

And Then There Were Four by Lilith Carrie

Chapter 81: And then there were Five

Book Two: And Then There Were Five.

Three months after the claim

Ivy.

Three months. That's all it had been, and yet life couldn't get any better. Sure, things were different now, but that was to be expected, right? Wrong. God, how stupid could I be to think everything was normal?

One moment I'm a normal college student expecting to go to a new place and finish my degree. Next, I'm some fucking goddess shifter thingy, and my life is being turned upside down by four amazing men who are also very fucking annoying.

"Damn it, James!" I screamed from the kitchen as I stood with the refrigerator door open, searching for the Snickers I knew I had hidden in there. "Did you eat my fucking candy bar?"

Laughter erupted from the living room, and I had no doubt it was the twins finding my hormonal cravings to be the center of their amusement.

Did I find it funny, though? Of course, I didn't, and if one of them didn't produce a fucking Snickers bar in the next five seconds, someone was going to get their ass beat.

"Calm down," James sighed, rushing into the kitchen with a smile on his face. "I just put it in a safe place, so it didn't get lost behind all the groceries I went and got."

Watching, he reached into the fridge and pulled out a small pink container with the words 'Ivy's shit' on top of it. The small sentiment was enough to bring tears to my eyes. James quickly hugged me.

"Please don't cry," he whispered, not wanting to get yelled at by Damian again for bringing me to tears.

Since I found out I was pregnant, I had started going through weird changes. One minute I was happy, and the next, I was crying. You would think it was only me that would be going through these changes, right? Wrong again.

It seemed my mates were each having their own version of sympathy pregnancy symptoms, and on more than one occasion, Damian had to feel the wrath of my sadness.

Which in turn made him start crying, and we all know... Damian isn't that kind of man.

"It's just sweet," I said, forcing back the tears as he opened the container and handed me the Snickers. "Just next time, tell me."

"Of course, sweetie. How are you feeling today?" he asked, and a sigh escaped me.

"Like a freakish monster carrying children who could potentially destroy the world."

Rolling his eyes, he shook his head, "I don't know why you keep saying that."

"Uh— maybe because that's what everyone thinks." I shrugged my shoulders.

"Not everyone thinks that," he groaned. "All that was said is we have no idea what traits will be passed down."

"Uh—

and that you're worried about what could happen. Come on now, I'm not stupid, and I can read between the lines, James."

He couldn't argue with me there. The more and more they tried to sugarcoat shit with me, the more annoyed I became. I just wanted the truth when it came to shit, and over the past few months, they had gotten better at telling me things.

Yet, part of me still couldn't help but wonder if what I was doing was right.

I was the Luna of the pack. The matriarch and mother to all... or so I was told.

Yet, everyone seemed afraid of me in a way, and I couldn't understand why.

I had never given them a reason to fear me, and with everything that was going on now with the pregnancy, I didn't want to be looked at differently.

"Look, you just have to give things time. I mean, look at Rosa. At first, she was a little unsure of you, but now you guys are like BFFs," he said, crossing his arms over his chest.

"James, she is the midwife. Of course, we fucking get along." I turned from the kitchen and made my way toward the living room.

I knew he was just trying to be helpful, but in all honesty—he fucking wasn't.

That's the fact. I'm a freak with unknown supposed powers, and every day I sit here, I find myself to the point of losing my mind. "I need a hobby."

"You have one, gorgeous," Hale commented, putting down his book as he made room for me next to him on the

sofa.

“Oh yeah, what’s that?” | said flatly while stuffing into the delicious chocolate treat I had been craving for the past few days.

“Us, of course.”

Smacking him on the leg, he, James, and Talon broke out into a fit of laughter. “Just because my sex drive is through the roof doesn’t mean it’s a hobby.”

“True, but it’s a great way to stay in shape.” Talon pointed out as he scrolled through his phone. “I mean, look at me... I haven’t been in better shape in a long time.”

“I’m being serious, guys,” | groaned in frustration. “I think I want to start going back to school. I need something to focus on, and I can’t just sit around here forever.”

All three of them fell silent at my statement. Damian and I had spoken about it before, but he always shot it down every time we did.

Not long after I went to enroll again, people started asking questions about Caleb. The guys had formulated something that made it look like he just moved out of town, but the friends he left behind questioned it all.

They were humans, and it wasn’t like we could tell them what really happened. Humans weren’t supposed to know our kind existed.

“You know what Damian said,” Hale sighed, shaking his head. “He isn’t going to allow it ... at least not right now.”

“That isn’t fair, Hale. I want something to do, and there is only so much learning I can take with Priscilla. I love her to death, but if I have to sit through one more meditation session with her, I’m going to scream.”

“What’s going to make you scream?” Damian said as his voice drifted in from the front door.

Jumping from my seat, I skipped toward him and wrapped my arms around his neck. He had been gone for the past week, and I was glad to see him home.

Business overseas hadn’t been going how he liked, and now that the drama was over, he had taken his roll back within the company on a more serious note.

“You’re back,” | smiled, kissing him gently. “Welcome home.”

He smiled down at me, pulling me into his arms before letting his hand rub against my stomach. Things **between** Damian and I had improved since my Luna ceremony and finding out that I was pregnant.

Instead of the cold, demanding, and asshole-ish person who he was—he became an Alpha everyone respected.

We had all agreed after the ceremony, he would still be Alpha. With him taking that position, Talon and James took over training and making sure the borders were protected.

Hale, on the other hand, worked more with me. He helped out tremendously in the pack hospital, and on more than one occasion, I told him he should have become a doctor. It just wasn't what he wanted to do, though.

Instead, he managed the pack hospital and oversaw the pack school.

There was an intelligence about him that stumped even me, and with everything else going on, I was glad to know I had them close.

