

And Then There Were Four by Lilith Carrie

Chapter 56: Bar Fight with a She-wolf

Ivy POV

Anger. It coursed through me like a wildfire as I tried to come to terms with what I was seeing.

“Seems you both are having fun, aren’t you?”

“James, it’s so lovely to see you.” The woman purred as she ran her hand over Damian’s chest. His face unreadable as it paled at the sight of me.

“What are you doing here?” Hale finally asks, as his brows narrow at me. “I figured you would be living your life in Georgia.”

The man speaking was not the same Hale I had known before. This man was unrecognizable, and it killed me he was acting the way he was. My heart breaking, I felt James step closer to me, but at the same time, I had to handle this myself.

“Yeah, and I never thought the man I fell in love with would be sitting here with a naked woman, moving on so quickly after everything that had happened. Yet, here we are.”

My snarky response caused the woman on Damian to laugh. “Wait, is this the girl?”

Clearing his throat, Damian tried to remove himself from Shamira. Her eyes darted to Damian as he moved before quickly grasping him and pulling him back.

“Interesting,” I snapped.

“Oh, she is feisty. Tell me, girl, why are you here?” she asked, putting her gaze on me once more. The look in her eye stirred something inside me that wanted to rip her apart.

“Well, I came to collect what belongs to me, but I see that they have found entertainment where they don’t belong. Funny how that works,” I grit out as James wraps his arm around my waist, pulling me closer.

*We should go-” he murmurs, causing Hale to look between the two of us before standing to his feet.

“You’re mated?” He asks, snapping James’ attention, who looks at him with a small nod.

“You have missed a lot brother, and I thought Damian came here to bring you home, but it looks like that is not the case.” James snarled as Damian’s eyes flickered, his wolf fighting for control.

Every time Shamira touched Damian, my anger rose a little more. I knew that this wasn't the boys' territory, and even though I was still very new to their world, I had to remain calm. Otherwise, I would do more damage than needed.

"Damian, we need to leave," I said, clearing my throat deciding to deal with him later.

"Oh, he isn't going anywhere." Shamira laughed, "I don't know why you, as a human, think you have the right to tell him anything. He is mine, and you lost your chance. Plus, humans don't breed strong children, where I can."

Her words stung, and as a growl left James, I held my hand up and pulled my hair to the side to show off James' mark. "They are mine, and I am here to collect what rightfully belongs to me, so it's in your best interest to stand down."

Hale's eyes widened as I spoke, and slowly, he stepped near me. "That isn't possible."

"Who the fuck do you think you are to speak to me like that?" The woman shrieked as she stood to her feet, do you know who I

am?"

Laughter left my lips as I shook my head, watching as Damian stood next to her and shook his head for me to stop. But it didn't matter, because this was a fight I wouldn't back down from.

"I don't care who you are. I am their rightful Luna, and you will back down now." I said sternly, with more confidence than I thought I had to begin with.

Something about the way I spoke seemed to make the guards step back, and even the woman in front of me to second guess her actions. However, Hale stepped back from me, clenching his fists as he stared at the mark upon my neck

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"I don't understand," he replied, "regardless this means nothing. What happened, happened."

The hurt from his words caused pain to shoot to my heart as it crumbled a little more.

"Hale, just come with us and listen to what we have to say. Don't do this." James replied as Damian stepped forward, shrugging Shamira off as she tried to reach for him.

“James is right,” Damien replied, staring at me with a lust filled look that I chose to shrug off. “Ivy, please let me explain. I can see you’re upset.”

“Upset?” I laughed, “I’m not upset. I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Enough of this!” The woman screamed again as she pushed her way towards us, and grabbed me, throwing me to the side. “You are a worthless human!”

Growls echoed around me as the three of the guys turned towards her in a menacing way.

“You dare touch what is mine!” James all but roared, as I slowly made my way back towards them. His wolf was on the brink of breaking through as I tried to shush him and calm him down.

“Please, let’s not do this here.” I pleaded with them, “she isn’t worth it. Let’s just go. Please.”

A grip on my hair pulled me back, and I realized quickly that the woman had a hold of me. Turning in her grasp. I lashed out, punching her in her face. Pain radiating through my hand as I realized I had just hit this she-wolf.

“You stupid bitch!” She roared as she tried to lunge at me again, only to be grabbed by an older man with graying hair.

Everyone seemed to freeze at the man’s arrival-all but me.

