new position as her sweet pussy gripped his cock at a different angle.

He loved the slapping sound and the way Meg's buttcheeks rippled whenever he slammed himself into her.

The grip on her hips made it easy for him to control the pace and it was better than any of the previous times, confirming that his sex mastery was rising with practice!

Chapter 293 - At The Beach (5)

The lunch was over, and our group moved to the area where towels waited for them.

Within a minute, they felt the scorching July heat on their skin. Werewolves are good when facing cold weather, but heat is their nemesis.

Guys suggested that they continue sitting at the tables because they will be in the shade of big umbrellas, but girls rejected the idea.

How can they enjoy the beach without relaxing on the towels that were spread on the soft sand?

The solution was obvious: remove umbrellas from the tables and stick them in the sand around the towels.

Everyone agreed that this was a brilliant idea.

That led to the current situation. Guys were busy relocating the umbrellas, Omegas were cleaning and removing the tables after lunch, and girls went to stand ankle-deep in the water while waiting for the shade to be ready.

It was only four umbrellas and if the girls went there also, they would get in the way.

With nothing better to do, the girls discussed the latest topic: Meg and Kai.

They started guessing how their lives will change, other than Meg moving to the Midnight Guardians pack.

"Does Meg have a big family?", Maya asked Kalina.

Unfortunately, Kalina herself was a new face and she saw Meg only twice so far, so she didn't know much.

"I know that her parents are not ranked members. Other than that... she went to the same school with Tony."

Similarly, Kai was from the Midnight Guardians pack, and no one was close to him.

They could ask Tony, Axel, or some of the other guys, but they were busy with their tasks and girls didn't want to disturb them for the sake of some light gossip.

With both Meg and Kai being unknown, their topic shifted.

"Ah, I still remember the rush when I saw Caden the first time.", Maya said dreamily.

When no one responded, Maya looked at the four faces around her, and saw that all of them were lost in thoughts.

Maya was the most experienced in terms of having a mate. Kalina and Tony were still fresh, Talia didn't know that Damon was her mate until a few days ago, Tatiana recognized her mate that same morning, and Mindy was still waiting for hers.

Maya thought it was funny. "Each of us has a different situation related to mates, and we are so close in age." She turned to Kalina. "Tell us about you meeting Tony for the first time."

Kalina was ready to talk about it. "He was dorky in an adorable way. I remember Tony walking toward me, and he tripped on the carpet. His arms waved wildly and in the last moment he put them in front of him, to save his face from meeting the floor." She giggled. "He ended up doing three pushups, before standing up coolly with his hands in his jeans' pockets, like that fall was on purpose."

All girls burst into laughter.

"I wish I was there to see that.", Tatiana said.

"What about you?", Talia asked.

Tatiana's laughter stopped abruptly when she realized that question was directed at her.

"What about me?"

"How did it feel when you met Max?", Talia asked.

Tatiana cleared her throat awkwardly. "You were there. You saw it."

Kalina licked her tongue. "The only thing I saw was that you were eating his face. Tell us, how did it feel? Does he have a specific scent?"

"You didn't talk about it either.", Tatiana said in her defense.

"I said that he was adorable. As for what makes him special... chestnuts."

"Chestnuts?", Tatiana, Mindy, Talia, and Maya asked in unison.

Kalina nodded. "Roasted chestnuts. I love those. I could stuff myself with roasted chestnuts all day, every day."

Maya giggled. "Well, you got your wish. Tony is stuffing you with..."

"Don't!", Tatiana exclaimed. "We all know what you were about to say, but don't. She is my baby sister and the idea of Tony stuffing her with his..." she couldn't make herself say it. "I don't want to think about it."

"But you are thinking about it.", Maya said in a singing voice.

"Instead of thinking about me, you should think about your mate.", Kalina said to Tatiana.

"I am thinking about him.", Tatiana said irritably. She was not used to others poking their nose in her business.

"Oh? What are you thinking?", Talia asked. "I didn't see much progress during lunch."

Tatiana realized that Maya, Kalina, and Talia were eager for answers, and she looked at Mindy who was silent so far.

"Don't play with my brother.", Mindy said. "What Max did for you so far, he never did for any other. It should be that way because you are mates, but I fear that you might end up pushing him away. I don't know what else you expect from him before you accept him as your mate. He is an Alpha, not a clown."

Seeing that Tatiana's expression was frozen, Mindy wondered if she said too much. She always speaks her mind, and this time she had Maddox's best interest at heart. Mindy saw Maddox bending and twisting in order to get Tatiana's attention ever since they returned from their shopping trip, and Mindy was irked that Tatiana didn't react, not even a little bit.

"I am saying this as Max's sister.", Mindy said. "He wants to make it work and I hope you want the same. Don't dwell on what happened this morning because it might grow into something that can't be fixed. Both of you need to decide what's more important and I hope you will pick your mate because it's obvious that he picked you. Figure out what you need from him in order to get over it, and tell him. He was never good at guessing or waiting."

Tatiana didn't respond to Mindy's comment about Max because she didn't know what to say.

Mates should fall for each other immediately. They did that.

Mates should put each other first and their love should be unconditional. They failed at that.

How Tatiana saw it, if Maddox put her first, they wouldn't encounter a situation that morning where two she-wolves emerged from the bathroom. And if she loved him unconditionally, she would brush it away with, 'Don't let it happen again'... and everything would be perfect.

Both of them seem to be faulty at this mate-thing, and Tatiana was not sure how to resolve this knot that formed in her stomach.

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Maya wanted to pull the group back to the cheery mood.

'PAK!'

Maya clapped loudly, startling the other four ladies out of their thoughts.

"What should we do first?", Maya asked enthusiastically while her eyes darted between Talia, Kalina, Tatiana, and Mindy, reminding them that they came to the beach to have fun.

Kalina patted her stomach. "I ate too much." Tony was feeding her relentlessly. "Let's not do something too physically taxing until I digest this a bit."

Talia was eyeing the big beach ball since the dessert. "How about we play with the beach ball in shallow water?" She really wanted to do that.

Seeing that no one objected, Maya announced, "Alright! Let's start, and guys can join us when they figure out the umbrellas."