"I want to go back to school, Damian," I whispered. "The guys even agree.. don't you?" The glare I gave them had their eyes wide and their mouths parted.

"I mean,"

"Uh—well..."

"I didn't say shit," Talon finally piped up as a gasp left my lips.

"Talon, seriously?" I asked in disbelief.

Standing to his feet, he shook his head, "look; honestly, I don't think it's safe. Especially considering you're pregnant. Outside of the pack territory, I can't keep you protected like I can when you're in it. Your pregnancy isn't a secret; everyone knows about what happened at Sanctum. Who knows who wants you..."

I knew he was right, but I couldn't believe he would be so against it. It was like even though my life had become amazing. I was a prisoner.

Fear enveloped those who didn't understand something, and with me, there was so much people didn't understand. Every day, though, I tried to help people see I was normal.

It just wasn't always possible.

"I will be safe," I begged, looking at Damian with the biggest puppy dog eyes I could put on. "Please let me... I mean, technically, I don't have to ask permission, but I'm trying to have you agree and be supportive."

"Look," Damian sighed. "I will agree that you can go

back to school, but I would prefer it be after the baby is born. Can you at least agree with that?"

It wasn't the answer I was hoping for, but understanding his concerns, I smiled.

"Okay, deal," I replied, leaning up to kiss him.

In the end, I won the situation somewhat. Now the only thing left to happen was to get through the rest of this pregnancy in one piece and pray nothing crazy happens with my pregnancy.

The last thing I wanted was to turn into a Godzilla wife because, honestly, that would be my luck. I would have something insane happen and then watch... the world would literally depend on something completely bizarre.

Like the last piece of pizza that always seemed to disappear when I try to save it.

Life wasn't easy, that was for sure, but as long as I had my guys, anything was possible.

"Ivy!" Priscilla called from the front door as she walked in behind Damian. "Oh, Damian, you're back!"

"Yes, it's lovely to see you again, Priscilla. I hope those classes for Ivy are coming along well?"

"Yes, they are, but she still has a long way to go." She turned her gaze to me and smiled. "Are you ready?"

"Yeah, as long as this baby lets me actually get some peace." I giggled, rubbing my hand over my small protruding bump.

"Don't you mean babies?" Priscilla said with a grin, causing my eyes to widen.

"You're fucking joking..."

"Twins!" Hale laughed. "I fucking knew it!"

"You don't know shit, Hale." I scolded as I watched – James and Talon fork money from their wallets and hand it to Hale. "I haven't even gotten the ultrasound done yet. Don't count your chickens yet."

I knew what Priscilla said was true. Over the past month, I wondered if it was two, and something inside me told me it was. I just had been avoiding the ultrasound for this particular reason.

How the hell was I going to deal with Twins?

Oh, wait. I have two grown-ass ones standing in the living room. Goddess, help me.

Chapter 82: History Lesson

Twins.

They confirmed it quicker than I had expected. One day I was listening to Priscilla tell me there were babies... and then the next day, I was on an ultrasound table watching as the pack doctor used cold jelly and a magic wand to scan my stomach.

“Oh, look... right there, Luna. There is baby one... and there is baby two.”

The doctor's words didn't comfort me. I was excited, yes, but extremely scared.

“Thank you,” | replied, not knowing what to say.

I had grown up an only child and had no clue what it was like having a sibling or raising more than one child. Granted, I wasn't alone. I had four incredibly sexy mates who stood over me as if on guard twenty-four hours of a day, but it still didn't ease my mind.

“There is no need to thank me. I would like to see you back in two weeks. That way, we can get another scan and determine the sex of the babies.”

As soon as the doctor cleaned my stomach, he stood to his feet and went from the room. My eyes cast towards my four mates, who had excited faces as they looked at the photos of my ultrasound that had been given to them.

It shocked me none of them cared to determine who the father of the children was. Instead, they shared in the duty as if all four helped create the children to come.

Which, honestly, was a sweet notion. I was glad the paternity of the children would not be an issue for them. Then again, they never had a problem sharing me.

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“Are we ready to go home?” I asked as their eyes lifted to meet mine. “I mean, we can stay here if you want, but I was kind of hoping for pizza and a movie.”

Pizza and movie were two words triggering all their attention.

It wasn't a Netflix and chill kind of situation.

They literally ordered pizza, and we watched movies. It was the one time I let them surprise me with both toppings and genre. Even though I often questioned their choices because, I mean, who doesn't love pineapple on pizza? Cue

dramatic eye roll.

“Pizza! You keep saying those sweet magic words to

me, and you may end up pregnant for the unforeseeable future, Ivy,” James replied as he moved towards the door with me right behind him.

Laughter escaped me. “Pizza and movies turns you on and makes you want to have kids?”

James wrapped his arms around me and leaned in, kissing my neck. “With you, yes.”

James was definitely the most affectionate of the four men and always had me laughing and smiling, no matter the situation. My life with them was far from dull, but at least communication was better, mostly, now.

“So, are you wanting to design the nursery, Ivy? Or did you want to have us do it for you... hire someone, maybe?” Damian asked as we climbed into the car.

“I don't know,” I sighed. Designing a nursery was sort of the last thing on my mind for the time being. While they thought about things like this, I was still worried about someone coming to challenge us.

Yes, I was a bloody Sølvmåne werewolf, but I was pregnant.

What the hell was I seriously going to do when I would eventually be as big as a house?

I hadn't exactly thought things through when I started letting them fuck my brains out.

However, we didn't know what I was either, so there was that, too.

“Are you okay, Ivy?” A soft touch on my shoulder from Hale pulled me from my thoughts, and slowly, I nodded with a smile.

“Yeah, sorry, just a lot on my mind,” I mumbled, trying to clear my confusion. “I don’t mind about the nursery. We can look at some things.”

