

## Chapter 29: Return

"If only love was enough".

### Damon's POV

"Damon?", I felt a hand on my shoulder, shaking me awake, and I peeled my eyes open to see my mother kneeling next to me, looking defeated.

"What did you do?", she whispered sadly, her voice almost breaking and my eyebrows arched up in confusion

"What do you mean?", I looked over my shoulder hoping to see Layla sleeping peacefully beside me, but she wasn't, her side of the bed was wrinkled up and empty. My heart sank when I realized she was gone.

"She le this morning", my mother informed me and I jumped o the bed to the closet only to see that all her clothes were gone

"Did she say where she was going?", I reached for her phone to dial her number, it rang at first, but then it took me straight to voicemail

"She went back home, to her father's house"

"Mother, why didn't you wake me up? I could have stopped her".

My mother shrugged lightly. "I also didn't know, she le a note saying she needs some time to herself and that she's not sure when she'll come back. I only saw it this morning", she grabbed my face in her hands. "You need to get her back. I don't care what you do, you need to get her back".

"I intend to. I'm not going to lose her".

### Layla's POV

"Why the sudden visit?", my father asked for the millionth time and I heaved a quiet sigh. "What did Damon do to you?"

"I just missed you, that's all. Surely that is not a crime", I forced a smile, and he narrowed his eyes suspiciously at me, clearly not believing what I was saying.

"Aren't you happy to see me?", I rose a brow and his features so ened

"Of course I'm happy to see you Baby cakes", he smiled, opening his arms wide for another hug and I nearly cried onto his shoulder when I was locked safely in his fatherly embrace

"I missed you Dad"

"I missed you too, so so much", he kissed my forehead, stroking my head gently and cupped my face in his hands. "You grow up to look like your mother each day"

I chuckled a little, a few tears managing to stream down my cheeks, and he wiped them o

"I know you missed but there's no need to cry", he joked, and I smiled, knowing very well that if only he knew the real reason behind my tears, he wouldn't be pleased

"Are you sure you're okay?", he asked again when he pushed a cup of co ee towards me and I nodded

"I've never been better"

He studied my face for a while before taking my hands into his

"Layla, you know you can talk to me about anything, right?", he asked, and I nodded, every time he called me by my name instead of baby cakes, it's either he was super pissed or just being straight forward serious, jokes aside

"And I know you well enough to see that you're not okay, you really don't fool me", he gave my hands a gentle squeeze and I lowered my eyes. It was honestly safe to say that my father knew me more than I could say I knew myself. He could see right through me.

The more I thought about it, I realized that I really needed to get this whole Damon-Scarlett thing o my chest because it was eating me up alive. All the way here I was trying to convince myself that this shouldn't bother me as much as it did, but my heart was aching, and I was hurting.

"I'm your father, and you should be able to talk to me, whenever anything- or anyone is bothering you"

"It's not that simple Dad", I found myself saying without thinking twice, and I could see it on his face that he was now getting really worried

"What's not simple?", he sat next to me and I hesitated, shrugging mg shoulders because I didn't know where to start

"Layla", I felt him tilt my head up with his hand so that I looked at him, apparently my eyes told him something I just wasn't sure he was ready to hear yet. "Talk to me"

I took a deep breath, opening my mouth to speak, but before I could utter some words out, his phone started ringing, and he ignored it, still waiting for me so to say something

"Aren't you going to take that?", I asked, and he shook his head, swiping on the screen to decline the call

"If it's important, they'll call again", his gaze focused on me again, now raising his eyebrows, motioning I should continue, but his phone ringed again, causing him to grumble in irritation

"Maybe you should take that, it could be important", I urged, and he heaved a sigh before taking the call. While he was on the phone, it got me thinking that it was best I don't tell him what was happening, it was just going to be an unnecessary burden on him. I'll just have to gather enough strength to actually face this situation head on. I don't even know why I'm hurt about this whole thing if Scarlett's pregnancy. Is it because I was starting to fall in love with him?

-Maybe

"I'm sorry Baby Cakes, there is an emergency at work and I have to go there as soon as possible", he reached over the counter to grab his car keys. "Can we continue with this when I get back?"

"I'll still be here", I smiled flatly at him, and he leaned to kiss me on the forehead

"There's ice cream in the freezer if you want some", he put his jacket on. "If you need anything else, Elsa will be back later on this a emoon"

"Okay Dad, thanks", I smiled, and he gave a short nod before he hurried towards the door, closing it shut on his way out. The second he disappeared from sight, I let out a breath I wasn't aware I was holding and hunched over the counter, massaging my temples a little to ease the throbbing pain I felt there from all this pressure.

A er I was done with my co ee, I took out my phone to check my emails, there were some posts I had applied for before I le , and maybe I might find that there were some feedback. There were missed calls from Damon and I swiped over the tab to remove it from my notification bar, I wanted nothing to remind me o him.