The girls all looked at the scene of Tyler and Tony trying to stabilize one open umbrella that was wobbly, and Maddox jabbing the second umbrella in the ground with a lot of force.

The beach was sandy, but that was artificial. Under a few inches of fine sand, there was a hard surface made of tightly packed soil and clay. The sand was not sturdy enough to hold the umbrellas, while the hard soil was difficult to get into.

Maddox didn't want to have anything to do with those blasted umbrellas, but Tatiana said how shade would be nice, and there he was... trying to get the umbrella into the ground and wondering if he will succeed before he breaks the flimsy metallic rod that already started bending.

Caden, Paul, Nate, Axel, and Greg were discussing something while pointing at the remaining umbrellas, obviously coming up with a good layout.



Damon was observing the umbrella-related efforts from the side, like a boss who doesn't need to work.

Chapter 294 - At The Beach (6)

It was obvious that guys will take some time with their current task (aka setting up umbrellas for shade), so girls decided to start with the fun.

There was no point in looking at the guys, they had enough audience among other beachgoers anyway.

If not for the secured VIP area, many women from the beach would jump on them already.

Tatiana was first to remove her dress, leaving her toned body in a stylish black bikini with golden details. She produced a big silky scarf from her bag and tied it around her waist to create a makeshift knee-length skirt that looked like it came from a fashion magazine.

"Oww...", a muffled cry was heard, and Tatiana knew that was Maddox getting smacked in the head by an umbrella. She saw him gaping at her while he wielded the umbrella haphazardly, but she pretended not to notice.

Tatiana stepped into the water and observed the lake.

She found it interesting to see swimmers on the left and on the right, while everything in front was undisturbed. It was obvious that this was area marked as VIP and others didn't dare to trespass. The discipline of these people surprised Tatiana. If they were humans, someone would dare to test the boundaries and get close.

Tatiana attended many parties, but whenever there was a VIP crowd involved, others were denied access in the visible range. It was easier to keep the uninvited people away completely, than to separate areas. And of course, there are always paparazzi and various spies who are eagerly waiting for celebrities to make something worthy of the front page. Scandals sell magazines the best.

"What are you thinking about?", Maya asked as she stepped next to Tatiana.

"This is really beautiful." She didn't want to comment on the separation of the VIP area from others.

The lake was vast and even with the noise from all around them, it gave her a sense of peace.

"It is. This lake is the center of the Dark Howlers pack. No matter what's going on in the town, every evening, youngsters gather here for parties that end with skinny dipping. This place perfectly combines fun and adventure."

Tatiana's interest was piqued. "Adventure?"

Maya nodded knowingly and looked toward the middle of the lake. "There is a legend that mermaids live at the bottom of this lake."

Tatiana cocked an eyebrow skeptically. "A legend? Do you expect me to believe how there might be mermaids in the middle of werewolf territory and no one went down to investigate?"

"I went down there three times.", Maya said.

"And considering that it's still a legend, I can assume you didn't find anything. Isn't that proof how there are no such creatures as mermaids? At least not in this lake."

Maya shook her head. "You don't understand. The lake is calm on the surface, but once you reach a certain depth, you will feel the underwater currents. They are not very strong but are enough to stir the mud from the lakebed and disorient you. No matter how strong your night vision is, it's impossible to see further than your arm can stretch, and the kelp forest is so dense that one can easily get tangled down there."

Tatiana blinked while thinking about Maya's words. She got it... the water was murky and vine-like plants were all over the place, but... "No one thought to bring some tools in order to trim those plants and clear the way?"

It was Maya's turn to look at Tatiana with disapproval. "Do you always think about destroying the habitat of other creatures in order to get what you want?" Even if there are no mermaids, numerous fish and other creatures live there.

"That's not what I meant.", Tatiana quickly backtracked. "I wanted to say that if there is such a big mystery, I would do my best to investigate. With enough people, you can sweep the place in one go and dispel any false stories that are stirring kids to go down there and risk their lives."

Maya realized that she showed hostility. It was not intentional. "The legend also says that only those who are worthy will be able to see the mermaids. By forcing our way in, we risk disturbing the ecosystem of the lake, and if the mermaids are really there, they will be angry."

Tatiana stifled a laugh. "If that's true, why did you go there more than once? I'm not sure if you are tempting me to go down there, or if you are telling me to stay away."

"Take it any way you want.", Maya responded without missing a beat. "But if you go there and strange things happen, relax and go with the flow. It's the mermaids."

"Did you say, mermaids?", Kalina asked breathily from behind.

"Yes, yes. We have those at the bottom of the lake.", Maya said enthusiastically.

Kalina's eyes sparkled. "Can I see them?"

Maya was pleased that one of the Wilkow sisters was interested in the myths of Darkbourne. "Only if you are worthy. The bottom is murky, and the kelp forest is vast and full of dangers..."

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Tatiana rolled her eyes and disconnected from Maya and Kalina who shared interest in the mermaid-nonsense.

Kalina was always a dreamer who believed in things like Tooth Fairy, Sandman, and Baba Yaga. And it seems that mermaids should be added to that list also.

How Tatiana saw it, mermaids at the bottom of the lake was a campfire story that started when someone saw a large fish jumping in the distance. It's good to entertain youngsters, but Tatiana was not part of that group.

Tatiana is a serious businesswoman who happens to be a werewolf and she came from Europe to check on her baby sister (aka Kalina).

Now that she ascertained Kalina and Tony are getting along well, and he is not taking advantage of Kalina's kind and carefree nature, Tatiana decided to spend a day or two relaxing before she goes back to reality. Chasing ghosts (or mermaids) was never her thing.

What Tatiana didn't expect was to bump into Maddox.

Mindy's words echoed into Tatiana's head.

Tatiana knew that Mindy was right. She shouldn't play with Maddox.

The truth was that Tatiana was not playing with him, however, she didn't know what to do with him either.

Finding a mate should be a monumental event worth celebrating, yet she found her mate and things just got complicated.

Tatiana turned to look at the big hunk who was cursing an umbrella.

Yes, Tatiana came to check on her sister who found her mate, and Tatiana ended up finding her own mate. Who would have thought of that? And he is an Alpha, with a full schedule and responsibilities he can't neglect. Tatiana is a busy woman herself. How will they make their relationship work? Will they make it work?

