

Chapter 37: Taken

Damon's POV

Layla wasn't talking to me, well she was but not as before. It was either she answered what I asked her specifically or asked closed ended questions and I missed talking to her about the little things. All this started the second Amber stormed into my o ice and oddly enough, Layla didn't ask me anything about her to this hour.

"Look, I'm sure you're probably wondering what happened this afternoon at the o ice", I turned to look at her. I couldn't sleep, the whole thing was weighing so heavily on me, and it was killing me knowing that Layla wasn't talking to me because of it, she wouldn't say it, but I know her.

"I'm really not interested", she turned a page of this new book she started reading and continued reading

"Layla, I'm talking to you"

"I listen with my ears Damon", she looked at me for a while and closed her book for a second. "Not with my eyes"

"It would be a lot better if you just looked at me"

"What difference is it going to make?", she rolled her eyes, removing her gaze from me to continue with her book

"Just look at me", I said, and she ignored me, causing me to snatch the book away from her and throw it on the far corner of the room. She drew a deep breath. "If you want to talk, just talk. If you want my attention, fine, then you have it. You didn't have to do that".

Her voice was still as calm as before as she folded her arms and I apologized

"Listen, I'm sure you're wondering who that woman is"

"Even if I wasn't, I am now", she blinked slowly looking in my direction

"I swear to you, there is nothing happening between us"

"Then why was she acting like there is something?"

"That's because there was something", I said and her eyes lurked to the right, nodding with her hand for me to continue

"Amber is my ex-fiancee"

I saw no reaction from her as instead she shrugged and said, "That's it?"

"Yeah"

"Then why didn't you tell me?"

"There was really nothing to tell. It was right a er collage when I proposed to her, she made her intentions of agreeing to marry me very clear when she started showing me her true colours, a few weeks before the wedding".

"Let me guess", she paused to think. "She only wanted the ring and your last name?"

"Yeah, Amber came from a wealthy family herself but the only reason she wanted to marry me was because her father made some terrible investments that led him straight to bankruptcy, and I was her only ticket to the continuation of the good life"

"How can you be sure of that?", she argued. "Maybe all of it was just a coincidence that her father was bankrupt right before the two of you got married?"

I shook my head

"One night, I went to her house to surprise her when I came back a day early from a business conference my father forced me to attend and overheard a conversation she had with her friend when I walked towards her room, and so I decided to eavesdrop, only to hear her telling her friend that she was only dating me because I came from one of the wealthiest families in the country and that I could do for her, I laughed thinking of how much of a fool I was for thinking she really loved me. Layla's features so ended a little as she took my hands in hers.

"I'm sorry"

"It's okay", I forced a smile. "I've gotten over it"

Layla cupped my face in her hands before engulfing me in a hug and I sighed a breath of relief when I tightened my grip around her a little, finding comfort in her arms

"But you do realize that I'm not very different from Amber", she whispered against my ear before breaking away from the hug. "I chose to marry you because of a similar condition."

I placed my index finger on her lips, stopping her from continuing

"You didn't know what you're getting yourself into, neither did I. We both didn't have a choice so please, don't you dare compare yourself to Amber again. She was just a gold digging b", anger was evident in my voice when I thought about her and Layla covered my mouth with her hand, shutting me up.

"I got the picture, thanks", she said playfully, and I laughed with her hand still covering my mouth before I licked it

"Eww", she yanked her hand away to wipe it o my shirt and I rose a brow.

"You don't say ew when I kiss you"

"No, it's just that you don't hear me", she tapped my nose with her index finger and I pulled her down onto me, causing her to rolled onto her back and I caged her into my arms.

"I love you"

"I know", she whispered just when I was about to kiss her and I could feel her smiling in between kisses

"What?"

"Eww", she said playfully as she shoved me o her and got of the bed to get her book

Layla's POV

"I have great news", I said excitedly as I couldn't wait to share the news with him, and he nodded his head, waiting to hear what I was about to say next

"You remember that editing post I applied for a few months ago?"

"From the publishing company?"

"Yes. The assistant called me today to inform me that I got the job", I talked between bites of my fruit salad, barely containing my excitement.