“Enough of this,” he replied firmly as he stared at the woman, “you disrespect me with your actions Shamira.”

“Father-” she choked out, “she hit me — you have to punish her.”

“I saw everything through the camera, Shamira. You started this, and now you will go.” Shaking his head, he shoved her towards a security guard who drug her out of the private lounge. His eyes slowly trailing back towards me.

“I apologize for my daughter’s behavior. I have spoiled her too much in life. Are you okay, my dear?” He asked me with nothing but sincerity in his eyes

“Yes,” I replied with a nod before turning to look at James, Damian, and Hale.

They were unmoving and firm in their place as the man’s eyes wandered over me before glancing towards them. “I hope that my daughter’s actions have not caused ill blood between us.”

“She attacked my mater” James snarled, but stopped as I held my hand up.

“There is no ill blood between us, sir, What’s done is done, and we will be leaving the city tomorrow. I do apologize for the inconvenience we have caused you.”

My response causes a smile to line his face as he clasps his hands in front of him and nods before looking at the guys. “You have a fine, Luna. The goddess has blessed you all with her presence.”

“Thank you for your hospitality. We are very blessed to have her.” Damian finally said, speaking up, as James wrapped his arm around me and pulled me away to let them talk.

I knew full well he was trying to rein his wolf in that wanted blood, but at the same time, we couldn’t lash out when we were in someone else’s territory. I was glad that he had controlled himself. I didn’t want a war caused because of me.

“Are you okay?” Hale’s voice said from behind me, causing James and I to stop.

Turning slowly, I looked at him, blinking back tears, “will you come with us?”

“I don’t-” he sighed, trying to find the words I didn’t want him to say. Questions of whether he had ever actually loved me swirling through my mind

“I’m sorry.” I replied, not waiting another moment to hear him as I pulled away from James and pushed my way through the crowd till I hit the cool air of the night.

My main objective had been to come and get the men I loved, and instead, I was faced with sights I hadn’t wanted to see. Damian

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was in the arms of another woman, and Hale didn’t want me.

Hale, a man I loved, didn’t want me after everything that had happened.

My mind was fogged over with thoughts as a black sedan pulled up to the curb and James came out, ushering me inside it. All wanted to do was to go home. I had hoped finding Hale would have been as it was with James, but I was so wrong.

I had lost him, and that killed me.

As for Damian – could I trust him after what had happened?

I wasn’t sure, but part of me wanted to believe he wasn’t trying to hurt me.

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Walking back into the suite we were staying in, I headed straight for my room. I didn't want to see anyone, and the last thing I wanted to do was talk. My head was a swirling mess of confusion over what had happened.

"Ivy!" Damian's voice called out as the sound of the front door opened. "Ivy??"

"Will you shut the fuck up?" James snapped as the sound of his bedroom door opened.

"Where is she?" Damian replied, and as I sat in my room, I couldn't help but sigh.

I had gone out to find Damian and Hale to bring them both home and, instead, I was met with chaos and heartache. Damian and Hale had both been in the arms of other women, and my heart clenched at the fact they didn't seem to care for me.

As tears streamed down my face, I quickly wiped them away only to have my bedroom door thrown open, and Damian's dark eyes staring down at me.

"Ivy, please let me explain"

"No," I snapped, shaking my head. "Your actions spoke louder than words, and I don't think there is anything for you to say to change my mind."

The sobs I fought to hold back tore at me. I had given myself to him, and was falling in love with the idea of all of them being mine, and yet he did this to me.

"Stop it," he growled. "You're going to listen to me. That was all an act. I had to make her think things were okay with us so that I could find Hale. Otherwise, we would never have found them."

Stunned by his confession, I couldn't help but feel that there were things he was leaving out.

"Did you kiss her?" I asked him.

"What?" He was taken aback by my question, but at the same time, I had to know

*Did. You. Kiss. Her?"

Laughter escaped him as he shook his head, "I don't see how that is relevant."

It was clear, though, that the answer to my question was yes. "So you did. Guess you will do anything to stay undercover then. Especially since you and she have a very close history."

"Who the fuck told you that?" he growled angrily. "Did James tell you that?"

“No, actually, he didn’t before you act stupid,” I replied, crossing my arms over my chest.

“Then who?” Standing to my feet, I ignored his demand, and walked towards my doorway where he stood.