Chapter 295 - At The Beach (7) [Bonus ]

Author's note:

Here is a shoutout to DespinaNY!

Thank you, DespinaNY, for the magic castle!

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"Do you believe in that story about mermaids?", Mindy asked Talia. The two of them were standing on the side and listening to Kalina's and Maya's excited chatter.

Talia shrugged. "Unless I see them, I can't be a hundred percent sure they exist, but just because I didn't see them, doesn't mean they are not real."

If Mindy asked Talia this a month ago, Talia's answer would be that there are no such things as mermaids. Her life was too gloomy for her to believe in anything magical.

However, since then, Talia met Damon who found her in the attic, he gave her a place to live and food and more than she ever dreamed of. So yes, thanks to Damon, Talia started believing in fairytales, miracles, and above all, she believes in Damon.

"How about you?", Talia asked Mindy. "Do you think mermaids are real?"

"Yes.", Mindy responded without missing a beat.

"You do?"

"Of course. There are many things in the world we don't know about, but that doesn't mean those things don't exist. Take us for example. If you go to human town and ask if werewolves are real, what will they say?"

Talia thought how Mindy's words make sense.

Talia took a mental note to ask Damon about those mermaids. Considering his adventurous and rebellious nature, if there is anything mysterious down there, he definitely found it.

"Stop talking about mermaids...", Tatiana snapped at Maya. "At this rate, Lina will find herself at the bottom of the lake, searching for them. Will you take responsibility for her safety?"

Maya pouted. She was secretly hoping that Kalina will join her and the two of them give it a go together. Caden forbid Maya from going again down there, but if Kalina comes, then Caden won't be able to stop them. Who knows, maybe this time she really sees mermaids?

"Stop being such a worrywart.", Kalina frowned at her sister. "What's a life without some excitement?"

Tatiana cocked an eyebrow. "Some excitement? Didn't you hear about murky waters and currents that make you disoriented so you get lost in kelp forest? Unless you are a fish, stay out of it. Or even better, tell Tony. If he agrees that you can go mermaid hunting, I will stay out of it."

"No, no...", Maya was quick to interject. "Let's not bring guys into this."

Tatiana smiled smugly, feeling victorious. "And why is that?"

"Guys are overprotective. If it's up to them, they will jump into a volcano and wrestle rattlesnakes, while keeping us under a glass bell.", Maya said.

Talia agreed with this. She had a fresh memory of Damon jumping into a waterfall and then shouting at her for doing the same.

"OK. OK.", Kalina said while waving her arms between Tatiana and Maya to get their attention. "No more mermaid talk. We said that we are going into the water, so let's get down to swimsuits." She turned to Maya and mouthed, "Later".

"I saw that!", Tatiana snapped.

Kalina blinked at Tatiana innocently. "What did you see? There was nothing..." She pulled her t-shirt over her head and got busy unbuttoning her shorts. Just like other girls, she had a swimsuit under her clothes.

Talia was fascinated by the tattoos that covered Kalina's exposed back. As Kalina's body moved, it looked like that artwork came to life.

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"Are you sure that there are no stands for these umbrellas?", Axel asked Damon suspiciously.

"My Omegas searched for them, but they had no luck finding anything.", Damon responded with all the sincerity in the world.

Axel didn't believe him. Damon was standing on the side and enjoying Maddox's struggles.

"The stands should be in the same place from where tables and umbrellas came. It's obvious that they are a set.", Axel said dryly.

Damon nodded. "They should. However, it's been ages since any of these were used, and over time things got lost. Don't worry, I'm sure they will be found. Or if they are not, we can come up with something that will work."

Damon didn't care about the stands. He asked Omegas to bring a large white canopy that they use in the garden of the packhouse when there is a gathering. That should provide shade for all their towels.

The canopy will arrive any minute, but Damon didn't want to reveal that because, just as Axel suspected, Damon was enjoying Maddox's struggles.

"I thought that your front is impressive, but your back is even better!", Talia's excited voice drifted toward Damon and his ears perked up. Was she talking about him? Definitely!

He straightened his posture and puffed his chest so that she can get a better view of his back.

"That bird is beautiful..."

Damon's brows came together. He has a lot of muscles, but he was not aware that any of them resemble a bird.

Damon turned toward the direction where Talia was, and his expression darkened when he saw Talia fawning over Kalina. Damned tattoos!

...

By the time Talia finished visually inspecting Kalina's tattoos, Mindy, Maya, and Tatiana were in the waist-deep water, passing a massive beach ball among each other.



"Are you two coming?", Maya asked in a singing voice.

"I'm ready!", Kalina exclaimed and dashed into the water.

Talia realized that she was the only one not ready. She unbuttoned the top three buttons of her dress and pulled her arms out before she shimmied out of the garment and flicked it with her foot on the towel.

Talia made a step toward the water when everything turned dark.

"Ahh!", Talia screamed and started flailing her legs.

There was a fluffy fabric all around her and she lost her footing!

She didn't fall, and there were two strong arms holding her, and something firm pressed on her back. Was she being kidnapped? In front of everyone!? And why was no one helping her!?

"Relax, kitten. It's me.", Damon's voice sounded close to her ear.

Talia was flabbergasted. Damon? What the...?

"I need to talk to you.", Damon said.

"Can you let me go first?", Talia squeaked.

"Sure...", Damon kept her down and she struggled to remove fabric that was obstructing her face.

It was a beach towel.

Talia was not happy. No matter what Damon wanted, was there a need to wrap her in the towel and carry her? The beach was packed with people, and they all saw him acting like a kidnapper.

Talia wanted to keep the towel away, but Damon was quick to grab it and wrap Talia in it from shoulders down.

"What are you doing?", Talia asked while wondering what got into him.

Damon looked at Talia and his brows furrowed while he scrambled to find an acceptable answer to her question.

He thought that his biggest problem was Talia admiring someone else's body (aka Kalina's tattoos), but then he saw her getting undressed and she was left in only a red bikini and... how can he allow others to see her gorgeous body? That is only for him to see, damnit!

