

Alphas Bride 201

Chapter 201 - The Perfect Plan Backfired

Talia's insides were churning as Ashley and Heather took turns in twisting what happened and making Talia appear like a bitter woman who was overreaching.

It seemed that Damon called them.

Was he curious about what happened?

Did he think that she would enjoy watching this show?

Heather's brows were furrowed into a concerned expression, and she leaned toward Damon, giving him a full view of her ample cleavage. "When Lia said that you belong to her, we had to warn her that she can't recklessly claim our Alpha. And when we pointed out that she is not marked, she started throwing insults at us..."

Caden and Maya exchanged glances and shook their heads. Those two airheads were digging their own graves.

Heather was about to say more, but Ashley gave her hand a squeeze, and Heather realized that Damon's expression darkened.

"Did we do something wrong?", Ashley asked cautiously.

"What you told me is unsettling.", Damon responded. "Regardless of the status, if a random woman stakes her claim on me, she will suffer consequences."

Ashley and Heather had matching smiles that froze as Damon continued talking.

"However, this is a serious accusation and I need to investigate thoroughly. You said that Lia acted out of line, but Doctor Travis told me that the two of you were bullying her."

"That's not what happened.", Ashley was quick to deny it. Even if Travis was present, he didn't hear much.

"Are you saying that he lied?"

Ashley smiled innocently. "I'm not saying that he lied on purpose, but there is a chance he saw it wrongly. Lia bullied us. We were only standing up for ourselves. And for you."

Damon nodded. "I feel that another perspective is missing. Should I look for Lia and see what she has to say?"

Heather gulped audibly. "What would she say? Do you think she will admit to her wrongdoings?"

"Whoever lies to me will suffer consequences." Damon craned his neck and glanced at Talia who was observing everything in silence. "Do you want to enlighten us and say what actually happened?"

Talia stood up and walked toward Damon and when she glanced at Ashley and Heather, those two were so pale that it looked like their souls were about to leave their bodies.

They didn't realize that Talia was here. And Talia being here before them, meant that Damon heard Talia's version of the story first.

Damon was disappointed that Talia stopped moving on the side of his desk, and he extended his hand toward Talia, silently urging her to come closer.

His stomach dropped when she didn't take it.

Damon called these two blondes here so that Talia sees how he will stand up for her. Why was she rejecting him now? He didn't do anything wrong.

After a few endless seconds, Damon retracted his hand. This was the first time that someone left him hanging!

Talia didn't want to look at Damon. She was upset at him and she feared that if she meets his icy-blue eyes, her will might waver, so she focused on Ashley and Heather.

Lies. Malice. Ridicule. Schemes. Beatings. Talia went through it all and she suffered greatly when no one cared to investigate and find the truth. For many years, Talia was a scapegoat for everything that went wrong.

Now things were different, but this incident reminded Talia of the helplessness when she was wronged and powerless, and it made her nauseated. She hated it.

"What do you think you will get by slandering me like that? How can you not care what will happen to me because of your lies? I remember you coming to me with a question about how I managed to hold onto Damon long enough to end up in a magazine? You behaved like you were inviting me to join a club for Damon's hookups when you spoke about his favorite poses and that he loves to take a woman from behind..."

Damon's face fell. His hookups? Favorite poses? Taking a woman from behind? What the hell?

A sense of crisis gripped his heart.

Damon wanted to reach to Maya and Caden to see if they knew something about this, and maybe give him an exit strategy, but those two had their heads lowered and they were snickering silently.

Were they mocking him?

And sure, there it was, Caden spoke to Maya through the mind-link, 'Damon's perfect plan backfired. He wanted to fight for Talia's honor, but by the looks of it, his honor took a hit.'

'You make it sound like he has honor', Maya responded.

'Unless you are helping, I suggest you shut up!', Damon grumbled into the mind-link and both Caden and Maya stiffened.

Damon took a mental note to reprimand them later. How can they enjoy the show when their Alpha was in a pinch?

Things were looking bad and going to worse because Talia was not done.

"You said Damon is keeping me hidden like a pet and that his interest in me will wane the moment he finds another woman who tickles his libido because I'm no different than the two of you or any other woman he used for one time fun..."

Damon felt that the room was spinning. Why did those two disclose that he bedded them and insinuate that Talia is no more than a hookup?

Wait! Damon didn't remember getting handsy with Ashley or Heather, but considering his past, that was not unusual. There were too many to remember.

Ah, this was a disaster!

No wonder Talia needed time to cool down yesterday. And no wonder she didn't take his hand now.

She probably saw him as dirty.

Talia was like a perfect Goddess who shone brightly, and next to her, Damon felt like the lowest scum of Earth.

...

-- This work is published on WebNovel (w e b n o v e l . c o m). Don't support illegal copies! Read from the original site to support the author --

...

Damon needed to salvage this situation and he needed to make it fast because Talia's temper was flaring and as much as he enjoyed seeing her put people in their place, he had a feeling that soon Talia's fury will be directed at him.

He waited for Talia to pause to catch her breath and then he intervened.

"So, you lied to your Alpha?", Damon asked Ashley and Heather who were already drenched in sweat because Talia's aura weighted on them, making it difficult to breathe.

Damon could feel the pressure Talia exerted and he wondered if that was her maximum, or if she was still unlocking her potential. In either case, she was magnificent. He reminded himself to stay focused.

"Answer me!", Damon used an Alpha command and both Ashley and Heather nodded with pained expressions on their faces.

In front of an Alpha command that directly impacts the werewolf's mind, one had to submit and respond truthfully, unless he had the strength to resist. It was obvious that neither Ashley nor Heather had the capacity to resist Damon's command.

"You will be sent to the dungeon until we decide on the right punishment.", Damon said.

"Dungeon?", Ashley asked breathily. "We were just talking. I request that Elders investigate and decide if any punishment is needed."

"Elders don't have jurisdiction when the crime was done against members of the Alpha family.", Damon said sternly. "Slandering your Luna falls into that category."

Both Ashley and Heather looked at Damon and then at Talia in disbelief.

Without giving Talia chance to react, Damon pulled her to sit on his lap, and his arms locked around her waist firmly as he spoke to Heather and Ashley, "You heard me right. This is Talia. My fated mate. Your future Luna, who will decide on your punishment, when she feels like it. Until then, use your time in the dungeon to think about what you did and how your actions would impact the person you slandered if she was anyone other than Talia."

Damon glanced at Caden and Maya. "Take them away."

"Let's go...", Caden said sternly, and Ashley and Heather stood up robotically and walked out, dragging their feet with dreadful expressions like they were only seconds from parting with their souls.

When the door closed, Damon cupped Talia's cheek with his palm and made her turn to look at him.

"I'm sorry, kitten. These things shouldn't happen. Once we announce you as the Luna of the Dark Howlers pack, no one will dare to provoke you like this."

Talia was not sure if Damon will really make this whole Talia-as-the-Luna show public, but even if he does that, it won't erase his past as a man-whore.

Ashley and Heather came forward and spoke openly, and if they thought of Talia as Damon's Luna, they probably wouldn't do that, but it wouldn't change what Damon did with them.

"I know that it's normal for an Alpha to sleep around, but..." Talia's heart was heavy, and she couldn't put her thoughts into words.

No matter how disgusted she was at the thought of Damon being intimate with other women, when he was this close, holding her, the only thing she could see was him and everything else faded into insignificance. And how can she be angry at him for things he did before they met?

Damon's heart cracked as Talia's emotions poured into him, and he tightened his hold on Talia, fearing that she will leave him.

"I'm sorry..."

"Don't.", Talia interrupted him. "If you are truly sorry, don't let it happen again."

Damon smiled a little when he realized that Talia used the same words he said to her more than once.

Talia balled her hand into a fist and gave him a weak punch in the chest.

"You big dummy.", Talia said with a pout. "You said that I will be your last. As long as that promise stands, we will be fine."

"That promise will stand forever.", Damon said. He made a cross over his chest with his index finger, where his heart is, indicating his sincerity.

Talia leaned on Damon, and he cradled her in his arms, and they sat like that in silence for a long time.

Chapter 202 - Guests Are Coming [Bonus ]

Talia lost track of time while sitting on Damon's lap, using his firm body as a super-luxurious chair that came with the extra service of his fingers running through her hair.

She really loved Damon's solid warmth and his addictive scent, but unfortunately, they couldn't stay like that forever.

Both of their desks were cluttered, reminding them that they have work to do.

Before returning to their duties, Talia had a few questions.

"Damon?"

"Hmm?"

"What will happen to those two women?"

Damon didn't care about Ashley or Heather. "Whatever you want. But don't let them go easily. Unless you show them you are in charge, they will see it as a weakness and try again. Even if they don't come at you directly, they will gossip and incite others."

Talia wondered, wouldn't they gossip and scheme more if she gives them a hard time?

"Do you really expect me to decide on their punishment?"

"You don't want to?", Damon responded with a question. "They approached you with bad intentions. This is your chance to teach them a lesson and set an example for others."

Others? "Should I punish every woman you slept with?"

Damon could feel Talia's irritability that was laced with sadness and a mix of emotions swelled inside him. Shame. Anger. Regret.

He rested his forehead on Talia's shoulder and tightened his hold on her.

"Fuck", Damon cursed under his breath. "If I had a time machine, I would go back in past and slap my previous self until I engrave into his mind that he needs to save himself for you."



Talia pressed her lips into a line.

Why did she bring up the point of Damon's hookup habits?

Does she have the right to admonish him?

Why was he apologizing instead of being his usually domineering Alpha?

It seemed he was really sorry and that he cared about her opinion.

The truth was that he couldn't change the past, and Talia wondered why did it bother her so much. And there was one more thing...

"If you had a time machine, I would ask you not to use it."

Damon lifted his head to look at her. "I thought that you were bothered by..." He struggled to find the right words. "...my past."