"That's great news my love", he smiled before taking a sip of his co ee. "When are you starting?"

"Tomorrow"

"Tomorrow?", he prompted in surprise, almost choking on his co ee

"Yeah", I rose a brow. "Is that going to be a problem?"

"No, it's a bit earlier than I anticipated", he chuckled so ly. "I'm happy for you babe"

"So you don't have a problem with it?", I asked surprised because I didn't expect this kind of reaction from him

"No, why should I?"

"Err, I don't know", I shrugged. "Maybe because it means I won't have enough time for everything now, including you and Dylan"

I could see from the look in his eyes he was expecting me to say more

"That's it?", he laughed. "That's only the reason you're saying I'll forbid you from working and doing what you love?"

I nodded a little

"I'm not that selfish Layla", he took another sip of his co ee. "I'm delighted you got this post and I know you're going to nail it"

"O-kay", I laughed in disbelief. "I didn't think you'll be this positive"

"Layla...", he took both my hands in his, forcing me to look at him. "As your husband, it's my duty to support you in every decision you make, and I will never try to put you down or belittle you when I'm supposed to upli your spirit whenever you're feeling down or some sort", he paused to think. "Wait, am I making sense?"

I laughed. "I'm hearing you loud and clear"

"Okay good", he smiled. "All I'm trying to say is that, I'll never stand in the way of you doing what you love. I'll be here with you every step of the way"

I leaned to kiss him fully on the lips. "Thank you"

"We should go out to dinner tonight, to celebrate", he stood up when he finished his co ee. "I guess we'll have to let Julia know there will be a few changes to her schedule"

"I hope it's not going to be a problem"

"I don't think she'll mind spending more time with Dylan", he leaned opposite me on the counter before he snapped his fingers in remembrance. "Before I forget, I have something for you"

Curiosity took control of me as I kept track of his movements to see where he was going and what he was bringing back

"There you go", he handed me a rectangular box and I shook it

"What's in here?"

"Open it and find out", he urged and I when I did, I discovered that it was the most gorgeous bracelet I've ever laid my eyes on

"It's beautiful", I gasped as I took it in my hands and trailed my fingers on the diamond decorations on it

"You like it?"

"I love it", I kissed him fully on the lips again. "Thank you"

"I saw it and thought of you", he said as he helped me put it on then admired my hand for a second before it to lips to plant a o kiss.

"Now this is real beauty"

"Thank you so much"

"It's only a pleasure"

Damon's POV

Every day, I was greeted with a warm hug and a breathtaking kiss each time he came back from work and honestly, I wasn't complaining. I was hooked into being close to him that I clung onto him tightly when he wrapped his strong arms around me.

"I get the feelings I was missed", he chuckled, music to my ears kind of chuckle

"You don't know how much", I said, and he kissed my temple before we broke away from each other

"How was your day?", he poured himself a glass of water and I kicked my shoes o

"It was alright I guess, yours?", I massaged my calves, feeling a stinging pain there, and it must have been from standing too long

"Same old, same old", he stood opposite to me and I motioned he gives me the glass of water to me. I was so thirsty. "Are you setting okay?"

"Mhmm", I hummed in response as I took a huge gulp of the water. "There's a lot of work though but everyone is friendly, and we get along very well, so no complaints", I handed the empty glass back to him, and he gave me the what am I supposed to do with this now look.

"That's good. No one is giving you problems, right?", he raised a brow and I shook my head.

"Not a er you sent Harry to scare o every male that tries to approach me", I raised a brow back at him while folding my arms.

"Trust me, I'm sure everyone knows that I'm Damon the great Kingsley's wife"

"Hm", he seemed satisfied with my answer

"So, how long is Harry going to be my bodyguard?"

"Until I find someone suitable for that position"

"Suitable?"

"Yep", he said popping the p. "I'm actually looking for a kind of bodyguard who's really not interested in women"

"So that he won't be interested in me in other words"

"Exactly", he grinned and I laughed. "Not that there is nothing wrong with you. You're a beautiful and an attractive woman, and you're also my wife and I don't like sharing", I laughed out loud at his words.