All four of them hesitated for a moment, staring at me before I pushed a smile upon my face. “Seriously, I’m fine.”

“Is that why you cut us off from linking you this morning?” Talon asked with confusion.

I wasn’t sure what to say. It was the truth, but I suppose part of me didn’t tell them, hoping they wouldn’t notice.

“Kind of,” I finally admitted. “There is just so much going on, and I can’t help but wonder if having babies right now is coming at the most unrealistic of moments.”

“Ivy... babies never come when they are needed. They come when they come, and everything else just gets fig

ured out around it,” Damian replied with a smirk.

“That’s easy for you to say, Damian. You’re not pushing two fucking watermelons out of your hoo–ha.” I was trying not to freak out. Honestly, I was trying.

However, the more I thought about the fact I had two lives growing inside me, and I was going to have to push them out of a hole that shouldn’t stretch like that big terrified me.

Their dads were giants among men, and there was no way two big–ass babies were going to be able to come out of my cooter. It just wasn’t possible.

Silence descended over us for a moment as the car pulled up to the front of the house. My mind reels with the future I have been given. No matter how much time had passed, I could never get used to my current situation.

Stepping out of the car, the guys’ laughter consumed the surrounding air.

“Come on now, Ivy. It will not be that bad. Women have babies every day.”

Talon’s words did nothing but aggravate me further. They had no idea how I felt, and with my hormones all over the place, I couldn’t control the emotional rollercoaster !

was feeling.

Slamming the door behind me, I stormed off towards the house, tired of their bullshit. I loved them dearly, but right now, I wanted to smother them all. They tended to be complete assholes when they wanted to be.

A few hours later, and a tub of chocolate cake frosting, I was in a much better mood.

“You know, I think the only real reason I like these movies is so that I can watch Aquaman’s sexy ass.” My muttered comment caught Hale’s attention, and quickly, I felt the jealousy he had for the actor on tv.

Suited him right for pissing me off.

Pizza and Marvel movies were my calling. The guys were thrilled not to be stuck watching some sort of chick flick, and even though I enjoyed them, I was in more of an **ass**-kicking mood lately.

I felt as if this calmness surrounding me was only the calm before the storm, and deep inside me, I felt something **was** coming.

I just wasn’t sure what it was.

Looking at Hale, who sat on my left, I found myself curious about the information he had searched about his history. Priscilla had told me there were things he and Talon knew only they could tell.

Even as a seer, she couldn’t see everything, and if I wanted answers, I would have to go to the source, eventually. “Hale. Can I ask you something?”

“Of course. What’s on your mind?” he said, casting a small glance and a smile my way.

Looking down at my hands, I hesitated for a moment while I gathered my thoughts. “I wanted to know what you learned about yourself. You told me you had researched what the ancients were, and while Priscilla is helping me learn some things, there’s still so much that I don’t under

stand.”

Hale stared at me for a moment as if he wasn’t quite sure what to say. Every time I mentioned it in the past, he avoided the conversation, but I knew deep down that was because he was scared. I just wasn’t sure why he was scared. We’re mates and shouldn’t hide anything.

“What do you want to know?” He cast his gaze towards the window as if unable to look at me while we talked about

"I don't know... anything, really."

To see Hale like this made little sense.

"If it makes you uncomfortable,"

Turning to me with a wide grin, he shook his head. "It's not. It's just that, honestly, none of it makes sense, but I supposed I can tell you what I do know that will."

Adjusting, I stretched out over his legs, making myself comfortably to him. His hands instinctively went to my feet as he started to rub them. I tried hard to stay focused, but the deep circled motions were more than distracting.

"Our mother was a regular werewolf, but she came from a very long lineage. Her bloodline went as far back as the nomadic Vikings, and possibly even further."

"Vikings?" | giggled. "Like plunder the land kind of Vikings?"

Nodding his head, he nudged me with his elbow gently and smiled. "Yes, those."

"Makes sense now why you and Talon love to throw me around and make claims on me so much..."

At the moment I said that, laughter from the open doorway behind me echoed through the room, and to my

surprise, James and Talon stood there with popcorn.

"I thought we were watching a movie?" James said as he plopped himself down onto a chair near me, and Talon took the floor below me.

"We were, but Ivy wants a history lesson," Hale said pointedly, causing me to roll my eyes.

"Will you continue, please?"

"Of course... nowhere was I." Taking a moment, he smiled. "Oh right, so our mother was this descendant of a long lineage, and at one point, she was supposed to marry this other Alpha from a neighboring pack. The idea of mates had slowly faded back then, and many just married in for power or wealth. Except, our mother ignored new notions and was determined to find her mate."

"What a mate he was," Talon chuckled, popping his snack into his mouth.

“Who’s telling this story? Me or you?” Hale replied with an irritated expression.

Gesturing with his hand, Talon let Hale continue. However, something in Hales’ eyes made me unsure if telling this story was a good idea.

As Hales’ eyes met mine, he sighed. “Our mother met our father in the darkest parts of the woods. It was said to be off limits and cursed, but something drew her there, and according to diaries we found of hers in the attic a few years ago, she felt like he watched her for weeks before she let him claim her.”

“So he knew that your mother was his mate, then?”

Nodding his head, Hale looked off with a heavy breath and stared out the window as if expecting to see something no longer there.

“He knew, but no one else knew what he was. Except for our grandmother, and she cursed the relationship because she said it would bring hell upon the world with the creations they would give life.”

My heart all but dropped into my stomach after hearing him. Those words sounded so oddly familiar, and as much as I wish I could remember why, I couldn’t.

The creations they made were my mates, and I knew each of them. They wouldn’t hurt anyone who didn’t hurt them first.

“She was just scared—”

“No, Ivy. She wasn’t a normal wolf. She was a hybrid herself and Priscilla’s twin sister.”