“Get out of my room, Damian,” I argued, holding myself together as I tried to close the door. Only to be stopped with his firm grip on the frame and a cold glare in his eyes.

“We’re not done talking.”

“Damian, perhaps you should listen to her. Tonight has been eventful enough.” Hale’s voice called out from just out of my sight, and pushing past Damian. I stepped into the hallway to see him standing there looking at me.

“You came?” I questioned, trying to understand why he had decided to leave.

Nodding, he sighed before bringing the bottle of whiskey to his lips. “Yep. Call it curiosity.”

Watching him, I could tell that the Hale I once knew was gone. No longer was the sexy, happy man I had fallen for in my presence. But instead was a man who has grown cold.

“You don’t love me anymore, do you?” I asked softly, staring at him. I wasn’t sure what I hoped for, but it wasn’t a cold glance and a small laugh as he shook his head slightly, as if unsure on how to answer.

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“It’s hard to love someone who was never really yours, isn’t it?”

The answer painfully tore at my heart, and not wanting to let them see me cry, I turned walking into my room, slamming the door behind me.

How could I have been so foolish to think that things would be different this time?

Damian’s POV

Never did I want things to be this way.

The moment she had walked into the club, I knew I fucked up thinking I could have things the way I wanted. Thinking that she wouldn’t come seek me out, because that was who Ivy was.

She was beautiful. The most beautiful woman in the room, and I broke her heart.

I didn't need the matebond to tell me I had. What killed me the most was the look she had when she saw Hale. She had waited for days to find him, and her excitement was crushed when he acted as if she was nothing but a problem.

My wolf howled at me to punish him for hurting our mate.

"You fucking idiots," James snapped as I stepped into the living room with Hale beside me.

"Watch your mouth, James," I growled, "You have no idea the problem you caused."

Laughter escaped his lips as he clenched his fists, "I caused? I didn't fucking cheat on her."

"Neither did I!" | sneered. Looking towards Hale, I watched as he took a seat on the sofa, softly laughing to himself. "What's so funny?"

As his eyes met mine, he raised a brow. "The fact you two are fighting over a woman who doesn't belong to us. The bond is broken, and you told us to move on Damian, so what are we doing here?"

His complete disregard for her angered me. I didn't understand why he was acting the way he was because it was completely out of character for him.

"Because the bond wasn't exactly broken. The bond is still there. She gets to choose whether she wants a normal life or she wants us as her mates. We were given a second chance."

My words seemed to confuse him as he leaned forward on his knees shaking his head, "what are you talking about? That isn't possible."

"It's true," James finally spoke up. "That's why I was able to mark her."

"Why didn't you mark her then, Damian?" Hale asked me, causing a deep breath to escape my lips as I ran my hand through my hair.

"Because I messed things up the first time, and I wanted all of you to mark her first before I did."

My confession swirled in the air, and as Hale leaned back into the sofa once more, I could see he was contemplating what I told him. As if my words were believable, but then they weren't.

“So after everything that happened, you expect me to forget the pain I went through, and act like we are one happy family again?” he questioned while glancing between James and I.

“I don’t expect you to do anything for me. I expect you to think of her. She gave up a normal life to be with us and even put off finishing school to come find you all since you took off. She loves you, and she didn’t break the bond. That was my fault.”

“You’re right!” Hale snapped, “It is your fucking fault, Damian.”

“I don’t need you acting like this. Just fucking go see her,” I growled, trying to control myself. I had given my brothers too much leeway over the years to speak to me however they wanted, and I was growing tired of it.

“No,” Hale said flatly as he continued to drink. “I don’t think I will.”

James gasped at Hale’s remark, looking at him wide-eyed. “What? Why?”

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“Because I don’t trust the bond the goddess” supposedly bestowed upon us. I won’t allow myself to be hurt again by some woman. I tried once, and Ivy is everything that I want in a woman, but I won’t be a fool again.”

Selfish. That was all Hale was.

Turning on my feet, I stormed off towards the front door and slammed it behind me as I exited. I couldn’t believe we had come all this way for Hale to act this way.

Talon I expected it, but Hale... there was no way.

He was so scared and torn up about what had happened before that he couldn’t move past it to see the truth. In the end, Ivy was the one who would suffer for it.

The only thing giving me hope was that he came back to the suite with me. Perhaps there was a chance that he could change his perspective being around us. Perhaps there was a chance that he would come back to the states with us.