To say that she wasn't would be a lie, but Talia looked at that from a different perspective.

Talia put her hand on Damon's cheek and smiled a little. "If you are not this Damon, the Damon of right now, you wouldn't go to the Red Moon pack, and we wouldn't meet."

Damon looked at Talia in awe. "Do you always see the good side of things?"

"Not really.", she admitted. Talia always thought of herself as realistic, but the truth was that she often succumbed to negativity, except for... "When I am with you, it's different."

Damon's interest piqued. "How different?"

Talia was not really sure how to explain, and it was a bit embarrassing.

"Tell me, kitten. I really want to know.", Damon said with his best puppy-eyed look that Talia couldn't resist. He was silly and adorable and incredibly handsome, and she inhaled deeply before responding in a small voice, "You make me feel like..." Talia hesitated.

Damon's eyes widened in anticipation. "Like?"

"Like... anything is possible. Like... as long as we are together, everything will be alright."

A big smile bloomed on Damon's face as Talia's words echoed in his mind.

"I feel the same about you." He really did. "As long as we are together, everything will be alright, so, don't leave me, kitten."

Actually, he felt more, much more, but he couldn't put it into words, so he inched closer in slow motion and pecked her lips once, twice, and then Talia's arms moved around his neck, and he deepened the kiss and the whole world faded, leaving only the two of them tasting each other while their hearts beat as one.

...

-- This work is published on WebNovel ([w e b n o v e l . c o m](http://www.webnovel.com)). Don't support illegal copies! Read from the original site to support the author --

...

It was late in the afternoon when Talia's phone rang.

She paused the education video about solar cells and her eyes lit up when she saw who it was. Kalina.

"Hi Lia!", Talia exclaimed enthusiastically, and then she slumped in her chair and glanced at Damon who was working at his desk. It took him a second to shoot her a glance with a smile that made her heart skip a beat.

"Hi Lia!", Kalina greeted back. "Is this a good time to talk?"

"Sure.", Talia responded in a low voice, careful not to disturb Damon whose gaze returned to the documents in front of him.

"Guess what?", Kalina asked.

"What?"

"Today I will finally finish with Luna-to-be activities, and that means Tony and I can come to your pack starting tomorrow. Let me know when you are ready to receive us. Tony will bring four additional people, but those four are fine to stay with warriors..."

Talia's heart fluttered. It's happening! Guests are coming! And she will be the host!

"OK. Got it.", Talia responded. "So, it's you and Tony and four more people. I will talk to Damon and get back to you. What about Mindy?"

"Do you expect me to invite Mindy to stay at your place? You should do that."

Talia thought how that made sense. "Alright. I will give her a call. I will let you know once I figure out her availability."

"We are having guests?", Damon asked Talia when she ended the call.

With his werewolf hearing, Damon heard both Talia and Kalina, but he still wanted to hear from Talia.

"Kalina, Tony, and four more people. Kalina said that those four are fine to stay with warriors."

"You can tell Steph to handle the warriors so that you focus on settling people who will stay in the packhouse.", Damon suggested.

"Didn't you say that people coming with Tony should be his close associates?", Talia asked. Damon told her how Tony is at risk of becoming an Alpha without anyone reliable by his side unless he befriends capable people soon, and the fact that he was bringing people must be one of his befriending attempts.

"I did.", Damon confirmed.

"If they are close, they should all stay in the packhouse. Tony will learn from you, and those guys can learn from Caden. Besides, we have plenty of rooms here.", Talia said, and Damon had to agree with this logic.

Damon admired Talia's mind that considered the big picture, and also focused on details. She was the perfect Luna.

Talia held onto her phone and stood up. "I will call Mindy and check if she can come also."

Damon didn't like the idea that Talia was leaving the study. "You can make the call from here."

Talia refused. "I don't want to disturb you. There is a good chance we will talk about more than just her schedule." Talia gave Damon a meaningful look. "Girl talk."

Damon watched helplessly as Talia walked out of the study. It's not that he wanted to control everything, but whenever Talia was not in his visual range, Damon would become restless. And just like many times before, he had a bad feeling about this.

He was on pins and needles for the next fifteen minutes.

What is taking so long? Did Talia forget that she needs to return? Did she get lost? What if something bad happened?

Only when the door of the study opened, did Damon settle his racing thoughts. Talia was back.

She was holding onto her phone, a notepad, and a pen.

Talia saw that Damon's attention was on her, so she spoke enthusiastically, "Alright. We have eleven people coming. I told them to plan tentatively to arrive three days from now, and that I will confirm the exact timing by tomorrow morning. What do you say? Can they come in three days?"

As Damon's assistant, Talia knew his schedule and since he didn't plan any trips, it should be fine, but she still wanted to confirm with him.

Damon was stuck on one thing. "Eleven people?"

Tony, Kalina, and four more make six, and if Mindy is coming, that's seven. Who are the other four?

Chapter 203 - Guests Are Coming (2)

Talia explained the number of guests to Damon.

"You know that Kalina and Tony will bring four people, and Mindy will come with Max." Talia made a pause because Damon frowned at the mentioning of Maddox, and when Damon waved his hand, she continued, "Axel will also come with Tyler and Kai."

Damon's frown deepened. "Why is Axel coming?"

"When I spoke to Mindy, Max was nearby and he was on a call with Axel, and since it's a social visit and Axel has some free time, Axel asked if he can come...", Talia's voice trailed. "It's fine, right?"

"Right.", Damon said stiffly. Something didn't sound right. If Max was on the call with Axel, how could Axel hear what Talia and Mindy were talking about?

But even if Damon accepts that unlikely situation as real, there was the fact that members of the Midnight Guardians pack are not social butterflies; unless there is some official function, they keep to themselves. And Damon still didn't forget Axel's unusual interest in Talia.

The more Damon thought about this, the more his suspicions grew.

Talia's face fell. "I can see that you disapprove. Should I tell Axel, Tyler, and Kai that they can't come? But I already said they are welcome. Will they be upset if I go back on my word?"

Damon didn't have the heart to spoil this for Talia. "Don't worry about it, kitten. Eleven guests in three days. You can tell them to come in time for lunch. Make sure to notify Steph that we will have guests, she likes to shop for groceries in advance. As their host, you should make sure their rooms are ready, and think of some entertainment options. Tony said that he wants to train, so I will take care of the guys, and you should figure out something for the girls, and maybe something that we can all do together. Steph and Maya can give you a hand."

Talia's eyes were sparkling from excitement, and she hopped toward Damon to give him a smacking kiss on the cheek. "Thank you, Damon. This will be fun."

When Talia tried to inch away, she realized that Damon's arms were around her waist and that she can't budge.

Damon's expression challenged her in a where-do-you-think-you-are-going manner.

"Do you think that one kiss on the cheek is enough to thank me for eleven guests?"

Talia understood that he was asking for more kisses. On the lips, probably.

Part of her wanted to point out how some of those guests are his. Actually, most of those guests were his. But another part of Talia was eager to pay Damon in requested currency (aka kisses), with interest.

The second part won, and Talia moved to sit on his lap.

"How many kisses are enough?"

Damon hummed while his eyes roamed over her face that was getting redder by the second. Even when she acted boldly, Talia's cute blush was proof of her inexperience. Damon really adored this shy side of her.

"From you, kitten... it's never enough."

Talia's heart skipped a beat when Damon inched closer, and her toes curled when he deepened the kiss. It was that good.

...

-- This work is published on WebNovel ([webnovel.com](http://webnovel.com)). Don't support illegal copies! Read from the original site to support the author --

...

It was dinnertime when Lisa left her room unwillingly.

Stephanie gave her a lesson on how she needs to get down from her high horse, she was forced to cook, and then Stephanie said how she will not be bringing any food into Lisa's room anymore. If Lisa wanted to eat, she needed to either make something for herself or come to the dining room, like everyone else.

It's not that Lisa had a problem with eating in the dining room, but Maya and Caden saw Lisa being humiliated in the kitchen, and she didn't want to face them. On top of that, everyone knew that Tony

dumped her, and it didn't seem that anyone cared because other than her mother, no one came to check on her and offer some words of comfort.

Lisa understood that her mother was triggered when Alpha Damon ordered them to remake food that Lisa ruined, but Lisa really didn't understand what's such a big deal about it. It was just a meal and a very simple one. Did Talia blow it out of proportion?

Why would Stephanie, Maya, and Caden defend the new face (aka Talia) so ardently? Is it because Talia is a wolf-less she-wolf and they feel sorry for her?

Lisa felt like everyone was against her!

If it's up to Lisa, she would never come out of her room, but alas, she was hungry and she dragged herself toward the dining room that was unexpectedly lively. The cutlery made clinking noises, indicating that people were working on their dinner, and excited chatter filled the air. Did they have guests?

Lisa peeked in to see that Maya and Stephanie were talking with Talia while Caden and Damon were eating and listening to the commotion.

The picture looked harmonious, like a family sharing a meal in a good mood, and Lisa was dejected that all this was happening without her.

In the packhouse of the Lightclaw pack, there were always at least a few Omegas ready to serve her at any moment and this was... different.

Lisa felt like an outsider.

She was standing at the door, and no one acknowledged her. Considering that there were five werewolves at the table, they should be able to notice her.

Lisa didn't get it. Why was Talia eating with them at the table? Why were they acting so close? And why was Talia sitting on Damon's left? Isn't Talia just an Omega?



Sure, Stephanie told Lisa not to think of Talia as Omega, but if Talia was not Omega, why would she work in the kitchen? And Talia even prepared a separate meal for Damon.

Lisa spent years with Tony, and she never cooked. In the Lightclaw pack, they know the order. Omegas perform those low-level jobs like cooking and cleaning, and how much Lisa knew, the same was valid for the Dark Howlers pack.

Lisa cleared her throat and chatter stopped abruptly.