Holy fuck... say what?!

Chapter 83: Dreams of Darkness

Running.

It was all I ever seemed to do, and every time I closed my eyes, the darkness cascaded over me like a blanket.

Welcoming me home.

But it made me feel terrified that I would be lost forever if I stepped into that darkness.

Taking a deep breath, I pushed past my own fears. The calling sound of a woman in the distance made me move further. I wasn't exactly sure what I would find, but something deep inside me told me to keep going. As that darkness finally cleared, I found myself in a valley of light seemingly to never end, and within the light stood a beautiful woman with long red hair and glowing crystalline eyes.

She looked familiar to me, but then again, she didn't. Was I back where I met Frigga?

"Who are you?" I asked softly, watching as the woman's gaze turned to me as she gently tilted her head.

Plump red lips and razor-sharp teeth formed into a

wide smile as she stared. "Who am I? I am you. Do you not recognize your own flesh and blood?"

What the hell?

"You're not me..."

"Am I not, mother?" Every breath in my chest escaped me at her words.

Mother? Was this the vision of my future daughter? Was I to have a daughter?

For a moment, I stood still and contemplated the woman's words. But before I could say anything, a baby's cry caused me to turn my attention quickly to something in the darkness behind me.

Confliction. Utter confliction filled the core of my soul, and as the crying grew, my anxiety climbed higher. "If you go, mother, it will end as it was planned."

Turning to look back at the creature, I shook my head in disbelief. "What are you talking about? What is planned?"

The crying grew louder and more restless with every passing second. Instead of waiting to hear what she said, I turned from the woman and ran toward the child. If there were a babe in trouble, I would be the one to save it.

The closer I got, the farther away the child seemed to be, and to make matters worse, a roar of endless terror echoed through the darkness, setting the panic within my soul I did not even know existed.

If there was something dangerous within the darkness, I had to hurry. Not just because I was in danger, but because there was a baby in danger too.

It wasn't until I saw the soft pink and blue blanket upon a lush bed of grass I realized I had finally made it. However, the sudden feeling of being stuck captivated my attention to the ground beneath me.

My feet were stuck to the ground, and no matter how much I tried to free myself, I couldn't. It was as if someone had super glued my feet to the ground, and there was no way to escape. "No..." I cried out softly. "Hold on, baby, I'm coming."

As I searched the surrounding area for something to help, I glimpsed something in the shadows ahead of me.

Bright, red eyes gleamed through the darkness, and as those red eyes stepped forth, I saw the face of a monster with a hunger dripping from its muzzle that terrified me. Its eyes darted from the baby to me as its tongue swept **across its mouth**.

Jolting from my bed, I sat in panic with my hand across my chest and tears streaming from my eyes. I didn't have the slightest clue what the hell had just happened, but I was glad to know it was all a dream.

Lifting my hand, I brushed the sweat from my forehead and took a moment to catch my breath. At the same time, my bedroom door burst open, and Damian ran in wide-eyed with James right behind him. "What happened?"

Taking a moment, I took a deep breath and pushed through my calming panic.

"Nothing, just a bad dream, is all. I'm sorry I woke you guys."

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Damian and James looked at each other with confused expressions before stepping forward. "Do you want to talk about it?" James asked.

"No, no. It's nothing. Why don't you guys go back to bed? I'm just gonna read for a while. I think all those action movies last night got to me."

With annoyance on his face, Damian turned and walked out of the room, telling me to rest. Things had improved with him over the last few months, but he was hard to read.

I knew he loved me, but I don't think he knew how to

honestly handle everything going on. I often had to remind myself it isn't just my life that has changed, but all of theirs, as well.

Glancing at James, he leaned down and kissed me softly. "Get some rest, sweetie. Tomorrow we can go shopping for things for the nursery."

"Sounds like a plan," I replied as he made his way from my room and closed the door behind him. My mind slowly drifted back to the flash of images in my mind from my dream.

Never once had a dream frightened me as much as that one did.

Who did the woman call me mother?

And why was there a baby in the middle of darkness with a beast looking to devour it?

Perhaps this was just me and an overbearing imagination as a new mother worried about the world her children would enter. I didn't know what to make of it, but the more I thought about it, the higher my anxiety became.

Was I bearing children into a world that did not **deserve** them?

Was I living a life that was no longer safe?

Granted, humanity wasn't ever safe, but I was aware of those evils, and I could protect my children. Instead, I am in a world of supernatural creatures | barely know anything about.

Creatures that, at any moment, could take everything from me I love, and there wouldn't be anything I could do to stop it.

Sliding from the bed, I let my feet gently touch the floor. There was one person I could go to who would know what to do. I still couldn't believe she was actually their aunt. Why wouldn't they have told me that?

Making my way towards the attic staircase, I turned on the light and ascended the stairs. Priscilla had taken up residence in our converted attic, making it more incredible than I thought possible.

Knocking three times on her door, I waited, and slowly Priscilla opened the door with a smile spread across her face letting me know she already knew I was coming. "Come in, dear. I set the kettle."

Stepping through the threshold, I shut the door behind me and glanced around her suite she had created. She had impeccable taste, and even though it was more of the garish variety, I found comfort in it where Damien would not

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let me decorate the rest of the house in this kind of decor.

“I’m sorry to intrude on you so early in the morning,
Priscilla.”

She gazed up at me from where she stood near the fire place and grinned. “I knew you were coming, dear.”

Of course, she did. “I know, but still…”

“I take it you are having bad dreams again?” she commented as she continued meandering around the room.

“Yes. This one, though, was much different from the others.”

“Aren’t they all?” she cackled softly. “Whatever it is, has you worried?”

Once again, she could read me like a book. I didn’t even have to tell her what was going on, and she would already **be aware**, which in the end made things a lot less complicated when I needed to tell somebody something.