Only time would tell in the end. For now, I will try to keep my distance from him.

Chapter 58: Heated Connections

Hale POV

Seeing her walk into the club was like a dream.

Too many times in my sleep had I seen her walking back to me, and as much as my heart wanted it to be true, I knew it wasn't possible. She had been torn away from me, and I lived with that pain every day. I just was shocked it hadn't killed me.

"You have to give it a chance, Hale," James said softly, as I stared at the front door. Damian had walked through it in a huff, and I was left confused, showing no emotion.

"I don't think that's possible," I said beneath my breath as I watched James from the corner of my eye shake his head and go towards his room.

My thoughts swirling over the night's events, and memories of Ivy flooding over me.

I could almost taste her on my tongue the first time I ever kissed her. Her pouty pink lips waiting for me in the next room to take once more. Yet, I doubt taking the forefront of any desire I had lingering for her.

With a heavy breath, I laid back on the sofa and closed my eyes. My mind, begging for release.

By the time my eyes opened again, darkness had surrounded us completely. I wasn't sure what time it was, but listening carefully, I could tell Damian had come back at some point and he and the others were sound asleep.

Moving to my feet, I walked down the hall towards the bathroom, but as soon as I got to her door, I couldn't help but hesitate. My curiosity begged me to open her door and see her again.

Taking a deep breath, I exhaled and did just that. I pushed the door open and quietly stepped into her darkened room. The smell of her perfume wrapping around me as I pushed forward.

My eyes settled on her petite sleeping form, stirring my wolf.

Slowly, I stepped forward and watched her. How was it that this woman could affect me as much as she did? It was something! I would never understand.

She was my biggest weakness, and yet at the same time, my greatest asset.

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Ivy POV

Running. I always seemed to be running, and as I was I could see him. The beautiful wolf I had grown to admire no matter how much he was thought to be dangerous.

“Talon!” I called out, watching as the wolf looked at me with a pained expression and then fought off something that seemed to be trapping him. I didn’t understand what was happening, but as I ran through the snow covered forest I called out to him again.

“Talon, please wait!”

It was of no use though. The more I ran and the harder I tried the slower I became.

A heavy weight seemed to fall over me that didn’t make any sense, and with it I felt helpless to the situation. But the sensation was being watched chilled me to my bones.

Letting my eyes scan the forest I waited for whatever it was to attack. The only problem was I felt myself being pulled, and as I was I realized something-it was only another dream.

The same dream I had been having for the past few nights, only this time it felt more real.

Something was pulling me back to reality, and I felt him before I opened my eyes

The smell of his cologne woke me from my slumber as I slowly opened my eyes to see him standing next to my bed, looking down

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at me.

“Hale?” I whispered, causing him to startle and step backwards. Don’t go.”

“Why, Ivy?” he asked with more vulnerability in his voice than I had expected.

I was confused by his question, and as I sat up in the bed, I stared at him. “Why what?”

“Why did you come here?”

“Because,” I sighed. “I want you with me. The bond.. it isn’t broken, and I don’t want a life without you, Hale. I need you with me.”

There was no hesitation in my response. It was all true, and I had to have him realize that no part of me ever wanted to lose him. It wasn’t my choice, and despite the opportunity to run from them, I didn’t.

"You don't know what you're saying," he replied firmly. "You had the chance to be free, and live a life as a human does. Being with us will take all of that from you."

I was aware of what he was saying, and regardless of all of it, I didn't care.

"I know. Yet, I still came." Standing to my feet, I moved towards him, but as I approached, he recoiled. He didn't want me touching him, and I knew why.

"You shouldn't have come, Ivy," he said, causing me to halt in my steps. My heart, already broken, couldn't take much more, but at the same time I could see it would be difficult for him to know the truth unless I did one thing –

Before he could move again, I moved forward quickly and wrapped my arms around his waist, holding him tight against me in a hug. The feeling of him in my arms once more warmed me and brought tears to my eyes.

For a moment earlier, I never thought I would feel this again.

Hale was stiff at first, but slowly he melted within my touch. His hands going to my face as he raised my eyes to meet his. Tears lined them as they slowly slid down his cheeks.

"I didn't want to believe they were telling the truth," he sobbed quietly. "How..."

Smiling, my own tears began to fall, and I shook my head. "I don't know, Hale."

It only took a moment for his lips to captivate my own, and with the kiss, I felt my heart swell with love, realizing that in some way! had him back. I had the man who made me swoon, and fall over and over again... back in my life.