I heard the sound of the front door opening and closing again, thinking it was Elsa I quickly hopped out of my seat to go say hello, but then I stopped in my tracks when I saw Damon standing in the center of the lounge, his eyes so ening a little at the sight of me

I folded my arms across my chest. "Why are you here Damon?"

"Why did you leave?"

"So we're answering questions with questions now? Okay", I clicked my tongue, turning on my feet to go somewhere else, but he was quickly in front of me, blocking my way.

"Damon please, I don't want to do this with you right now so I'd really appreciate it you leave"

"You didn't give me the chance to explain"

"Explain what?", I prompted. "You got another woman pregnant, what more do you have to explain?"

"Okay, emotions are a little high right now so why don't you calm down a little?"

"Don't tell me to calm down", I raised my voice a little but I wasn't shouting. "I was calm before you came here but that's just the thing about you, right? You just had to ruin that, didn't you?"

"Layla, you promised me that whatever happens, whenever it happens-"

"I'll never give up on you?", I rose a brow at him. "Is that why you made me do it? So that I could have that promise hanging over my head every time you drop a bombshell on me?"

"No, not at all", he ran his hand through his face then turned to face me. "The point is you broke that promise"

"I shouldn't have made that stupid promise in the first place", I scored, and I heard him draw a sharp breath

"Can we just talk about this?"

"What's there to talk about?"

"When I told you Scarlett is pregnant, I never said it was mine"

"You didn't say it's not yours either so, Yippie! I'm so happy for you", I clapped my hands in fake enthusiasm. "I think you've said what you came here to say, so you're free to go"

"I'm not going anywhere without you. Even if it means staying here every day until you get tired of seeing me".

"Damon, I just need you to leave me alone, okay?", my voice broke. "I came all this way to be away from you. Can you please just go? Please".

I watched as his eyes drop in disappointment

"If that's what you want, I'll respect that", he gave a short nod. "But I'm still not leaving here without you, so I'll book into a hotel and wait for you just until you're ready to talk"

"No, you don't understand, I don't want you here". I was close to tears. "I need you to go back, do you think you can do that?"

"I don't think I can", he gave a helpless shrug, tears started to build up in his eyes a little, but he quickly wiped them o . "So I'll give you some time and when you're ready to talk I'll just be one call away, okay?"

I kept quiet, just looking in between his eyes before wiping the tears that were streaming down my face

"Okay?", he prompted, seeking confirmation and I gave a short nod

"Okay"

Three days passed, and I thought it was time to finally call Damon and put this thing behind us. He was thrilled to finally hear from me, insisting on coming over so that we can talk, but I told him it was best I come meet him at the hotel he was at because it wouldn't be a great idea of him and my father to be in the same space as I had finally told my Dad what was going, and he didn't take it well like I predicted. But then he suggested that Damon and I have that talk, to either find a way forward or go our separate ways because this situation was a dealbreaker for me.

A er Harry dropped me o at the hotel, I found Damon waiting for me in the restaurant downstairs, and he quickly stood to his feet the minute he saw me approach the table he reserved for us

"I'm so glad you could make it", he pulled me a seat and I thanked him as I sat down. "Would you like anything to drink?"

"Just water, thanks", I said, and he waved at the waiter to come take our order, sitting uncomfortably in his seat now that it was the two of us again, about to have the di icult conversation

"So, are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm okay", I took a sip of my water. "Are you?"

"I guess you could say that", he smiled a little before clearing his throat awkwardly. "So, have you thought about everything that's been happening?"

"It's all I could think about honestly and to be frank with you, this is not what I signed up for Damon. I'm quite aware that you and I are not exactly at a solid place in our relationship as yet but this is a little too much".

"I know and I'm sorry Layla. I didn't know that Scarlett was pregnant until she told me a few weeks ago. I didn't plan for all of this to happen at all, you need to believe me".

A er studying him for a few minutes, almost believing what he was saying was true, I had to ask

"So what now?"

His eyebrows arched up in confusion. "What do you mean?"

"I mean what are you going to do?"

"I'm not actually sure what's going to happen from here on now, since Scarlett made it clear that she's going to give the baby up for adoption"

"You do know she can't do that if you disagree with her as the baby's father"

"Until I know that the baby is mine, I don't think there's nothing I can do"

"For now, I think you should focus on finding out whether the baby is yours or not then I guess we'll take it from there"

"We?", he prompted, a little hopeful smile playing on his lips. "Does that mean you'll stick around?"

"I mean a vow in front of God and all the other witnesses that were present on our wedding day that I take you, Damon Kingsley as my wedded husband, to have and to hold, from that day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us apart don't know about you but I did take my vows seriously".

"Layla...", he seemed really touched that I said all of that

"So yes, I'll be sticking around", I breathed out, and he took my hand in his, planting a so kiss before covering it with his

"You have no idea what that means to me", he smiled a little. "Thank you"

"You're welcome"

"I know I've been horrible to you the last couple of months, but I promise I'm going to work on myself, now more than ever"

"Do you really mean that?"

"I'll do anything", he entwined our fingers together. "You're the most important person in my life now Layla. Without you I'm nothing".