

## And Then There Were Four by Lilith Carrie

### Chapter 61: Taken by the Darkness

“Ivy.”

A taunting voice called from outside the cottage, followed by a scratching sound that made me bite my bottom lip. “Why are you hiding from me?”

As much as I wanted to reply, I couldn't. Instead, I remained quiet, and with my silence, I heard the cottage door crash open. His thundering steps echoed over the flooring as he stepped inside. “Are we playing hide and seek?” he chuckled deeply.

There weren't many places to hide in my cottage. The distant voices of James and Damian echoed outside. “Hale!”

Holding my breath, I watched Hale's shadow from the closet door. He knew where I was, and as the doors flew open. I tried to push past him, only to be snatched by sharp claws and pulled back. A cry escaped my lips as he chuckled. “Why are you running? You said you wanted to play with me.

“Hale, what are you doing?” I whined as I looked up into two dark, swirling eyes. “How are you shifted like this?”

“Because I'm not Hale... well, technically not.”

Confusion laced my mind as I tried to come to terms with what he was saying. He was Hale... his human form was present, but small characteristics had changed, and with them, something else came forward.

A more primal side of him took the forefront.

“What do you want?” I asked breathlessly as his tongue slid over my neck before tossing me onto the bed. I was turned on at the moment... To know he and his wolf had a need only I could fulfill, and as he stood over me, I waited.

Waited for him to pounce waited for him to take me.

The swollen and sensitive mound between my thighs ached, and with every movement my thighs teased me, begging for a release only he could give me.

“You should have listened to them,” he said with a predatory gaze that caused fear to creep in slowly. “You shouldn't have run.”

Before I knew it, I was pinned beneath him as his lips met mine. The kiss was not as before, and his touch was not soft at all. Most women would have screamed, but me... I didn't.

I was utterly entranced by what he was doing to me, and as his thick erection parted my folds, impaling me all I could do was moan in pleasure.

I was his to do as he wanted, and the voices of Damian and James were distant in the fog of pleasure that clouded my mind.

Hale's hand gripped my throat as he fucked me with a force no human man could ever compete with and cries of pleasure escaped my lips over and over again.

"Oh, shit!" I screamed as he flipped me over and slipped himself back in from behind. The penetration was deep and slightly painful. Yet, it was nothing compared to the sensation of the knot at the base of his cock swelling and pushing against my walls.

"I can't-" I whimpered as he held me down. His lips trailed over my neck as he created more arousal within me

\*\*You are mine, Ivy. Say it. Say you are mine."

"I'm yours," I replied breathlessly. "Make me yours." Overloaded to the max, I tried to pull myself together, but his whispered words in my ear stopped me cold.

"Oh, I will. And as I empty myself, you will carry the future." The voice wasn't normal and panicking, I realized it was that of his wolf.

"Wait, what" elongated teeth bit down at the base of my neck, and pleasure flooded through me as I screamed coming undone as I felt the pressure of his release settled deep within my womb.

I didn't care at that moment what he meant anymore. I was willing to surrender to his desires.

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Desires that made my heart flutter as darkness slowly crept into my vision. I wasn't sure what the future would hold, but as my eyes began to close, I saw the creature within the darkness. A force unlike anything I could have imagined

It was a beast waiting to be released. A force of nature that didn't fit with the world we were currently in and none of it made sense.

"Ivy." It called out in a soothing voice that wrapped around me like velvet. I have been waiting for you."

Fear spiraled through me as my heart began to race. The beast in the darkness stalked towards me slowly as if it owned me. Yet, even though fear was there, I wasn't entirely afraid.

The creature was more familiar to me than I understood, and something deep down inside my soul recognized it. Something deep inside me was calling to it, and as it did, the creature reached for me, plunging me into a dark abyss of constant pleasure and comfort

Was this the end... Or was it simply the beginning of something new?

Something that could potentially destroy us all if we weren't careful.

James POV

Bursting through the door, I watched as Hale slowly became himself again. His eyes flickered for a moment as he looked at me, and then down at Ivy whose beautiful neck was now lined with another mark next to mine.

His mark... his claim on her.

"You didn't," I gasped, realizing what it meant that he had laid with her in that form. He had claimed her and mated with her in a way that very well could produce a child by the end of a year.

"Oh, fuck-" he said as he realized what I was talking about. "I-I didn't mean to."

Heavy footsteps echoed behind me, and as I turned, I took in Damian's dark glaring eyes assessing the situation. Hale slowly moved as his knot released and grabbed a blanket, laying it over Ivy's now sleeping form.

