

Taken

Lara was getting ready for her morning shift at the diner three days later when she got the call from Connor. Within seconds she was grabbing her apartment keys from the messy coffee table and running down the hall with Connor's words ringing in her ears. Charlotte's been taken. The words repeated in a loop until she reached Liam and Charlotte's apartment. The door had been left open and she ran in to find the place empty but raised voices had her sprinting into the bedroom. Kennedy, Marcus, Dean, Connor, Daniel, and Thomas were all there already. Kennedy looked gutted, his eyes bright with tears and his face creased with worry.

"What happened?" Lara asked, her heart stopping when she spotted the blood-covered book on the floor.

"We don't know," Connor explained. "Liam felt pain in his chest during training and when we got here, Charlotte was gone. Liam said their bond isn't broken though, so she's still alive."

Lara could practically hear the silent 'for now' at the end of that sentence. She swallowed the lump in her throat, her hands trembling with adrenaline and fear. Liam and Charlotte had just gotten back from New Orleans the previous night. Lara couldn't understand who would have taken her friend.

"Why would someone take her?" Lara asked in a trembling voice, her eyes flitting over the scene, looking for anything that might tell her why this had happened.

"We don't know who did it but Liam mentioned something about it being the same person who killed Charlotte's mom," Dean said, sounding uncertain.

Lara's eyes flew from the spot of blood on the wall next to one of the bedside tables over to him. Dean looked just as confused as she felt. Charlotte had told her that her mom had died in a car accident. What Dean was saying didn't make sense.

"We don't know who it is though so we need to split up and start looking," Connor added.

"Where do we even start?" Daniel asked.

"Some of us need to go downstairs and ask the guards if they noticed anything. The rest of us can..."

Lara walked over to the spot of blood on the wall as Marcus continued to give orders. She bent down and her shaking hand lifted to hover over the red smear. They had no way to know if it was Charlotte's. No way to know if their friend was okay. Lara blinked back the tears that had started forming in her eyes and started to turn back to the group. Something caught her eye as she did though.

"Guys," she said, interrupting Marcus. "Look at this." She pointed at the red letters that had been written onto the brown wood of the bedside table.

"EM," Thomas read aloud. "What the hell does that mean?"

"Em," Lara muttered with a frown, not understanding what it meant either. "Maybe she was trying to spell out a name?"

"Emmerson," Kennedy snapped, his voice angrier than Lara had ever heard it.

"Holy s**t," Dean muttered, probably echoing the thoughts of everybody there. A Council Master, one of ten of the most powerful werewolves in the States, had taken Charlotte.

"I'll go find Liam," Connor said before rushing from the room.

Charlotte had used blood to send them a message and Lara could only hope they'd found it in time.

"Where's Greg?" Lara asked Kennedy gently. She knew Charlotte's brother had been staying in a hotel but was assuming someone had called him as well.

"He's on his way," the man replied hoarsely.

"Charlotte's tough as nails. She'll be okay," Lara told him, though she could make no such promise.

Kennedy smiled at that but his eyes remained haunted. Knowing they needed all the help they could get, Lara excused herself from the room to call Jackson.

"Hey, babe," he answered the phone. "Just finishing my coffee and then I'll be ready to take you to work." Wanting to spend some time with his parents and his younger brother, he'd gone over to their place for breakfast.

"Jackson, I need you to come to Charlotte and Liam's apartment," she told him.

"What? Why? What's going on?" he asked.

"It's an emergency. I'll explain everything when you get here but I need you to come now," Lara said.

"Okay. I'll be there in a second," he replied with a sigh.

"Thanks," Lara said quietly before hanging up. Things between the two of them had been... okay since the night of the bonding ceremony but they were far from great. There was no time to think about her relationship problems right then though.

Lara walked back into the bedroom, her mind racing with questions about why Emmerson had taken Charlotte and what he planned on doing with her. Her mind went wild with theories and ideas, but the explanation that Liam gave them a few minutes later when he got back to the apartment, followed shortly by Greg and Jackson, was not even close to what she'd been imagining, especially the part about Charlotte and her mom being half-witches.

Liam couldn't tell them why Emmerson had killed Charlotte's mom and why he'd taken Charlotte but he knew it had to do with their powers, specifically the clairvoyant abilities that Charlotte had. Lara's head spun as she listened with the others to his quick explanation of how Charlotte's mom had gifted her a necklace that had been hiding Charlotte's abilities but they'd destroyed it in New Orleans and she now had full access to them.