"Hi Lisa, nice of you to join us.", Stephanie said. "Don't just stand there. Help yourself..." Stephanie gestured toward the spot on her right where an empty plate was with clean utensils. Stephanie set it up with the hope that Lisa will join them.

Lisa approached the table, and her eyes flashed when she saw Damon cutting meat that was obviously on Talia's plate, and everyone was acting like it was a totally normal thing.

Seeing that Lisa was settling into a chair, Stephanie continued talking with Talia, "As I was saying, don't do everything yourself. Ask Rosa to set up the rooms. You should only check when it's done."

Talia really didn't want to interact with Rosa. "Can I borrow Zina and Dawn?"

Damon's ears perked up. "Is something wrong with Rosa?"

Talia's mouth opened and closed without making a sound and she needed a second to come up with a response. She didn't want to cause trouble for anyone.

"No, no. I mean, I don't know. I'm familiar with Zina and Dawn and the three of us can set up the rooms in a jiffy.", Talia said.

Stephanie didn't agree. "I told you to let them do it. Other than Rosa, there are a few more Omegas on cleaning duty. You need to tell them which rooms to prepare and check if everything is in order once the work is done. I admire your eagerness to do it yourself, but you can't do it all. Learn to delegate."

"I don't mind working. It's not a big deal to set up the bed and vacuum.", Talia said with the best smile she could muster.

Talia didn't want to say that she was not comfortable with the idea of ordering others what to do.

If it's up to Talia, she would do everything herself, but Damon told her to get help because he needs her as his assistant. The truth was that Damon wanted Talia to study and not bother with those menial tasks anyone can do.

Lisa put food on her plate and took a seat.

By now, she understood that someone was coming to the packhouse. But why was Talia in charge of Omegas who were setting up the rooms? Was Stephanie training Talia to work as her replacement?

Lisa decided to eat and listen. For now.

As the dinner progressed, Lisa realized that it was difficult to focus on the conversation because she couldn't stop staring at Damon and Talia. Damon was cutting things for Talia, and feeding her, and Talia accepted all that pampering like it happened many times before.

And Lisa definitely noticed the way Talia and Damon looked at each other. It was not surprising to see a big smile on Talia's face, because any she-wolf would be moved when an Alpha is giving her special treatment, but Lisa had difficulty understanding why Damon looked at Talia like she was the only girl in the world.

Lisa's eyes lost focus as she drifted off into her memories. Only a week ago she was next to Tony as they shared a meal. Tony never cut food for Lisa or fed her, but they did many other things together and she still missed him immensely. Her heart tightened at the thought of how that will never happen again because Tony found his mate and that was not her.

Chapter 204 - Guests Are Coming (3)

"Lisa? Are you done with food?"

Stephanie's voice pulled Lisa out of her stupor and Lisa realized that it was only the two of them at the table.

How long was she spacing out?

"The others left?", Lisa asked the obvious.

"Yes. They went to the study for evening debriefing, and the two of us should clean up the table."

Lisa's eyes widened like she just heard something outrageous.

"Why should we clean up? Where are Omegas?" Whenever Lisa was in the packhouse of the Lightclaw pack with Tony, Omegas served Lisa, and when she was in her aunt's house, her aunt did everything.

"Omegas left when dinner was ready, as always. They prefer to eat at their home. Normally, I clean up after dinner, but now that you are here, I expect you to help me.", Stephanie said. When she saw that Lisa frowned in disapproval, she urged her. "Come on. You need to do something and collecting plates and putting them in the dishwasher is not a big deal. We will be done in ten minutes."

Lisa was not willing. It was not about the time, but about the lost dignity. "What about Talia?"

"What about her?"

"Why is she not helping with cleanup?"

"She is in the study with Damon, Caden, and Maya."

Lisa's expression worsened. How can Talia mingle with the high-ranking members while Lisa was stuck to clean up the table? "Why is Talia with them?"

"Talia is working as Alpha's assistant."

Lisa blinked rapidly. Alpha's assistant is a big upgrade for an Omega. "Is she Damon's assistant, or is she working in the kitchen?"

Stephanie shook her head. "Everyone is contributing in any way they can. Talia is catching up on her studies, working as Damon's assistant, and she is helping in the kitchen when she can. Also, Doctor Travis is teaching her about medicine. She hopes to get a job in the pack hospital eventually."

The more Lisa listened, the more fantastic it sounded. How can one person do all that? And that was not just any person, that was a wolf-less she-wolf.

But even if Talia had two brains and six arms, Lisa didn't think that Talia was a big deal.

The story about Talia doing all those things must be exaggerated, or maybe Talia cast some spell on everyone in the packhouse. There was no other explanation why everyone would think highly of Talia.

...

-- This work is published on WebNovel ([w e b n o v e l . c o m](http://www.webnovel.com)). Don't support illegal copies! Read from the original site to support the author --

...

'CLINK! CLANG! TING!'

Plates and utensils made cringing noise as Lisa was keeping them in the dishwasher with more force than necessary.

"Whatever you break, you will need to replace out of your pocket.", Stephanie said irritably. She knew that Lisa didn't want to help with cleanup but breaking dishes out of anger was too much.

"Does that rule apply to Omegas also?", Lisa asked stiffly.

"It applies only to ones who break things on purpose."

Lisa grumbled something unintelligibly and continued loading the dishwasher, this time with care.

Lisa remembered something. "Mom, is Talia going to take over your duties in the packhouse?"

Stephanie was not sure from where that came. "Why do you ask?"

"I heard you talk over dinner. Guests are coming and she will be the host. That's something you always did."

Stephanie wouldn't mind if Talia took over her duties in the packhouse. There were so many other things Stephanie wanted to do, but she didn't have enough time, and if Talia steps in, Stephanie will be grateful.

However, until that is confirmed, Stephanie could only respond with, "Talia will be the host because her friends are coming."

Lisa paused. "Talia has friends who are qualified to stay in the packhouse?"

"They are high-ranking members from several packs."

Disbelief was obvious on Lisa's face. "Really? From which packs?"

Stephanie was not sure how to respond to this, fearing that Lisa will be upset again. But Lisa was bound to find out about it one way or another, and it's probably for the best that Stephanie breaks this information to Lisa without any witnesses.

"The Blue River pack, the Midnight Guardians pack, and the Lightclaw pack."

"What?", Lisa asked breathily while her heart thundered against her chest. "Did I hear you right? Did you say... the Lightclaw pack? Who is coming?"

Stephanie started from the beginning. "Alpha Maddox and his sister Mindy from the Blue River pack, future Alpha Axel and his Beta and Gamma from the Midnight Guardians pack, and from the Lightclaw pack we will host six people... Future Alpha Anthony and Kalina included."

Lisa stared at her mother. She had so many questions.

"How is it possible that a lowly she-wolf like Talia knows them?"

In two quick steps, Stephanie was in front of Lisa, and she grabbed the latter's shoulders harshly.

"Mind your language, Lisa. If Alpha Damon finds out that you are badmouthing Talia, he will punish you." Actually, even Stephanie was fed up with Lisa's behavior. "Some of those people were here for the Summer Solstice festival, and Talia attended Kalina's Luna announcement ceremony. Why wouldn't Talia be familiar with them? She is a nice girl."

The more Stephanie reprimanded Lisa, the more indignant Lisa became.

"Why is Damon allowing Tony and Kalina to come? Didn't you bring me here to stay away from Tony and his mate? How is it fine for them to come here?"

It's not that Stephanie didn't understand Lisa's point of view, and in a way, she was right. However, there was nothing they could do about this.

"Tony is coming here as the future Alpha of the Lightclaw pack. It has nothing to do with you and it's normal that his mate will accompany him. Like it or not, Kalina will be the Luna of the Lightclaw pack. They will be here in three days, and no one is sure how long they will stay, but we are planning for at least one week. I don't expect you to smile and welcome them, but if you can't be civil, I suggest you plan to stay away. Either go back to your aunt until they leave, or we can plan for something else."

Lisa's sight blurred from angry tears. She left the Lightclaw pack because she couldn't stand the ridicule. Everyone knew that Tony dumped her, and they were either mocking her openly or offering fake pity. And after enduring all that, Tony and his mate, the sources of Lisa's misery were coming here.

"You are sending me away? Isn't this my house?"

Stephanie's heart cracked. "This is your home, and it always will be. But it's also the packhouse of the Dark Howlers pack. Delegations from other packs will be staying here as needed, and we can't allow our personal feelings to jeopardize relationships between packs."

Lisa narrowed her eyes irritably, shook Stephanie's hands away, and stomped out of the kitchen.

Stephanie wanted to remind Lisa that she didn't finish with the dishes, but considering Lisa's mood, Stephanie feared that all dishes will be broken. Stephanie gave up on calling Lisa and resumed loading the dishwasher, where Lisa left.

...

Lisa threw herself on her bed and the fluffy pillow muffled her scream.

She was hurt, helpless, and furious.

Ever since Tony found his mate, Lisa's life was spiraling downward.

Everyone knew that she was dating Tony, and they all treated her as the future Luna of the Lightclaw pack. As the news of Tony and Kalina spread, people started looking at Lisa in a different light.

Lisa is a prideful she-wolf but she couldn't hold her head high when everyone was ridiculing her.

She thought that coming home will give her a breather, but Talia's presence was unexpected.

Lisa didn't like that Talia was here, acting like she owns the place, but she hated the most that everyone seemed to like Talia for some unknown reason. How Lisa saw it, there was nothing special about Talia.

And how is it possible that Talia knows all those impressive people?

Lisa pushed herself into a seated position and reached for her tablet.

She avoided going online because she didn't want to see messages and emails from her friends, and she definitely didn't want to see news related to Tony and Kalina, but now she had to check something.