The mating process took every last bit of energy from her.

"What's done is done," Damian replied firmly through gritted teeth. She is one with you both now, and it can not be undone as it was before."

"Damian, why haven't you claimed her?" Hale finally asked as I grabbed a pair of shorts from a stash in her closet we had left weeks before and tossed them at him.

"I have given my reasoning before," he sighed. "You all deserve to have her before I make my claim. As should have been done in the past."

"We need to find Talon." I interrupted, causing them both to turn to me before nodding in agreement.

Finding Talon would be a problem. After losing Ivy, he had gone off the radar and stayed to his animalistic side. A side that was hard to reach at times, considering how out-of-control Talon was.

\*\*No matter what we do... you, Hale, can not let that happen again. You have controlled that side of you for years. What the fuck happened up there?"

Damian's scolding question caught Hale by surprise, and I knew I was at fault for what happened, as well as Ivy. I pushed her to do what she did, but never did I think that Hale would have lost it.

"It's my fault," I whispered, causing them both to look at me. "Ivy wanted you, Hale, and I could feel how bad it was breaking her to not be with you. To have you so indifferent to her. She expects it from Damian, but not from you. So I pushed her to do what she did."

"I knew it." He yelled as he stormed towards me and shoved me against the wall. "I could have killed her, James!"

"Enough!" Damian roared, causing us both to back down. "I will not tolerate any more of this shit in my pack. We are stronger together, and I will not have us divided. I said what I said, what's done is done."

Damian was more than serious, and I was well aware of what he had to say. "What would you like to do about Ivy?"

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His eyes cast down to her as he shook his head, "take her to the room and lay her down. Whatever happens though from here on out, she can not be a part of retrieving Talon. Especially if the goddess takes pleasure in our situation, and she does become pregnant."

I didn't miss the way his eyes darted to Hale with swirling blackness as he said pregnant.

Yes, she belonged to all of us. However, the Alpha wolf in him wanted to have that right first.

It was about dominance and control. Even if she was shared. His wolf didn't care.

“Of course,” I muttered as I walked towards her and lifted her sleeping form in its blanket.

My wolf howled in protest in the back of my mind to a danger lurking around us. I wasn't sure what it was but the pacing he was doing caused me to grit my teeth as pain radiates through my skull.

‘Mate.’ It whined as if to try and tell me something was wrong with Ivy.

A feeling of despair slowly grew within the pit of my stomach as nausea swept through me.

“I think something is wrong,” I whispered, causing Damian to look at me with concern.

“What do you mean something is wrong?”

Shaking my head I looked at him with confusion, “I don't know... Just something isn't right.”

Our eyes lingered on Ivy's sleeping form in my arms. Her hair swept around her face causing her to seem more delicate than she was. “Isn't the bond the same as before?”

“No.” I said softly, “Hale didn't bond with her like he did before. This was different. There is something in Ivy that is different than before, and my wolf is going crazy”

As Damian and my eyes lingered on Hale he stood speechless, “I can't feel anything.”

That isn't good. With the bond solidified between them, he should have been able to feel what I did, and yet, he couldn't.

\*Take her to her room and lay her down. We will take turns keeping an eye on her. In the meantime, we need to find Talon. That has to be priority. if we don't. I have a feeling she will turn to drastic measures of trying to find him.”

Nodding my head, I made my way back to the house trying to calm the beast within my mind.

I had no doubt that she would be out for a while. The mating process with anyone was draining, but to mate with the mixed ones... Well, that was sure to be more dangerous.

Chapter 62: Family Secrets

Ivy POV

Two days passed since the incident with Hale, and it had become more than awkward around the house. The guys seemed content with whatever project they were working on, but I had no doubt that it had to deal with Talon.

On more than one occasion, I heard his name mentioned and even heard Damian get angry. Walking down stairs, I made my way towards the living room. My eyes landing on James who sat reclined on the sofa watching T.V. "Hey, you," I smiled, watching him turn to me.

"Hey, did you sleep well?" He asked as I slid in between his legs and got comfortable.

"Yeah," I sighed, "has there been any news on Talon yet?"

A heavy breath left him as he pondered over what I was saying. I knew he didn't want to tell me what was going on, but at the same time, it was time they told me something.

"We still aren't sure"

"Don't give me that," I snapped, as I turned my eyes to his. "Don't lie to me. I know you know something, otherwise Damian wouldn't be as angry as he is."