“This one is different, though. I feel like it is trying to warn me about something. Like something horrible is going to happen, and I can’t stop it.”

Lifting two cups, she made her way to where I had taken

me on a seat on a small pillow near her coffee table. “Our dreams are often the reflections of fate we are unprepared for. Don’t ignore them, but remember that you can’t change them.”

“That’s not exactly comforting,” I groaned while sipping on the tea she had sat in front of me. “I wish I knew what to do.”

“Have you spoken to the guys about these dreams?”

Glancing at her quickly, I shook my head. “No, definitely not.”

“Why not?” she asked, slightly taken aback. “They are your mates and can help.”

"They are more likely to have a heart attack and board me up in this house forever. You should know this, considering they are your nephews." I said, letting her know I knew who she really was.

Frozen for a moment, a smile crept across her face that met her eyes. "They told you?"

"One of them did. The others just didn't object."

Laughter escaped the two of us as she shook her head, raising her brow. "Hale is very informative."

"He is, but what I want to know is why you didn't tell me. We have been working together for months to get down to what I am and how I can control myself, and you said nothing."

Priscilla hesitated as she played with the spoon in her tea. Her mind seemed to wander for a moment, but then, with her usual glance, she looked at me and smiled.

"Not everything is easy to explain, Ivy. Sometimes things must be discovered on your own." That wasn't the response I wanted, but it was clear it would be the only response I would get from her right now.

"Okay," I said with a little enthusiasm. "What do you suggest I do about these dreams; then? I mean, I can't keep on like this. The lack of sleep is getting to me."

"Perhaps you should talk to the goddess again. She had much to tell you before."

There was a feeling inside me telling me the same thing, but I didn't want to have to stoop to that unless I needed to. Just because I could reach out to them didn't mean I needed to for every minor issue I had.

"Maybe I should talk to the guys and see what they think first."

I hadn't told the guys the details of my dreams simply because I didn't want to worry them, but now I thought that was my best course of action.

"Avoiding the problem will not get you anywhere, Ivy. If you want to tell them, you can, but in the end, you don't need to put off talking to the goddess. She came to you for the first time for a reason. You're a Celestial."

Priscilla was right as usual, even though I refused to tell her that. It wasn't because I was too prideful to admit she was right, but simply because if I did, then I would only further be showing I can't do anything without her guidance.

If that actually made any sense.

Conflicted with the possibilities of what the dream had meant, even though I knew it was a warning, the rational side of me just wanted to toss it up as nerves and nothing more.

Was that foolish? Perhaps... but then I felt I was being cautious.

Just because I was told by the 'goddess' I was a celestial and destined for great things, didn't mean that was actually the truth.

How was I sure that they weren't lying to me for their own personal gain, and they weren't the trickster god they had tried to warn me about?

In the end, I had to gain clarity.

But it would be on my terms when I felt the situation called for it.

Chapter 84: Town Secrets

James

The next morning I knew something was definitely wrong with Ivy. She wasn't acting herself, and when she came downstairs to get breakfast, she was quieter than usual.

I could feel she had bad dreams every time she closed her eyes, but she acted as if nothing was wrong. Even though I knew there was.

Just don't think she knew how to confront us about it, or maybe she didn't want to.

Since we completed the mate bond, we could read each other easily. However, the problem was Ivy liked to keep herself cut off from us more than we would have appreciated. At least when she was awake.

She didn't do it because she didn't care. She simply did it because she said she felt it was an invasion of privacy, which was understandable considering she didn't grow up in our world.

"Did you still want to go into town today and look for some nursery stuff?" | asked, trying to judge whether she was up for doing anything.

Her eyes met mine for the briefest of moments, and as if she was pushing away an external force clouding her mind, she nodded her head and let the small smile of joy creep across her face.

“Yes, definitely. I’d like to get started on everything. I mean, I know there’s a lot that you guys are going to do for me, but I really want to be part of it.”

I was happy she was excited about the twins arrival, because from the conversations I and the guys have had, we were concerned she was regretting her decision to be with us and to have our children.

For the past three months, she had done nothing but shrug off the topic of the unborn children or anything that had to do with babies.

Hale and Talon simply explained to me she regretted her decision to be with us. She was young. Her schooling had been changed. Her whole life had been upended and completely rerouted, and now to top it all off, she was pregnant with not just one baby but two.

She was a new mother, and she would need time to adjust to it.

“Great. I’m not sure if the twins are still coming—“

“No, Hale and Talon are still on patrol. They did night shift, but unfortunately, Murphy and the other guy that we’ve got running have both come down with some mysterious cold,” Damien said as he entered the kitchen.

“Cold. They’re werewolves. How do they have a cold?”

Ivy’s question caused Damien and I both to chuckle. “Just because they’re wolves doesn’t mean they can’t get sick. Certain ailments trigger us, just like they would any normal human. The difference is that we tend to get over it a lot quicker than humans.”

“So, you’re telling me you guys have had an actual regular cold before?” Her brows furrowed in confusion as if she just could not wrap her mind around this.

“Let’s get going before you confuse yourself more. I will explain everything in the car on the way there.”

Rolling her eyes, she smiled and hugged Damian. The soft interaction with them as he kissed the side of her head made me slightly jealous, but I was going to spend the day with her, so I couldn’t hold it against him.

We were all mates, after all. Even if I didn’t like to share.

Leaving his arms, she moved towards me, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear, and grabbing her purse. The

sweet smell of her wrapped around me, and with it, I could sense the children growing within her belly.

Children that could have been there because of me.

“Come on, James,” she said with an amused glance as she opened the garage door.

Following behind her, she made her way towards the car, and as we climbed in, I couldn't help but stare. “Are you okay?”

Her question pulled me from my thoughts, and chuckling, I nodded. “Yep, I'm good.”