Lisa navigated to the web page of WW Magazine (the source of news and gossip for the werewolf community) and Lisa's stomach cramped into a hundred painful knots when she saw that trending topic was the newly mated couple, Tony and Kalina.

There was a photo of Tony and Kalina holding each other, locked in a gaze full of emotions, and on their left and right were Alpha Magnus and Luna Alicia.

Lisa wiped the tears with the back of her hand. That was her spot, damn it!

She looked at the next trending topic and she saw that it was related to Alpha Damon and Talia (aka Lia).

Lisa couldn't believe that there were several articles covering Damon and his date for Kalina's Luna announcement ceremony. There were photos of them in various intimate poses that showed how Talia is much more than just Damon's assistant. They were feeding each other, dancing, kissing...

What the hell?



Jealousy swelled inside Lisa.

Talia was on those photos smiling not only with Damon, but with Mindy and Kalina, and Lisa could clearly see that they were sitting at the same table and having a blast. The caption under the photo was: "New generation that will shape our society".

Lisa gritted her teeth while looking at the smiling faces that seemed to mock her misery.

That was supposed to be her!

She was supporting Tony for years! How can she be forgotten overnight?

Why was no one seeing Kalina as an impostor?

Lisa never liked Mindy. On a few occasions they met, Mindy always acted high and mighty, treating Lisa like air.

And Talia... Lisa's insides burned, and she thought that she might vomit from anger. How can a lowly Omega end up with so much glory?

To sprinkle salt on Lisa's wound, since Tony found out that Lisa was not his mate, Tony didn't bring Lisa to any of those high-profile events. Lisa became invisible, but she swallowed it all while convincing herself how Tony will realize that she is the best choice to be his Luna, and then all her suffering will be worth it.

Kalina showed up and ruined everything!

Lisa imagined her Luna party many times. The mood would be good, Tony would hover around her, and everyone would want to suck up to future Luna Lisa.

Unfortunately, those were just dreams because the reality was that when the day of that party came, Kalina took Lisa's place, and Tony celebrated with hundreds of people, while Lisa was drowning in her sorrow.

Where is justice?

Chapter 205 - Plans For Their Morning Apart [Bonus ]

Then next morning...

Talia and Damon were in bed, holding each other and discussing their plans for the day.

Normally, they would spend the day together, but Damon had several things to handle outside the packhouse, and considering that Talia was making arrangements as the host for their guests, it was inevitable that they will spend some time apart.

"Rose will wait for you after breakfast to get instructions about the rooms.", Damon told Talia.

Damon could feel Talia's displeasure at the mentioning of Rose, but unless Talia spoke up, he was determined to push Rose in front of Talia. He was hoping that Talia will tell him what's wrong with Rose, but she just sighed with a "Fine".

"If something is bothering you, you can tell me.", Damon urged her.

Talia didn't want to tell him about her interaction with Rose. Actually, other than being nosy and scarcely dressed, Rose didn't do anything wrong. Sure, that irked Talia, but she didn't want to nitpick.

"I was just thinking about Lisa.", Talia diverted the topic.

"What about her?"

"I'm sure that she is uncomfortable with Tony and Lina coming here." Talia looked up at Damon. "You said that you will talk to her."

Damon made a face. He really didn't want to talk to Lisa, but he promised to Talia so... "After breakfast, I need to do rounds with warriors. It should be done within an hour and after that, I will talk to Lisa. Or after lunch. Today, definitely."

"Are you procrastinating?", Talia asked in a teasing voice.

"Me? No. I'm just... prioritizing.", Damon responded matter-of-factly. "Soothing Lisa's heartbreak is not on my list of important tasks, but I know that you want to avoid drama when Tony and Kalina come so I will talk to her today."

Talia's heart was moved. He was doing it for her. Can he be any sweeter?

Damon thought how Talia was adorable, thinking about the comfort of others, like a real Luna she is.

"You shouldn't worry too much about Lisa. She will get over it. After all, she is young with plenty of time to find her mate, and until then, Lisa has a loving mother, and all the resources she wants."

"But she doesn't have Tony.", Talia said.

"You are talking like you know how it feels to be dumped."

Damon frowned while thinking that someone would dare to dump Talia. And then his frown deepened at the thought that Talia had a romantic interest. Damon felt an urge to spill the blood of Talia's imaginary ex-boyfriend.

Talia was not sure why Damon was frowning, so she quickly explained, "I don't know how it feels to be dumped, but I know that it's easy to get used to good things in life. You might think that Lisa will look at

her situation objectively, but she is hurt, and the only thing she can think of is what she lost when Tony found Lina."

"True. But it's up to a person if one will succumb to negativity or focus on the positives. Every situation has two sides. When my parents died... It was hard. But I focused on the living people who needed me to tell them that things are going to be alright. Whenever I thought about giving up, I imagined what would happen with my people if I failed to guide them as their Alpha. If I was weak, other packs would divide my land and my people, and I believed that if that happens, then the people who killed my parents truly won."

Talia didn't breathe while absorbing every Damon's word. She knew that he was opening up to her and this was important.

Seeing that Talia's honeyed eyes were waiting for him to continue, he tapped the tip of her nose with his index finger before saying, "Lisa needs to decide if she will stay in that room and feel sorry for herself, or will she come out and do something. No one can make that decision for her. By continuing with her current behavior, Lisa is only harming herself and her loved ones."

Talia thought how Damon was wise. "You should tell that to Lisa."

Damon cocked an eyebrow at Talia. "Do you really want to talk about other women while we are in bed, naked?"

Talia swallowed hard when she felt his erection pressing on her lower belly. They were having a serious conversation, but now it took a sudden turn.

"I thought we were talking about our plans for the day.", Talia said, slightly breathy.

Damon smiled slyly. "Yeah. We discussed what we will do after breakfast, but there is still this gap before breakfast that needs to be filled with... activities."

Talia wanted to say how they don't have so much time until breakfast, but before she could say anything, her arms already moved around Damon and his toe-curling kiss erased any thoughts that were not related to Damon, Talia, or the bed they were on.

...

-- This work is published on WebNovel (w e b n o v e l . c o m). Don't support illegal copies! Read from the original site to support the author --

...

With Caden back in the packhouse, breakfast was lively again.

Caden and Damon were discussing drills they will be doing with warriors, and Talia listened with great interest.

Stephanie had her breakfast in the kitchen, as usually, and Maya was chewing the waffle absentmindedly while checking something on her tablet.

Talia loved that Damon would occasionally turn to her and explain what he and Caden were talking about. It helped her understand the basics of warrior training and how ranking and reporting structures work in the Dark Howlers pack.

After breakfast, Damon and Caden will be joining the generals in quarterly evaluation where prospective candidates for promotion will be completing various challenges and if they meet the requirements, they will raise up the ranks.

Higher rank meant a higher salary and more responsibilities, and of course, more bragging rights, but this was not something anyone could accomplish. It required a lot of hard work and preparations, and no one took it lightly, especially because Damon and Caden were there to personally oversee the final stages.

It sounded very exciting.

Talia really wanted to see that for herself, but she had a list of tasks that needed to be accomplished before guests come, and there was no time to dilly-dally on sightseeing. Besides, these evaluations were

done every three months, so there was always the next time, and she was sure that Damon will take her if she asks.

Talia didn't realize that she started making plans for the future that included Damon. One week ago, she wouldn't dare think beyond what was happening at that moment, but little by little, the door of possibilities was opening, and Talia dared to dream.

At some point, Lisa entered the dining room and took a seat at the table.

Maya, Caden, Talia, and Damon threw quick glances at Lisa, silently acknowledging her presence before resuming their previous activities.

Talia felt weird, but she didn't dare to start a conversation with Lisa. Their first interaction left a bad taste in Talia's mouth, and Talia was not sure if Lisa will hate her for being friends with Kalina.

Talia's discomfort lasted less than a minute because Damon finished putting fruits and whipped cream on the waffle he already cut, and he started feeding her. It was easy for Talia to forget about everything when Damon was around and showering her with his attention.

Lisa was trying to stay focused on food, but her sight gravitated to Damon and Talia who were lost in their own bubble.

"Ah!", Talia exclaimed softly when Damon smeared whipped cream on her upper lip on purpose.

He chuckled because Talia looked like she had a white mustache.

"You did that on purpose", Talia said with a pout.

Damon didn't deny it. It was on purpose.

"I apologize. Let me fix it..."

Before Talia could react, he was holding her head in place and licking the whipped cream, and one second later, that action turned into a kiss.

Talia wanted to push Damon away because others were watching and it was not appropriate, but she ended up fisting his shirt and responding to his kiss. It was dark chocolate with whipped cream. Delicious.

Lisa couldn't believe that Damon and Talia were making out during breakfast, at the table.

Maya and Caden pretended not to see anything, so Lisa swallowed whatever she wanted to say, together with the dog food Damon and Talia were serving.

Over the years, Lisa saw Damon with many women. He would always be aloof and domineering, and with Talia, he acted like an enamored teenager. What made Talia so special?

Tony never treated Lisa like that. In public, they would hold hands, and Tony's arm would be draped over Lisa's shoulder, and everyone knew that when she spent the night in Tony's room they were not playing dominoes.

There was a time when Tony looked at Lisa with the fire in his eyes, but the moment he confirmed they are not mates, Tony's behavior changed, and he became more reserved.

Yes, Stephanie advised Lisa to end the relationship right there, but Lisa still hoped that Tony will change his mind. By refusing to give up, she gained two years long extension and now that it was over, she wished for a bit more. A lot more.

Lisa was not sure if she was more upset because Damon was giving Talia attention that Lisa didn't get from Tony, or because this reminded Lisa that Tony was out of her reach. Forever.

And there was the point that Damon barely acknowledged Lisa's presence when Talia was around.

How can she not feel dejected?

Chapter 206 - Confrontation With Lisa

Later that morning...

Talia exited the guestroom where Rose and Kate were cleaning the bathroom, and she smiled happily.