If he knew that it will be one thing after another, he would put a stop to the idea of an afternoon on the beach!

Chapter 296 - At The Beach (8)

After a few torturously long seconds under Talia's scrutinizing gaze, Damon thought of something to explain his erratic behavior.

"Your skin is pale. You should cover up so you don't get sunburns."

Talia wanted to say that everyone else is down to their swimsuits and just fine, but then she looked at herself. She really was pale. Actually, every person other than Talia was tanned to some degree, and her skin appeared super-white among that bunch of people. That's because she spent most of the time in the attic, and since she came to the Dark Howlers pack she was busy and didn't go much in the sun.

Talia wondered if Damon was right. Will her skin get sunburns?

She couldn't imagine that he would lie about something like that, and his concern seemed genuine.

Talia was never like this in the sun, so she was not sure, but still... "Even if I burn, I will heal quickly."

Damon shook his head, indicating how that's not acceptable. "How can I allow you to suffer? Any scratch or burn on you hurts me thousand times over. I asked Omegas to bring sunscreen. Be good and stay with me until then." Covered up. And there was no one coming with the sunscreen. Talia should just stay with him for the rest of the day.

Talia couldn't believe this. "But they are playing with the ball now. By the time sunscreen arrives, the game will be over."

Damon was never so conflicted. He wanted Talia to be happy, but he couldn't leave her so exposed for others to see either.

He got an idea.

"Here...", he reached to the side. "Wear my t-shirt. That should do it." His t-shirt looked like a baggy minidress on her, so it was acceptable.

Talia looked at the t-shirt he was holding and then at his expectant expression, and she thought of something... "Is this because I'm exposed?"

It wouldn't be fair. He was in his swim trunks only. They talked about it!

And this was a beach. Everyone was wearing swimwear!

"What? No!", Damon lied with a straight face. "I am just concerned about your skin. Now put this on and you can go and play, and I won't worry about you."

Talia didn't want to argue. She wanted to play with her girlfriends in the water!

Talia grabbed Damon's t-shirt and pulled it over her head while Damon held the towel around her so that it doesn't fall down and reveal her body for others to see.

With that, Talia sent Damon an air-kiss and dashed into the water.

Damon was sure that some already got a peek of Talia's beauty before he wrapped her in the towel, and Damon was ready to gauge their eyes out!

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A minute ago...

While Damon and Talia negotiated for Talia to wear Damon's t-shirt, Axel used this opportunity to approach Maddox who was still struggling to set up an umbrella. The holding bar was crooked under Maddox's manhandling, but he was not giving up.

"What's the situation there?", Axel asked while gesturing with his chin toward Damon and Talia. "Did you find out anything new?"

Maddox looked at Axel in confusion and it took him a few seconds to remember that he and Axel were plotting to come here and expose Damon's and Talia's relationship. However, that was before Maddox knew that Talia and Damon are mates.

Maddox recorded Damon and Talia dancing and being lovey-dovey during Kalina's party at the Lightclaw pack and he sent those to Axel together with selected information. Maddox wanted Axel to be his

accomplice, and possibly take the blame if Damon discovers them and blows a fuse. That's why Axel was here and now Maddox was not sure what to say.

"There are some developments.", Maddox said mysteriously.

Axel leaned closer, obviously wanting to know more. "Well?"

"I don't know if you heard, but I found my mate.", Maddox said with a big smile. "Tatiana Wilkow. She is the one in the black and golden bikini."

Axel wanted to say how he was asking about Talia and Damon (well, Talia mostly), but he didn't want to appear rude. "Congratulations on finding your Luna. Should I assume that you are totally focused on her now and you forgot about our plans?"

Maddox pressed his lips into a line. What plans? They only spoke about coming here and then figuring out something!

In front of Axel's disappointed gaze, Maddox felt guilt swelling within him and he couldn't pretend that he doesn't know anything.

"Axel", Maddox called. "I advise you to stay out of it."

Axel was alerted. "Out of what?"

"Their relationship is not simple."

"Not simple? What do you mean? Can you stop talking in riddles?"

Maddox was exasperated. Why can't Axel understand hints?

Damon told Maddox that he and Talia are mates, and how that was not a secret, yet it shouldn't be publicized either. Maddox didn't know if Axel belongs to the group of friends who can know about it, or if he was part of the general public. There was only one person who could decide that.

"You will need to ask Damon.", Maddox said.

Axel exhaled in frustration. "Every time I bring up Talia in front of Damon, he looks at me like he wants to rip my head off."

"And that should tell you that their relationship is not simple."

"Why can't you tell me?"

"Because it's not mine to tell.", Maddox responded right away. "You said it. Damon is protective of her. I don't want to say something I shouldn't and get on his bad side. If you want to know what's going on, it's better to ask him directly."

Axel understood that Maddox won't tell him. Well, he can't force him.

Axel gave Maddox a stiff nod and turned to see Omegas arriving with a bundle of white cloth and long bars that will be used to frame the structure which will hold the canopy.

"You can stop fiddling with that umbrella.", Axel said.

"Damn it!", Maddox cursed under his breath when he saw what Omegas were bringing. Caden was telling them where to set up the canopy.

Maddox threw the bent umbrella on the side and walked in large strides toward the source of his anger. "Damon! I want an explanation!"

Damon laughed and dashed into the lake with Maddox hot on his trail.

Two big guys rushed into the lake through the girls, splashing them in the process.

"Are you racing!?", Maya shouted after Damon and Maddox.

Of course, two Alphas didn't respond. They both dove underwater.

Damon was confident that he can outswim Maddox and he had no intention of stopping until Maddox cools off.

Maya looked at Caden questionably who was standing on the beach.

'What's going on?', Maya asked Caden through the mind-link.

Caden scratched the back of his head. 'I'm not sure.'

Well, Caden had a hunch, but he didn't think that two Alphas will act so childishly in public for everyone to see.

Chapter 297 - At The Beach (9)

Damon and Maddox reached far into the lake when Damon abruptly stopped swimming and turned toward his pursuer (aka Maddox).

Damon was swimming in order to escape Maddox's wrath, and while doing so Damon was coming up with ideas on how to pacify the raging Alpha whose murderous aura was leaking all over. Damon knew why Maddox was pissed, and Damon had no regrets about it. However, he needed an exit that will allow him to avoid a brawl.