Lara had to keep fighting back the urge to tell him that witches weren't real, that they were just a silly fairytale made up by humans. It all sounded so...crazy, but Lara knew Liam wouldn't lie about something like that, and based on Greg's and Kennedy's expressions which were fearful, stormy, and impatient but held no surprise or shock, they'd known about Charlotte being a witch as well. When Liam finished his explanation, Lara and the others just stared at him silently, and the silence was only broken when Connor came into the apartment, his forearm wrapped around a swearing Medial Jacobs's neck.

"Uh, what's going on?" Lara asked with wide eyes. She had no love or sympathy for her old trainer but she didn't understand why he was being shoved into a chair by Connor while Liam tied him down.

"Medial Jacobs kept me distracted so Emmerson could get Charlotte out of the building," Liam explained through gritted teeth. "So we're going to make him tell us where he's taken her."

"Go to hell," Jacobs spat, his hateful glare pinned on Liam.

"Tell us where she is!" Greg yelled, storming towards him furiously but Dean and Connor held him back. Lara hated the desperate rage on his face, the angry tears that were fighting to spill onto his cheeks. If Kennedy had looked gutted, Greg looked absolutely destroyed.

"That's not the answer I'm looking for," Liam snapped at Jacobs before he sent his fist into the man's sneering face.

Lara covered her mouth with her hand as Liam punched him again and again and again. She'd never witnessed such brutal violence before, and even though she hated Jacobs and he'd played a part in Charlotte's disappearance, bile rose up in Lara's throat at the mess that had become the Medial's face.

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"Where did Emmerson take her?" Liam roared and Greg watched with growing impatience as he smashed his fist into Jacobs' already bloodied and bruised face.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Jacobs said for the third time after spitting blood onto Liam's living room floor.

"I'll f*****g kill you!" Greg yelled, fighting against Dean and Connor to get to the Medial. "Where is she?" After what had happened to his sister in Portland, Greg had barely been able to breathe after hearing Charlotte had been taken. He couldn't lose her. He'd just gotten her completely and things had only just gotten better between them. The only reason he hadn't completely snapped and lost his mind was that Liam said their mate bond was still intact, which meant that Charlotte was alive.

"Like I said," Jacobs said through a clenched jaw. "I don't know."

"This is a waste of time," Kennedy snapped.

"He's not going to talk," Marcus agreed.

"I'll make him talk," Greg seethed, shoving Dean and Connor off of him with renewed strength and storming towards the chair Jacobs was tied to. He pushed Liam to the side and used all his strength to punch the man who'd helped Emmerson take his sister. One punch wasn't enough though, not for the accomplice to the person who'd killed Greg's mom and had taken Charlotte from her bed.

"Son, that's enough," Kennedy said but Greg didn't stop, couldn't stop.

"Tell us what you know!" Greg finally roared, forcing his fists to his sides as he waited for the bloodied and battered man to reply.

"I was just following orders," Jacobs choked out, blood spilling from his mouth. "He told me to keep you occupied while he took her to the car but he didn't tell me where he was taking her."

Greg's rage only built with the words, and he lifted his fist up. He could have done it. Could have continued beating Jacobs until he was dead but Lara's voice stopped him.

"Greg, stop!" she screamed, and Greg's fist paused in the air. "He's had enough," she said quietly and when Greg turned to look at her she'd gone pale. She looked like she might be sick as she stared at Jacobs' bloodied face and when Jackson pulled her into his side, she jumped slightly.

Jackson's hand on her waist had Greg's rage boiling up again and he turned to Jacobs and promised, "If she dies, I'll kill you," and he meant the words as he spoke them. If Charlotte died because Jacobs had let Emmerson take her, Greg would beat him until he stopped breathing.

"There's someone else here who might know something," Liam said suddenly, drawing Greg's attention away from Jacobs.

"Who?" he asked as he wiped the blood from his hand onto his black shirt. The pain from his torn knuckles barely registered as the broken skin scraped against the material.

"My father," Liam explained. "You thought he might have been working with Emmerson, right?" he asked Kennedy.

"Yes, but on Council matters," Kennedy replied.

"Still, he might be able to give us something," Liam said. "It's worth a shot."

Greg's father nodded. "Let's go."

"Greg and Marcus, come with us," Liam ordered. "The rest of you stay here and keep an eye on Jacobs."

They were back in the apartment within minutes, and soon enough Master Gold was tied to a chair just like Jacobs had been. Unlike Jacobs though, they didn't need to interrogate him because they already knew where they needed to go.