Talia thought that her interaction with Rose might be bumpy, but now Talia realized that she worried for nothing.

After breakfast, Talia and Damon parted ways. Maya and Caden also left the packhouse, and Talia found that two Omegas (aka Rosa and Kate) were waiting for her in the kitchen.

Talia, Rose, and Kate inspected the rooms that need to be prepared, and Rose and Kate listened attentively to Talia's instructions.

Omegas will start with cleaning bathrooms and then proceed with dusting and vacuuming before setting up the beds with the fresh bed linen. By mid-afternoon, Talia can inspect it and if anything else is needed, Rose and Kate will handle it before heading home for the day.

Maya told Talia that she will accompany her after lunch to Darkbourne to buy small chocolates, soaps, and welcome cards that Talia can arrange for guests, as a small welcome package. And then the two of them will sit and discuss various activities in the newly opened cafe that was close to the town square.

Damon and Caden said that they will join the girls, if their schedule allows it, at least for the cafe part.

Guests were due to arrive in two days which left Talia with one full day to handle the details.

Talia was buzzing with excitement.



Once she was done with Rose and Kate, Talia had free time until her training session.

Looking at the time, Talia knew that Damon was still busy with warriors, so she decided to head to the study. Her plan was to check emails and watch educational videos until Damon returns.

Damon promised that before lunch they will go to the gym and train, and Talia was looking forward to the shower that will happen after training.

She bit her lower lip and smiled mischievously while remembering Damon's expression and all the sounds Damon made when she took him into her mouth. At that time, they were in the shower enclosure, she was on her knees in front of him, his face was veiled with lust and pleasure, and she was in control.

She was so bold!

Talia really wanted to do it again.

...

-- This work is published on WebNovel (w e b n o v e l . c o m). Don't support illegal copies! Read from the original site to support the author --

...

Talia was a few steps from reaching the study when she realized that the door was open and Lisa's form came out.

Talia had a bad feeling about this, and her instincts screamed that she should avoid meeting Lisa.

It's not that Talia was afraid of Lisa, but Talia knew that Lisa was in a bad state of mind, and considering Talia's friendship with Kalina, Talia feared that Lisa will hate her.

On top of that, their first interaction was not good, and Talia didn't want things to escalate.

Lisa was going through a heartbreak, Stephanie is her mother, Lisa is now living in the same packhouse as Talia, and Damon told Talia that Lisa was the closest thing he had to a sister. How can Talia offend her?

Talia's plan was to avoid Lisa until Damon confirms that Lisa was fine, but Lisa was right there. Where could Talia go?

Talia glanced up and down the hallway and she cursed her luck. There was no one.

Lisa froze when she saw Talia.

Lisa met with Talia a few times, but this was the first time without others present. And Lisa now knew that Damon and Talia have a special relationship.

Lisa's mood worsened as she remembered how Stephanie praised Talia. Talia is working, studying, learning... Talia this, Talia that. And now that Lisa got another look at Talia, she concluded that Talia was nothing special.

Why was Damon giving attention to Talia? There were so many more attractive she-wolves, even among Omegas.

"Can I help you?", Talia asked. She saw that Lisa scrutinized her and Talia wanted to be done with it.

"I was looking for Damon."

Talia thought how this was odd. No one just comes to look for Damon and misses him because everyone would usually mind-link him first to confirm where he is and if they can come. But then... Lisa lived with the Lightclaw pack for a decade, did she change loyalty? Or maybe she didn't have the right to mind-link Damon directly.

Whichever it was, Talia's response wouldn't change.

"Damon is busy with warriors and should be back soon. If it's anything urgent, I can give him a message."

"Alright. I came to ask him if we can avoid Tony's visit."

Suddenly, Talia regretted her offer to convey Lisa's message to Damon. Did Lisa really think that Damon is not aware of how Tony's presence might make things awkward for Lisa?

Talia realized that Lisa came to demand from Damon to cancel Tony's and Kalina's visit.

Talia knew that Lisa would have a problem with this, but Talia also hoped that Lisa will not make a big deal of it.

How can Talia not understand Lisa's thoughts?

After all, Marcy's visit was hanging over Talia's head, and it was getting closer with every passing day, but Talia never voiced her grievances about it. It's Damon's business and he will need to consider the impact on the pack if he acts rashly. Talia already decided that if Marcy comes, she will hide in the room, or maybe ask if she can crash with Dawn or Zina for some time, and if Marcy would stay longer, then Talia would request a room in one of the common buildings and stay out of sight. In any case, she wouldn't make presumptuous requests only because she didn't want her bully to come here.

But alas, Lisa was not Talia and Lisa had no problems with telling everyone about her likes or dislikes, and Lisa was definitely not shy from making demands.

Can Talia convey this message to Damon? Sure. But there was also another explanation that Lisa should realize...

"Tony asked Damon for guidance so that he can prepare for his role as an Alpha. He is coming here with four of his men to train and to learn from Damon. This visit will set the stage for future collaborations between the Dark Howlers pack and the Lightclaw pack."

Lisa grimaced. "Kalina will come also."

Talia opened and closed her mouth a few times, unable to find the right words, except for... "I'm sorry, Lisa, but..."

"You are sorry?", Lisa interrupted Talia angrily. She couldn't accept that some nobody (aka Talia) was patronizing like she knows everything. "Why are you sorry? Do you think that this won't happen to you?"

Talia's brows came together in confusion. "What do you mean?"

Lisa smirked. "At first, I thought you are just an Omega, but now I see that your skills extend beyond setting the table. Do you think that Damon cares about you? Unless you are his mate, you are just temporary entertainment."

Talia felt her insides churning. How was that any of Lisa's business? "What are you trying to accomplish by saying this?"

"I am telling you this because I was in your shoes until Tony found his mate. He took me places and introduced me as his yet look at me now... alone and heartbroken. Or are you hoping that Damon won't find his mate and will mark you? Let's imagine that he gets to choose his Luna. Do you really think that a powerful Alpha like Damon will mark a wolf-less she-wolf? You are happily talking about preparing rooms for your so-called friends but remember my words, the moment Damon dumps you, all those friends will dump you as well. Do you think they like you, or do they like that you are Damon's bed warmer? Maybe you think that I'm mean, but I'm just not kissing your ass because I know that your position in Damon's life is short-lived."

Lisa snorted at Talia who stood frozen, and she moved down the hallway, bumping Talia's shoulder with hers. It was on purpose.

Talia had no idea how long she stood there, feeling emotionally numb.

Why did Lisa say those things? Even if they were true, that was still mean.

But Talia knew that Lisa was right. If not for Damon, she wouldn't get a chance to meet Mindy or Kalina. Thanks to Damon she met many other people also. Will they abandon Talia once Damon dumps her? Talia didn't have an answer to this question.

The reality was that Talia owed her current lifestyle to Damon, and just as it all came easily because of Damon, Damon had the power to take it away.

This thought made Talia displeased. Didn't she say that she will study and learn and be independent?

She shook those thoughts away. It's still early. It will take time. These things can't be rushed.

Talia knew that Lisa was bitter and angry and that she was just projecting her frustration on Talia, but that didn't mean that Lisa's words didn't hit a vulnerable spot in Talia's confidence that allowed Talia's insecurities to resurface.

Talia had no idea how she found herself in the garden.

The rustling of leaves called for her from the distance with a promise of calm that Talia always felt when surrounded by nature, and this time Talia didn't sit on a bench. She continued walking toward the forest, and then she broke into a run.

Chapter 207 - Rogues

Talia's steps slowed down after an unknown measure of time when she noticed through the gaps in bushes and trees that someone was standing in the distance.

Talia thought it's one of the patrols, and if she avoids them, she might appear suspicious, so she continued moving straight, without altering her path.

A few steps later, Talia confirmed it was four men and she slowed down as she realized that something was off.

The warriors are usually patrolling in wolf form (Damon told her that), and even if they are in human form, they would be dressed in dark gray t-shirts while these guys wore green and brown-ish patterns that provided camouflage in the forest.

Talia bent slightly, hiding behind nearby bushes while focusing on four men who were talking in whispers and looking around nervously.

Her eyes widened when the breeze brought the words, "Avoided... Did you find... We don't have much time..."

Talia's heart thundered. Rogues.

Damon said they would sneak into their territory, but she never imagined that she would actually bump into them. After all, the territory of the Dark Howlers pack is huge, and they have numerous patrols. Isn't she close to the packhouse?

"Who goes there!?", one of the men asked and Talia jerked into a full squat.

Talia held her breath while cursing her luck.

The day started well, but by the looks of it, it won't end on the same note. Even if she escapes the rogues, Damon will give her a hard time.

Talia felt like crying. She just wanted to calm down in the forest. What did she get herself into?

...

Damon was in front of the main training facility for warriors that was nestled in the forest, West from Darkbourne. They just finished with the round of tests for promotions and he was shaking hands with the generals while offering them rare words of praise for their good work.

One general was talking something, but Damon couldn't focus. He felt uneasy, and he knew it was Talia.

Now what?

He remembered that Talia was not happy to work with Rose. Did Rose do or say something to upset Talia?

Damon mind-linked immediately, 'Rose! Is Talia with you?'

'No, Alpha...', Rose responded in a shaky voice, flustered that Alpha mind-linked her directly, and intimidated by his stern tone. 'Talia left us to work a while ago...' Her next words hit a dead end because Damon shut down the mind-link abruptly.

Damon puffed his cheeks and he wondered who could upset Talia. Was it Lisa? He didn't want to jump to conclusions because it could be many things, and there was only one certain way to confirm what's going on. Damon stepped on the side and got his phone to call Talia.

One ring, two... and then the call was answered and Damon heard an unknown male voice, "There you are... Look! I found a little rabbit hiding..."

Damon's stomach dropped, unsure if that wave of fear was from him or Talia.