"It isn't that, Ivy," he said, as he kissed the side of my head. "There are other problems going on, too. Allison is trying everything she can to get you and us removed from our positions. Saying that we are playing with the political aspects of a pack and are no longer capable of leading."

This was something I knew that I hadn't heard before. A few days ago when we arrived back, I was sure that Allison had been cast aside and was going to leave us alone.

But that would have been too easy.

"Why is she doing this?" I asked, but deep down in my chest, I knew the answer.

She didn't like me, and I was a problem in her eyes.

"Damian already told you about how she has been towards us growing up, Ivy. Everything is more complicated than you think, and he wants you to stay out of it."

"Of course, he does," I groaned, rolling my eyes. Damian acted like I was a China doll, and didn't want me to be part of anything. He thought he knew best and had since the day I had gotten here. "Can you at least explain to me about Hale?"

James' eyes caught mine again just as footsteps approached the living room. The devil himself appeared and as his eyes caught mine, I could see his hesitation. "What do you want to know?" Hale asks softly.

“The truth that’s all I ever want. I don’t want you lying to me or hiding things from me anymore. We should be past that type of relationship.”

I didn’t miss the way Hale and James looked at each other as if in some sort of unspoken language. There was more that they were hiding, but if we could start here, I wouldn’t push it further.

Hale moved towards an armchair and took a seat across from us. His demeanor had changed since the first moment I saw him, and now something more sinister seemed to lurk beneath the surface.

“Our mother was a full-blooded wolf shifter. She came from this pack actually, and her family was the original family. Yet, when my mother came of age to find her mate, she found it in the most unlikely of places.” Hale said with a sigh, she found herself mated to darkness.”

“Darkness?” I questioned furrowing my brow, “but I thought it was all about the moon and light.”

Soft chuckles left the men as Hale shook his head, “no Ivy, but that is the dream, isn’t it.”

“Ivy, things aren’t like the stories others have told the world. Shifters are not light and happiness. We are creatures of darkness.

## Chapter 62 Family Secrets

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Cursed by the moon.”

I was beginning to realize that there was still so much I didn’t know, and as I let it process, my eyes met Hale’s once more. “You aren’t darkness, Hale.”

A flicker of light in the depths of his eyes seemed to spark for a moment as the corner of his lips turned up, you always see the light in everything, don’t you?”

“Maybe,” I smirked, shrugging my shoulders, “continue... I want to hear it all.”

Shaking his head, he sighed with a wide grin as he rubbed his hands against the tops of his thighs, “well... My father was the darkness she found. He was mixed between a wolf shifter and something far more ancient-a Lycan. The race of Lycans died or supposedly had died, but yet something happened where the last of them mixed with wolf shifters to preserve the bloodline.”

Something deep inside me understood clearly what he was saying, and my mind raced with dreams that I had had once upon a time. Dreams that were more nightmares and haunted me every time I closed my eyes.

“All of you can look like that?” I finally asked after a moment of hesitation. My eyes glossed over the three of them with curiosity.

“No, Ivy.” Damian replied, “just the twins. They took after our father more, whereas James and I took more after our mother. It’s a simple case of inherited genetics. We are stronger than most wolves, though, and our senses are far more heightened than normal shifters.”

The sound of gravel outside distracted me from the conversation, and all of our eyes turned towards the front windows of the house. Kate’s elegant form stepped from the car with all her badassery and I couldn’t help but smile as I jumped to my feet.

“Kate!” I squealed with excitement as I ran towards the front door. The sound of James laughing echoed behind me as I slung open the door and ran to her. “Kate!”

Pulling me into a hug, our laughter mixed as she squeezed me tight, “hey girlie! Oh, my god it’s so good to see you again.”

“Likewise,” I replied, pulling from her. “What the hell are you doing here? I thought you would have gone home.”

“Yeah, well, I did. By the way, your mom is looking so much better since the pack doctor has taken her under his wing.” She grinned, giving me a knowing look.

“My mother?!” I gasped, “and the pack doctor?”

“Uh, huh?” She nodded as we both laughed, turns out that he can’t get enough of her and they have been spending a lot of time together. Her treatments are going really well, and she is doing a lot better. Figured I would let you know since I know she doesn’t want you to worry.”

Nodding, I smiled. “Thanks, Kate. It means a lot.”

“So the party is out here, huh?” James laughed as the three men exited the house. Knowing what I did, I couldn’t help but wonder if there were others like them out there. So many questions swirled within the depths of my mind, and I wanted answers.