"Very smooth Damon"

"I want to hire a guy who doesn't look at you the way I look at you"

"And how do you look at me?", I asked amused, and he smiled

"The way you look at the stars", he grinned and my heart melted. "By the way, I have something for you"

"Again?"

"Can't seem to get enough of spoiling my wife", he fished something out of his pocket and handed me a navy blue box. I opened it and there were keys inside.

"I have my own house keys"

"They are not house keys. Take them out and take a look", he laughed, and I looked at him before shaking my head. I grabbed them by the keyholder and I noticed there were letters embroidered on it.

Mine?

"Mine as in you're mine, or I'm yours?", I asked, and he shrugged

"I'm all yours, and you're mine"

I turned the key around and discovered that they were not house keys but a car key. Audi Logo.

"Does this mean...", I could barely hide my excitement as I stood up "It's yours and it's outside"

Best words I've ever heard

"You are serious?", I jumped, squealing in excitement

"Like a heart attack"

Damon's POV

Layla held Dylan so close to her chest and she claimed to give him one last hug

"I'm going to miss you", she whispered to him, running her hand up and down his back so ly while planting kisses on his face and hands. Dylan then pouted his lip as if he knew what was going on. "I love you so much"

"Layla, he's only visiting his grandparents for a week", I looked at my wristwatch for the nth time now, and it was more than 30 minutes now. Layla stood patiently alongside her as she was the one who will look a er him at my parents place.

"Can't we just go with him?", Layla looked at me, still holding Dylan close to her chest. "It's only for a week"

"We'll be joining him soon, don't worry", I reassured, and she handed Dylan over to Elsa before I ran my hand through his hair, messing it up a little

"You'll be a good boy, right buddy?", I asked, and he just placed his tiny hand over my mouth and I kissed it.

"Don't worry, I'll take very good care of him", Julia reassured us again and Layla nodded her head

"Please let us know you arrived safely"

"Will do", she smiled. "Say bye to Mom and Dad", she helped Dylan wave his hand goodbye and Layla blew kisses to him while Harry helped Julia with the bags to the car, and they shortly drove o.

"Still you be alright?", I took her into my arms, and she gave a little nod, and a little saddened about Dylan's departure

"I'll be okay", she smiled a little. "What time should I expect you home tonight?"

"I'm not sure", I watched her face drop in disappointment. "I'm sorry babe, but I have deadlines to meet"

"So I'm going to all alone here?", she pouted as I had given all the help the day o since it was Workers day

"Mary will be here, but she's going to knock of earlier than usual"

"Then I'll have to find something to do in the meanwhile"

"I'm going to make it up to you", I kissed her forehead. "I promise"

"She smiled. "I'll have to hold you onto that"

Layla's POV

I decided to visit the local bookstore to keep myself from being bored to death alone at the house. The best part was that it was open even on public holidays and for 24 hours. I lost track of time as I went from book to book as I couldn't seem to put them down. Around 10pm I decided to go back home and to my luck, it started raining as I drove myself home.

It was pouring outside, and I got inside the house as quickly as I could, but I was already drenched in water. To my surprise, it was dark inside, like no-lights-were-on dark. I took o my coat and hanged it near the door before searching for the socket to switch the lights on. I heard a few noises from a distance, I felt quite relieved that I wouldn't be in the dark for too long.

"Damon?"

Silence

Maybe Mary decided to come back. "Mary?"

Dead Silence

Was there someone else in the house? I wondered as it was now starting to get a little scary now that I was stumbling in the dark alone, but it didn't feel like I was alone. I fished in my bag for my phone so that I could use the flashlight to guide me through this darkness but because my hands were shaking in fear, I managed to drop my bag, successfully scattering all the contents inside across the floor.

"Just great", I sighed, kneeling on my floor to crawl in the direction I heard my phone slid in. A lamp lit on and my eyes focused its direction before I heard footsteps making their way to me.

"Hello Layla", a voice said, starting the breath out of me and I quickly stood up, walking backwards closer to the door

"Who are you?", I could only see his legs and he stepped forward, coming into view

Who's this?

