

Chapter 23: Tears

Layla's POV

"You -(punch)Lowlife -(punch)Piece of shit -(punch punch punch". Damon punched my assaulter mercilessly when he fell onto the ground

Matt made his way to the other man who had pinned Quinton onto the ground before he tried to run, but Matt got to him and punched him hard on his face and abdomen while Taylor dragged the unconscious Quinton o the scene.

I was laying on the ground with my vision still a little blur, but I could see Damon beating my assaulter furiously and by the pace he was going he was surely going to kill the guy as blood was already splatting in every punch

I gathered some strength to crawl to them and tried separating Damon o the man, but he kept on beating him. The man groaned in pain, but Damon didn't stop.

"Damon, you're going to kill him

Please stop", I begged, but he didn't seem to hear or pay attention to what I was saying to him

"Damon stop please", I begged again, but he kept going

"Damon, that's enough", Taylor ripped him o the man, and Damon groaned while running his hands through his hair and sighed heavily, standing to his feet. He turned to look at me, and we locked eyes.

"Are you okay?", he knelt next to me whilst helping me up. I was still so petrified by seeing him beat that guy up I couldn't speak, I just nodded instead.

"Did he hurt you?", he paused when looked at his hand that was glowing liquid red with my blood as he was holding by my arm where I was cut

He looked at his hand and back on me again in astonishment while concern was raining from his eyes. "You're bleeding"

"You're hurt. This son of a bitch hurt you", he fumed up again while aiming to get back to beat up the man again, but I grabbed him by his arm, stopping him as Taylor was already blocking his way and he groaned before he took steady breaths to calm himself down.

"We need to get you home", he took o his jacket and covered me with it, wrapping his arms safely around me

"Yeah, Matt and I will keep an eye on these two until the police arrive", they tied the perpetrators together.

Damon nodded and thanked them both before escorting me to his car. Helping me gently inside and strapped the seatbelt across my chest before closing the door, and he walked to the other side and turned the ignition on. We drove in complete silence before my eyes caught a glimpse of an unconscious Quinton laying in the back seat via the rearview mirror.

"Oh my God", I attempted to get o my seat, but Damon grabbed me with one hand, forcing me back on my seat

"He is just unconscious, he's going to be fine. The doctor will attend to him as soon as we get home", he said firmly with his eyes focusing strictly on the road.

My heart arched for Quinton, as I saw he was bleeding and had bruises on his face. He had it a lot worse, and he was just trying to help me.

When we got home both Damon and Harry carried Quinton to his room as the doctor had already arrived. Damon ordered me to go to my room when I insisted being in the same room as them when the doctor was examining Quinton, and I did.

Mom walked into my room and found me sitting on the floor, cradling my feet to my chest and sat beside me, o ering me a shoulder to cry on while stroking my head so ly. She ran me a warm bath, and helped me change into comfortable clothes, an oversized T-shirt and sweatpants and tied my hair up in a high ponytail.

A er tucking me in bed, she only le when I had fallen asleep, but my thoughts were only clouded with feedbacks of all the awful events that happened that night and how everything that happened was my fault, I was even crying in my sleep

"Layla?", I felt the bed undip besides me and I peeled my eyes open to see Damon's so eyes looking down at me and I sat up, quickly wiping my tears o

"Is Quinton going to be okay?"

"It's just a couple of cuts and bruises. He'll live", he said, and I sighed a sigh of relief. I watched his eyes drop to my arm, and he stretched to hold me.

"You're bleeding through your shirt", concern was raining from his voice and I looked to see a blood running down my arm

"I don't know how cause Mom treated it-", I saw him standing to his feet and disappeared into the bathroom, coming back with a first aid kit on his way back. He took my arm in his hands and started applying peroxide on my wound, causing me to flinch a little.

"Does it hurt?"

"A little"

"I'm sorry"

Warm tears started streaming down my face I used my other hand to wipe them o

"I don't even want to think about what would have happened if you didn't show up", I sobbed when he finished banging my cut, and he looked up at me

"Hey...", his voice was soothing as he wrapped his arms around me.