However, those answers would have to wait for another day. They said it was a secret, and if Kate didn’t know, I wouldn’t tell her. After all, it wasn’t my secret to tell.



As Kate conversed with James, Hale and I, I couldn't help but notice the other man with her speaking quietly with Damian off to the side. Their hushed words were distractive and yet. I wasn't sure what they were talking about.

Whatever it was, though, Damian's eyes connected with mine for a moment, and the look he gave me was one of worry. His body was rigid, and his hands fidgeting.

Something was definitely off, and I didn't like it.

"Care to share the information you're sharing with the rest of us?" I asked, placing a hand on my hip, "no secrets, remember?"

The man speaking with Damian quickly closed his mouth and looked between the two of us.

"I'm sorry. I don't think we have been introduced." He quickly replied, stepping towards me holding at his hand, "My name is Angel. I'm Kate's mate."

"Mate?" I replied, shocked, as my wide eyes looked at a grinning Kate.

"Mhm." She laughed. "We met each other a few weeks ago."

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"Oh, my god. I'm so happy for you."

"Thank you." She grinned as he wrapped his arm around her waist, "we are still trying to figure everything out, but with his job and my newfound talent, we will figure a way."

Curiosity piqued my mind as I looked at him with a smile, "oh what do you do for a living?"

"Oh, I'm a tracker-" He said before Kate quickly elbowed him in the stomach.

Shaking my head, I looked at Damian and the others with a smirk. "I knew it."

"Ivy-" Damian called out before I held up my hand to silence him.

"If you will excuse me, I will go get some food ready. Kate, I'm sure you both are starving after your trip."

She looked at me with hesitation before nodding. "Let me help you-"

“No no. No need. You have business to attend to, and afterward, we can catch up on everything else.” I replied before turning on my feet and walking back inside the house.

It was obvious that I was the elephant in the room, and with me around, they had to be careful of what they were saying. I didn't understand it though, and something deep in my stomach clenched at the hidden secrets.

It had to deal with Talon. There was nothing else that they would need to hide from me.

Something was wrong, and they were afraid to tell me.

Deep down I knew the answer, though-Talon needed me.

### Chapter 63: News of Talon

Taking the day to clear my mind of all the bodies that have been currently filling the pack house, I made my way into town. The need to escape the madness and find solitude in the only place I knew I could.

My favorite university.

Gripping the steering wheel of my sleek black car, I took enjoyment in the purring sound it made when I stepped on the gas. I never had a car like this, and even though it wasn't top of the line like the guys had it was mine.

Flying past treelines, the car gripped the road without trouble. The silence allowed my mind to go through everything that had happened since the moment I woke up. I wasn't sure where my future would lead, but I knew deep down what I was doing was right.

It had to be right.

Talon's whereabouts were still unknown, and with him still missing, I couldn't find the closure I so desperately needed. To top it off, James and Damian constantly fighting wasn't doing any good.

James blamed him for everything that happened, and Hale sat quietly like a loose cannon ready to explode. The chaos wasn't healthy for anyone, and if anyone should be blamed, it was me.

I was the one who came here and turned their lives upside down.

I was the one who decided to fix them and give up my chance of being normal.

They were simply following a calling. A beacon of hope they would have the mate they had always desired and with it. I brought more chaos.

Tears quietly slid down my cheeks as I let my bottled-up emotions free. The mess I had created broke me bit by bit, and as it did, I had the drive to fix it. I was just terrified while I was trying to fix it, I would fuck it up even more.

Turning off of the highway, I pulled onto the main streets of town, heading towards the university. Everything in the town was more than normal, and as I spotted some of my classmates walking on campus, I couldn't help but be jealous of them.

That could have been me.

I could have been normal. I could have been so many things, but instead, I felt selfish.

Pushing back my emotions, I pulled into a parking spot on campus and dried my tears. My soul intention in coming to campus was to meet with my academic advisor and go over options to start taking classes again.

Yet, stepping out of my car, I felt weird. The last time I had been here was with Caleb, and his betrayal was a wound that still had not healed. He may have been bad, but he was desperate.

In times of desperation, we all make bad choices, and in the end, must learn to live with them.

Taking a deep breath, I pushed myself forward towards the office.

I had a goal to achieve, and once the five of us were back to a normal routine, I wanted to be prepared. I wanted to be able to continue what I had started.

It was about as close as I would get to being normal.

If there was even such a thing as being normal.