Damon would never avoid a good fight, but this was different. With Talia and Tatiana present, neither Damon nor Maddox would give up easily and them ending in a hospital was not a good ending either so... Damon needed a sophisticated solution to come out of his predicament.

For Maddox, this was much more than just a crooked umbrella.

Maddox's irritation started waaaay early that day.

He was having his usual carefree time with two she-wolves, and things were going well. Next, he soared into the sky when he met his mate, only to plunge into the depths of hell when Tatiana slapped him.

The rest of the day was horrible because the only almost-positive thing was holding hands with Tatiana in the car. Maddox was not happy about that small feat because Tatiana let go of him the moment the car stopped moving. Sure, holding hands might be good progress for someone, but for Alpha who just found his mate, anything other than carnal pleasures until complete exhaustion was not acceptable.

During lunch, Maddox was hovering around Tatiana, hoping to soften her up in order to get his chance to sink his cock into her tender flesh and claim her as his officially, but Tatiana was not cooperating. Holding back went against his instincts, and his impatience was bubbling and threatening to become something that can cause unimaginable consequences.

Maddox thought that he might score points with Tatiana by providing her the best shade on that damned beach, but when Maddox realized that he was fighting the wretched umbrella only because Damon was messing with him, Maddox needed to release his fury.

Maddox was chasing after Damon full speed while cursing Damon who seemed to have fins attached to his feet.

Maddox really wanted to get his hands on Damon and release his frustration, but the moment Damon stopped, Maddox paused and eyed Damon cautiously.

Damon was never the one to give up on anything, and this looked like a trap and not surrender. How can Maddox allow himself to be outsmarted again?



Maddox was confident that Damon stopping on his own, just like that, meant nothing good.

"Why did you stop?", Maddox asked suspiciously.

"We need to talk.", Damon said.

Maddox increased his vigilance. Did he already step into a trap? "About?"

"You and Tanya."

Maddox's lips twitched. "Should I believe that you give a shit about me after you left me there to make an ass of myself in front of my mate?"

Damon shrugged. "Think what you want, but the reality is that you need me if you want to get anywhere."

Maddox couldn't deny the obvious. He knew that Tatiana was not mellowing down, and Maddox had no idea how to woo a woman. No matter what he does, the likelihood was that he will make it worse, and worse than his current situation would be catastrophic.

"Say what's on your mind.", Maddox grumbled while eyeing the calm lake all around them. Are there warriors surrounding him underwater?

"You need privacy."

Maddox snorted. "On this beach?" Everyone could see that Tanya would rather spend time with Kalina and girls than with Maddox.

"Not on this beach but..." Damon turned his head to the side and pointed in a certain direction. "You should go there."

That was the spot where Keith took Talia during Summer Solstice.

Maddox was not sure if Damon was setting him up again, but he was desperate for a solution to his situation with Tatiana. He could always start a brawl later.

"Where?"

Damon swam closer to Maddox and explained, "There... do you see those rocks?"

It took Maddox some time to pinpoint the location. "And how should I get Tanya there?"

"That's up to you.", Damon said. "Don't look at me like I just cursed your whole family. Tanya is obviously not rejecting you which means she is waiting for your move. I will ask Omegas to prepare some snacks and drinks for you to carry, and you invite Tanya for a walk."

"Do you think she will accept?"

Damon was not sure if Tatiana will accept, but he knew that... "If you stay in the group, you will make zero progress. You need to talk to her openly, and the audience will prohibit you from doing that..."

And just like that, Maddox forgot about his previous grudge against Damon and was set on inviting Tatiana to join him for a walk.

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By the time Maddox and Damon decided to return to the beach, the canopy was set up.

Girls finished their game with the ball and guys joined them in the water.

Maya, Paul, Nate, Greg, Tyler, and Caden were competing who can hold their breath underwater longer, and Axel was watching them to make sure no one cheated. Axel wanted to compete also, but others said how his Alpha bloodline would give him an unfair advantage, so he accepted to be the referee.

Mindy and Tatiana went swimming at a relaxed pace, not straying too far from the shore. The two of them chatted about fashion and the latest happenings in the world of celebrities and the mood was good.

Tony was playing with Kalina. They were splashing each other, and Tony would occasionally jump on Kalina to pull her underwater where he would sneak a few kisses.

Talia was floating on her back with her arms and legs stretched to make a giant letter X. She closed her eyes and enjoyed the murmurs that drifted her way from all directions. Human voices, laughter, water splashing, birds chirping... Somehow, it was harmonious, and she was relishing the fact that all this was happening around her and she was part of it.

Talia came to the beach, played with a ball in the water, there was food and friends and good mood and of course, there was Damon. It was perfect.

A splashing sound came close to her right and Talia was startled to see Damon's head emerging from the water.

"Did I scare you?", Damon asked with a boyish grin that made her heart skip a beat.

He wanted to grab her from below, but he changed his mind at the last minute.

"A little bit.", Talia admitted and wrapped her arms around his neck.

Damon loved that Talia approached him for this small intimacy on her own. His kitten was getting used to the closeness and she didn't care that many eyes from the beach were on them.

"What was that with you and Max?", Talia asked. She saw Damon storming into the water and Maddox jumping after him energetically.

Damon shrugged, indicating that it's not a big deal. "We were just playing."

He had no intention of admitting that he was messing with Maddox and got caught because he had a strong feeling Talia won't approve of it.

Chapter 298 - At The Beach (10)

Damon observed Talia who was in the water with him, with her hands around his neck. She was beautiful.

He nudged Talia's nose with his. "Did you miss me?"

"Yes.", she admitted. She always missed him, whenever he was not in touching distance.

Damon's gaze fell on her lips that were slightly parted, obviously waiting for a kiss, and based on Talia's emotions, he knew that she wanted more than a kiss.

The pressure in his groin area was maddening. Just the thought of Talia wanting him was enough to arouse him, and to make things worse, she was right there, in his t-shirt (and a red bikini under it), sticking to him closely.

If this was not a packed beach, he would remove the pesky swimwear and have his way with her right there in the water.