That's when I realized his right hand was also bandaged with an ooze of blood stain on his knuckles.

"I'm so sorry", I cried." I should have just listened to you -You told me not to."

"None of this is your fault", he pulled away to hold my face in his hands. "You're safe now, okay?"

I nodded my head, and he pulled me back into his warm embrace once more

"Nothing bad is going to happen to you while I'm around. I'll always protect you".

"Thank you", I breathed out as he tightened his arms around me gently. I actually found comfort being locked into his warm embrace and for the first time in ages, I actually felt something I hadn't felt in a while. I felt safe.

Damon's POV

I still can't wrap my head around what almost happened to Layla. People like those two imbeciles shouldn't be le roaming freely on the streets. They are a danger to society and are the reason women have to always live in fear.

The whole experience changed Layla. The past few days she's been beyond traumatized. Every sound startled her, she didn't even eat or sleep properly. I tried asking her to go to trauma counseling, but she shut me down, even when I o ered to come along with her.

At night, she cuddled up in a ball and cried herself to sleep. It murdered me seeing her like that, and it reached a point where I couldn't stand it anymore. I was tired of hearing her silent cries.

"Layla?", I switched on the lights and saw her cradling her knees beside me, her eyes pu y red with fresh tears still streaming down her face

"I just need a minute", she sni ed. "I'll be okay"

"Talk to me", I tried reaching for her hand, but she moved away from me. "Layla..."

"I'm fine, really", she wiped the tears o her face

"I can see that you're not Layla, you really don't fool me", I searched for her eyes. "Listen, I have no idea what you're going through, and I'm probably the last person you would want to share your feelings with but let me be there for you. Stop pushing me away".

She looked at me and took a deep breath.

"Do you really mean that?", she asked, and I wiped her tears o with my thumb

"I want to be there for you and I can't do that if you don't talk to me", I took her hand in mine, her eyes dropped to our entwined fingers and locked eyes with me again

"Why are you doing this?"

"Because I...", don't even think about using that word!Because I care about you"

Her eyes so ened a little

"I'm sorry for pushing you away", she dropped her eyes from mine. "It's just so hard".

"I know it's not easy", I wrapped my arms around her. "But we're all here for you Layla, every step of the way"

"I really appreciate it", she wrapped her arms around me and I take a deep breath. "Damon?"

"Yeah?"

"Do you think you could come to the counselling sessions with me?"

I smiled a little. "Gladly"

"Good morning" I got inside our bedroom and closed the door with my foot because my I got my hands full of breakfast

"Morning", she placed her book aside and tied her hair in a high bun

"I brought you breakfast", I placed the tray on the bed and she smiled

"You really didn't have to do this", she took a sip of her juice

"I wanted to"

"Thank you", she stated indulging into the food and paused as she looked at me watching her. "Aren't you going to join me?", she asked between bites and I shook my head.

"I'm not really hungry. I'm just here to make sure sure you eat", I said, and she nodded her head.

My phone beeped, and it was a call from my grandfather and I sighed as I took the call. What else is he going to force me to do this time?

"I need to take this", I gestured, and she gave a short nod as I answered the call

"What do you want?"

" Hello to you too Damon"

I drew a breath. "What can I do for you?"

" Now that you asked so nicely?"he replied, and I rolled my eyes. "I want to talk to you and Layla"he stated, and I furrowed my eyebrows.

"I don't think it's the right time. We're going through a lot right now and..."

"I wasn't asking Damon"his voice was cold and demanding as usual

"Fine then"

"Good, I'll see you when you get here..."

I hung up

"Everything okay?", Layla asked as she had stopped eating

"Grandad wants to see the both of us", I pocketed my hands. "If we leave now with the jet, we'll be back just in time for dinner"

"I better go get ready", she smiled as got up from the bed, I grabbed her by the arm

"What?"