"Talia! TALIA!", Damon roared into his phone, but there was no response.

He quickly flipped to look at the GPS coordinates and his heart froze painfully when he realized that Talia was in the forest. If the patrol bumped into Talia, and they didn't recognize her, they would report an intruder, and that creepy guy's voice definitely didn't sound like he was up to any good.

Damon threw his phone at Caden who was right next to him. "Talia is in trouble. Send patrols..."

Damon's last word was mixed with a growl as he shifted in his wolf form mid-jump before dashing into the forest, leaving only his tattered clothes behind.

...

-- This work is published on WebNovel (w e b n o v e l . c o m). Don't support illegal copies! Read from the original site to support the author --

...

In the forest...

Talia was facing four men who were looking at her with complicated expressions.

"Why are you not shouting for help?", one of the guys asked Talia. It was obvious that he was the leader.

"You can hurt me before anyone comes to the rescue.", Talia responded.

The guy nodded in approval of her words. "Good that you know. Why are you here? How did you find us?" He eyed her white silky shirt and blue pencil skirt that Damon prepared for her to wear that morning. "You don't look like a warrior...", he mumbled.

"I just came for a walk.", Talia said. "You can go on your way, and I will pretend I didn't see anything."

"Yeah right...", the guy from the side said impatiently before turning to the leader. "Why are we talking to her? As much as we know, patrols are already on the way. What if she mind-linked them? We should get rid of her quickly..." He approached her with a big knife in his hand.



The leader extended his hand, blocking the man's path toward Talia. "She didn't alert anyone. Can't you sense that she doesn't have the mind-link?"

The other three guys looked at Talia with renewed interest.

"Are you here on a mission? Who sent you?", the leader asked.

Talia realized that they assumed she is a rogue, here to spy on the Dark Howlers pack. That was something she could work with.

"It's none of your business.", Talia responded. "I didn't ask you why you are here or who sent you, so I expect the same courtesy."

The leader tched. "In our line of work, accidents happen, people disappear... There are four of us, and only one of you. We can do whatever we want, and if anyone finds you later, they will assume it was the Dark Howlers pack."

Talia's heart trembled. "You wouldn't dare."

The leader stepped closer and grabbed Talia's chin. "You will see what I dare soon enough."

Talia gathered whatever courage she had and yanked her head backward, out of his grip. "If you want to do anything, I suggest you hurry before a patrol arrives."

The leader smirked. "I admire your spirit. You should join us."

Talia blinked while her brain scrambled for exit strategies. Damon will be upset if he finds out that she went to the forest on her own and she ended up bumping into rogues, and he will be super-upset if he finds out that she joined them.

"I can't.", Talia said. "If I don't return soon, my cover will be blown."

"Did you come here to meet with someone?", the leader asked suspiciously and before he could say anything else, the man who was on his right exclaimed while holding onto a phone, "Check this!"

The leader glanced at the phone that had a photo of Talia. He smirked. "So... you are the one that got Alpha Damon's attention."

Talia swallowed hard. She thought she was getting away with it, but how does she get out of this pickle? No matter what fighting moves Damon taught her, these are four werewolves, and fighting or running will be in vain.

She realized that this is it. She can go down proudly or crying and there was no use in crying.

Talia lifted her chin. "What about it? Are you jealous that my mission was a success while you are empty-handed?" She overheard bits and pieces of their conversation and confirmed that these rogues didn't get whatever they were looking for.

The leader's face twisted into an ugly grimace. He expected many things but this... he was not sure how to respond and it took him a few seconds to recover.

His demeanor changed as his eyes sparkled with greed. "It seems we struck gold this time. Instead of gathering information, we got Alpha Damon's weakness."

Talia was sure he got it wrong. "What makes you think I'm his weakness? I accompanied him to a few places and that's it."

"Enough talking.", the man barked. "You are coming with us."

He grabbed her hair with one hand, and with another he covered her mouth.

Talia wiggled to get out of his hold and one of the other three men pressed a knife on her throat.

He chuckled when Talia stopped moving.

"The blade is laced with wolfsbane. It won't only cut you, but it will poison you as well. Be a good girl and no one will get hurt."

A small whimper escaped Talia's lips. She was terrified and the stinging ache in her scalp was making her see stars.

"Give me a cloth or something to gag her and tie her up.", the leader said, and the knife moved away from Talia's skin.

Without thinking, Talia opened her mouth as much as possible and she bit the man's hand.

He didn't expect it and Talia used the moment of confusion to punch him in the throat. The moment his hold on her hair loosened, Talia dashed into the bushes as fast as her legs would carry her.

Unfortunately, there were four werewolves hot on her trail and Talia didn't reach far when a man jumped on her, and she ended up tumbling.

When the world stopped spinning, Talia was on her back with a man straddling her. She frantically tried to push him away, when...

'WHACK!'

The man hit Talia with the back of his palm and Talia's left cheek went numb. A second later, she felt a warm thick liquid in her mouth.

"This will teach you to stop running. Bitch.", he squeezed through his teeth.

Chapter 208 - The Majestic Black Wolf

Talia's vision was blurry, and she struggled to stay conscious as the voices mixed like they came from a great distance with a slight echo.

"Don't kill her!"

"I was just teaching her a lesson."

"Give me something to tie her up!"

Talia felt a rough palm gliding up her thigh, squeezing occasionally. She tried to wiggle away, but someone was holding her arms together in a vice-grip, while another one was sitting on her legs, just above knee level. Based on the sickening chuckle, whoever was molesting her, was enjoying her futile struggle.

"We don't have time to fool around."

The palm was gone.

"Keep your voice down and hurry up. We need to leave quickly..."

"Do you think Alpha Damon will pay for her?"

"Even if he doesn't, she definitely knows something useful."

"Will she talk?"

"They always talk..."

The rogues used some cloth to cover Talia's eyes, and she felt the tugging as they were pulling her arms above her head.

Talia knew she was trapped, but how can she give up?

If they take her away from here, who will save her? Actually, even if they don't take her away, who will save her if she doesn't fend for herself?

They want to use her as a token against Damon! Talia was terrified of that happening.

Damon did so much for her and even if she died right now, her only regret would be that she won't get to see him again.

She really missed his warmth, his scent, his intense gaze, his touch, and the feeling of safety and comfort that came with his proximity... but now was not the time to get lost in such thoughts because she was not dead yet, and as long as she had breath left in her lungs, she was determined to keep on fighting.

The guy who was straddling her lifted himself slightly, and in the next moment, Talia's leg jerked, and her knee got lodged in his family's jewels.

A suppressed groan was heard as the man fell on the side and the pressure on her wrists loosened. Talia quickly pulled her arms down to remove the blindfold.

As soon as the light flashed in front of her eyes, Talia gasped as one of the guys kicked her in the stomach.

"You need to behave", the man said and spat on the ground only an inch away from her face, and then Talia saw a blade of the knife coming close to her face. He sneered. "Let's see how a scar will remind you to listen. Wolfsbane will make it permanent..."

Talia forgot about the pain as her heart thundered in her chest violently. She was not afraid of the scar. However, the wolfsbane was another story because it's extremely poisonous to werewolves. Small doses are not deadly, but the pain is agonizing. For her who doesn't have her wolf, it will probably kill

her quickly. But then... maybe that's for the best. If they poison her and she dies, they won't be able to use her against Damon.

Just as she thought that the blade will reach her face, a big black blur flashed in front of her eyes, taking the man with the knife with him and leaving behind the scent of the forest and the dark chocolate.

Talia jolted into a reality where three men stood petrified and looked at the majestic black wolf who bit off a chunk of the fourth man's neck.

The man was on his knees with his head bent backward at an unusual angle and the blood spurted from the gash on his neck like a fountain.

It was a gory sight.

Before anyone could react, the wolf was already pouncing at the second man who lifted his arm defensively, lodging his forearm into the wolf's jaws, to avoid critical injury. A moment later, the man screamed sorrowfully as his arm was ripped away from his body, but he still had the presence of mind to plunge a knife into the wolf's stomach.

By now, the other two men snapped to their senses and one of them had a knife, while the leader had a gun pointing at the wolf.

'BANG!'

The wolf whimpered as his body arched, but he didn't stand down. He turned to two guys, ready to attack with his jaws open to expose sharp fangs that were dripping with fresh blood from two rogues he attacked previously.

'BANG! BANG! BANG!'

The whole forest shook with reverberating gunshots and Talia couldn't believe that the black wolf was still going at the man.

Talia saw the wolf's unwavering ferocious icy-blue eyes and the world stopped as Talia realized that the black wolf is the same one she saw in her dreams... the reason why she picked Blackie at the fair... and the scent of the forest and the dark chocolate he left behind... Damon.

Damon came for her. He found her.

There was a knife in his stomach, the wound bled profusely, and the rogue was shooting at him.

As much as Damon's gaze was firm, Talia could see that Damon was in pain, as his movements became somewhat sluggish. Wolfsbane.

Will he die here? The thought was unimaginable.

Talia's body was set on fire that was somehow icy as it coursed through her veins.

"No... No... No...", Talia muttered under her breath while pushing herself to stand on her feet, and her honeyed eyes flickered with strands of silver.

As soon as her feet got a grasp on the ground, Talia moved as fast as lightning to stand between Damon and the two men.

"NO!", Talia roared and the faces of the two rogues changed into agonizing grimaces. Their bodies twisted with the sound of bones cracking, and they flew backward at an unimaginable speed. Two blurry forms swished through the bushes until they slammed into trees and fell down on the ground like ragdolls.

Talia inhaled once, twice, and she wanted to turn and see how Damon was doing. He was hurt. She needed to tend to his wounds... but her vision became spotty, and she fell on the ground as the darkness consumed her.

...

-- This work is published on WebNovel (w e b n o v e l . c o m). Don't support illegal copies! Read from the original site to support the author --

...