"Please don't leave me again," he whispered, leaning his head against my own.

"I won't-" I cried, giving a soft laugh, "I promise, Hale. I won't leave again."

There was a moment of silence between us before the door burst open, and James and Damian stood there staring at us with smiles on their faces.

"Oh, thank fuck for that," James replied, letting out a sigh of relief. "For a moment there, I thought you really were fucking going to blow us off."

Turning in Hale's grasp, I stopped short when he pulled me against him tightly again. His eyes met mine as he shook his head no. I knew that he wasn't ready to let go of me, and I was fine with that I would do whatever he wanted to make him feel comfortable.

"I'm not saying I understand all of this completely, and that I agree with the prophecy, but I am willing to give it one last try. As you said, Damian, this is for her. Not us."

Damian nodded at Hale, and a bit of uncertainty filled me. I wasn't sure what he meant by that, but at the same time I was happy that Hale was at least giving something a chance

"Good," Damian finally said after a moment, "because we have problems back home and we need to get back."

"We can't yet... We have to find Talon." I gasped, looking at James and Damian with confusion.

"Ivy-" Damian replied, shaking his head.

Fear swept through me. I needed them all. "No!" I screamed, "we have to find him. He needs me... I can tell. Talon needs me. I have to find him."

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There was nothing but panic in my voice. For too many nights I had dreamt of Talon, and through those dreams I could tell he was in pain, and the anger he felt was uncontrollable.

Perhaps, they had been dreams, but at the same time I couldn't just let that be it. I needed him just as much as I needed the others.

"Ivy." Hale said softly in my ear. "I will make sure we find him, but Damian is right. We have to go home first, and then we can look for him."

James nodded in agreement as he stood with his eyes closed, looking at me.

It was pointless to argue against all three of them, at the end of the day their word was final.

Chapter 59: Unwanted Visitors

By the time we had made it back to the states, I was more than worn out. The plane ride hadn't been like the others, and as much as I wished it would have been, I couldn't help but think that was partially my fault.

I wasn't as forthcoming as I was before.

"We're here," Hale whispered softly in my ear as I looked up at him. I was still pressed firmly against him in the back seat of the car as we drove from the airport to the pack house.

“Finally,” I replied. “I can’t wait to get out of this car and stretch my legs.”

There was an eerie silence as the car came to a slow stop. All three of the guys were sitting up straight before looking at each other. “When we stop Ivy, I want you to stay in the car.”

“What?” I asked with confusion. “Why?”

Just for once, please do as you’re told. Please,” Damian begged with a sigh as my eyes met Hale’s and he nodded in agreement.

“Okay. I’ll stay in the car.”

Slowly the car moved forward more, but as it stopped, I finally got a glimpse of what was worrying them. Allison and my father stood with a group of older men at the front of the pack house and a smirk adorned Allison’s face.

“What the fuck is she doing here?” I snapped in anger as she stared at the car with amusement.

“I don’t know, Ivy.” Damian replied, “but just please stay here. We don’t want you to get hurt.” Knowing Allison was here, I couldn’t make any promises to him, but one thing was for sure, I would wait and see what happened first.

All three of the guys exited the car and started talking to those present. Voices were raised and glares were being thrown. However, when Allison slapped Hale in the face, I about lost my shit. Ignoring what they said, I jumped from the car, “lay your fucking hand on them again and I’ll kill you myself, bitch.”

Laughter erupted in the crowd as the group stared at me, oh, this little human has jokes, doesn’t she?”

James quickly was at my side as he looked down at me, shaking his head, “why don’t you ever listen?” He smirked.

“Hey, I did listen. Until she touched what is mine,” I murmured as I watched her say something to the guy next to her.

“Why is this human even here?” Allison yelled, “she is nothing to this pack and should be long gone. There is no bond anymore!”

Pushing past James, his arms wrapped around my waist as I glared at her and pulled down the collar of my shirt to expose James’ mark. “The bond isn’t gone, dumbass. The rules just changed.”

Shock ran through the woman and seeing this sent pleasure through my chest. I had something on her she wasn't aware of, and I planned to complete the prophecy. Regardless of what Damian and Hale had done... they were both still mine.

"That isn't possible!" She yelled. "It's a trick!"

The men with her didn't seem to be very enthusiastic about how Allison was acting. Her desperate attempts to cause issues were irrelevant. "Allison enough." One of the men said.

