

Alphas Bride 351

Chapter 351 – Lunch With The Next Luna Of The Dark Howlers Pack (2)

George and Nora were not the only ones that made Marcy wary. Oh, no.

The next one on Marcy's not-pleasant list was Kalina.

Kalina was not friendly toward Marcy at the Lightclaw pack, and Marcy was hoping that Kalina will soften up. After all, right now, they were both guests of the Dark Howlers pack, but Marcy had the position of Damon's future Luna, so Kalina should suck up to her. Unfortunately, Kalina was still acting high and mighty, like she didn't put Marcy into her eyes at all, and Marcy was trying to figure out if Kalina didn't care about her or if she didn't understand the situation.

Other than bumping into Marcy in front of the ladies' room at the Lightclaw pack, Marcy didn't interact with Mindy before.

As for Maya, Marcy met her when Damon visited the Red Moon pack, but Marcy was so focused on Alpha Damon that she didn't talk to Maya.

And last but not least, there was Talia.

By now, Marcy knew that Talia, who was the host for this gathering, was Alpha Damon's assistant. Marcy also connected the dots that Talia was with Alpha Damon at the Lightclaw pack, the same Talia that ended in the WW Magazine as Alpha Damon's mysterious date, Lia. Marcy didn't share this information with Nora, because she didn't like Nora to begin with.

However, Marcy didn't think that Talia was an obstacle.

Sure, Alpha Damon took Talia with him to a party, and she was working as his assistant, but if Alpha Damon saw Talia as someone important, he would make it official.

Besides, considering what she saw in the Red Moon pack, Marcy concluded that it's normal for Alphas to keep a woman or two on the side. As long as Damon is discrete about it, Marcy would close her eye at Damon's occasional escapades. Who knows, maybe Marcy can keep George?

Marcy was not sure what to think of Talia. Can they be friendly? Will she be able to be friends with a person who is shagging her husband? Currently, Marcy didn't think that would be a problem, but she was not sure if that will change after Alpha Damon marks her.

Fated mates or not, the mark will create a bond between the two, and they will feel a certain level of affection between each other. Will that include possessiveness and jealousy? Marcy didn't know.

While thinking about Damon being with another woman, Marcy didn't feel anything. However, when she thought about George being close to another female, rage bubbled within Marcy and she knew that this was the bond working.

Aaaaand... Marcy was back to thinking about George. Will he stop the silly game he was playing and accept her rejection? Surely, George won't let it drag until Marcy's Luna ceremony because that would expose them as mates and both of them will end up in trouble.

"Marcy... Marcy!", Nora's call made Marcy jolt out of her thoughts.

"What?"

"Are you excited about the party?"

Marcy blinked. "What party?"

Nora rolled her eyes dramatically. "You saw Alpha Damon this morning. Does he have such an effect on you that you can't focus?"

Marcy plastered a stiff smile. What was Nora up to this time? Marcy cursed internally for not paying attention. "I was thinking about something, don't make a big deal out of it. Will you explain what was that about the party, or should we drop the topic?"

"There is a party tomorrow, for you.", Nora said meaningfully.

Marcy was surprised. "For me?"

Talia hoped that her confusion was not showing on her face. She was surprised by this 'party for Marcy', just as much as Marcy was.

Mindy winked at Talia before saying, "Talia is the main person to answer your questions. Everyone who is someone in the Dark Howlers pack will be at the party tomorrow. It's to...", Mindy leaned over the table and spoke in a whisper, "Introduce the future Luna of the Dark Howlers pack."

Marcy perked up and a bright smile slowly bloomed on her face as Mindy's words sank in. Her first impression was that Alpha Damon was trying to wiggle it out, or that he won't treat her well. However, now Marcy realized that she misunderstood him completely.

Alpha Damon was mysterious because he wanted to surprise her with a party!

Marcy thought how she was silly. Of course, Alphas don't have time for courting, chit-chat, and romantic stuff. They are busy with their matters like managing a pack and training and fighting against rogues. But no matter if Alpha Damon has women on the side, or how much work he has, he was still preparing a grand party for Marcy. Isn't he the sweetest?

While Marcy was processing the idea of a party that changed her opinion of Damon, Nora noticed one odd thing about how Mindy delivered the information.

"Why did you say that quietly?", Nora asked Mindy suspiciously.

Maya responded, "Because of where we are. This party is only for important people, and the ones who are not invited might get offended or want to crash the party."

"Oh..." Nora nodded in understanding. Who would want to mingle with those low-level characters anyway?

Nora looked at Marcy enthusiastically. "Did you hear that? A party for you." And for me as well! This will be an amazing chance to mingle with important people!

Nora turned to Talia. Mindy said that Talia was the go-to person. "Is there a theme? Should we buy specific outfits?"

Talia had no idea how to answer this. Talia had a hunch that this was the part of setting up Marcy, but other than a few hints she got from Maya, Mindy, and Kalina earlier that day, the girls didn't tell her anything.

Unfortunately, Nora was looking at her, and so did everyone else, so Talia took a deep breath and improvised.

"It will be late afternoon and evening. Think about an upscale party, but not over the top that would make people stiff. Luna of the Dark Howlers pack should be someone who is dignified, yet down to Earth. Everyone will be looking at her even though she won't attract attention. She can talk to Alphas as an equal, and she will take care of Omegas and their needs."

Everyone at the table gaped at Talia.

'No wonder Alpha Damon is keeping her as his assistant...!', Marcy thought. Talia's response was eloquent, and Marcy actually imagined herself showing up among hundreds of important people and being the center of attention.

Nora blinked. Talia said a lot, but she still didn't get her answer. "So... should I dress up fancy or not?"

Kalina stifled a laugh. "Why are you worried? It's not like you are going to be the next Luna of the Dark Howlers pack."

Nora's face fell and if a look could kill, Kalina would stop breathing the moment she finished that sentence.

Chapter 352 – Lunch With The Next Luna Of The Dark Howlers Pack (3)

"Don't give them hard time, Nora.", Marcy said magnanimously. She was obviously in a much better mood than before. "You can dress as fancy as you want. If you didn't pack anything appropriate, I will ask Alpha Damon to arrange for you an escort to take you shopping."

Considering that Alpha Damon was organizing a party for Marcy, Marcy was confident that he will indulge a small request like that.

Nora had mixed feelings about this. She was excited about the party, but she disliked that Marcy was the lucky one to get this attention. And why was that? The only advantage Marcy had over Nora was that Marcy's father was an Alpha. Ah, if Nora's father was an Alpha, Nora would be a Luna a long time ago.

And it was not just that Alpha Damon had the title of an Alpha of the largest pack in North America, but he was also handsome, filthy rich, and perfect in every way possible.

The more Nora thought how that exquisite specimen was doting on Marcy and not her, the more Nora felt a sour taste in her throat.

Nora wanted to break the sour mood that descended on her. This was in public, and it was not the right time or place to be grumpy.

"How about we celebrate?"

"What do you have on your mind?", Mindy asked Nora.

"Drinks!", Nora exclaimed and waved at the waitress. "Bring us your finest wine. Do you have champagne?"

The waitress glanced at Maya questionably and Nora snorted.

"Why are you looking at Beta Maya when your future Luna is at this table? Snap-snap. Hurry with that wine."

The waitress paused for a moment while wondering if she heard Nora right. Future Luna? Which one?

She concluded that it's not Nora, and Maya and Kalina were mated so... Talia? Mindy? Marcy?

Maya didn't want to clarify Nora's words. After all, Nora was right. Their future Luna was at that table.

Maya waved at the waitress, indicating to her get the drink.

'Pick any good wine you have.', Maya told her through the mind-link.

Marcy's chin went up with pride as she heard whispers from the patrons in the restaurant.

There were discussions about all three Luna candidates (Talia, Mindy, and Marcy), but soon the talks focused on Marcy.

After all, there were rumors already that Marcy and Alpha Damon might be an item. To add to that, Marcy is the princess of the Red Moon pack. She is beautiful, educated, and mysterious, and now that she appeared at the Dark Howlers pack, and was sitting at the table with Maya (aka Beta), Talia (aka Alpha Damon's assistant), and other high-profile individuals, theories about Marcy and Damon were sparked again.

No one noticed George's expression darkening by the second and he fought mightily to reign in his wolf so that his aura doesn't leak and expose him. He didn't think that just trailing Marcy will be this challenging.