Talia's eyes fluttered open, and she found herself in an unknown place. There were machines beeping next to her and she tried to lift her head, only to feel a palm pressing on her forehead.

"You should stay put."

It was Maya.

"Where am I? What happened?", Talia asked and grimaced when her throat hurt from talking.

Maya handed her a glass of water.

"You are in the pack hospital. You were attacked, Alpha Damon came to help, by the time patrol arrived, four bad guys were dead and the two of you were unconscious. Let me call Doctor Travis to check on you."

Maya pushed the button that was on the remote attached to Talia's hospital bed.

Talia's breath hitched when she remembered the knives and gunshots. "Where is Damon?"

"He is in the room next door.", Maya said.

"I want to see him."

"Doctor should check you."



"I'm fine.", Talia said. "I want to see Damon."

The door opened and Doctor Travis came with one nurse behind him.

"Where do you think you are going?" Travis frowned when he saw Talia scooting out of the bed.

"To see Alpha Damon."

Travis could see her determination, but... "Let me first check your condition."

"I am fine. I want to see him." Talia's irritation was rising. Why was everyone telling her to wait?

Travis shook his head in disapproval. "I gave you painkillers and you are running on adrenalin. I need to..."

"I want to see him!", Talia shouted, and Travis took a step back, bumping into the nurse behind him, and then both the nurse and Travis lowered their heads.

Travis was surprised that Talia managed to suppress him like that, and he realized that it won't be good to anger her.

"Can you be reasonable?", Travis asked while wiping the sweat from his forehead. "You were unconscious for six hours. I need to check your condition. How would Alpha Damon feel if you run around recklessly and your condition worsens?"

Talia felt her fighting spirit deflating.

"Six hours?", Talia asked in a shaky voice.

Maya tilted her head, indicating to Doctor Travis to go ahead. "Make it quick."

"How is Alpha Damon doing?", Talia asked.

"You should worry about yourself.", Doctor Travis grumbled.

"What's wrong with me?"

"You suffered a blow in the head, one in the stomach, but the worst part is the damage done to the muscles in your legs."

Talia remembered the slap and the kick but... "My legs?"

Doctor Travis nodded. "They are nearly ripped like you put them under extraordinary strain." She shook his head. "I don't know how to explain it. I never saw anything like that. What happened?"

Talia pressed her lips into a line and there was a hazy image of her running to stand between Damon and the rogues and then rogues flew away like they were paper kites caught in the storm.

Talia knew how that was not normal. Another explanation would be that she imagined it. In either case, she decided to keep that for herself.

"I don't know. I remember that Alpha Damon came to rescue me, but then I fainted." Talia looked at Maya. "I'm sorry. I only wanted to go for a walk, but I ended up bumping into four..."

"Don't worry about it.", Maya interrupted Talia. "Rogues in our territory is nothing unusual. They knew our patrol schedule and routes. Caden issued an order to scramble their schedule. You were unfortunate to bump into them."

"They had knives..."

"Your blood pressure is fine.", Travis interrupted Talia.

Talia exhaled sharply as her anxiety rose. They didn't let her finish talking and no one told her what was bothering her the most.

"How is Alpha Damon doing?", Talia asked again.

"You will see in a minute.", Travis responded and turned to the nurse. "Get a wheelchair for Miss Talia."

When the nurse stepped out, Travis spoke to Talia in a hushed voice, "You should know that only a handful of us knows Alpha Damon's condition. If this information leaks, the whole pack will be in danger. You would also be kept in the dark, but Beta Caden and Maya vouched for you as trustworthy."

Talia got her answer why they were interrupting her whenever she tried talking about the incident.

In situations like these, even the walls have ears.

Chapter 209 - That Makes Six [Bonus ]

Author's note:

---

Maya pushed the wheelchair with Talia on it, and Doctor Travis opened the door that was guarded by two warriors.

Caden stood up from the sofa when he saw the trio entering and he asked Talia how she was doing, but she didn't hear him because her whole world was reduced to Damon who was lying on the bed with bandages covering his body and various machines attached to him.

Talia couldn't accept that the most handsome man in the world who would smile at her, tease her, and make her days better was now unmoving and it was all her fault.

Damon did so much for her, yet she ended up disobeying him and going into the forest. He told her to stay safe. He told her that there are rogues and that it's dangerous. She didn't take him seriously and because of that, he was hurt.

Talia vividly remembered the knife in his stomach and the whimper when the bullet hit him, yet he still glared at the evildoers with an unwavering gaze.

Will he forgive her? Will she forgive herself?

The sound of the door closing pulled Talia out of her daze, and she asked, "Can you tell me now about his condition?"

"Two stab wounds and he was shot three times.", Doctor Travis said. "The blades and bullets were laced with wolfsbane. Luckily, none of the wounds was fatal, but he lost a lot of blood. I flushed the wolfsbane out of his system and his condition is stable."

Talia didn't feel better when Travis said that Damon's condition was stable. "When should he wake up?"

Travis let out a long exhale. "I don't know. His healing is unusually slow, probably due to the wolfsbane."

Talia couldn't accept this. Damon was lying on the bed, most of his body was covered in bandages, he was pale, and Talia's heart was heavy.

The only thing that could make it better would be if he opens his eyes and smiles and tells her that everything will be alright.

"Is there something we can do?", Talia asked without removing her gaze from Damon.

"In this situation..." Travis paused. "The only thing we can do is wait."

Travis saw that Talia's expression fell and he put his hand on her shoulder. "Alpha Damon is strong. If anyone can pull through this, it's him."

Maya and Caden exchanged gazes and Caden nodded in understanding. They didn't need the mind-link to know what the other one was thinking.

"Doctor Travis...", Caden called. "Can we have a word? In private."

Caden and Travis stepped outside, and Travis led the way to his office.

After making sure all windows and doors were closed and that no one was nearby to eavesdrop, Caden turned to Travis and spoke in a hushed voice.

"Healing is faster when mates are together."

Travis's brows came together when he understood the meaning behind Caden's words. "True, but Alpha Damon didn't find his mate."

"He did.", Caden said.

Travis stared at Caden, and Travis's eyes widened when he realized... "Talia. Why...?"

"She doesn't know.", Caden interrupted whatever Travis wanted to ask next. "With her wolf gone, she can't feel the bond. Considering her previous experiences, Damon wanted to win her trust before disclosing they are mates."

Travis nodded in understanding. "I assume that Maya knows also."

Caden confirmed. "Elder Samson and Elder Charlie know as well. With you, that makes six of us."

Travis realized that he just found out a big secret. "And you told me this because..." Travis waited for Caden to finish the thought.

"It's essential for Damon's benefit that Talia stays close to him. But you can't tell her they are mates."

"How will you make her stay close to him without explaining why?", Travis asked.

"Let me take care of that."

...

-- This work is published on WebNovel ([webnovel.com](http://webnovel.com)). Don't support illegal copies! Read from the original site to support the author --

...

In Damon's room...

"You are not allowed to blame yourself.", Maya told Talia who responded with a weak smile.

"Damon told me not to go there on my own, but I still did. If I didn't go to the forest, I wouldn't bump into rogues, and Damon wouldn't get hurt.", Talia said. "Or if I left with them obediently..."

"Stop that!", Maya exclaimed. "What are you saying? Damon saved you because he cares about you. No matter where you went, he would find you. If you went with rogues obediently, Damon would not stop until he found you, and that would be in their territory, and it would end up much worse than this. Besides, you wouldn't go to the forest if you knew rogues were there. And..." Maya paused. "Why were you in the forest? I thought that you were supposed to prepare rooms for guests."

Talia opened her mouth and then closed it. She didn't want to say that Lisa got her upset, and she needed some air.

"I finished early and thought of enjoying the forest a bit before going to study."

"So, you went for a walk?", Maya asked and when Talia nodded, Maya said, "That was quite a walk."

Talia guiltily avoided Maya's gaze. "I didn't realize how far I went."

Maya knew that Talia was hiding something, but since Talia didn't want to talk about it, Maya let it slide.

Caden and Travis returned, and Caden gave Maya a small nod before speaking in an official tone. "Alright. Our current plan is that Maya and I will return to the packhouse and deal with any work as usual. We don't want to alert people this happened. The official version is that Alpha Damon defeated four rogues. If anyone looks for him, we will say that he is in the pack hospital with Talia because she got hurt."

Caden turned to Talia. "Talia, you will stay here and watch over Damon. Doctor Travis will handpick nurses that will come here. They will bring you food and I will make sure that trustworthy guards are outside. Other than the four of us, no one will know the complete truth."

Talia had no objections and no questions. She didn't want to leave Damon's side, but there was one point, "What about the guests?"

Caden puffed his cheeks. "Let's worry about it later. They are due to come in two days, and hopefully, Damon will wake up soon and decide on these things. Our focus is to prevent information leak until Damon regains consciousness."

"Is there something related to guests that is still pending?", Maya asked Talia.

"We were supposed to buy small gifts for them.", Talia reminded Maya. "Rose and Kate are probably done with room cleanup by now. You need to verify that everything is ready."

"Don't worry about gifts.", Maya said. "I will tell Stephanie to check the rooms."

After exchanging a few more words, Maya and Caden left.

Doctor Travis looked at Talia with renewed interest.

Now that he knew Talia is Damon's mate, Travis also knew she is the future Luna, and he remembered how she suppressed him when he blocked her from seeing Damon.

What piqued his interest was that Talia was not marked. It meant that the aura she projected was hers only, and that aura was not weaker than Alpha's.

What is her background? He shook those thoughts away because being too nosy might get him in trouble.

Travis was rewinding all their previous interactions and mentally checking if he offended her. Hopefully not.

"Do you have any advice for me, Doctor Travis?", Talia asked when she realized that Travis was standing there and staring at her.