"Don't you remember me?", he asked amused, and I turned my hand on the door knob. I could hear him make the ts, ts, ts sound before seeing him shake his head, smiling sadistically, and I gulped down hard.

"I'm really o ended", he was walking towards me, but I had already opened the door to flee for my life, but a hand roughly grabbed me by the arm, forcibly pushing me back inside and threw me on the floor

Sitting up, I noticed that I was now surrounded before a pair of hands roughly grabbed me and I screamed as loudly as I could for help, putting up a struggle but I was shortly silenced when a cloth was pressed against my face and the more I struggled, the more I inhaled the intoxicating chemical on it and I slowly felt numb. The last thing I remember was the sound of the man laughing maniacally before he knelt in front of me, stroking my cheek as I slowly drifted into unconsciousness.

"No one is coming to save you this time sweets, now it's just you and me"

Daniel's POV

"Have you seen the news?", my assistant, Angelo barged into my o ice and I looked up from my laptop screen to stare at him

"Why?"

"Layla's missing"

"Hm", I took a sip of my whiskey and flipped a page of the files I had to sign. His eyebrows ceased up in confusion, looking surprised that he didn't get the reaction he was expecting from me.

"Have a look for yourself", he switched on the television and Layla's disappearance was all over the news feeds

"It suspected that she was kidnapped at her own home, the housekeepers claimed to have found some of her belongings scattered on the floor but there was no trace of her. Please help us find her, if you think you know anything that would help us in tracking her down, please come forward."

"Switch o the o o", I demanded sternly, and he switched it o immediately

"I know Layla's missing because I took her", I signed on my whiskey again and Angelo's face dropped in disappointment.

"And you didn't even tell me?"

"I'm telling you now, aren't I?"

"I'm guessing Quinton was the one who helped you in this?", his fist rolled in a ball when I nodded my head. "I'm supposed to be your right-hand man", he spat. "Quinton is a child, he doesn't know anything about the real world".

"Quinton is more valuable in this mission than anyone else. He's providing specific intel on everything we need to know", I read the contents of the next page. "You know we need him.

"You and I are supposed to be a team"

"You and I will always be a team, just not on this mission", I rose my eyes to look at him, he shook his head before walking out the door and slammed it hard behind him

Damon's POV

"Do you and Layla have any enemies Mr Kingsley?", the oicer asked keeping a straight face and I shook my head

"I don't know anyone who would want to hurt Layla, she doesn't have any enemies. I might have a few", my hands shook and Mary gave me a glass of water.

"Could you perhaps name them?"

"Obviously when a business deal goes wrong, hatred is bound to form, and I've had plenty of those over the years"

"Have you noticed anything odd or strange lately?", the other one asked, and I shook my head a er taking a sip of the water

"No, everything seemed just fine"

"Where were you the night Layla went missing?", the first oicer asked

"I was at work. I had pulled an all-nighter because I had deadlines to meet".

"Can anyone vouch for you?", he raised a brow

"Yes, my P.A, receptionist and some of my employees were there with me"

They both nodded.

"Have you received any threatening messages?", the other one asked as he scribbled notes onto the notepad in his hand

I shook my head. "Not that I know of"

"Okay", the both stood to their feet. "We'll try our best to find your wife Mr Kingsley, but please if the kidnappers make any sort of contact with you, don't hesitate to tell us immediately, alright?"

"Of course", I gave another nod. "Please find her, I don't know what I would do if anything happened to her"

"We give you our word, and we'll keep you updated", one said before they le

Minutes later, Layla's father stormed in, charging at me, and he punched me hard across my face. Mary screamed in horror when went flying on the floor.