Talia didn't get it. Why did Maya, Marcy, and Kalina make it sound like the party was for Marcy? Aren't they just adding oil to the fire?

Yes, they said that they will make Marcy feel comfortable in order to slip, but isn't it too much to make her think that Damon accepted her as his Luna?

Talia could see Marcy's demeanor changing and Talia didn't like it, not even a little bit.

Marcy was showing a similar expression she had in the Red Moon pack, when Marcy acted like she was the queen of the Universe.

What if Marcy goes to Damon after lunch and tries to give him a thank-you kiss? If he rejects her, he will blow up the lie, but if he accepts that kiss, Talia will blow up the packhouse.

Talia pushed her insecurities down and tried to shut down the noise.

Surely, her girlfriends know what they are doing, and Damon is not an inexperienced teenager who can get tricked into a kiss. As for random people in the restaurant, they had no idea what they were talking about anyway.

Talia chanted internally that all this will pass, and she will be back in Damon's comforting embrace in no time.

A middle-aged man with an apron around his waist entered the restaurant while pushing a serving cart in front of him.

Six sparkling bell-shaped plate covers attracted attention, and everyone fell into silence to see what he was up to.

The man stopped when he reached the table where Talia, Maya, Mindy, Kalina, Marcy, and Nora were sitting, and he bowed a little.

"I am Hamil", the man introduced himself. "I am the owner of the sweetshop that's down the street." He gestured toward the covered plates on the cart in front of him. "Alpha Damon sends his regards."

With that, Hamil started removing six shiny covers, to reveal the sweet goodness, under numerous curious gazes.

Everyone in the restaurant was paying attention. After all, Alpha Damon sent this, and nothing like that ever happened before. Didn't this confirm their guess that Marcy from the Red Moon pack is their future Luna?

Each plate had an assortment of cakes and cookies that looked and smelled delicious.

Hamil took the first plate and placed it in front of Talia. "Miss Talia, this one is for you."

Talia looked at the man who gave her a meaningful look and all her hostility and insecurities sizzled away in an instant. She knew that this was Damon's way of confirming that he was with her, no matter what was happening around them.

The next plate went to Maya and the third one to Kalina. Next were Mindy, Marcy, and Nora.

The man bowed with, "I hope you will enjoy desserts that Alpha Damon personally selected.", and then he made his exit.

"Wow!", Nora exclaimed and nudged Marcy with her elbow. "Alpha Damon knows how to make a girl feel special."

Talia looked at the plates and noticed that hers was different than others.

Every plate had a slice of mango cake, a slice of lemon cake, a caramel wafer, a vanilla cream puff, a cookie with orange jelly, and a fruit tart. Every plate, except for Talia's.

Talia's plate had a slice of a decadent chocolate cake, a chocolate cookie with bits of nuts and chocolate chips, a chocolate-coated pretzel, chocolate-dipped strawberries, and a chocolate mousse.

Talia smiled at the thought that her chocolate sent her chocolate. Her mate was telling her that he was thinking about her and that she should be thinking about him... and she did.

It didn't take long for others to notice that Talia's plate was an odd one.

"How come your plate is different, Talia?", Nora asked while munching on the lemon cake that melted in her mouth. It was delicious.

Talia shrugged, and she couldn't stop her lips from lifting into a smile even with the big bite of chocolate cake that filled her cheeks.

Marcy narrowed her eyes at Talia. Her instinct told her that Talia's happiness was for more than just a tasty cake. And she also had a hunch that Talia's plate was not different accidentally. Didn't the baker guy say how Alpha Damon picked these personally? And he gave Talia her plate first!

Was this Damon's way of sending a message that Talia was special?

Chapter 353 – Maya's Plan Against Marcy

Lunch ended and six women and one man lingered at the parking lot around two cars while determining who will be going in which car.

They already knew that George will drive one car, and Maya the second one, so Talia, Kalina, Mindy, Marcy, and Nora needed to figure out if they will take the black SUV (with Maya) or the dark blue one (with George).

"Miss Talia", Marcy called. "Can you come with me in the car? I would really like for us to continue talking about the upcoming party. I feel that my input will be important."

"She will talk to you", Maya responded before Talia could. "Unfortunately, there is one important issue in the pack that I need to address first, and Talia's presence is necessary."

"Oh?", Marcy's eyebrows shot up. "Pack issue? Can I join? Maybe I can help."

"I apologize Miss Marcy, but this is something that requires high-security clearance.", Maya said with a smile and Marcy's expression stiffened.

"It shouldn't take more than one hour", Maya added. "I suggest you go to the packhouse with others, and Talia will find you when we are done."

"I see." The disappointment in Marcy's voice was obvious. She wanted to talk to Talia about more than just the party, but that can wait for a bit.

"Alright!", Mindy exclaimed and moved toward Marcy. "I will tag along with you. I didn't get a chance to talk about my charities. We can chat about it until Lia comes."

Nora was already in the seat behind George. She didn't want to go with Maya or Talia, and she didn't want to sit next to George either.

Kalina sat in the front passenger's seat, next to George.

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Maya drove the car in the opposite direction from the packhouse.

Once they were out of Darkbourne, Maya stopped the car on the side of the road and turned to Talia.

"How are you holding on?", Maya asked. She knew that lunch was unpleasant for Talia, and the fact that Talia didn't say a word during the ride, told Maya that Talia had a lot on her mind.

"I will feel better if you tell me that there is a good reason why Marcy thinks that the party is for her. And why is the party tomorrow? Does Damon know about this?", Talia asked impatiently.

"Sorry, Lia. Everything happened suddenly and we didn't have time to figure out the right approach." Maya paused to take a deep breath. "Damon told me not to tell you yet, but I think you should know."

"Know what?"

"Lisa is talking around how you came from the Red Moon pack."

Talia's eyes widened. "Why would she do that? How does she know?"

Maya frowned. "Didn't you tell her?"

"Why would I tell her? Didn't you say how that's a secret and it can cause trouble for me, Damon, and the pack?"

Maya was confused. She and Caden didn't tell anyone, and Damon confirmed that his lips were sealed. "Are you sure? You didn't tell anyone? Maybe you mentioned it to someone else, and Lisa found out from that person."

Talia thought for some time and shook her head and then froze with realization... "I think I told Steph. I remember that she asked me from where I was. That was before you told me how it should be kept a secret."

Maya puffed her cheeks. "Stephanie probably told Lisa." Maya saw that Talia's expression fell and she put her hand over Talia's shoulder. "Don't overthink it. What's done is done. Lisa can't talk anymore, and I will tell Stephanie not to spread it further. She is not the one to talk."

Talia saw Maya's eyes losing focus and she knew that Maya was already mind-linking Stephanie.

"What do you mean, Lisa can't talk?", Talia asked when Maya's attention was back on her.

Maya's lips lifted into a smile. "She is in the dungeon."

"And Steph is OK with it?"

Maya shook her head helplessly. "Steph knows that Lisa is a loose cannon and it's not safe to have her around. Damon said that he will deal with Lisa, but until the guests are here, Lisa will stay in the dungeon. She is not imprisoned but can't leave, and we hope that her time there will help her get a new perspective on life. Without Tony, people won't give her preferential treatment, and she needs to accept that Tony belongs to Kalina. The point is that we don't need to worry about Lisa. However, she is the reason why Damon requested that we organize your introductory party as soon as possible. He wants all important people in the pack to be aware you are his mate, and the future Luna. If this introduction happens after Alpha Edward finds out that you came from his pack, Elders might not be willing to support you and Damon."

Talia exhaled a shaky breath. She didn't think that her coming from the Red Moon pack and disclosing that to Stephanie would create all these problems. And her wolf was still not awake. No matter how Talia looked at this, she messed up, and it was her fault... she was the faulty one.

"Don't worry, Lia.", Maya said while patting Talia's shoulder. "We are taking care of it. You are Damon's mate, and the only one worthy to be the Luna of the Dark Howlers pack. Even if you doubt yourself, you need to believe in the Moon Goddess. She is never wrong. Keep that in mind, and everything will be alright."

Talia nodded, but her expression was not good. "So, how does Marcy fit into all that?"

Maya's eyes lit up with a malicious glint. "She won't make it to the party."

"What? How?"