Forty-five minutes later, I was given every bit of information I could possibly need to get me prepared for online school. The very same type of schooling I had refused to do once before.

It was the best they could do for me, though, considering the circumstances of my immediate withdrawal a few weeks back.

"Ivy!"

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I turned to see Kate smiling and waving at me from across the courtyard.

“What the heck are you doing here?” I called out as she approached me with a grin. “I thought this was just like a cover for you or something?”

Rolling her eyes, a grin lined her face. “No way. I actually like school contrary to what most people would think and my sexy mate happens to think smart girls are cute. So it’s a win-win for me.”

“Well, I’m glad he approves,” I laughed as I stood there soaking it in. “I have to admit, it’s weird to be back here, Kate.”

“Why?” she replied with a concerned look on her face. “You love school, and getting your degree has been a goal forever.”

“I know, but so much has changed since the first day I arrived here. My life was practically turned upside down, and I don’t know if I’m coming or going anymore.”

Pulling me in for a hug, she smiled down at me, “well, why don’t we go get coffee like old times and talk about it.”

As we pulled away, I hesitated for a moment and looked towards the campus cafe. It wasn’t the reason I had come here, but thinking about it, there was no way I could say no to her.

\*Sure, that would be great.”

Turning, we headed towards the cafe as we had always done before. This time, though, we were down to two people that had usually joined us, and as if she knew what I was thinking, I watched her smile fade.

“It is weird, isn’t it?” she said softly as we ordered and took a seat in our favorite booth.

“Yeah, but at least things are slowly getting back to normal.”

“Well, well. If it isn’t my lucky day.” A snappy voice called to my left, and as I let my eyes gaze over the figure, my blood boiled, and every part of me wanted to lash out.

“Allison,” I seethed, “what brings you here to the campus? I didn’t realize you were trying to finally better yourself.”

All I wanted was normalcy for one day, and as always, fate didn’t want to allow me to have that. Instead, I was constantly bombarded by people like Allison.

Furrowing her brows, I watched her jaw clench before a smile lined her lips, “and I didn’t think you would be getting back into classes so soon. I had assumed you would have left already to go after your lost mate.”

Glancing at Kate, I watched her eyes widened in shock as she stared at Allison. Her lips slightly parted as if she was unsure of what to say. “Allison, don’t...”

“Don’t?” Allison smirked, placing her well-manicured nails upon her hips. “Don’t what?”

“Kate... what is she talking about?”

“Oh, my goddess. You guys haven’t told her?” Allison scoffed, “that’s pretty sad. To think I thought she was just being a bitch by not going after him. In reality... she doesn’t even know.”

Staring between the two of them, my heart began to race. They were hiding information from me. Information that led to Talon. “Kate, do you guys know where Talon is?”

Slowly she nodded her head with defeat, “it’s complicated.”

“Complicated my ass,” Allison exclaimed with disappointment before turning her attention to me. “You think I’m your enemy. You don’t have the slightest clue what they are really trying to do. Perhaps you should reevaluate your mates.”

“I fucking get it!” I snapped at her, watching as her eyes widened. “You need to leave...”

“What the hell?” Allison gasped as she stumbled over herself, backing away from me. “That isn’t possible. It just isn’t...”

Allison didn’t bother to finish her sentence before her figure disappeared through the front doors of the cafe. Her departure allowed the anger to slowly subside, and instead leave a trail of hurt straight to my heart. “Why?”

“Ivy-”

“No Kate... why are you guys hiding secrets?” I asked more clearly as I turned to her, waiting for an answer. “What just happened? I don’t understand.”

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“Well... a lot just happened,” she said, letting out a heavy sigh,” one of them being what you did to her.”

Taking a moment to think over what she was talking about, i frowned in confusion, “huh?”

“Ivy,” she whispered, leaning over the table towards me as she looked around, “you just used an Alpha voice on her.”

A burst of laughter escaped me as I shook my head, “don’t be ridiculous. One, I’m not a wolf... and two, even if I was... I wouldn’t be an Alpha.”

“I don’t know, man. That was pretty intense-”

What she was saying made little sense, and brushing it off, I played it down to Allison overreacting. The woman was beyond irritating and an enjoyable coffee with Kate had been ruined by the news she gave me.

“So is it true, then? You guys are hiding Talon from me?”

A wave of uneasiness seemed to seep from her before she nodded again. “Ivy, I’m so sorry. Damian said he didn’t want to bother you until he knew everything one hundred percent. He didn’t want to get your hopes up, and it’s way more complicated than we thought before.”