"Ivy, this is the elder council," Damian said in a professional manner.

"Hello" I said softly with a smile, "it's a pleasure to meet you all, but what are you doing here?"

An older graying man stepped towards me and as he did, James' grip tightened as Hale moved closer. "Calm down. I'm not going to hurt her. I just want to see the mark."

"Oh!" I exclaimed with my cheeks blushing, "of course. Here you go."

Pulling down my collar, I allowed the man to take a closer look, but never once did he touch it. Instead, after a moment he stepped

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back and turned to Damian. "We will be on our way. I do expect to see you all at the next meeting in two months time."

Damian nodded his head with a small smile, "of course, Elder Don. We wouldn't miss it."

Allison and my father still stood speechless as the men gathered into their vehicles and drove away. The pleasure of knowing that whatever she was trying wasn't going to work.

"Ivy- my father's voice said softly: "Can we talk?"

"No, we can't." I snapped, "you made it clear what you think about me and I have nothing to say to you. Now both of you need to leave right now!"

I was pissed, but at the same time, I was hurt. I couldn't believe my own father had done what he did to me, and still tried to let his wife hurt me. She was an evil bitch, and I wanted nothing to do with her. At the end of the day, she needed to leave us alone.

*Who do you think you're talking to?" She snapped at me as she took a step closer, only to be stopped by Damian, who stood quickly in front of me.

if you touch her, Allison... I will kill you." Damian growled in a protective manner as James and Hale stood by protecting me as well. I didn't need them to protect me, but their actions made my heart swell.

*You will regret making this decision, Damian." She warned, "things are not going to end up the way you're hoping."

I wasn't sure what she was hinting at, but I didn't like the sound of her warning. There was a glint in her eyes that made my stomach knot. Yet, Damian said nothing as she and my father turned and got into their car, and left.

How were things supposed to get better for the five of us if we were still having to deal with Allison's issues? Damian sighed as he turned to face me, "let's get you inside."

Nodding my head, I followed behind him, and Hale with James at the rear. The feeling of having them all around me was comforting, but at the same time, it didn't feel complete yet.

I needed Talon

"Why don't you freshen up, and we can get some food and hang out for a bit?" James whispered in my ear from behind, causing me to blush.

*That sounds wonderful, but there is a problem," I admitted, watching as all eyes turned to me.

"What's wrong now?" Damian sighed, brushing his hand over his face.

*First off...don't be an ass," I said, rolling my eyes. "I was merely going to ask what room I'm staying in. I don't want to be presumptuous about my accommodations. Unless you want me back in my cottage?"

Hale's eyes widened as he shook his head, "no no. Come with me, and I will show you where to go while James and Damian sort some things out."

Laughter escaped my lips as Hale gestured towards the stairs, and I caught a glimmer of amusement on James' face. He could sense my emotions, and even though I once found it invasive-I was growing fond of it.

"Perhaps you should have some fun with him." James replied through the link, causing me to smirk

*Perhaps I will, but the more the merrier."

There was no doubt about what I was hinting at, but I had a feeling the answer would be no.

As much as I want to, I think you need time alone with Hale,” he replied.

“I know, but he doesn’t want that with me right now. He seems scared,” I sighed,

“Then entice his wolf, Ivy.”

The suggestion was one I hadn’t thought about before, and perhaps he was right.

Following Hale down the hallway, he stopped outside of the master bedroom and opened the door. “Damian told me he had this fixed for you while you guys were gone. This will be your room.”

Confusion filled me at Hale’s words, and as I passed the threshold, my eyes widened. A huge bed lay against the far wall, bigger than any king-size bed I have ever seen. White thick blankets on top of it, and an abundance of pillows. The entire room had a

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feminine feel and completely depicted my personality.

My heart swelled with love and appreciation as I gasped, and tears filled my eyes. “He did this for me?”

“Yeah, he isn’t as bad as you and others think. Damian just has had a hard time believing in love, but I can already tell that around you he is changing. He isn’t as cold as he used to be.”

“I’m beginning to see that,” I replied as a heavy breath escaped me, “thank you for coming home, Hale,” I said as I turned to face him. “I can’t do this without you.”

A soft chuckle escaped him as he turned to leave, “I will let you take a shower.”

James’ comment ran through my mind again as I quickly reached out and grabbed his wrist, “wait. Don’t leave just yet.”