"We got it figured out. You saw what happened in the restaurant. As soon as Marcy felt that things were going according to her plan, she started acting like she owns the place. We will continue boosting her ego, and tonight we will pull the rug under her feet. We have several options in place, but we are mostly leaning toward taking Marcy to the Shifters nightclub. A few cocktails will loosen her up and then we will

deliver unpleasant surprises that will make her blow up. We want her to lose her composure and to make a scandal. The bigger the better."

Talia thought how that made sense. "What do I need to do?"

"Nothing. You just sit and watch the show. Until showtime, I will be respectful toward Marcy as a Beta, and Mindy is already sucking in with a pretense of how she wants to secure donations from the future Luna of the Dark Howlers pack. That's why she went with them in the car."

"What about Kalina? She was not friendly toward Marcy.", Talia said.

"A-ha!", Maya exclaimed and raised her index finger. "That's the point. Neither of us has a good history with Marcy. I kind of ignored Marcy when I was at the Red Moon pack, and both Mindy and Kalina dissed her at the Lightclaw pack. It would be suspicious if all three of us are suddenly friendly. That's why I said that I'm going to approach her as a Beta, Mindy is talking about her charities. From Marcy's perspective, she will understand that we have our reasons to be friendly. However, Kalina is different. She will keep her distance, like when two Lunas must be together due to political reasons, but they don't like each other."

Talia admired the plan. They came up with all that on short notice, and Talia wondered what they would do if they had time to prepare.

Talia had nothing to add, other than to ask, "How do I fit in that?"

"You do your thing.", Maya said. "I'm sure that Marcy noticed you are not just an assistant, and that might be one more thing that will trigger her. If she suspected it before our lunch, she definitely confirmed when those deserts arrived. Damon won't allow you to suffer a loss."

Talia's lips lifted into a smile involuntarily and her chest was filled with warm and fuzzy emotions. Yes, Damon treats her well.

Chapter 354 – Marcy Vs Talia (1)

Talia and Marcy were in the living room. Talia was sitting on the sofa chair, and Marcy was on the sofa.

Other ladies went to the garden to hang out and to give Marcy and Talia privacy, and Damon went to check how the training was going.

Of course, Damon left only after Talia promised not to go into private quarters with Marcy, so that Damon can keep an eye on her through the video surveillance that covers all hallways, common areas (such as the living room), and perimeter around the packhouse (garden included).

The only one who refused to leave was George. He was standing still like a statue, with his back to the wall, a few steps behind Marcy.

George had no intention of leaving Marcy out of his sight. Anger and dejection simmered in the pit of his stomach since the lunch in the restaurant, but Mindy was sticking to Marcy, and only when Talia arrived did Mindy leave, so George didn't get his chance to talk to Marcy without anyone eavesdropping.

But he was used to waiting.

In the evening (if not sooner), George will get his chance to corner Marcy and ask her, does she really have no shame? She gave herself to her mate, who was right there, and she was talking about becoming Luna to some other guy? Did she really plan to go with that until the end?

Part of George wanted to beat Marcy until her family can't recognize her, and other part of him wanted to choke her while he fucks her senselessly.

He knew that his impulses were impacted by the cracked bond between them and his unreasonable wolf, but there was nothing he could do about it. Sure, he could accept her rejection, but he knew how that was exactly what Marcy wanted, and George had no intention of giving Marcy what she wanted.

As for Marcy, she forgot about George's existence a few minutes after she started talking to Talia.

Talia was glad that on the way to the packhouse, Maya told her some details about the arrangements related to tomorrow's party, so Talia was able to respond to Marcy's questions without guesswork.

Marcy had preferences about flowers, she wanted balloons, and she requested specific food and drinks to be served.

"I will see what we can do, Miss Marcy.", Talia responded politely while cringing on the inside.

They were talking for nearly an hour and Talia would be deaf not to hear Marcy's condescending tone.

After her chat with Maya, Talia knew that Marcy won't get to attend that party, and Talia couldn't wait to see Marcy's back as she leaves the packhouse forever, but until Maya, Kalina, and Mindy do their thing to set up Marcy, Talia needed to play her role.

However, just agreeing to Marcy's over-the-top demands was not the right solution either.

"Some of these items are popular in Europe, and we don't have such a pastry chef in Darkbourne. Also, this is not the blooming season for irises."

Marcy frowned. "Are you telling me that you can't do it?"

"That's not what I said. I am only pointing out that the party is tomorrow, and we don't have much time to make changes. Pastry, in general, takes time to make so even if we find a suitable chef, and he is available, it's doubtful he will be able to deliver these in time. As for the flowers, the greenhouses in the area might not have the required quantity."

Marcy waved her hand, indicating that it was not important. "I don't want to sound ungrateful. Treat my inputs as suggestions. For my next party, I will have time to make necessary arrangements."

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Talia released a long breath, together with some of her frustration, and she glanced at her phone to see a message from Damon. He was on his way back from the training center and not a minute too early. Talia needed his proximity to calm down because Marcy was driving her nuts.

With that, Talia was ready to make her exit.

"I better hurry and make some phone calls to see if your changes can be accommodated. Is there anything else, Miss Marcy?"

"Yes, there is.", Marcy said. "I wanted to discuss your position."

The surprise on Talia's face was genuine. "My position?"

Marcy went straight to the point. "I noticed that you are close to Damon."

Talia frowned. How dares Marcy call Damon so casually? It seems that Marcy already settled in her position as Damon's Luna.

Marcy smiled magnanimously. "Don't worry. I won't ask him to remove you from your position. You can continue to serve him, as long as you are discrete about it."

Talia was sure that her ears malfunctioned. "What?"

Marcy cocked an eyebrow. "Are you going to deny that you are sleeping with Damon?" Marcy took Talia's lack of response as a confirmation. "I will be his Luna and he will eventually get bored of you. Until that happens, as long as you are discrete, I won't cause you problems."

"How generous of you.", Talia said sarcastically while trying to suppress her fury. It was one thing for Marcy to be arrogant, but when she started talking like Damon was hers, Talia was in danger of blowing a fuse.

"I am not generous. I am realistic.", Marcy said. "The fact is that I will be Damon's Luna, and you are replaceable. I only hope that when he finds his next assistant, you won't give us trouble."

Anger sizzled within Talia, and she was not aware that her face contorted into a grimace. "Do you really think you are in the position to make such a decision?"

Marcy frowned. "Keep talking like that and I will tell Damon to replace you."

"Please, do. I am eager to hear which one of us will be sent away."

Marcy rolled her eyes. "No matter how good your skills in bed are, there are always better. When he feels a real woman", she gestured toward herself, "he will abandon your skinny ass."

Talia saw red. She completely forgot about Maya's plan, and about Marcy being from the Red Moon pack. The only thing Talia saw was a shameless woman who wanted to take her place next to Damon, and Marcy was pretending to be righteous while assuming that Talia was using her body in order to keep a job.

"Do you think that everyone is like you, to sleep for benefits?"

Marcy was outraged. "What did you say?"

"You heard me.", Talia said angrily. "If you are spreading your legs for others, do you assume everyone else is doing that?"

"Damon will hear about this. You are slandering me!", Marcy hissed. "I am not like other she-wolves who sleep around."

"Slander?", Talia sneered and got her phone. "Let's see if you can continue lying through your teeth after you see this..."

Chapter 355 – Marcy Vs Talia (2)

Marcy gritted her teeth while waiting to see what Talia will show her on the phone.

Considering the context of sleeping around, Marcy was confident that Talia was bluffing. Marcy didn't have sex with anyone other than George, and that happened only on the previous day. As for before that, it couldn't be anything incriminating because whenever Marcy was fooling around with guys, she was extra-careful that she was not recorded. And besides, that was in Europe. How could a no-name assistant girl reach all the way there to collect evidence?

Marcy was certain, if Talia has anything, it must be fake. Maybe a lookalike.

Talia was consumed in rage, and she quickly scrolled through files before playing one.

"What are you doing?", Marcy's voice was heard from the speaker.

"Memories of our first time, baby. Turn around. Let me see you...", Damon's voice followed.

Talia's insides churned at the thought of that video. Damon said that he will erase it, but she kept a copy for herself (not just of that video, but of all files Damon collected over the years), knowing that it could be handy, and that Damon shouldn't remove evidence just because it was bothering Talia.