“What do you mean? How is it more complicated? I need to understand how finding my mate is complicated, Kate. Getting him back is my top priority.”

Slowly standing to her feet, she gestured with her head for me to follow. Unsure of where she was taking me, I didn’t bother to question her, and instead fell in step with her out of the cafe and back across campus. “What are we doing?” I asked her.

“I don’t want to discuss this where someone can hear us,” she replied as she continued to power walk farther away.

“Uh, why? What’s wrong that it’s so difficult for you to tell me back there?”

Stopping in her tracks, she turned to me for a moment and stared as if she wasn’t sure she should be saying anything. The hesitation in her eyes hurt considering how close we had gotten, but I could see her confliction clear as day.

“If I tell you, will you promise me you won’t do anything stupid?” she asked with concern laced within the depths of her eyes, “I’m serious, Ivy. Nothing stupid.”

Groaning, I rolled my eyes, “fine... Jesus, just fucking tell me already.”

As we walked across the courtyard and headed towards the small park across from the school, I couldn't help but wonder what was so terrible she was finding difficulty in telling me what was wrong, and Damian, James, and Hale would hide it from me.

"Something's wrong with him, Ivy." Kate finally replied as she stopped in her tracks and looked around before her eyes once more fell on me. "He isn't normal."

I knew it. Deep down, I knew that something was wrong with him from the moment I woke up in the hospital. It was as if I could feel his pain and agony without being connected to him.

I wasn't sure why, but at the same time, I just knew.

"What's wrong with him?"

Shrugging her shoulders, she shook her head slightly with a sad look in her eyes, "we don't know, Ivy. He has become unreachable through the link and his wolf is acting erratically. Almost as if he has gone crazy, and his humanity is no longer there."

My heart raced hearing her words. There was no way that was possible. Things like that just didn't happen in this world. He was perfectly fine the last time I had seen him.

Storming away from her, I hurried across the street, and bee-lined straight for my car.

"Ivy! What are you doing?" Kate screamed at me as I heard her footsteps quickly approaching from behind me. "You promised me

Spinning around, I stopped and stared at her, "I am going to see Damian. It's time they stop hiding things from me as they always do and bring me in on Talon's status. Keeping secrets isn't going to build our relationship, Kate. I'm done with it."

"Shit-" she groaned as she climbed into my passenger side and closed the door, buckling herself in. "Fine, fuck it. Let's go."

"He is going to be pissed, you told me. You know that, right?" I grinned at her. "Sure you don't want to wait it out?"

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"No, just fucking go," she sighed, "you're right. They shouldn't be hiding things from you at all."

Surprised to hear she was agreeing with me, a smile crossed my face. The problem was it didn't last long, because an ache in my chest grew slowly thinking over Talon.

He was alone wherever he was, and everything that had happened because of me was causing him to lose sight of himself. I needed to find out what Damian knew, and I had to force them somehow to find him.

It had to be done whether they wanted to do it or not.

I need Talon, and I know he needs me.

## Chapter 64: Bella Donna

### Damian POV

Hearing Talon was probably too far gone was not the news I wanted brought to me. I had sent a group of men to the northern woods of Canada to find him, and out of the eight I had sent, only two came back.

Talon had torn them apart, and according to Ralph—he enjoyed it.

He enjoyed it so much, according to Ralph, he feasted upon the fallen bodies as if he was dining at the table of the gods. A sight! was glad I didn't have to witness for myself.

No matter what Ralph said— my brother wasn't a monster.

\*Damian, we have a problem, Angel stated as he quickly entered my office.

“What kind of problem?”

“The kind where Ivy knows about Talon,” he replied with emphasis on her name, stressing the importance of the situation.

\*How the fuck does she know anything? I snapped, seething with anger as my hand slammed down upon my desk “I made sure everyone knew not to say anything to or around her. I can't have her upset if things don't turn out right.”

“I know,” Angel replied looking at me with regret, “unfortunately, it was leaked to her and there is nothing that can be done with it now.

Pinching the bridge of my nose, I exhaled deeply, trying to wrap my head around the shit show that was about to happen. I had promised her no more secrets, and here I was lying to her again. “How did you find out?”

“Kate mind linked me and told me they ran into Allison on campus. Allison told Ivy some things, and Kate couldn't lie to her. She hasn't told Ivy everything, but they should be here any moment, and from the sounds of it, Ivy is on a warpath.”