“Okay, then,” she replied sarcastically with a smile of her own. “Let's get going then.”

15 minutes later, Ivy and I were heading down the highway towards the center of town to do a bit of shopping. It had been a while since she had properly been out, but that **wasn't** because she didn't want to go.

Instead, it was because there were security **issues** Damian wanted her kept close for.

“So did they ever find the rogues or whatever near the pack's north end?”

“No,” I replied. “Damian said that he thinks they were passing by, but the twins think otherwise, so they have been on top of patrol like you wouldn't believe.”

“Is it something I need to worry about?” She caused me to glance at her to see her biting her bottom lip with her brow furrowed. “James?”

“Uh—no. Everything is fine, but we always take precautions to protect the pack.”

Silence filled the space between us for a moment as we both looked ahead. “You mean to protect me...”

That was what I meant, but I didn't want her to think we would neglect the pack's protection over her. Even though we would do it if we had to choose. It wasn't because we were heartless... She was our mate.

“It isn't like that, Ivy. Of course, we would do anything to protect you, but protecting the pack is protecting you. People are growing on you being here, whether you choose to see it,” I pointed out, giving her a knowing glance that caused her to roll her eyes.

“They don't like me being here, James.”

“Of course, they do. You’re their Luna, Ivy. They just have to get to know you,” I said, trying to reassure her further.

“You know, for as sweet as you are, you really need to learn that you suck at lying.”

Gasping, I feigned hurt from her comment, and that expression alone caused her to burst into a small fit of laughter. “I do not,” I replied firmly, trying to seem serious.

“Uh, yeah, you do.” She glanced at her phone. “I haven’t heard from Kate in a while... Do you think she is mad at me?”

“Mad at you? Why the hell would she be mad? That woman literally threatened to neuter me at one point if I hurt you.”

Thinking about that conversation had my balls aching. It was like it had only happened yesterday, and in reality, it happened two months ago. Two months that not a day went by when I didn’t think about it.

“I almost forgot about that,” Ivy hummed to herself as we pulled into a parking spot in front of the local shopping complex.

Amongst them were several clothing stores, hardware

shops, and baby centers. I had hoped we could get a variety of things on our outing today to keep Ivy preoccupied for the next few weeks while the twins took care of our border issue.

It was honestly the main reason I took her out today.

Damian and the twins held a gathering with pack members to review protocols and other safety measures. I explained to them that Ivy would want to be present, but Damian said no.

He didn’t want her to worry in her condition, and I knew very well if she found out later, she would be more than pissed about it.

Hopefully, she just wouldn’t be pissed at me.

“So, which store do you want to go to first?” I asked as we stepped out of the car into the slowly warming air. “The baby outlet... or maybe the department store...”

Taking a moment, Ivy glanced around and settled her eyes on a hardware store.

"I want to look at paint swatches," she said enthusiastically as she made her way towards Harders Tools and Paint.

"Paint?" | replied quickly, catching up to her. "We're

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painting?"

A softened stare of amusement crossed her face as she laughed. "Yes, James. Painting is something that you typically do."

"You know Damian isn't going to like odd colors, right..."

"Oh, I know," she chimed as she opened the door. "That's why I'm doing it."

Fuck. Of course, she was doing it on purpose.

Debating with myself, I watched her look at the swatches going between blues and pinks to shades of green. Should I tell him now and save his wrath for another time?

Or should I say fuck it and let her do it, then watch him explode?

The internal struggle was real, but in the end, I let her have her fun and do what she wanted to do. It would make for a much more entertaining evening.

"So, what are you thinking?" | asked as I stepped closer, looking at the swatches in her hand. "Traditional baby colors?"

Laughter escaped her as she shook her head. "No. I want more earthy tones."

"Oh, my god! Ivy, is that you?!" A voice shrieked from the other side of the store.

I watched Ivy freeze for a moment before turning to look towards the person, and the sensation of dread and irritation flooded her. "Sasha... it's been ages."

The brunette girl strode towards Ivy quickly before her eyes went down as she looked down at the growing bump that Ivy carried. "Oh, my god. So it's true... you're pregnant."

"What do you mean, it's true?" Ivy asked, a bit more bitingly than I thought she wanted to sound.

“Oh, well, there was just word going around that you dropped out of school because you got yourself knocked up. I didn’t want to believe it, but when Caleb disappeared, and then you did, a lot of us wondered,”

“Wait, what?” I said, staring at the girl in confusion. “What does Caleb have to do with anything?” The girl was quiet for a moment, as if embarrassed she had even said anything, and with her hesitation, I became more and more enraged.

“Oh, please forgive me,” she muttered, flipping her hair over her shoulder. “A couple of students on campus have been gossiping about how close you and the professor were before, and one person saw you guys get in a car together at one point because she lived near him. So she assumed that y’all were together.”

A low growl emitted from my throat as Ivy grabbed my upper arm. She stared at me, shaking her head as if to tell me she would handle the situation.

“I don’t know who told you that, but you’re misinformed. Caleb was a horrible man and very abusive to other women. Thankfully, I wasn’t subjected to that, and I knew when to get away. That’s why he left.”

— Ivy’s words caught me off guard. I could tell she was lying a bit, but she was being honest about other things. Staring at Ivy, I watched how rigid her posture was while speaking with the woman and seeing her uncomfortable didn’t please me.

Caleb was dead, as well as the girl who helped him. It was one of the memories I tried hard to forget, yet I constantly felt reminded of the past.

“Oh!” She gasped in shock. “I can’t believe that no one told me. I’m so sorry to think that the two of you—”

“It’s fine,” Ivy snapped with a smile. “People don’t always get their facts straight before making assumptions.”

“That’s true,” she nodded before glancing between Ivy and I. “So you two are together?”