Maya explained to Talia how they would use those files to discredit women who were after the position of Damon's Luna, and Talia thought how it would be unreasonable just to delete them, so... here she was... using one of the files to slap Marcy in the face.

Talia felt better when she saw that Marcy lost all color from her face.

"What is that?", Marcy asked breathily. "Turn it off!"

Marcy jumped toward Talia to snatch her phone, but Talia nimbly avoided Marcy and pushed her back on the sofa. All that training with Damon came in handy.

Marcy wanted to get up, but Talia twisted Marcy's arm behind her back and held her to sit at an awkward angle while holding the phone in front of Marcy's face to see.

Of course, Talia was not really that strong physically, but with a bit of her aura, she suppressed Marcy completely. And she was not even aware that she was using her aura. It was just as Damon said, Talia was natural. She used her powers, without realizing it.

Marcy cringed as she couldn't move, and Damon's voice continued from the phone, "Spread your legs... more... Perk up that ass... You are flooding Marcy..."

Talia was nauseated at the thought of Damon touching Marcy, but she didn't want to stop the video.

Just sending Marcy home or smacking her around would be too easy.

Talia wanted to humiliate Marcy for all the beatings and snobby attitude that Marcy gave her. Marcy didn't know that Talia was the girl from the attic, but Talia will never be able to forget how princess Marcy came up and tricked her to open the door only so that Talia gets a beating. Twice.

Talia still didn't know what she did to deserve such harsh treatment but even if she did some major offense, just hitting her senselessly was not an answer.

And then Marcy had the gall to come here and parade herself as Damon's future Luna.

Talia really wanted to shove that phone into Marcy's mouth and make her swallow it while the video played on repeat for everyone to hear.

"Whose pussy is this?", Damon's voice was heard from the speaker.

"Yours."

"What do you want me to do, Marcy?"

"I want you to...", Marcy's words were interrupted by a loud moan. "Fuck me."

"How do you want me to fuck you, Marcy. I need details."

"I want you to put your big cock in my pussy and fuck me hard. Make me scream, Alpha Damon."

Only then did Talia stop the video.

"I wonder...", Talia said in a low voice. "Did you do this before or after you agreed to be Damon's Luna? Don't try to act pure, because I have a video here that would blow the internet if posted online."

Talia released Marcy and took a step away.

She crossed her arms over her chest and looked at Marcy who was trying to process what just happened.

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"How did you get that video?", Marcy asked.

"Does it matter?", Talia responded with a question.

It was obvious that Marcy was not pleased to know about the existence of that video and Talia was happy that she had something against her bully. The tables have turned.

Talia remembered Maya, and the plan, and Talia regretted her outburst, but just a little bit. No matter what Maya, Kalina, and Mindy will do, Marcy deserved to know that Talia won't pretend to be invisible. Damon was hers!

With this, Talia made her stance clear and she released some of her steam. Talia was ready to step back and allow her girlfriends to do with Marcy whatever they planned to do.

"Don't try to get in my way, Marcy, or I will release this for everyone to see."

Marcy gritted her teeth in annoyance. "And what will that accomplish? For people to see me allowing my future husband to touch me?"

"Future husband? We will see about that.", Talia said curtly. "You are lucky that you have your background, so I won't kick you out of here right this instant, but don't push your luck."

Only then did Talia see another figure standing next to the wall like a statue. George.

He didn't make a sound so far, and Talia forgot about him.

For a split second, Talia feared that George will make a move against her, or maybe attempt to rescue Marcy, but he stood there without moving a muscle while staring blankly at the floor. He looked like a robot that was shut down, and Talia didn't want to disturb him.

Besides, Talia made her point with Marcy and it was time for Talia to make her exit.

Talia smirked at Marcy, turned on her heel, and left the living room.

Marcy was trembling from anger.

She hated that Talia had that video. Marcy forgot that Damon recorded her.

Did Damon share that video with Talia? Did he show it to someone else also? Or did Talia find it on her own? Surely, as Damon's assistant, she had access to his files.

But the most upsetting for Marcy was that she was stuck on that sofa and unable to move while Talia held her down. Marcy couldn't believe that such a skinny girl overpowered her, but at that moment, Marcy felt weak, and couldn't push Talia away no matter how much she tried. What was that?

Marcy stood up and paused at the sight of George.

In an instant, Marcy's anger got directed George's way.

When he said that he will follow her everywhere as security, Marcy feared that George might take advantage of the situation to get into her panties again, and she never assumed that he will just stand there and do nothing while she was being bullied.

Chapter 356 – A Serious Situation (and Some Flirting)

Marcy was never so humiliated!

Talia showed a scandalous video featuring Marcy, and Talia ridiculed her, and even held her down. How can Marcy accept that?

And what did George do? Nothing!

Marcy interpreted George's lack of reaction as a feeling of guilt. Surely, he must realize his incompetency when he just stood there and did nothing.

"What's the use of you being here if you won't act when someone attacks me?", Marcy hissed at the non-responsive George while waving her arms wildly. "You think that you are someone because my father made you a commander? Wait until I tell him how useless you are!"

George was lost in a daze of his emotions that clashed against his thoughts, and he barely registered that Marcy was shouting at him.

He didn't see the video, but the sounds coming from Talia's phone were quite descriptive and he had a good idea of what was going on.

Marcy said that her pussy belongs to Alpha Damon. She asked him to fuck her, and she was quite explicit about it, more than she was with George.

George was confident that he took Marcy's virginity, and he thought it meant something. However, the vagina was just one of the holes on Marcy's body, and George realized that her other cavities were explored by someone else.

No wonder Marcy gave him such a good blow job. She knew what she was doing.

And he thought it was special because it was her first time. He was such an idiot!

George was drowning in disappointment, rage, and he ridiculed himself for being stupid and believing that Marcy cared about him and their bond. She played him for a fool, and he allowed it to happen.

"Don't ignore me, you imbecile!"

Marcy's shout pulled George out of his thoughts.

She was standing only two steps away and glaring daggers his way.

George's eyes narrowed at Marcy as all his emotions mixed and morphed into disgust.

Why would the Moon Goddess pair him with such a woman?

Mates should be each other's half, but Marcy rejected him on the spot because she saw him as unworthy.

George wondered, is that what he deserved? To live without his other half?

Before he met Marcy, he was doing just fine!

Surely, life without a mate can't be as bad as what he was going through at that moment. Actually, since George found out that Marcy was his mate, his life turned into hell.

George took a step toward Marcy and she raised her head to meet his gaze. Marcy was so embarrassed and angry after her confrontation with Talia that she didn't notice how George's mood was not right.

"Marcy Redmayne", George spoke in an official tone. "I George Shaw, Alpha of the Frostcrest pack, accept your rejection."

Marcy's eyes widened for a moment.

'What was that? Did he say he is an Alpha?'

Before she could process what just happened, a soul-wrecking pain shook Marcy's internal organs and she fell on the floor with a weak shriek.

The Moon Goddess ensured that fated mates can't harm each other.

Marcy's rejection cracked the bond and allowed negativity to seep in.

With George's acceptance of Marcy's rejection, the final threads of their bond snapped and Marcy felt George's furious Alpha aura hitting her full force. She couldn't breathe.

George was not spared from the repercussion of his actions.

The bond works both ways, for better or worse, but he was stronger than Marcy, so he managed to stay on his feet.

George clutched his chest and stumbled out of the living room. He supported himself on the wall while making his way down the hallway.

The pain of completely breaking their bond was unbearable, but George was determined to put as much as possible distance between himself and Marcy.

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Damon emerged from the trees while walking in large strides toward the packhouse. He could feel Talia's emotions.

Irritable, displeased, furious, vengeful, upset, disappointed.

Her emotions were fluctuating faster than he could identify them, and even though nothing seemed to point how Talia was in danger, Damon was in a hurry to find her.

Damon was surprised to see Talia sitting on the stairs in front of the main entrance with her face hidden in her palms.

Talia regretted her actions. Why couldn't she just ignore Marcy's words and leave that room? Why did she taunt Marcy? Why did she show her the video?

It felt good at that time to see Marcy squirm helplessly, but now that the heated emotions were settled, Talia worried if her few minutes of satisfaction will cause trouble for Damon and the Dark Howlers pack.

If Marcy tells her father that she was mistreated, who knows what Alpha Edward will do?

Things could escalate quickly, and then what? How will Talia explain this to Damon?