OK. Not exactly there because he would need some leverage for his feet to steady himself, but definitely somewhere nearby.

Damon always had a high libido, but since he met Talia, things were several folds worse. He had two states, aroused and deep inside Talia. There was no third option.

He thought how it was adorable that Talia was completely oblivious to how much he wanted her.

"Kitten...", Damon called in a strained voice. "I know a good spot not far from here. Do you want to see?"

How can Talia not know that he was talking about a spot where they can indulge in carnal pleasures?

Yes, yes, YES! "We have guests. Maybe some other time."

Damon frowned in disapproval. His hand landed low on her back, and he pulled her toward him until her crotch area pressed against his erection.

"Do you feel this, kitten?"

Talia closed her eyes and released a shaky breath. How can she not feel that?

Why the heck were her legs around him and connected at the ankles? When did that happen?

"Damon...", Talia's voice was protesting, but she didn't want to move away from him. "People are watching."

Damon grinned. "That's why I think it's a good idea I show you that spot."

"How far is it?"

Damon couldn't believe that she was considering it. He decided to give her another push. "Just a minute. Come on... no one will notice us missing."

Talia knew he was talking nonsense. How can no one notice them missing? There are thousands of eyes full of jealousy burning holes at the back of Talia's head, but she pushed all those aside. Those women are not important because the man with her was Damon, her mate, and he belonged to her.

Damon could feel that Talia was considering it. "What do you say?"

He moved his hips to grind himself between her legs and Talia dug her fingers into his shoulders.

"OK..."

Damon's cock lurched in response. She was willing!

He was ecstatic because, guests or not, he will get a taste of his mate. Now!

Damon gently held onto her thighs, urging her legs to open, and then he pushed her body to float next to his.

"Hold onto me, kitten."

Damon put her hand onto his shoulder, and when he confirmed that her grip was firm, he swam like never before.

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Talia admired the might behind Damon's every stroke. He swam like he was not pulling another person.

At some point, Talia wanted to say that she can swim on her own, but she kept those words to herself because she enjoyed the water taxi service Damon provided.

Damon slowed down when they reached a thick curtain made of willow branches.

He spread the branches to create a path that revealed a small inlet. Their destination.

Talia was nervous. She could still hear the muffled clamor from the beach.

Was Damon really thinking that they should go at it here? Sure, there are dense bushes and more willow trees on each side, but what if someone comes and sees them?

She looked up to see the green tree canopy arching above them, providing shade and privacy from the outside world.

"Do you like it?"

Damon's question made Talia look at him.

He was close, with only his head above the water and those drops gliding down his sculpted cheeks made him exceedingly handsome.

"It's beautiful.", Talia said.

"We should come here in March.", he said. "The catkins bloom and turn everything white. When I was a kid, I would come here with my mom every spring. She loved white but didn't like the cold. If you pretend it's snow, it looks like a winter wonderland."

Talia's heart swelled from the flood of emotions. Were those hers or his? She didn't know, but she knew that it was overwhelming.

Damon rarely spoke about his parents, but whenever he mentioned them, his gaze would be filled with longing and pride and Talia knew that he missed them immensely.

Damon caressed Talia's cheeks with the tips of his fingers. "Before I met you, I wondered if I will ever find a woman with whom I want to share that experience. No matter how many were there, none seemed worthy... except for you, kitten. I want to share my everything with you."

Talia thought that Damon brought her here for a wild session of lovemaking, yet he ended up revealing a part of himself that she wanted to embrace and comfort and never let go.

"I will be honored to come here with you. In March.", she said. And any other time.

It took her a few moments to realize how sharing a tender moment didn't mean they won't get steamy.

Damon pecked her lips once, twice... and then he deepened the kiss.

His hand started roaming her body and he frowned when he felt the damp cloth (aka his t-shirt on her body) that was getting in the way.

Damon didn't bother to remove it nicely, as the fabric gave in quickly when he grabbed it and tugged in opposite directions.

"Does this mean I'm no longer in danger of getting sunburns?", Talia asked while looking at the gray fabric that was stuck on the nearby bush when Damon flicked it on the side.

Damon paused. What sunburns? He needed a moment to remember the lame excuse he came up with in order to cover up her gorgeous body.

"We are in the shade now.", Damon said.



"What about when we get back?"

"You will stick close to me. I will shield you." From the sun and from lecherous eyes.

Before Talia could say anything else, her lips were sealed with Damon's.

Now there was no damp t-shirt in the way, so his hands explored her body without obstruction.

They clung to each other, and Talia was confident that he found solid ground under his feet because her legs were around his waist and they were not drifting randomly.

"Damon...", Talia called breathlessly when she felt him pushing her bikini bottom to the side. "What if someone sees us?"

Damon smirked. Her words spoke about caution, yet her body said otherwise. Did she notice that she was grinding against his cock?

"No one will come here, kitten."

Talia gripped Damon's shoulders while wondering if he discarded his swim trunks because what was pressing at the cradle of her thighs was definitely his erection and there was no fabric between them.

"What if someone hears us?"

He wanted her to have the adrenaline rush due to the possibility of getting caught, but he still assured her, "Do you think I will allow anyone to see or hear you?"

Talia had to agree with this. Her Alpha was taking good care of her, and no matter how cheeky and naughty they were in private, when someone else was around, he treated her like a queen. His queen.

With this, the last speck of Talia's reluctance disappeared, and she gave in to her need to become one with her mate.

Damon's hand landed at the back of her head, and he swallowed her moan that ripped out of her chest when his hard and hot shaft stretched her tender flesh.

By the time Damon was fully sheathed inside Talia, she didn't care if anyone will hear them.

Chapter 299 - At The Beach (11)

When Damon and Talia returned to the beach, they saw that Tatiana and Maddox were not in sight, while others were on the towels in the shade that the canopy provided.

Mindy was flipping through fashion magazines that Tatiana brought from Europe and others were divided into two groups.

In one group were Kalina, Tony, Caden, and Maya. Girls leaned on their mates, and they were chatting while sipping chilled beverages and snacking on freshly cut fruits that were arranged on several plates.

In the second group, Paul, Nate, Greg, Axel, and Tyler were playing poker.

