

## Chapter 146: Shadows Within

Lottie POV

"You are lying." Knox gasped, both of us knowing under no circumstances would Kane beg a demon to pursue our daughter. Shaking my head slowly, I looked back at Knox, who was staring at Astaroth with hatred. I could see the primal need in him to protect us working its way to the forefront and knew I had to do or say something to defuse the situation.

"What do you get from this? What do you get from messing with people's lives?" Knox spat furiously. "You are a sick fuck." he added with a growl, but to my relief, he stayed with Kane supporting his brother's exhausted body. My heart ached to be closer to them, but I wanted the demons to remain focused on me.

"A beautiful and powerful mate at my side and on my arm forever. I thought that would have been clear." The demon laughed, shrugging as he looked between us.

"Enough. I can't even... deal.. With you!" I hissed, waving my hands in the air. "Release Kane, now!" I added, my furious eyes finding the amused eyes of the demon who had until now held all the cards.

"You do not make demands of me..."



"I am serious, release Kane from your wicked hold and heal him and Chase. NOW!" I seethed, crossing my arms over my chest, knowing I was acting like a spoiled brat, but honestly, I couldn't take much more.

"We have been puppets in everyone else's game for long enough. No more! You need me a hell of a lot more than I need you! Remember that and do as I ask!" I seethed, visibly shaking from the rage eating at my core.

"Is that so?" He chuckled, the sound seeming foreign in this place.

"You need me to agree to your plan. Because, like you said, you want or rather need my daughter? But why the hell would we agree to any of this when, so far, you have given me no reason to trust you, with a paper bag, let alone a child of mine?"

"Tell me freak..." I spewed, my eyes rolling when Astaroth mocked me by acting insulted by my insult. Ignoring him, I carried on. "Why would we want our child, our daughter chained to you by the bonds of fate?" I asked, raising a brow and nodding for him to explain.

"I am not that bad... I did expose your father's plots."

"After YOU killed my father!" Knox expressed, through what I knew was clenched teeth.

"Yes, yes, but that was so a deal could be struck. I knew he

wasn't dead.. Dead!" Astaroth stammered, showing the first signs of trepidation. The look of shock on my mate's face only served to rile me up further.

"Really? Laura didn't know that when she grieved her mate's loss though, did she?" I started to say, but Astaroth silenced me by raising his voice.

"I went to visit your Luna, I took away her suffering." He tried to plead with me, but I shook my head angrily.

"And what of Knox? He didn't know your plan when he went through hell and untold anguish thinking he was responsible for his father's death." I spat, feeling the fury boil in my blood chasing away and chills left by this demonic filth.

"I needed him to.."

"So you could trick him?" I cut him off, arching a brow furiously as I tried to ignore the pleading look on Knox's face for me to stop antagonising the beast who held us captive. "Like I said, not exactly giving us reasons to trust you."

"Enough Lottie." Knox fumed. "This isn't helping!" But he couldn't see Astaroth or the panic he wore on his face. I had hit a nerve. I had to keep going.

"I exposed your father's deceit." He repeated, making me scoff.

"We already knew of that." I snorted, shaking my head. "And from what you have said you had a hand in that deceit too."

Sounds to me like you want your cake and to eat it too."

"Careful, girl!" Astaroth warned his outrage, presenting itself and sucking what little light was in the cathedral into him. Quickly, the shadows in the room began to dance as if feeding off their master's irritation, casting the cathedral with an eerie glow.

"Or what?" I laughed, shaking my head. "Are you going to hurt me? We have already established that I carry the child you want so badly."

"Badly?" He asked, stepping closer, the darkness following him like a cloak. "You have a high opinion of yourself. Your 'father' did too, and look where he is now. Maybe you should dial it down a tad, honey."

"I am not wrong though, am I?" I nodded, deciding to call his bluff and ignore his snarky comments. I wasn't my father! When his thin lips pursed, I snorted and nodded. "I thought so."

"I don't need you, just what you carry. Perhaps it is wise to remember that." He laughed, but the confident edge to his tone was gone.

"And you think any daughter of mine, with my blood raised with my morals, would want to be with a man.. Or a demon... who had hurt her family.. Her mother?" I asked plainly, my lips curling seeing my words sink.

"Who is to say she would know?" He countered, his

confidence still wavering.

"What the fuck does that mean?" Knox snarled, but I held my hand out to him, needing him to stay with Kane until I knew we were all safe.

"The truth always comes out in the end... something you should consider.." I announced to silence Astaroth's reply, out of fear he would only rile Knox up further.

"What is that meant to mean?" He barked his tone just as angered as Knox's when he had asked. Shrugging, I ignored him as he narrowed his eyes at me, enraged.

"It means I will agree to consider your request. And have an answer for you by 3 pm. That gives us time to listen to your master plan and put the wheels into motion. If we agree!"

"I sense a BUT..."

"But..." I grinned, popping the T. "You heal Chase. He has nothing to do with our drama. He is innocent in this." I bartered firmly.

"Doesn't he?" He asked, shaking my head, reminding myself that he was fond of casting doubt and causing chaos.

"Then, you will heal Kane and release him!" I added with a firmness that I hoped came across as confidence.

"Full of requests... Aren't we?" He laughed, but the smugness was almost gone.

"They are not requests.. They are conditions," I replied, coldly.

"I could just kill you all.. Sounds like a lot less work." He replied with just as much coldness coating his words, but his eyes gave him away.

"Go for it.. But with it, you kill this love you have been harping on about."

"Is that everything?" He asked, not replying to my challenge with a heavy sigh, relenting in his threat, giving away more than I am sure he hoped.

"No. You will agree not to lay a hand on my mates, my family or theirs again." I stated, my eyes holding his steady gaze. " There will be no compromise on this."

"Will I?"

"Yes! And that includes your magical bullshit... No harm is to come to them from you! Or anyone associated with you. If it does, then I will take my chances with the Moon Goddess."

"You think she is better than me?"

"No, I think she is just as cunning and manipulative. But at least she has been honest with me so far. She hasn't played games... I know where I stand with her. Can't say the same for you, can I?"

"You really think that?" Knox asked, his shock obvious.

"I can tell you now, she will do everything in her power to stop your children from being born..."

"Why?" I asked, not wanting to believe him, but something about the way his eyes pinched and the curve of his lip told me that he was just as scared as us that some harm would come to the pups I carried.

"A child with powers and abilities like your daughter will have... Could only be seen as one thing in her eyes."

"A threat!" Kane answered, his unwavering voice getting our attention. "She will be a threat!"

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