Talia knew that Damon was strong and that the Dark Howlers pack had many powerful warriors, but she also knew that Damon had a good reason to tiptoe around Marcy instead of rejecting her outright.

Provoking the Red Moon pack will come with unimaginable consequences, and by coming onto Marcy aggressively, Talia did just that.

Ah, she messed up!

"Kitten?", Damon called, and Talia's head snapped to look in his direction.

After a moment of stillness, Talia bolted on her feet and dashed straight into Damon's embrace.

She took a moment to inhale her favorite scent of the forest and the dark chocolate and to feel Damon's firm body pressing on her, but she liked the most his solid arms that held her with a sense of safety and belonging.

"Maya had a plan, and I ruined it.", Talia spoke into his chest.

"It's OK.", Damon said while rubbing Talia's back gently.

He didn't know what happened. The last thing he saw was that Talia and Marcy were talking in the living room, and he stopped watching the feed once he was on his way to the packhouse. He missed the whole conflict part, but based on Talia's emotions, he knew that something happened and that Talia's gentle heart was in turmoil.

Damon wanted to assure her that he's got her back, and to comfort her. Details can come later.

Talia shook her head. "It's not OK. Maya, Kalina, and Mindy made a plan to handle Marcy. I was supposed to stay in the role of your assistant so that Marcy gets overconfident and trips, but then Marcy said that she will be your Luna and how I'm replaceable, and... I lost it."

"Did you use your powers?", Damon whispered close to Talia's ear.

When Talia shook her head, indicating that she didn't, Damon grinned. "You lost it? Tell me the details. Did you slap her?"

Talia looked up at him. "Be serious. This is serious."

'Silly girl', Damon thought. The only serious thing would be if outsiders found out how amazing she is. Everything else fades in comparison to that.

"I know it's serious.", Damon said earnestly. "Some random woman claimed me as hers, and my kitten defended my honor. That's serious. My only regret is that I was not here to witness it in person."

Chapter 357 – A Serious Situation (and Complications)

Talia couldn't believe that Damon was in the mood for joking. Or was that flirting? "Can't you assess the severity of the situation?"

Damon chuckled. "I already told you. No one matters other than you, kitten. The only restriction I have is not to disclose we are mates. Other than that, I can do whatever I want, including sending Marcy and her group of clowns packing. I didn't want them here anyway."

Damon tapped the tip of Talia's nose with his index finger, and he had to remind her, "It was you and your wolf who demanded that I allow them to come here."

Talia lowered her head guiltily. Damon was right.

Damon touched her chin, making her look at him. "Tell me what happened, so that I have context when I kick them out of here. Or should I watch the security footage?"

Talia was confused by Damon's easygoing attitude. She really wanted Marcy to scram, but... "What if Alpha Edward causes trouble?"

"If he causes trouble, we will deal with it. Now it's him, tomorrow will be someone else. There are always people who think that they can take what's mine." Damon leaned to kiss Talia on the lips once, twice... and then he lifted his chin proudly and continued talking.

"What's the point in being the undefeated Alpha who is leading the largest pack in North America if I can't protect my mate? Trust your mate, kitten. I am awesome." He said the last part with a cocky grin.

He pecked her lips a few more times, and then he said in a husky low voice. "So far, I was fighting on my own, and now it's two of us. My Luna is not a pushover, and she is my greatest strength."

Talia smiled foolishly at Damon's words, the light feeling that descended on her made her feel like she was floating among clouds that were pink in color and had Damon's face on them. Was it possible that only a minute ago she was mulling over what happened as her mistake?

Damon took Talia's hand into his. "Come on. Let's find Marcy. You don't need to tell me what happened, because I have a good idea. I don't want to delay this further." His only regret about chasing Marcy away would be that he didn't get a chance to spar with George.

Talia glanced at their connected hands. "Is this OK?"

"Of course, it is, kitten.", Damon assured her. "I agreed to pretend in front of Marcy, but that was before she got you upset. There is no need to conceal we are together."

Damon led the way into the living room, and they found it empty.

"Maybe Marcy went to her room.", Talia guessed. George was also missing.

Damon moved to leave the room, when Talia tugged his hand. She saw a foot sticking out behind the sofa.

Damon followed Talia's gaze and he walked to see who it is.

"When you said that you snapped, I thought it was with words and not like this.", Damon said while gesturing toward Marcy who was on the floor. Her body was curled in a fetal position, but Damon could hear her heartbeats, so he knew she wasn't dead.

"Maybe you should tell me what happened. In details.", Damon said stiffly to Talia while his eyes didn't leave unmoving Marcy.

"She was alive and kicking when I left.", Talia said and realized that her choice of words was wrong. "I mean... I didn't do this."

"Did you pressure her with your aura?", Damon asked. "Weak ones tend to faint if the pressure was too much."

Talia shook her head in small jerky movements, indicating that she didn't.

Damon wanted to tease Talia a bit, but he could feel Talia's anxiety bubbling.

"Don't worry. She is alive.", Damon said and pulled out his phone.

"Who are you calling?"

"I want to see what happened after you left the room."

"You don't believe that it was me who did this. Right?", Talia asked anxiously.

"You said you didn't, and I believe you.", Damon said matter-of-factly.

Talia smiled and huddled close to Damon to see the video that was already playing on his phone.

Damon paused when Talia left the living room and they saw Marcy shouting at George, and George standing and not responding... and then they heard George say, "Marcy Redmayne. I George Shaw, Alpha of the Frostcrest pack, accept your rejection."

Both Talia and Damon stared at Damon's phone without blinking while wondering if they heard what they thought they heard. There was so much information in those few words.

George was an Alpha? Talia never heard of the Frostcrest pack.

Talia didn't get one thing, "What does it mean, he accepted her rejection?"

"Mates...", Damon said. "George accepted Marcy's rejection, which means that she rejected him first. His acceptance severed the bond completely. That's why she is like this."

Talia subconsciously clutched her chest.

They had a hunch that something was going on between George and Marcy, and their theories went from colluders to lovers, but mates...? That was serious.

Talia didn't like Marcy, but out of everyone who came from the Red Moon pack, Talia had a good impression of George, and she was worried about him.

"Does that mean George is like this also?", Talia asked.

"He walked out of the room, so he might not be this bad, but he can't be fairing good either." Damon jabbed his hand into his hair. "Shit! I thought of sending them home, but I can't send them home like THIS!"

Damon's mood dropped when he remembered that some werewolves die from a blow of rejection. The pain is like a soul is being torn into two and not everyone can handle it. Damon listened to Marcy's heartbeats and observed that they were slower than they should be. How will he explain himself if Marcy dies here?

This complicated the already serious situation.

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Talia looked at Damon and she could see his eyes losing focus. He was mind-linking someone.

"Travis is on his way.", Damon said when his attention was back on Talia.

It didn't take long for Maya to enter the living room. She saw Damon and Talia holding each other in silence, and she also saw an unmoving body on the floor.

Maya circled around the sofa, and her eyes widened when she realized that was Marcy.

Maya looked at Damon apprehensively. "What did you do?"

Damon frowned. "Why are you assuming that it was me?"

Maya looked at Talia. "Did you forget that we had a plan? Why did you overdo your aura when suppressing her?"

Talia's frown matched Damon's. "It was not me."

Maya looked back at Marcy. "Are you expecting me to believe that she collapsed on her own?"

"It was George.", Talia said. "He broke their mate bond."

Maya blanked out and it took her a few moments to recover. "I think something is wrong with my head because I imagined that you said how George and Marcy are mates."

"WERE mates.", Damon corrected Maya. "The security feed caught George accepting Marcy's rejection."

Chapter 358 – Like Romeo And Juliet [Bonus

They needed to get Marcy out of there before someone else sees her, but first, Damon wanted some answers from Talia. "What exactly happened here?"

Damon didn't think that George wanted to break their mate bond right there.

If he planned to do it, he would find a spot where no one can find them, because consequences could be dire, which means George did it in the spur of the moment.

Since Talia was in the living room minutes before it happened, she should be able to shed some light on this mystery.

Talia wanted to tell Damon to watch the security feed, but she thought that it will be shorter just to say it.

"Marcy was full of herself, talking about the party. I thought how that's where our interaction will end, but then she said how she knows that we are sleeping together and that as long as we are discrete about it, she won't give me a hard time."