And there was one more group, in the far corner of the shade. That's where Dawn, Zina, Ivy, and Lily were. They also relaxed and snacked on fruits while making sure drinks and snacks don't run out for anyone.

Talia and Damon slowly walked toward shallower waters while holding hands.

"Ah!", Talia exclaimed when Damon picked her up before water went below her waist level.

Damon held her close to him, covering her up how much he could with his muscular arms. No one will get to see his woman!

Talia was glad that no one teased them for being absent. Well, at least not yet.

Once they reached the canopy, Talia peered onto the group that was busy with cards.

"Do you know what game they are playing?", Talia asked Damon.

Damon threw a glance at the cards and plastic chips before answering, "Poker." He noticed her curiosity. "Do you want to play?"

Of course! "Will you teach me?"

As an answer, Damon walked to the circle five guys formed and demanded. "Make space for us."

Axel was quick to scoot on the side, but Damon sat on the towel between Nate and Tyler.

Damon's legs were in the lotus position, and he placed Talia to sit there. Talia glanced at Damon and smiled. With everyone sitting on the towels and her being propped higher by Damon's legs, it looked like she was someone important.

She hoped that no one can smell what they did before in the lake. That would be embarrassing.

Damon's arms moved around Talia, and he started telling her the rules, "Everyone gets cards and bets or folds. The one with the strongest hand wins the pot. If everyone folds, the last one standing can pick up the pot without showing his cards. We call that bluffing... you can also raise a bet..."

Talia watched a few hands while Damon was explaining what was going on and when Talia confirmed that she understood what are poker, straight, and a full house, they joined in the game as well.

Damon held the cards, and Talia would decide if she wanted to swap them or keep, and how much they will bet.

Talia truly enjoyed playing poker. It was something novel, and it came with Damon all around her and nothing beats that.

Damon stuck close to Talia with his torso arching above hers in order to shield her gorgeous body from any prying eyes. As much as he enjoyed the sparks that danced over his skin wherever he and Talia touched, Damon was observing his surroundings, Axel in particular.

Damon had a strange feeling about Axel. The future Alpha of the Midnight Guardians pack showed unusual interest in Talia from the moment he met her, and even now, while playing poker, Axel was trying to get on Talia's good side.

Damon's insides tightened whenever Axel spoke.

"Miss Talia, that's such a good hand!"

"Miss Talia, you fooled me completely!"

"Ah, Miss Talia, you are good at this game..."

Miss Talia this, Miss Talia that... Damon felt like punching Axel in the face.

How dares Axel act so cozy with Talia in Damon's presence? What is Damon? A decoration?

And couldn't Axel see that Talia was taken and that whatever Axel was offering Talia was not buying? Her smiling and responding was only Talia being polite!

How Damon saw this, Talia didn't slam rejection into Axel's face because Axel didn't really do anything too obvious other than being obnoxiously pleasant, but Damon couldn't wait to catch the bastard on his

own. Damon was ready to give Axel a piece of his mind, but first... he needed to put more distance between Talia and Axel.

"How about we play one more hand and then we go and relax on the towel?", Damon asked Talia and he could feel her reluctance to part from the card game. He spoke before she could refuse, "As hosts, we should give attention to everyone." Damon glanced toward the area where Kalina and Tony were chatting with Maya and Caden.

Talia glanced at the cards and then she looked at Damon with a big puppy-eyed look. "How about two more hands?"

"OK.", Damon agreed. When she looked at him like that, he would agree to anything.

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Damon and Talia moved to sit with the other group, and it took only a minute for Damon to realize how that was not a good idea either.

Why was Talia inspecting Kalina's tattoos again?

Damon's eyes lost focus for a moment, and in the back, both Dawn and Zina jolted on their feet and scrambled into the camper van.

Ivy and Lily exchanged confused glances and went after the other two Omegas. With Dawn and Zina rushing into the camper van so abruptly, it could mean only one thing: there was some important work to do. Did they forget something on the stove?

Ivy and Lily didn't want to leave their two new friends on their own, so they followed after Dawn and Zina to see if they can help.

Dawn and Zina were rummaging through drawers in the kitchen area when Lily asked, "What are you looking for?"

"A marker.", Dawn said.

Ivy and Lily exchanged confused glances. Dawn and Zina were running like their lives depend on it. Why would a marker be so important?

"What kind of marker?", Ivy asked.

"A permanent one.", Zina responded and exhaled in frustration.

There were not many drawers so they could confirm that there are no markers in the camper van. Does that mean one of them needs to go to the packhouse? Or to Darkbourne to buy one? But Alpha said quickly...

"Will a Sharpie do?", Lily asked.

Zina and Dawn looked at Lily with sparkles in their eyes.

"You have a Sharpie?", Dawn wanted to make sure she heard Lily right.

Lily nodded and went to fetch her purse. A few seconds later, she held a permanent marker in her hand.

"Lily has all kinds of stuff in that purse.", Ivy said. "If the end of the world comes, she will have the basics."

Lily rolled her eyes. "Why are you saying like that's a bad thing? Don't come to me next time you need a tissue, a sanitizer, mints, stain remover, a bottle opener, comb, hair ties, cotton swabs, or a lip gloss."

Dawn gaped at Lily. "You have all that in your purse?"

Ivy stifled a laugh. "She has more than that."

Lily frowned and looked at Dawn and Zina. "Do you want the Sharpie or not?"

"Yes, yes!", Zina was quick to snatch the marker from Lily's hand. "Being prepared for calamity is always a good thing."

Dawn and Zina couldn't figure out why Alpha Damon asked for a permanent marker, without asking for a paper or something he can write on also. Weren't they playing cards and relaxing on the beach?

Chapter 300 - At The Beach (12)

Chapter 300!

I want to thank all my wonderful readers who are reading this novel on the WebNovel platform and supporting my work with comments and votes.

This novel wouldn't be what it is today without you!

You are the best!

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Damon was listening to Talia admiring Kalina's tattoos and his mood was falling by the second.

How can she praise someone else openly? He was right there!

Damon hid his frustration behind a stiff smile because Alphas don't throw tantrums. Well, at least not in public.