Of course she was. My little vixen was a force to be reckoned with, and everything about her made me proud. I just wished more than anything I could be the man she was expecting me to be.

Until we figure out Talon, though I wasn't able to.

Instead, I would have to rely on James and Hale to soothe her. When this was all over, I would make sure to make it up to her. I would get her away from this place properly, and give her the relaxation that she needed.

Show her how mates should be treated. It's what she deserved.

Thinking over Angel's words, I tried to understand why Allison was there. For her to be on campus means she was solely seeking Ivy out. Which meant she had inside information on Ivy, and her whereabouts at all times.

That thought alone was uncomfortable. \*Angel, when Ivy gets here, can I count on you to round up border patrol leaders and tell them to sweep the area and double down on security. I have a feeling we are being watched."

"Of course, Alpha," he replied bowing his head slightly. "I will see to the task myself."

The sound of gravel beneath tires caught my attention just in time to see Ivy slamming her car door, storming towards the house with a stern gaze in her eyes.

\*Shit, she's here, I muttered just as James and Hale walked into my office.

"Why is Ivy pissed?" Hale asked as the sound of someone clearing their voice caught all of our attention.

She stood there with her hands on her hips, tapping her foot with a fuck you look in her eyes. She was beyond upset with us, and I suppose she had every right to be.

"Ivy is pissed because the three of you failed to inform me about Talon. Instead, your bitch of a godmother Allison so delightfully informed me of your failure to explain Talon's dire situation. So which one of you assholes is going to start explaining first?"

Opening and closing my mouth, I tried to figure out where to start. There wasn't much I could say to make things right Ivy"

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Holding her figure up, she closed her eyes as she laughed, "don't even try to deny or push the topic off me. I want you to tell me right now what is going on, Damian. I have a right to know."

"You do have a right to know." Hale interjected as he looked towards me, shaking his head, "we shouldn't keep this from her anymore."

Hale was right. We should be keeping this from her anymore, and I was a fool to think I could.

She was the Luna to this pack, and in the end, even the Alpha bows to his mate.

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Ivy POV

I hadn't expected Hale to be the one to speak up first. In fact, I had expected it to be James, but for some reason, he seemed so unsure as he passed glances with Damian.

Giving a reluctant sigh, Damian shook his head and took a seat behind his desk. "Okay."

"Okay?" I asked with shock as I raised my brow. "Does that mean you will tell me everything?"

Gritting his teeth, Damian stared at me, unimpressed by my attitude. Not that I gave a shit.

He was the one heading this operation, and he was supposed to be over this kind of thing with me. We had promised each other no more secrets. To be open and honest.

Yet, here we were once again.

"Yes, I will tell you what I know," he sighed. "May I begin?"

Nodding, I walked towards the sofa and sat down. My legs were shaking from the adrenaline running through my body and if I wasn't careful, it was going to take me to the ground.

"We did find Talon." Damian finally admitted causing my heart to swell with anticipated hope of Talon finally coming home, "but from what we know, he has lost his way. He has taken on his more animalistic side, and with that, he isn't responding to any of us. Even Hale can't get through to him, and they are twins."

"How is that possible?" I asked, looking at Hale, "you guys have always been so close and connected. Surely he has to be reachable."

Letting out a heavy breath Hale's shoulders sagged, "we think he has been drugged, Ivy."

"Drugged?" Taking a moment to let what Hale said sink in, I furrowed my brows and tried to understand how a werewolf... or shifter, as they called it was so easily affected by drugs when they heal so fast.

"Yes, drugged," Damian replied, "and he has killed many people in the process of trying to recover him because of this situation."

"That's not possible. You guys heal though... like stupid fast. How can something small affect you?" Turning to Damian, I watched as a smile spread across his face. "What the hell is so funny?"

"Nothing is funny, Ivy. I'm just shocked you have been researching our kind."

"Well, yeah." I shrugged. "If I'm to be your mate and the Luna of this pack, then I think it's important I learn about your kind. I actually found a bunch of books up in the spare room I had been staying in before."

"That's very progressive of you, Ivy," Damian admitted making me feel a lot less angry towards him than I had been before. "I'm impressed."

"Thanks." Even though his compliment made me smile I couldn't allow myself to get distracted. "Please. Tell me everything you know. What kind of drugs affect you guys?"

"Well, there are a few, wolfsbane being one..." he replied.

"Don't forget Bella Donna and Hemlock," James added.

My brows furrowed at James' remark. "Bella Donna?"