"She what?", Damon asked, unable to conceal his outrage. How dares Marcy look down on Talia?

If Marcy was not unconscious, Damon would knock the daylight out of her. Actually, even now he had an urge to kick her until she flies out of the Dark Howlers pack territory.

Talia waved her hand, indicating him to calm down, and she moved on to the main part. "I was frustrated, and I showed her the video you recorded of her when you were at the Red Moon pack."

Damon's face fell and he shifted on his feet awkwardly. That video brought him a lot of trouble. Will he need to jump into a waterfall again? But Talia didn't seem pissed, so he relaxed a bit.

"Didn't I delete those?", Damon asked.

"I saved a copy.", Talia said guiltily.

"Well, that explains the hostility in the restaurant.", Maya said from the side. She was still on the point of Marcy and George being mates. "People were guessing that Marcy is their future Luna, and I could feel George's aggressive aura. When you showed the video, he probably snapped." Maya glanced around. "Where is George?"

Damon shrugged. "Probably in his room. Let's take Marcy to her room before someone sees her."

Talia slapped Damon's hands away. She didn't want him to touch Marcy, so Talia and Maya held Marcy by the arms, and dragged her down the hallway.

"Did you know that George is an Alpha?", Talia asked Maya in a whisper.

"Whaaaat?", Maya drawled dramatically.

"Yes, yes. When he accepted Marcy's rejection, he said that he is George Shaw, Alpha of the Frostcrest pack."

"I will definitely watch it!" Maya said enthusiastically, and then her brows came together. "Frostcrest pack?" She looked at Damon. "Didn't that pack disappear a long time ago?"

Damon shook his head. He knew the history very well. It was part of his education as the future Alpha. "It didn't disappear. Alpha of the Frostcrest pack was defeated by Marcy's grandfather, and they became part of the Red Moon pack."

"Wow!", Maya exclaimed. "So, Marcy and George were mates from opposing sides, like Romeo and Juliet."

Damon frowned. "Let's hope these two have a better ending."

Damon didn't care much about Marcy or George, but if they end up dying in his packhouse, Damon will be held responsible. And this time, he really didn't do anything.

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After taking Marcy to her room, they confirmed that George was in his.

George was lying on the bed and staring at the ceiling without showing any signs that he noticed people coming in and out of this room.

Travis arrived and examined both Marcy and George while Damon, Talia, and Maya waited to hear the outcome.

After the exam was done, they all met in Marcy's room. She was unconscious, so they could talk openly.

"You said that they are mates who rejected their bond.", Travis repeated for the fifth time, and every time he hoped that Damon will tell him he heard it wrongly.

It's not that Travis didn't believe Damon, but it was so rare for fated mates to reject each other, that it was somewhat unbelievable.

Damon confirmed. "Yes. What's their condition? Will it get better?"

Damon hoped that Marcy and George will snap out of it, and he can send them home. This time, he had a good plan in place.

Now that they knew Marcy and George were mates, there was no need for Damon to come up with any ploys to send them packing.

Damon will accuse Alpha Edward of sending Marcy to be Damon's Luna while concealing that she had a fated mate, which meant that Alpha Edward went against the Moon Goddess, and that's a big offense for werewolves. And it's not just that Marcy had a fated mate, but her mate came as Marcy's bodyguard!

If that is not a slap in Damon's face, nothing is.

No Alpha would tolerate such behavior.

Even if Damon made them permanently disabled, no one would blame him... assuming that Marcy and George are not disabled, to begin with.

Damon didn't care if Alpha Edward knew that Marcy and George were mates. Actually, if he knew, he probably wouldn't allow George to accompany Marcy.

But regardless of what the truth was, Damon's version sounded believable, and it would get Alpha Edward off his back, and the whole werewolf society will scowl at Alpha Edward's actions.

Alpha Edward will have a lot of image-cleaning to do, and that will keep him busy for a while.

Marcy and George will take the burn of Alpha Edward's wrath, and Damon will use that time to solidify Talia's presence as the Luna of the Dark Howlers pack. Perfect!

Unfortunately, with Marcy unconscious, and George being a zombie, Damon couldn't accuse them of wrongdoing because the two wrongdoers looked like victims, and instead of scolding them, society will take pity on them.

Damon needed them up on their feet and lively, and he needed that to happen half an hour ago.

Travis looked at his notes before responding to Damon's inquiry about the status. "Miss Marcy is in a bad state. Based on the bruise on the side of her head, her healing is comparable to human's which means that her wolf took a hard hit. She is unresponsive, and I don't know if she will wake up. As for Commander George, his body is in better shape compared to Miss Marcy's, however, he mentally shut down, probably to deal with the emotional blow of the bond breaking."

Damon waved his hand impatiently. "How do we get them better?"

Travis shook his head helplessly. "This is outside my domain, Alpha. I heal diseases and patch up bodies. If they are not eating, I can administer an IV, but this injury impacted their soul. The best for these kinds of situations would be for mates to be together, but that's obviously not an option here."

Damon pinched the roof of his nose. That didn't sound good.

Chapter 359 – Top-secret Patients (1)

"Is there really nothing we can do?", Talia asked Travis.

Travis thought for a moment before responding. "Maybe you can."

Talia was surprised by this, and Damon was alerted.

"What do you mean?", Damon asked icily. Did Travis know about Talia's powers? Damon was ready to remove a witness. He would do anything to keep Talia safe.

Travis was not sure why Damon was suddenly hostile. "Herbs can help to calm their minds, and Talia knows about them.", Travis said with haste.

It took a moment for Damon to relax, and then Travis continued, "Herbs can help, but the bottom line is that they need to have a will to pull out of it. As a soldier, Commander George steeled his mind through training, but Miss Marcy is a different story. They need peace and a quiet and supportive environment, and we can only hope for the best."

"We should move them away from here.", Maya said from the side. "If James or Nora find out what happened, they might cause us trouble. If they alert Alpha Edward, I'm not sure how much he will listen to our version of the story. Even with the video evidence, he might say that we staged it."

Damon agreed with this. The video might prove that Damon didn't have anything to do with the state Marcy found herself in, but with Marcy screaming how Talia bullied her, Talia was part of it and Damon didn't want Talia to be implicated in any way. In addition to that, the video revealed George's true identity. If Alpha Edward found out about it, George wouldn't have a good ending.

Damon was not sure what kind of a person George was, but he had a hunch that George was in the Red Moon pack with an ulterior motive.

Enemy of an enemy is a friend or at least a temporary ally, and Damon hoped that George could help him get Alpha Edward off his back. After all, if George doesn't cooperate, Damon could reveal George's true identity, so Damon had an upper hand in this.

And there was also an option to push the blame of Damon rejecting Marcy on George.

No matter how Damon looked at this, George could be useful, but for that, he needed to snap out of it.

Talia also agreed with moving them, but she had another concern. "This can last for a long time. We can't tell them that Marcy and George went shopping. Tomorrow we have a party and James will definitely ask questions when his sister doesn't show up."

"Let's worry about James later.", Maya said. "First thing is to get these two out of here. We can repurpose one of the smaller homes that are nearby. For now, let's tell them that Marcy went to inspect the territory and George accompanied her. That could work for some time, and when Alpha Damon is away, we will say that he went to meet with them. Until then, we will get a better idea of their condition."

Damon thought that will work. "James is busy with training, and Caden will figure out something to keep the youngster busy when they are not on the training ground. Maya, you ensure that Nora is occupied."

Maya groaned. She really didn't want to deal with Nora. Her face lit up when she remembered the soldiers who were at the neighboring table in the restaurant. She will give them a task to keep Nora busy. Brilliant!

"OK. I will ask Mindy to join me in taking Nora shopping after lunch. If Nora asks about Marcy, we will tell her that she will spend time with Alpha Damon.", Maya said. "James will be in training, and you can use that window to take these two into the house. It will be ready by then..."

Travis didn't care about those little schemes. Dealing with other packs is part of politics that he never wanted to get involved with.

Travis agreed to keep this a secret until they figure out Marcy's and George's condition. He said that he will personally come to tend to them at least twice a day, and he entrusted Talia with doing the herbal treatment.

"I know you can do it...", Travis said to Talia while discussing herbs that can be used to calm one's mind. "I would recommend tea, but since Marcy is unconscious, you should dry the herbs and keep them in the room with the patients."