“Did you need something else?” he asked with confusion.

I needed him, but I couldn’t lead that way. He was still so temperamental, and like James said, I had to entice his wolf if I wanted him to play.

“I uh-just don’t want to be left alone. Will you wait in here for me to finish?”

There was clear hesitation in his eyes as he cleared his throat and forced a smile as he nodded.

“Uh, sure. I will just wait on the bed.”

Smiling, I tried to get my nerves under control. I wasn't the type of girl to be super outgoing, but I had to learn to be comfortable around them. After all, they were my mates.

Slowly, I began to undress, bit my lip as his eyes widened slightly watching me. “Ivy,”

“What is it, Hale?” I feigned innocence as I pulled off my shirt and slowly slid down my shorts until I was just in my bra and panties. “Is something the matter?”

“What are you doing?” he asked, looking slightly uncomfortable.

“Getting undressed for the shower?” I asked, confused, as I raised a brow with a smile. “I can't shower fully dressed.”

Reaching around, I unclasped my bra, letting it drop to the floor as his eyes darted to my bare breasts. The gold in his eyes flickered as his wolf slowly fought for the surface.

“I think I should wait downstairs,” he replied with more hesitation as he started to get up.

“Oh, stop.” I scoffed with a smile, “I'll go into the bathroom. Never thought you would be one to get all soft around me being naked, Hale. You have seen me naked a few times, and even had sex with me.”

Shit. I thought that would have worked, but it didn't. Turning towards the bathroom, I moved towards the shower and turned the water on. “It isn't working... he was going to leave.”

James' laughter echoed through my mind, causing me to groan, ‘so play with yourself and make him stay. His wolf will love it.’

‘I'm starting to think this is wrong, James.’ I groaned internally. ‘It hurts that he doesn't want me.’

‘Oh, he does. Trust me on that. He just needs a shove.’

Stepping into the shower, I thought about what he told me to do, ‘for some reason, I have a feeling you are going to get me into trouble.’

‘Oh, don't worry, babe.’ James laughed, you are going to like it.”

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'You will enjoy it.'

Those few words that James told me through the link had me hesitating. Yet, as the hot water streamed down over my body, I took the initiative. The bathroom door was open, and I knew without a doubt he had a clear view of me.

Even if he was choosing not to look.

Slowly, I let my hand slide down between my thighs as I cleaned myself. My mind drifting towards the erotic feeling that each of the men gave me. Hale, though, was unlike the others.

The first time he fucked me, I came undone with his teasing and forceful pleasure. Yet, I knew he was holding back. As if back then he was worried about hurting me.

The more my fingers stroked over my sensitive swollen clit, the more soft moans began to leave my lips and as they did, it's when I heard something I wasn't expecting. A low growl from the bedroom that sounded more dangerous than I had expected. I wasn't sure what to expect, but the faster and faster I pleased myself, the deeper the growl got until Hale finally spoke.

"Stop!" He growled as the shower door was ripped open, and I stood beneath the hot water panting as he stared down at me. "You have no idea how hard I am trying to control myself right now."

Then don't. My comment came out quicker than I expected, and his eyes quickly glossed over as if asking someone to come help him. "They won't help you." I smirked as his gaze came back to me.

"Oh, I don't expect them to." He laughed as he grabbed me roughly by the arm and dragged me from the shower. My heart hammering in my chest as panic slowly crept within me, unsure of what was about to happen.

"Hale- I gasped, "what are you doing?"

Tossing me upon the bed, I landed soaking wet in the center as I watched him exit the room for a moment, and come back with James. James' eyes met mine, and they darkened over as a sinister smirk crossed his face. "Are you ready?"

* Ready.. For what?!" | exclaimed as Hale gripped my ankle, dragging me towards him as I panicked to get away.

"The more you struggle, the rougher it will be."

The dark sultry reply went straight to my core, and as it did, he inhaled deeply and sighed before catching my eyes. "Do you want to know a secret, Ivy?"

Looking at Hale, I hesitated, “what..”

“We have a special talent rare to most wolves in our area. Something about our bloodline that you would have learned about later, but right now it’s going to happen sooner.”

Unzipping the bag, he flipped me over and gestured towards James, who climbed onto the bed and gripped my wrists, holding them down. “James, what are you doing? This isn’t funny.”

“Do you trust me, Ivy?” He smiled.