"Where is my daughter you sick bastard?", he screamed at the top of his lungs, aiming at me again but Hendric Jones quickly redirected him from hitting me again, and I groaned in pain and noticed blood on the floor to see that my nose was bleeding

"Are you okay?", Mary helped me to stand on my feet

"I'm okay Mary", I reassured her, wiping the blood on my face. "Thank you"

"Cedric, we didn't come all the way here for you to assault this young man", Hendric reprimanded his son before he let Cedric free and he plopped helplessly on the sofa

"I'll never forgive myself if anything happens to her", he covered his face with his hand and sobbed pitifully

"I'm sorry I wasn't there to protect her", I lowered my eyes in guilt and I felt their gaze on me

"It's not your fault, I'm the reason she was kidnapped. I just know it", Cedric stood up to pace to and fro. "I'm sorry I punched you, it really wasn't necessary"

"I understand"

"Have you heard anything?", Hendric asked, and I shook my head

"I've hired other people to look for her, the police are not enough"

"I hope she's safe", he sighed heavily. "If they dare one finger on her, I swear."

"No harm will come to her if they know what's good for them", I clenched my fists. "I promise I'll find her and bring her back home"

He nodded his head. "I trust you"

Daniel's POV

My door was kicked open and I quickly stood to my feet. Junior stumbled inside, panting heavily. "Layla's gone"

"For Christ's sake", I rubbed my temple. "I know Layla's missing. We have her"

"You don't understand", he struggled catching his breath and my eyebrows furrowed. "Layla was taken from our captivity, and she's nowhere to be found, it's like she just disappeared into thin air"

"What?", my jaw clenched as I felt my heart rate increasing

"She must have escaped"

"That's impossible", I lashed out. "She was heavily sedated"

"I'm aware, but the looks of it someone from the inside helped in getting her out", he folded his arms. "I'm suspecting Quinton"

"Fuck!", I was boiling up in rage as in one swift motion, I sent all that was on my table flying to the floor

"Find her", I growled, hitting the table with both my hands

"But where will we start looking."

"Don't give me that bullshit. Search for her and bring her back here to me alive. It's either that or I'm holding you personally responsible for all this shit. Do you understand me?", I snapped at him, and he slowly nodded

his head and ran out of my o ice as soon as he could

Layla was the only person I could use to get to them. She is their weakness, without her I'm have nothing. I took my phone out and dialed a number.

"Boos?"

"Be on the lookout. I want you to bring me Quinton's head on a silver platter".

"Already on it"

Quinton was going to pay for going behind my back like that

Layla's POV

I peeled my eyes open, groaning in pain as I turned over and rubbed my eyes. I felt horrible and dizzy while forcing myself to sit up straight. My head was spinning terribly, and I rubbed my eyes again before it dawned on me what happened to land me here.

I was kidnapped

I pushed myself out of bed, flying to the door and banged my fistied hands hard against it.

"Somebody help me. Let me out", I cried as I continued banging on the door. Nothing happened, and I continued screaming but eventually got tired before sinking to the floor helplessly.

A few minutes later, I heard the door being unlocked, and I jumped away from the door, and it was pushed open a er seconds later. A well-built man wearing a balaclava stood tall across me and my mouth opened agape in shock when he started walking towards me and I crawled away from him until my back hit the brick wall behind me. He then stood in front of me, took out something from his pocket and aimed in my direction.

I covered my face and shut my eyes tight, awaiting a bang

"Here", his voice said, and I was surprised that it wasn't the end of me yet, and I uncovered my eyes to look up to him to see he was holding a phone against me and I slowly took it from him.

"Expect a call in 5 minutes. You won't be able to make calls with that, only will be receiving them", with saying that, he turned on his feet and closed the door shut behind him and locked it.

I breathed heavily as I held onto the phone and looked down on it before bringing my eyes up again expecting to see an unpleasant location to be kept hostage at, but it wasn't. I was locked up in a fully furnished luxurious bedroom, a lot bigger than mine, and it had a fireplace.

I stood up to study my surroundings carefully and to pinch myself to see that I wasn't dreaming and still alive. I swear my mind must have been playing tricks on me, but it wasn't. I was still very much alive.

The phone ringed in my hand and an unknown number was calling. I hesitated before I pressed the green button and held it against my ear, saying nothing but just breathing nervously and the person on the other line spoke.

"Layla?", the voice asked my name and I furrowed my eyebrows in confusion, recognizing it to hear it sounded awfully familiar

"Damon?"