With Travis gone, Maya, Damon, and Talia agreed to keep George's true identity a secret, and they divided work.

In order to minimize the number of people who will be aware of the current situation, Damon went to deal with arranging the house, and Maya's task was to inform Kalina and Mindy about what happened. She will need those two ladies to distract Nora.

Talia lingered in the packhouse while watching the hallway through the security feed, to ensure no one comes to Marcy's and George's room.

She knew that other than Nora and James, no one would dare to come into those two rooms. James was in training, so if she just entertained Nora, any danger of Nora finding out the truth would be gone, but Talia really didn't want to mingle with Nora.

Talia remembered Nora shamelessly trying to get into Damon's room at the Lightclaw pack, and now that Marcy was out of the picture, Talia had a feeling that Nora will be another challenge she needed to deal with.

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The moving operation worked better than expected.

Mindy and Maya took Nora shopping in the human town.

Kalina joined training with the story of how the future Luna needs to be physically fit, and Nora thought how she should join some training sessions also. That would give her access to high-ranking guys, and Alpha Damon might attend also!

With everyone out of the way, Travis came to help Damon and Talia to move Marcy and George to a house that's isolated and nestled among trees, about five minutes away from the packhouse.

It's a two stories-high home with a kitchen, living area, and a dining room on the lower floor, and three bedrooms upstairs.

They placed Marcy on the bed in one room, and Travis hooked her up to an IV.

George walked, but it was sluggish and only when someone tugged him in a specific direction. It looked like his mind shut down and he would move as directed without any objections.

"I will come twice a day to check on them and to administer the IV.", Travis said. "It would be good if someone is nearby in case their condition changes." He would arrange for some nurses to always be around, but Damon told him that this needs to be held as a top-secret, so nurses were not an option.

"I will get warriors to keep guard. They won't come inside, but they can alert us if they hear something.", Damon said. He already thought of installing a few cameras so that they can keep an eye on Marcy and George.

Chapter 360 – Top-secret Patients (2)

Damon gestured toward the room where George was, and asked Travis, "Can he eat on his own?"

Travis shrugged. "Physically, there is nothing wrong with him. I suggest that you leave some food by his side and see if he will take it."

With that, Travis left the house. He had work to do in the hospital, and he was due to return in the evening to check on his two top-secret patients.

"I will get some food for George. There must be leftovers in the fridge.", Talia said.

Damon didn't want Talia to do it. "I will ask Steph."

"No.", Talia said quickly before he could mind-link Stephanie. "She has too much on her mind. Let me do it."

Damon frowned in obvious disapproval. He didn't want Talia to come and serve George and he definitely didn't want her close to Marcy.

"It's just to bring food.", Talia coaxed her grumpy Alpha. "In any case, I need to bring herbs that Doctor Travis requested. As for food, I could delegate that to Dawn and Zina."

Damon approved of someone else doing it, but... "Are they trustworthy?"

"I believe they are.", Talia said before correcting herself. "They are. Besides, we can't do this on our own. The herbs will need to be changed occasionally, the rooms need to be ventilated, and our patients will need food more often than once a day. Depending on how long Marcy and George stay here, this place will need to be cleaned. The two of us can't do it without arousing suspicion that something is off. I will treat this as a test for Zina and Dawn because I know that Steph wants to retire, and I am thinking of asking them if they will be willing to take over Steph's duties."

Damon's lips lifted into a smile. His kitten was doing Luna's duties, and he approved.

"Alright.", he said. "I will let you handle it."

Talia smiled brightly.

She was happy that he let her handle things. It was a sign of trust. Damon believing that she can do it, meant the world to her.

They walked back to the packhouse while holding hands with their fingers interlaced, and Talia asked, "Should we call Shaman Gideon?"

Damon's expression hardened. "Why?"

"He should be the best person to advise us in getting Marcy and George back on their feet."

"Why would I want to help them?", Damon grumbled. "Let them stay like that forever. I am thinking of just sending them to Alpha Edward and letting him deal with them. Instead of the video, we can say that someone overheard the rejection, so he won't find out about George's real identity. If I don't think George could be useful to us, I would expose him completely."

Talia knew that Damon didn't mean it. And she also knew that Damon had a grudge against the Shaman. Damon was under a lot of stress already, so Talia decided to stir the topic in another direction.

"Can you tell me about the Frostcrest pack?"

"They were a mid-sized pack...", Damon told her what he remembered about the pack, and how it disappeared from the map after being absorbed by the Red Moon pack about two decades ago. "Alpha Conor died in an Alpha duel against Alpha Howard. Luna Eliana passed away, due to heartbreak. They had a son, he was only a few years old, and he disappeared in the mess that happened during the leadership transfer. People believed that Alpha Howard killed the child in order to prevent a rebellion in the future because pack members tend to stay loyal to their Alpha. Who would have known that the boy was right under Alpha Howard's nose?"

Talia listened to everything attentively, and when Damon finished, she said, "So... George is like you. Without parents."

"Uhm... yes.", Damon said and eyed the little woman by his side. "I assume you were hinting at something with that comment."

"I didn't.", Talia denied it. "But I hope you will keep an open mind when it comes to George."

Damon frowned. "An open mind?"

"I have a feeling that George is a good person. That's all. In addition, I have something in common with George too."

"You do?"

Talia nodded. "Alpha Howard was responsible for me and George ending up in the Red Moon pack."

Damon agreed with that point. "My parents didn't approve that the Red Moon pack had this structure where children would be trained from a young age while living separately from their parents. Because of

that policy, it was difficult to estimate how many children were from the Red Moon pack, and how many came from other places."

Talia remembered her childhood. "There were many kids, and I assumed that they were like me, without parents. But when I became older, and they repurposed the building to be a part of training facilities, everyone else had a place to go, except for me. That's how I ended up in the attic."

"They didn't assign you a place because there was no data about you being there."

Talia halted her steps and looked at Damon. "Thank you."

"For?"

"For giving me a home."

Damon didn't know how to respond to this. He would say 'you are welcome', but he couldn't form any words as the myriad of Talia's emotions hit him harshly, making him understand how much was hidden behind those two words, 'thank you'.

Talia was always an outcast, never having a place to call her own, and he was determined to give her exactly that and much more.

Damon wrapped his arms around Talia and pressed her against him with the hope that she will read his emotions through the mate bond and understand how much she means to him.

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"Damon?", Talia called.

"Hmm?"

"About Shaman Gideon...", Talia's voice trailed.

"What about him?"

"I know you don't get along with him, but he might help us deal with this mess. If he can help Marcy and George get better, they will leave sooner. Isn't that what we want?" Seeing that Damon didn't respond, Talia kept on talking, "We don't need to disclose who they are. We can just tell him that two people broke their mate bond and are suffering. Maybe he will give us advice. If he agrees to see them, we can say that they are someone from this pack."

Damon let out a long breath. "I don't like Gideon, but I love you."

Talia looked at him expectantly. "What does that mean?"

"I can't say no to you, kitten. But don't expect me to talk to him, and I don't want you to go there either. Ask Maya to do it."

Talia's face broke into a smile. "Alright." She rubbed her face into his chest. "You are the best, you know that?"

"I know. I know...", Damon mumbled and then he got an idea. "But don't think that this is for free."

Talia froze. "What do you mean?"

"I expect payment for this." He leaned closer and whispered into her ear, "Tonight."

Talia got goosebumps dancing all over her skin.

Damon's hot breath tickled her ear and his hold on her tightened and she knew what kind of payment he was expecting. The naughty Alpha wanted to get frisky, and he was playful about it, so she played along.

"This is important, my Alpha. I will do anything." Talia put her index finger on his lips and traced the invisible line down his neck, over his Adam's apple, until she hooked her finger at the collar of his shirt and pulled him lower.

"Anything...", her lips moved against his cheek and Damon was hard in an instant.

He let out a slow chuckle, and spoke in a sexy low voice, "If we are not so busy, I would push you down on this grass right now and have my way with you."

Talia was surprised that lusty Alpha was aware of how there was a world beyond carnal pleasures. That was a first.

"Well, I guess you will need to wait until tonight, my Alpha." Her eyes flashed mischievously. "Maybe I put on a sexy outfit to treat you for doing me a favor."

Damon swallowed hard. The evening couldn't come fast enough.

Do they need to wait until evening?