“Yep. She belongs to me,” I claimed before wrapping an arm around Ivy’s waist and pulling her closer to me. “My forever, and always.”

"If you will excuse us, we really need to look at the paint and move on to the next store," Ivy said with a sickly sweet smile on her face. "I'm sure you understand."

She slowly slid from me before taking my hand and turned towards the sections of paint swatches, ignoring the woman. The mysterious woman stood there for a moment before finally giving up and turning away.

"I can't believe people think that—" I muttered before Ivy quickly cut me off.

"Don't think about it at all. People are going to gossip no matter what we do, and honestly, I don't want to pay it any mind because all it will do is irritate me further."

Oh shit. She was pissed about what Sasha said. Not wanting to see her day ruined by a bunch of gossip, I leaned forward, kissing the side of her head.

"Okay, sweetie. What color are you thinking?"

At this point... it was going to be whatever she wanted.

Even if she wanted the entire store.

Chapter 85: Agree to Disagree

Ivy

After the entire thing with the girl in the store, whose name I couldn't remember, I went on a shopping spree like you wouldn't believe. From paint to furniture and clothing.

Even toys that lord knows the babies wouldn't be able to enjoy for quite some time.

"Holy shit!" Hale said as Talon jumped out of his pickup truck. "Did you buy the entire store?"

Laughter escaped me as I stood at the back of James' car with my arms crossed, staring at the two men looking over the large haul I had gotten today while James and I were in town.

There were so many things I had picked up that half way through the trip, James had to call Talon to bring his truck to help us. The sight of Talon in a baby store was more than amusing because the man's eyes went wide with the variety of items there were to choose from.

His questions were cute, but at one point, he picked up a **breast** pump, and I had to question whether or not he was

all there. The man had placed it in his mouth and asked if it was a breathing machine or a netipot device for the baby's **noses**.

To say the laughter wasn't in short supply would be an accurate statement, and I was glad I had my phone on me to make sure I caught a photo. I would use it later to show the kids, when they were older, the things their dad did.

I wasn't exactly into scrapbooking, but my mother did it, so honestly, it couldn't be that hard... right?

"Will you guys stop fucking complaining about how much stuff I bought and just take it out of the truck and put it in the living room, please?" | replied with a smile as I rolled my eyes at them.

They were ever so dramatic, and watching them fuss over the stuff they had to move was entertainment on its own.

"Oh, look. Damian has joined us," James said sarcastically as he grabbed boxes and bags from the car and started making his way towards the front door.

"Put it in the living room!" | yelled at him, not hearing the mumbled comment he made that was undoubtedly sarcastic.

By the time Damian stood beside me with his hands in his pockets, he was almost speechless. "Uh— holy shit, Ivy. When James said he was taking you shopping, I didn't think you would make us go bankrupt."

"Seriously?" | scoffed, crossing my arms over my chest with a smug expression. "Well, Damian. Purchasing things for a baby is expensive, and it's even more expensive when you're purchasing for two."

"Yeah, but you don't even know what they are yet. How do you know that what you bought will fit the gender of our children?"

Slowly casting my gaze from the twins unloading to Damian, I raised a brow and smirked. "I already know what they are, Damian."

“No, you don’t. The appointment is in two days... how would you know what they are? Did you find out without us?” he asked with a shocked expression that was nothing but humorous.

“Calm your tits, Damian. I would never do something like that. Just call it mother’s intuition, okay?”

Letting out a sigh of relief, he stood a little straighter, watching every item go past him. “So, what do you think it is?”

“Oh! So now you want to know... hmm, not sure I should tell you.”

“Ivy -” he groaned before a ball hit him in the back of the head, causing him to turn around quickly with his fists clenched and a scowl permanently etched into his brows. “What the fuck, Talon?!”

Looking at Talon, I couldn’t stop laughing. He threw his hands up in the air as to say ‘what the fuck are you doing’ and gestured to the shit that still had to be brought in.

“Stop talking and start fucking helping, mister big bad Alpha.”

— “Go fuck yourself, Talon,” Damian snapped as I gripped his upper arm gently and shook my head no.

“Stop it... help your brothers, please.”

He wasn’t pleased with the fact Talon did what he did, but letting out a heavy breath of frustration, he moved towards the truck, snatching things off of it as I watched on. “Damian, be careful. Your daughter and son won’t appreciate their shit being broken.”

Stopping in his tracks, he looked at me for a moment, and the frown he wore slowly became a smile. “You think it’s one of each?”

“Yes, now help, and we can talk more about it later.”

Every day my stomach grew more and more, and as I rubbed my hand over my growing stomach, I couldn’t help but imagine how in a few months, they would be welcomed into this world of chaos we all lived in.

“Hey, Ivy,” Damian said as he came walking back with Hale. “Why are we putting shit into the living room?”

“Because I need to paint the nursery, and I also had taken into consideration something that I wanted to speak to you about.”

My comments made him hesitate for a moment before his shoulders sagged in defeat, and he pinched the bridge of his nose. "I know that I'm going to regret this. But what is it exactly that you want to do?"

"Well, you know the large bonus room that you have upstairs that you guys use for gaming and guys' nights and all of whatever it is that you guys do...."

"Yes..." he replied as he stared at me. "What about it?"

"Well, since we have two babies coming instead of one, I thought it would be a great idea to turn that specific room into a nursery. After all, it is big enough to support both of them, and it's right next to my room, which means we can

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put a door between them."

Both Damian and Hale's mouths dropped at my idea. The mixed emotions that crossed their face in that moment were priceless, and I had to hold myself together as much as I wanted to burst into laughter.

"You can't be serious," Hale replied, speaking for a speechless Damian who didn't seem to know what to say.

"Oh, come on. It isn't that big of a deal, guys. Our family is expanding, and the house needs some renovations. Plus, that is the largest room upstairs near the bedrooms. It will be perfect for the kids."