“Yes.” I quickly replied without hesitation, of course I do.”

Leaning forward, he kissed me slowly before pulling away. “Good, then let what is about to happen. I will warn you, the twins are more attuned with this side of us than Damian or I.”

Something cold and hard came in contact with my bare ass, a stinging sensation running through me as I realized that Hale had just whipped me with something. Gripping at the sheets, I struggled against James as it came again.

A cry escaping me as pleasure rushed straight to my core. “Hale-” | moaned.

“Do you want more?” He asked and James’ eyes twinkled, waiting for my response.

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Hales fingers rubbing against the folds of my core driving me crazy for more. “Yes”

Another smack and my arousal was dripping down my legs. “I knew from the day I met you, you were into the same things I was.”

“Is that right?” I smiled, biting my bottom lip. “can I show you something?”

I couldn’t see his face, but I felt his hand brushing over the marks he had just created. “What’s that?” Hale asked.

“You have to let me up first so I can show you...” I taunted with a singsong voice and a soft moan.

“What are you doing?’ James asked through the link, causing me to smile.

“Let me go, and you will find out.” I taunted again, watching the confliction in his eyes.

“Don’t run.. whatever you do.. Don’t run. Hales’ wolf isn’t like mine or Damians. He and Talon’s wolves are dangerous when they want to be.”

James’ words lingered in my mind, and slowly he released me with nothing but gestation as his eyes glazed over. No doubt telling Damian something.

Turning to face Hale, I watched the pitch black of his eyes stare down at me with intrigue as I stepped forward, running my finger over his chest. “I know that you and your wolf share a mindset, Hale. Can I ask his name?”

Narrowing his brows, he slowly raised one with curiosity. “Liekos.”

“Liekos-” I said softly with a smile, “does your wolf like me?”

“Yes.” He said with a heavy breath as he watched me walk around him.

“Ivy.” James said again in a tone laced with warning, “tread lightly.”

My eyes slowly went to James, who was sitting on the bed, watching me intently. Always the worrier, but right now I knew he was being serious. I didn’t know what the secret was that he was going to tell me, but I wanted to know.

I wanted to know everything about them. “I will make you a deal, Liekos...”

‘Stop talking to his wolf, Ivy.’ James quickly said through the link. The warning falling on deaf ears as I watching Hale tilt his head to the side.

“What’s that?” Hale replied, but for some reason, his voice was much rougher. More animalistic.

Taking a few steps back, I trailed my fingers over hardened erect nipples, “if you can catch me Liekos – you get to have me.”

Turning quickly, I bolted from the room naked, and ran down the hall. James’ screaming “Ivy no” behind me as a roar erupted from the room that shook me to my core.

“Run!!” James yelled through the link, ‘I told you not to do that!’

Fear suddenly escaped through me as I ran towards the stairs, taking them two at a time as the office door flew open, and Damian’s panicked face looked at me with shock.

“Ivy, what the fuck did you do?”

“I-I don’t know. We were just having fun. I don’t understand what’s wrong.” I said breathlessly.

“We aren’t normal wolves, Ivy. We are mixed.. It’s-fuck, I don’t have time to explain. I will hold him off. Run towards the cottage now, and lock the doors.”

I didn’t waste another moment as I heard the commotion upstairs, and took off running towards the back door. My hand ripping it open as I pushed through the door, my bare feet hitting the grass with a fury. I didn’t care that I was naked or if anyone could see me.

I had to get away, and I had to hide fast.

Two sets of roars escaped the house as I heard a crash. I knew for a fact one was Damian, but the other-it was otherworldly.

“Oh, shit!” For once in my life, maybe I need to start listening to what people tell me.

Approaching my cottage, I stopped and turned just in time to see Hale burst through the back door. The only problem was he

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didn’t look like the Hale I knew.

Instead, he was taller and almost as if he had partially shifted into his wolf. Long canines over his lips and claws at the end of his fingers. “What in the hell?”

My breathless reply didn’t go unnoticed as his eyes landed on mine, and a roar escaped him again. One that rattled through my chest straight to my heart.

Throwing open the cottage door, I darted inside and shut it behind me, locking it in place before escaping into my bedroom and hiding.

I was terrified, but at the same time something inside me was exhilarated.

This was the secret they were talking about. The one I wasn’t supposed to know yet.

I had taunted his wolf, and something else came to play.

Something that wanted to ravage me in a way that aroused me.