"Yeah, it's a beautiful flower, but it's also very poisonous." James chuckled, "we don't have any of that here though. It's native to South Africa."

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"Do you have a photo of it?" I asked with curiosity trying to see if it was the same flower I had seen before within the house. I knew that it was native to South Africa. I wouldn't be an agricultural student if I didn't but that wasn't something to point out right now.

Furrowing his brow in confusion, James pulled out his phone and scrolled through it. “I don’t understand what this has to do with anything.”

“Yeah, Ivy. I thought you wanted to hear what we knew.” Damian replied, looking beside himself. There was something about it all, though, that I had to figure out.

Something Talon had told me when I first got here that never once made sense before, but at the same time, nothing like this has ever happened.

“Damian, when I first got here, Talon had called me a Bella Donna... Doesn’t that translate to something that has to deal with women?”

“It’s Italian... It means pretty woman,” Damian reluctantly said, “what does that have to do with anything?”

“Here..” James finally replied as he turned his phone to face me. “Wanna explain why you’re acting weird?”

“I’m acting weird?” I scoffed, “you guys really don’t pay attention to anything I’m into, do you?” “Of course we do,” Damian snapped, “you are the center of our attention at all times.” Even with his quick reaction, I caught on to the seductive hint he was giving. He was accurate. They did pay attention to everything that had to do with blowing my mind in any position they could get me in.

Deciding to ignore him, though I took James’ phone and stared at the photo. “Has Talon been to South Africa?”

“What?” Damian replied, “no... why does that matter.”

“It matters because out of all the plants that you guys are affected by, this one would cause a lot of his symptoms and going crazy is one of them.”

“That wouldn’t make sense, though,” Hale finally said as he stood to his feet from the sofa and began to pace the room. “This doesn’t grow around here.”

“It doesn’t have to be, Hale. People import shit like this all the time. I doubt Talon willingly would take this; he was very well versed with nature, and knew a lot about plants.”

The room grew quiet as I looked up from the phone and glanced at the three men. Their brows cocked in confusion, and mouths parted open. “What?” James muttered, staring at me. “The hell are you talking about? Talon didn’t care about flowers.”

“Seriously,” letting the shock of their comment roll off of me I took a deep breath. “You know what... We can address that later. Damian, what are the symptoms or characteristics he is showing?”

“From what we could tell, he wasn’t able to see quite well. He killed quite a few of our men, and on top of that, he was going crazy. All of which a lot of them do-”

“No,” I laughed, shaking my head, “all of them don’t. I’m telling you this is what is hurting him. We need to leave right now and save him before the toxicity ends up killing him. There is a cure-”

Damian slammed his hands upon his desk as he rose to his feet, staring at me. “I didn’t tell you so that you could be a part of getting him home, Ivy. Did you not just hear me when I said that he had killed multiple people on this recovery mission?”

“So you’re just going to give up?” | gasped, unsure if that was where he was leading. The idea of giving up on Talon wasn’t something that I could jump on board with. Talon was the other piece to my puzzle, and I needed him.

I needed him like I needed air to breathe.

“Ivy, my word is final,” Damian replied with a glare. “I will not have you part of this.”

Turning towards Hale and James, I looked at them for help. Surely, they wouldn’t agree with what Damian was saying. “Hale.. he’s my mate and your twin...”

“I know, Ivy, but he would agree with me in not risking you. If he can’t be saved, he wouldn’t want me to come after him.” Hale tried to keep a straight face. He tried more than anything to hold it in, but I could see right through him.

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I could see the tears welling within his eyes that he fought so hard to blink back.

He wanted to save Talon as much as I did. He was just more scared of losing me.

“No,” I stated firmly, turning my gaze back to Damian. “I won’t stand for this. Where is he?”

Laughter escaped Damian as he watched me, “do you think I would honestly tell you? I know how you are, Ivy, and you’re not going anywhere near there and that’s final.”

Finality was something that only ordinary people lived by, and I was slowly realizing I was more than normal. I was a human in a shifter situation, and it was my job to fight for what I wanted. Whether that be physically or metaphorically.

“No!” I snapped. The words came out of my mouth in a slow and dangerous growl. A growl I had never in my life ever created before. “You will tell me where he is right now.”

Damian stared at me in shock, but something inside him stirred and a dangerous glint crossed his eyes. “You dare speak to me like that.”

“I dare do what I need to get my mate back. With or without your help, Damian.”

If this was going to be a battle, then so be it. At the end of the day, though, I was going to find him. No matter the cost, I would have to pay