Liam's father hadn't been willing to tell them anything, but Dorothy had given them all the information they needed. How she knew where the Masters' had been disposing of all the people they'd been killing—without Kennedy's knowledge of course—Greg didn't know but he could have kissed her for telling them. From what Gold had let slip and what Dorothy had told them though, it was clear Emmerson was planning on killing Charlotte and that he had the other Masters' approval to do it. They were running out of time.

"Dean, Connor, I need you to get everything ready," Liam ordered once his father had been secured. "Call the witnesses and tell them we're making our move tonight. We can't wait any longer."

Greg hadn't involved himself much in Liam and Kennedy's plan to take down the Council but he knew enough that he understood what Liam was asking his friends to do.

"What are you talking about?" Gold asked as he struggled to get free. "What witnesses?"

"You were right dad," Liam explained. "Kennedy is working to take the Council down. I know because I'm helping him do it."

"You little s**t," the Master seethed.

"Greg, Kennedy, let's go," Liam ordered impatiently.

"Do you know where Charlotte is?" Lara asked, and, as always when Greg was around her, his eyes were drawn to the short auburn-haired woman.

"She's in a house in Mission Hill," Liam explained before Greg could.

"I'm coming with you," she said, moving to walk towards the door.

Despite what was going on, Greg's lips tipped up. If Charlotte ever doubted that Lara was a true friend, Greg would tell her about this moment.

"Like hell you are," Jackson argued, grabbing her arm to stop her and making Greg's eyes narrow on him. "You can barely throw a proper punch. You'll just get in the way."

Greg could see the hurt that entered Lara's eyes and tracked the way her nail dug into the skin of her wrist. He opened his mouth to tell Jackson he was being a d**k but Liam's words stopped him.

"We'll be back soon," Charlotte's mate said, and Greg knew they couldn't waste any more time.

Charlotte needed them now.

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"You sure you're okay?" Greg asked his dad for the thousandth time.

"Greg, I feel perfectly fine. I promise," Kennedy replied.

They'd found Charlotte but things had gone very quickly. It turned out that Emmerson had been stealing witches' powers for decades and with the abilities he'd managed to collect, he'd been able to stop Liam and Kennedy's hearts without even touching them. Charlotte had saved them though—how she'd done it, Greg still wasn't sure but he thought it had to do with the knife that she'd killed Emmerson with, the knife that he'd been planning to use on her, the knife that they would be throwing into the garbage with Emmerson's ashes.

"You lost a lot of blood," Greg reminded his dad, his mind flashing back to how pale his dad had looked as he lay unmoving on the floor, blood pooling under his head. He knew Charlotte had healed the wound at the back of Kennedy's head but there had been so much blood, too much blood.

"As soon as we're done here, we can go to the hospital in the Council building," Kennedy assured his son.

Greg tried not to think about the fact that Liam was planning on taking on the Council that very night. Kennedy would be expected to be there, to fight, and Greg wasn't sure his dad could handle a battle after what he'd just gone through. Something told him that Kennedy wouldn't have a better way than to be right there next to Liam though.

"I have to be honest, cremating a body together wasn't really on my list of father-son bonding experiences," Kennedy admitted with a chuckle after they'd been silent for some time.

The two of them had stayed behind while Liam had taken a passed-out Charlotte to the hospital, and were now waiting for Emmerson's body to turn into ash. It felt like poetic justice that Emmerson had been killed and was now being disposed of in the same way that he had been planning on murdering Charlotte and getting rid of her body.

"Next time let's just grab a pizza or something," Greg said, making Kennedy's smile broaden. "I'm really glad you're okay, dad," he added seriously.

He'd been so close to losing the rest of his family. Seeing Emmerson hold that knife to Charlotte's throat and then his dad lying on that goddamned concrete floor, his chest unmoving and his skin almost grey, had scared the s**t out of him.

Kennedy smiled sadly and pulled him in for a brief hug. "I'd given up hope on ever getting you back," he admitted quietly. "I'm so happy you and your sister found me."

"Me too, dad," Greg replied with a grin, and at that moment he knew that he couldn't go back to Seattle.

His family was in Boston, and even though he was a co-owner of a gym in Seattle and had made a home there, he couldn't face the thought of going back there. He didn't want to waste another second that he could be spending with his dad and his sister. He'd need to talk to Finn and Damien about the gym and sort that all out but Greg had made up his mind. He was moving to Boston for good.