"He can be a bully sometimes. Don't let him bully you into anything, okay?"

She laughed. "I have no idea what you mean but okay"

She was right, she had no idea what I meant, but I knew what was probably going through his mind

I opened Dylan's bedroom door, finding him wide awake reading a newspaper

"Whatever it is make it quick", I sat next to him as he was lying in bed

"Isn't Layla joining us?"

"She's downstairs with Kim, she'll be joining us shortly"

"Excellent", he folded his newspaper and placed it aside. "I was thinking that maybe it's time for the two of you to work on producing an heir for our legacy"

The nerve of this old man

"No"

"No?"

"You know exactly what Layla has been through a few weeks ago you have the nerve to suggest this?"

"I know this sounds a little insensitive but..."

"A little?"

"Yes", he sighed heavily as tears started to form in his eyes. "I don't have much time le Damon"

"What do you mean?. I thought you're getting well"

He shook his head. "I may appear to be strong in your eyes but in reality, I'm dying", he started breathing heavily. I quickly stood to my feet and bolted out of his room.

"Kim, we need help in here", she rushed with the equipment needed as she put the oxygen mask on him

"What's going on?", Layla asked alarmed as she walked into the bedroom soon a erwards

"He's okay", Kim reassured as she adjusted the pillows behind him, and he seemed calm

"Thanks Kim", we all said in union

She gave a short nod. "Shout if you need help okay?"

"Sure", Layla smiled at her as she took a seat besides him. Kim closed the door behind her. "How are you Grandpa?", she kissed his forehead and he removed his oxygen mask.

"I'm better now that you're here", he chuckled between coughs. Layla took his hands in her tiny hands.

"I'm sorry about what happened to you my dear-", he started, but Layla interrupted him by shaking her head

"I'll get through that as long as he's right by my side", she said looking back and smiled, I couldn't help than to reciprocate her smile

"I'm glad to see you two getting along.

Now I can die in peace", he smiled to himself

"Don't say that", her voice was so . He grinned mischievously. I sensed he was ready to drop the bombshell on her.

"If only...", he trailed o , and he knew that Layla would want him to finish o his statement

He's good

"If only what?", she asked innocently

"I would die peacefully if I had to see some little feet running around here. Yours and Damon's", he faked a cough and Layla's face went pale, like blood was drawn out of her face and she blinked in astonishment.

"I'm...uh", she choked on her words and I decided to finish for her

"Not ready yet", she looked back to look at me with that what are you doing glare

"It's just that Damon and I haven't talked about having kids and starting a family of our own", she said quietly

Talked?. I have never even touched you intimately, let alone have kids.

"I hope you two put that into serious consideration, seeing that I have not much time le ", he faked a cough again, and I rolled my eyes. I can't believe Layla was actually buying this crap.

"It's time for him to rest now", Kim announced as she walked through the door

Thank Goodness

"Okay. Nice chat", I'll faked Layla by her arm attempting to get the hell out of there before he faked something else. A er saying our goodbyes we walked out, and I was still pulling Layla behind me.

"Damon", she stopped in her tracks and I turned to face her

"Yeah?"

"Don't you think we should talk about it?", she asked nervously while fiddling with her fingers

"Talk about what?"

"You know -having kids", she barely kept strict eye contact with me and I can't believe she's actually thinking about it

"Do you want to have kids?", I asked, and she hesitated for a while

"Someday", she said quietly, almost in a whisper

"I guess we'll wait for that someday then", I was eager to get it over and done with this topic

"But, I guess we'll have to start trying", she looked up to meet my confused expression

"No Layla. A er what you've been through just weeks ago?"

"Maybe this will be a way to keep my mind o things and focus more on that", she said confidently as trying to convince herself than me

"No, I won't accept that. You were forced into this marriage, and I'll be damned to having being forced to start a family", her eyes widened.

"But..."

"But nothing", I opened the car door for her. "Can we leave?"

She slowly nodded her head.