Zina gingerly approached the group and Damon waved impatiently at her to hurry the moment his eyes landed on a Sharpie in Zina's hand.

Zina didn't see how Damon snatched the marker from her hand. The movement was so quick that she suspected Damon has the ability to teleport objects.

With Sharpie secured in his tight grip, Damon cleared his throat to get Talia's attention. "Do you like tattoos?"

"I find them fascinating.", Talia responded honestly. "People can memorialize their favorite things, people, or precious moments right on their skin."

Kalina told her that she got a tattoo of a bird leaving the cage on the day she left home to travel through Europe, and a big rose to always remind her of her mother's garden. Every image on Kalina's body had a special meaning.

"And it looks beautiful." That was Talia's opinion. Tattooists must practice for many years to make such delicate artwork.

Talia looked at Damon curiously. "Why did you ask?" Damon never asked things just to start a chit-chat.

Damon squeezed the Sharpie. "I was thinking about getting some ink on me."

Talia blinked. "You did?"



Talia thought about tattoos as fascinating because she was deprived of seeing such things while growing up, but Damon's body was perfect. No matter what tattoo he picks or where it's placed, it will only spoil his flawless visual.

Seeing Talia's confusion, Damon's expression darkened. How come Kalina's tattoos are beautiful while Talia didn't approve of Damon getting some? And Damon didn't forget the way Talia looked at the tattoos of that nobody soccer player (aka Liam).

"Does this mean you like tattoos only when they are on someone else?"

Talia was not sure from where that comment came. What did he mean by, someone else? It was just Kalina, alright? OK. Maybe she secretly peeked at some other people, but she never approached any of them! (Talia forgot about Liam) And Kalina was her girlfriend! Was there something wrong with complimenting a friend?

It took Talia a few moments to feel insecurities behind Damon's dejection and her heart softened at the thought that he was doing this for her.

Talia guessed that in twenty-seven years of his life if Damon liked tattoos, he would get some. She was not sure what's the process of getting tattooed, but she assumed it was not simple and it definitely shouldn't be done for the wrong reasons.

She inched closer to Damon and placed a gentle kiss on his bare shoulder.

"The question here should be if YOU like tattoos.", she said.

"I want you to look at me and not someone else.", he responded with a pout.

Talia was not sure how to deal with her man-baby. Less than an hour ago he was wantonly ravishing her insides in the lake under the cover of willow trees, yet now he was sulking like a child who got denied a second round of dessert.

Wasn't he aware that there were people around them? Maya was resting on Caden and watching them outright, while Tony and Kalina fed each other fruits. None interjected into Damon's and Talia's conversation, but Talia was confident they were listening. After all, they were right there so unless they stuffed their fingers into their ears and shouted 'la-la-la', they could definitely hear everything.

If they were in private, Talia would snuggle on Damon's lap and kiss him until he stops moping, but this was in public, and she wanted to know what will pacify her Alpha.

"So, what should we do now?", Talia asked.

"Here", Damon said while putting the Sharpie into her hand. "Draw something on me." And then he will go to a tattoo parlor to make it permanent.

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Talia was flustered while looking at the marker in her hand.

"I don't know how to draw." This was the truth. As someone who barely got any education, after coming to the Dark Howlers pack, Talia focused on learning basics with the goal to get a high-school degree and since arts were not mandatory, she didn't even look at those.

"Whatever you draw, it will be perfect.", Damon encouraged her.

"If you are so set on it, do it yourself. Or ask someone else.", Talia gave him the Sharpie back.

Damon frowned and stuffed the Sharpie back into her hand. "I want YOU to do it."

"My crooked doodles will only ruin your perfect appearance.", Talia said with all the sincerity in the world.

Kalina burst into giggles. She was obviously watching the Damon-Talia bickering show.

"Lia...", Kalina called. "Do you really want someone else to come so close to Alpha Damon in order to draw on his skin? Just do your best. It will wash off eventually. We came here to have fun, so have fun and draw on him. Get a napkin to practice first if it will make you feel better."

Talia thought that it made sense. She looked at Damon. "Where do you want it?"

Damon suddenly realized that Kalina was pleasing to the eye. She was much better than Mindy who talks rubbish and gifts dildos.

'AHOOO!'

A sneeze was heard from the side.

"Are you catching a cold?", Talia asked Mindy with concern. Can werewolves catch a cold?

Mindy rubbed her nose with her index finger. "I don't think so. It might be someone talking shit behind my back."

'It's not behind your back. I'm right here!', Damon thought. He believed that those random sneezes when someone thinks bad of you were empty superstition, but now he suspected that it's not so random and there might be some truth there.

Damon patted his shoulder and spoke to Talia. "You can start from here and work your way down. Or would you rather draw on my chest first?" He was already lying on the towel with his arms behind his head, ready for Talia to start doing her magic.

Talia's lips twitched. She was thinking to draw something small and simple, yet it seems that Damon had a much bigger project on his mind. How much did he want her to draw?

"Is there a problem?", Damon asked when he saw that Talia was not moving.

"I'm planning." That was not a lie. She was planning how to get out of her current predicament.

Eventually, she spoke, "Do you really want to do this?"

"Yes.", he responded with confidence. He was not really into tattooing, but since he gave Talia the Sharpie, she was focused on him instead of on random people, and that was perfect.

Talia puffed her cheeks while scrambling her mind for something... anything. "What would you say if I tell you that I want to get a tattoo?"

Damon was alerted. An image of a massive bearded guy sticking needles into Talia's body suddenly popped into Damon's mind and it was not good.

"Where do you want it?"

Talia shrugged. "I don't know. Maybe..."

"Aww...", Kalina swooned. "You can get matching tattoos! Tony and I are planning to get some. I already checked, there are some decent tattoo parlors in your area..."

Talia loved the idea of her and Damon having something permanent and matching.

"What do you think about that?", she asked Damon enthusiastically.

He couldn't say no to Talia, but he didn't want to agree to her poking her body either.

"How about you draw something on me first, and then we will talk about it?"

"Alright", Talia agreed. "But sit up. I will draw something on your shoulder."

If Damon was lying on his back, Talia would need to lean over him and that introduced the possibility of her forgetting there were people around them.