— In the end, I was the one who would push the two of these children out, and considering the fact I planned on breastfeeding; I was going to be the one that would have to get up in the middle of the night to feed them unless there was milk stored away for the guys to help.

Regardless of even that, I knew the guy's schedules were hectic. With Talon and James running patrols and training, and Hale running between patrols and the hospital, I was going to be on my own quite a bit.

Not that I was complaining.

I understood how important everything was and how it

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worked, and I wouldn't change it for the world. But I wanted a space that could fit me and the children perfectly.

"We all have to make sacrifices, guys. Honestly, this isn't that big of one."

"Hey, Talon!" Hale said over his shoulder as Talon and James came walking towards them. "Ivy wants to take our man cave and turn it into the nursery."

"What?!" Talon all but shouted. "Absolutely no way. Any other room, but not that room."

"Oh, my god..." | groaned in irritation. "Y'all stop being such babies over this. I'm the one pushing out two water melons from my vajay now, not y'all. Plus, I have a solution to all of that..."

"I'd like to hear it," James replied, walking around to my side and kissing me on the side of my head.

"Of course you do," Talon sneered. "You're so damn pussy—whipped you do anything she says and agree with anything she says."

"No, I don't!" he exclaimed, feigning a hurt expression. "I'm offended you think that?"

The rest of us glanced at James with small smiles as he

looked between us all. "James, I love you dearly, but you are the path of least resistance to this lovely relationship we all have."

Rolling his eyes dramatically, he crossed his arms over his chest and sighed. "Well, I still want to hear the idea. Never know, it may be a good one."

It was times like this when I realized how much I loved James. He always stood up for what I wanted, no matter how crazy the idea was. It wasn't because he was a pushover, because I knew firsthand when things got crazy, he would be the one to say no.

"Well, the basement is massive, and I thought we can have it done up, so half is the gym, and the other half is your man cave. You can put a bar down there and anything else you want, and it would be solely yours."

The four of them stood quietly for a moment as they contemplated the idea, and Damian shook his head with a sigh. "So you're wanting to do construction?"

"Essentially, yes," | replied sweetly. "It would be beneficial for us all, and with the crazy shifts you're working, you can relax down there without waking the children by being noisy upstairs."

A moment of realization crossed them, making me internally chuckle. They opened and closed their mouths, tak

ing the time to look at each other. As if wanting to object but knowing they had no solid reasoning behind their objection. A converted basement would literally give them twice the room as the current room they were using.

“Fine,” Damian sighed, causing Talon to smack him in the arm.

“Seriously?!” he exclaimed as Hale laughed. “I can’t believe you gave in to her, Damian.”

“Look, she has a valid point. Plus, happy wife, happy life, or however that stupid saying fucking goes. Look... I can call my contractor to come look at it tomorrow. We have to get it done soon with the babies coming.”

Jumping up and down slightly, I clapped my hands in excitement. “Yay! This is going to be so much fun.”

Leaning up, I quickly pressed my lips to Damian’s before kissing the rest of them and pushing past to walk inside. He had given his blessing, and the last thing I wanted was for Damian to run the chance of changing his mind.

Lord knows he did that often.

“Finish bringing the rest in, please!” I called over my shoulder happily. “Looks like rain.”

Everything was going according to plan, and I finally felt happy about my current situation. For the last few months, I had felt nothing but dread because I was so worried this pregnancy was coming at the worst of times.

Now, though... I wasn’t scared about them coming.

Of course, I feared the actual labor, but it was becoming clearer and clearer every day that they would be with me and support me one hundred percent.

Stepping inside, I skipped merrily towards the living room and searched through the many many bags that littered the area. I seriously had to sort through things and put them into piles so I could wash all the clothes I bought.

Organization was key, and even though I wasn’t organized... I had to learn to be.

Thirty minutes into my search for the matching female bear to the male bear, I had the phone in Damian’s office ring. Looking out the window, I saw he was struggling

with the twins to pull the oddly shaped crib beds out of the truck to put them in the garage and answered the phone myself.

Thad never answered Damian's office phone, but I was Luna. So I would assume it would be okay. "Hello?"

"Hello, this is Elder Jenny Harrison. This must be Ivy. How are you?"

"Oh, hello, Miss Harrison. I am doing well. Thank you for asking. Were you looking for Damian? I'm afraid he is pre occupied at the moment." The voice I used was very sweet and Luna – esque. I wasn't entirely Luna material, at least not in my opinion. But they didn't need to know about everything that went on.

"Well, I just wanted to call and check on you all. I'm actually going to be heading down that way for a few days to take care of business in another pack. And I wanted to see if it would be all right with you if I stopped in for a couple of days. I'd love to catch up with you and see how you're doing in your pregnancy."

The idea of having anybody from that Council come to our pack was not something I really wanted to do, especially being pregnant. However, I didn't want to be rude and draw suspicion from an elder counsel that originally wanted to get rid of my mates.

so I did the one thing any good Luna would do. "Of course, that would be fine. We are going to be going through some construction, though. I just want to make you aware of that. We have a lot of renovating before the **new** arrivals, so I will have the guest house set up for you to stay in."

"Oh, that would be lovely. Thank you so much, and please, I completely understand. I remember how it was when I had my first pup. Don't go to too much trouble. I'm just going to be taking care of a few things. And like I said, I just wanted to stop in and check on you."

As pleasant as the woman sounded, I was pretty sure from the conversation there wasn't anything to worry about. She was the new elder everyone had been talking about and perhaps it would be a good way to show the council that we weren't a threat.

"I will see you in a few days, then," I replied quickly; hanging up the phone. The only thing left to do now was break the news to the guys.

We would have a visitor, and it would be one that wasn't wanted.

At least not by Damian.