She wanted to approach Damon and hold his hand, but she feared that such intimacy won't be appropriate in front of Travis, and she couldn't wait for him to leave.

"Uhm... no. I will ask someone to bring you a meal soon. In the meantime, the closer you can get to Alpha, the better."

Talia's brows came together. "What do you mean?"

Travis couldn't tell her that he knows they are mates, and he didn't want to say that he saw photos in the WW Magazine of Talia and Damon kissing and dancing, so he decided to throw Betas under the bus.

"Caden told me about your relationship with Alpha Damon.", Travis gave Talia a meaningful look.



Seeing that Talia only stared at him while blushing, Travis cleared his throat awkwardly.

"I didn't mean to make you uncomfortable." Who was he kidding? He was the uncomfortable one. "I only wanted to say that you don't need to hold back. Alpha Damon is an Alpha and it would be good for him to feel that someone is by his side. The closer the better. The best would be if you can lay by next to him, the bed is wide enough. Just be mindful of his injuries." Talia was still not moving, and Travis took a step back. "Aright, I will leave you to it. Don't leave his side. Food will be here soon and if you need anything else, just push the buzzer."

And with that, Travis left the room while walking backward.

Talia had no idea how to react to Travis's remarks, but then, it didn't matter. By now, everyone saw the magazine that showed photos of them dancing and kissing, and considering Damon's reputation, it would be strange not to assume they are intimate. And they wouldn't be wrong.

Talia's gaze moved to Damon and all the unnecessary thoughts vanished.

It was just Talia and Damon, and Damon was hurt and unconscious. And she really wanted him to wake up. Right now.

Even without Travis's advice to get close to Damon, she would do that. OK, she probably wouldn't climb into Damon's hospital bed, but she would hold his hand. Definitely.

Talia pushed the wheelchair closer until it touched the edge of the bed and she slowly reached to hold Damon's hand.

The initial contact sent sparks through her fingers and Talia jerked her hand back.

What was that?

Chapter 210 - Awakening

Author's note:

If you are not reading this at WebNovel (W e b n o v e l . c o m), then the content you're reading is stolen! Please support the author by reading this novel from the original source.

---

Talia reached to hold Damon's hand again, and the same zap prickled her fingers.

She was startled the first time, but now she didn't jolt away, and the contact lasted for a second before she retracted her hand and observed it.

There were no visible changes on her skin.

Was it static electricity? Was it due to medications she got? Or maybe that blow to her head rewired her brain?

Whichever it was, Talia wanted to feel it again.

She held Damon's hand and closed her eyes as the delightful sparks traveled up her arm and seeped into her body, making her feel alive.

It was addictive.

Without knowing how or when, Talia climbed onto Damon's bed, on his right, and she scooted under the thin cover that concealed his body from the waist down.

Talia leaned against Damon's body gently, careful not to disturb his wounds, eager to experience this tingling sensation wherever they touched.

Damon was wrapped in many bandages from the neck down, leaving only some gaps of his skin exposed, and Talia was wearing a short-sleeved hospital gown that was tied at her back.

Talia slowly moved her hand up and down Damon's torso, testing the sensation with and without thin layers between their skins and she marveled how good it felt.

Even through the gauze and the cotton fabric, the sparks prickled her skin, and wherever they had skin-to-skin contact, it was electrifying.

Talia had no idea how long she was lost in this daze when the door opened, and a nurse came in.

The nurse didn't look toward the bed, but Talia could see a small smile on the nurse's lips as she placed the tray with food on the side table and scurried out without a word.

When the door closed, Talia felt guilt swelling within her. She was lost in a daze of this newly found sensation, forgetting that Damon was unconscious.

Yes, Doctor Travis said that Damon's life was not in danger, but when she looked at Damon's pale face, her heart tightened painfully.

She needed him awake. She needed to see his intense gaze directed at her. She needed to hear his voice, feel his touch, and this... this was not acceptable.

"The food is here. Won't you get up to feed me?", Talia asked, wishing that he responds with one of his cocky remarks.

Part of her hoped that this was a dream, a hallucination caused by medications, or maybe it was one of Damon's pranks.

"You can stop pretending now.", she said. "Open your eyes and tell me you are joking. I won't be mad."

Of course, he didn't move.

Damon wouldn't miss a chance to tease her, but he wouldn't go this far.

In front of Talia, Damon would always put on a brave front and make sure that whoever harbors ill intentions toward Talia, gets what he (or she) deserved.

In the forest, when facing the rogues, Damon didn't look at Talia, but she was confident that his priority was her safety. That's why he got so many injuries.

No matter how moody Damon was, Talia knew that he was reliable. He would make sure that she was fine and that she doesn't suffer injustice, and no matter what the situation was, he would support her. Even if he was stabbed with a wolfbane-laced blade, and people shot poisonous bullets at him, Damon would never abandon her. And that's why he ended up in this state.

With every passing second, Talia's vision was blurrier with tears, and she leaned her forehead on Damon's shoulder and started sobbing quietly.

"You asked me not to leave you...", she whispered in a shaky voice. "You said that we will be together forever. I am scared, Damon... I don't know what to do without you. I need you to wake up. Wake up..."

Her tears fell on his skin and silently glided down his arm, like transparent pearls that had a faint silver shimmer.

"Wake up... I need you to be fine... Wake up...", Talia chanted.

Talia felt the heat in her chest expanding and spreading through her body while morphing into an inexplicable cooling sensation that coursed through her veins.

If she looked up with her honeyed eyes that flickered in silver hues, Talia would see that the whole bed was enveloped in an ethereal hoary glow that pulsated in the rhythm of her heartbeat.

And then she passed out.

...

-- This work is published on WebNovel (w e b n o v e l . c o m). Don't support illegal copies! Read from the original site to support the author --

...

Doctor Travis dashed into the room with panic on his face, only to find Talia and Damon in bed, both with their eyes closed, like nothing unusually happened.

Travis scratched his head. Did the machines malfunction? He was startled by the alarm which indicated that the readings on machines tracking Damon's vitals were going crazy, but now everything seemed normal.

Damon might be unconscious, but how could Talia sleep with all the beeping ruckus the machines made? Or did the system malfunction only on his side?

Travis approached the machines, to check the history logs, and he saw that only a minute ago, machines recorded unusual values. What the heck?

Travis glanced at the bed, and he paused in surprise when he saw that Damon's eyes are open and directed at him.

"Alpha?", Travis called softly, careful not to startle him. He was not sure if Damon was aware of his surroundings.

With one glance, Damon knew he was in the pack hospital. Considering his history with fighting, Damon was familiar with this place.

It took him a second to remember the incident from the forest.

At that time, Damon heard that the patrol was less than a minute away. Considering that there were four armed rogues and they held Talia, it was wise to wait for reinforcements, but when Damon saw the rogue pressing a knife against Talia's face, he lost it.

From the moment Damon regained consciousness, he was aware that Talia was by his side, even before opening his eyes because he could feel the delicious sparks of the bond.

Other than Talia, Damon was prioritizing one more existence.

'How are you doing?', Damon asked his wolf.

The moment the blade pierced Damon's skin, he knew there was wolfsbane.

When a werewolf gets wolfsbane into his system, it's important to flush it out quickly, otherwise, his wolf will suffer. It's not uncommon that the wolf side is crippled or disappears completely with prolonged exposure to wolfsbane.

Most of the wolf-less werewolves ended up in that state due to wolfsbane poisoning.

Damon could feel the presence of his wolf, but he was worried about his condition.

'I'm tired, but good. Thanks to mate.', Damon's wolf responded.

'Thanks to Talia?'

'She healed us. Both of us.'

After the initial surprise, Damon felt pride swelling in his chest.

He wanted to know how did Talia heal them, but he could sense the fatigue of his wolf, and as long as everyone was fine, Damon was in no rush to probe for details.

'Rest, old guy. We will talk later.'

Damon could feel his wolf fading at the back of his mind.

Damon blinked once, twice, and then his eyes moved from Travis's inquisitive gaze to Talia who was lying on his right with her arm draped over his chest.

"How is she doing?", Damon asked.

"You should worry about yourself."

"I am fine.", Damon responded curtly. "How is Talia?"

Travis shook his head in disapproval, but he knew that it's not wise to oppose Damon.

Travis was about to talk about Talia's injuries, but he paused when he realized that the bruise on her cheek was gone completely.

Travis leaned closer to observe her face, without disturbing her sleep. "Talia was hit, but it seems that it was not as bad as I thought."

Damon hummed in confirmation. "Her healing improved."

Travis's eyes flashed in understanding. Talia's wolf was waking up, or at least making progress.

"Continue.", Damon ordered.

Travis straightened his back and responded with his official tone, "Talía's head and abdomen were injured, and the muscles of her legs suffered an extreme strain. As for her current condition, I will know once we do tests."

Travis looked at Damon with a complicated expression. "You got two stab wounds and I pulled three bullets out of your body. Blades and bullets were laced with wolfsbane. I patched you up and flushed the poison from your system, but to be honest... I'm surprised you are awake."

"I feel fine.", Damon assured him.

Travis let out a long breath. "OK. Since you are awake, let me check your wounds."

"Careful not to wake Talía.", Damon grumbled in a low voice when Travis reached to remove bandages.

Travis made a face. Mates. Every werewolf will dote on his mate, but Alphas are taking that to the extreme because the strength of the wolf is amplifying instincts to provide for their mate.

Now that Travis knew Damon and Talía are mates, he wondered, how come he didn't see it before? With Damon putting so much importance on Talía's wellbeing, and even accompanying her to her appointments... really. He should have known.

But... how was it possible that Talía was not marked?

Yes, Caden explained that Damon wanted to gain Talía's trust, but with Damon's instincts in overdrive, Travis didn't understand how could Damon resist that urge to claim her completely for everyone to see.

I can only hope that they will follow their conscience.