Chapter 361 – Top-secret Patients (3)

When Talia and Damon reached the packhouse, Damon headed to the study in order to figure out guards for the house where Marcy and George were, and Talia went to the kitchen in order to get food for George.

Dawn and Zina were sitting on barstools and leaning over the kitchen island while commenting on an article in WW magazine that was open in front of them. It was obvious they were idling.

"There is no work at the time. All guests are busy with something. Why are you here?", Talia asked.

"Ivy and Lily are in town with Rose, and we volunteered to stay back. What if Commander George needs something?", Zina asked cheekily, and Dawn nodded in agreement.

Talia shook her head at her silly friends. She wanted to tell them that he was in the other house, in a zombie-like state, but she realized that she didn't think that through, so she went with the official version, "Marcy and Commander George went to tour our territory and won't be back for some time."

Dawn and Zina showed disappointed looks, and Talia felt guilty for lying to them, but she will tell them the truth once she figures out how to say it.

Everything happened so quickly and even Talia needed some time to process things.

Talia went to the pantry and fridge and picked up a few items from each. There were plenty of leftovers from lunch.

Talia took a picnic basket that will be perfect to take the food for two patients in one go, and she will have a free hand to fetch some of the herbs on her way.

"Are you going on a picnic with Alpha Damon?", Dawn asked with a knowing smile.

I wish. "Something like that.", Talia responded. "Tonight, plan to stay a bit longer after dinner. I have an important task for you." By then, Talia will figure out how to tell them about the current situation.

Zina eyed Talia curiously. "Important task?" It must be more than just important if Talia announced it in advance. Normally, they just get instructions that end with: do it right now.

"You will find out what it is then.", Talia said mysteriously. "It's nothing too demanding, but it will require secrecy."

"Oh...", A sound escaped Dawn's lips. "So, you want us to do something secretly and no one to know about it."

"That's demanding already.", Zina said through giggles. "Are you planning a super-sexy surprise for Alpha Damon, and you want us to operate the fog machine?"

Dawn rolled her eyes. "What fog machine? It must be to set up a romantic spot that will provide privacy..."

"Nonsense.", Zina cut off Dawn. "It will be a sexy performance and she needs background dancers..."

Talia shook her head at her two friends who were guessing naughty stuff, but she didn't want to give them any hints at that time.

Talia knew that she shouldn't disclose that George is an Alpha, but... should she tell them that he ended up in a sorry condition because of the severed mate bond? Maybe she could say that rogues attacked him. But how can she explain Marcy's condition? And how can they be bedridden due to an attack when none of them has visible injuries?

Talia was never good at lying, so she needed to prepare for this. The truth was the best option, but Talia was not sure how much of the truth she should reveal. The good thing was that she had until evening to prepare for this reveal.

...

Talia was pleased with herself that she convinced Damon to deal with his matters and not tag along with her. It was just Talia bringing food and flowers, and she had no intention to linger.

In the garden, she collected lavender and passionflower, and on her way through the forest, she got chamomile. Travis gave her a few more herbs on the list, but they were not on the way, and she didn't have much time.

Talia remembered Gideon's garden, and there Talia saw a few plants she was looking for. Talia decided to ask Gideon for some when she gets a chance.

Talia knew that dried plants will release more of their fragrance, and she thought of storing them in cloth pouches that can be kept next to her two patients, but that will take a few days to prepare, and she really hoped that George and Marcy will snap out of it by then.

Talia's first destination was the kitchen. She found two vases and separated flowers so that both Marcy and George have some in their rooms.

With a vase and a bowl of fruits, Talia went to Marcy's room first.

Marcy was still unconscious, lying on the bed, like sleeping, and there was a small frown on her now pale face.

Talia didn't forgive Marcy for what she did in the Red Moon pack. And she didn't forgive Marcy's naughty attitude from earlier that day.

However, Talia felt sorry that Marcy was in such a bad condition. No one deserves to lose a mate.

Talia didn't get it, why did Marcy reject George as her mate?

Talia remembered that she was scared of Damon at first, and then she thought how he was willful and unstable, and she didn't know they were mates, but even with that, Talia craved for Damon's proximity. When he was around, she was not alone. At that time, Talia thought that he was only playing with her, but she still cherished every moment they spent together.

Talia gave Damon many of her firsts and she wouldn't regret a single one because it felt so right that it couldn't be wrong.

As a total opposite of that, Marcy rejected her mate. Why would anyone reject a person who was created to make them happy? Or maybe it's not happy.

The Moon Goddess pairs werewolves to form a perfect match, giving them exactly what they need, and maybe Marcy and George were not supposed to make each other happy, maybe it was something else, and what that else might be... only the two of them knew.

Talia went back to the kitchen to fetch a tray with food that was prepared for George. This one had more than just fruits, and it also came with a vase of fragrant flowers.

In George's room, Talia placed the tray with food and the vase on the bedside table and looked at George.

George was on the bed, staring at the ceiling with an unfocused gaze. The only difference between him and Marcy was that his eyes were open.

Unsure if she should say anything to him, Talia turned to rearrange flowers in the vase. Just coming and going without a word felt weird.

Can he even hear her? Doctor Travis said that he can.

Will he approve of her talking? Well, if he tells her to shut up, at least it will be some reaction, and anything will be better than this.

Talia steeled her resolve and spoke to George, "I brought you food."

He didn't move a muscle.

"I'm sorry you went through that experience. I can't imagine how much it hurts to be rejected by a mate." Just the thought of Damon pushing her away was giving Talia a glimpse of anguish that comes with the soul being torn apart. "We won't tell anyone about what happened, unless we have to, and we estimate that we can conceal this for a few days. Focus on yourself and getting better."

Talia made a step closer to the bed.

"I don't expect you to respond to me, but I hope you are listening. I know it hurts, but you can't do this to yourself. There must be people waiting for you to return home. Think about them."

Chapter 362 – George's Pain

With George not showing any signs that he wanted to communicate, Talia didn't want to linger.

"I will be back in the evening to take this away and bring fresh food. No one will disturb you. If you need anything, you only need to shout, and someone will come to check on you."

She said her goodbyes and left.

What Talia didn't see was that George's eyes moved when Talia closed the door behind her.

George heard Talia. He was aware of everything happening around him, but he didn't have the desire to respond. It was like all that was happening to someone else and he was observing from the third person's point of view.

Detachment allowed him to ease the pain, but the truth was that he felt hollow, like someone removed an important part from his chest. He was an empty shell, without a drive to react to external stimuli.

Why did the Moon Goddess give him Marcy as a mate? To teach him a lesson? To steel his resolve that he needs to demolish the Red Moon pack?

He heard that Marcy was in the room next door and that she was not doing well, and he didn't care. That was a relief. His indifference was proof that the bond was broken, and he won't be influenced by the persistent urge to stick to Marcy and to claim her as his.

The unbelievable part was that if Marcy didn't reject him, he would probably drop the whole revenge part if she asked him to. He would do anything to make her happy, and as the son-in-law of the Red Moon pack with the Alpha bloodline who is definitely more capable than James, the chances were high that George would become the next Alpha of the Red Moon pack without the need to spill blood.

That moment in the garden when he met Marcy the first time, was the fork on George's path, and he could continue with his revenge, or give up on it, and Marcy's rejection decided for him.

After Marcy's rejection, George spent days drifting between anguish and agony, wondering what he did wrong to be rejected by his other half as his heart ached like someone stabbed him repeatedly, and only when numbness replaced pain, he was able to breathe.

George heard updates about Marcy, but he avoided seeing her out of fear that he will experience that pain again. Luckily, she didn't come to the training ground.

When George heard that it's set for Marcy to go to the Dark Howlers pack, he decided to go with her. Did she really think that she will be the Luna of some other Alpha after what she did to him? George was determined to spoil Marcy's plans, even if that meant he needed to go through the same hell again.

It was easy to manipulate Alpha Edward into giving that task to George, and George was surprised that when he finally faced Marcy again, instead of pain there was anger.

Well... things unfolded the way they did, and after George realized that his innocent mate is a slut without a shred of morality, chasing after money and power, just like the rest of her family, he accepted her rejection.

Isn't this what she wanted? She wanted the freedom to be with someone else, and George gave it to her. Marcy was definitely not aware of the pain that comes when mate rejects his other half but George didn't have any desire to think about her anymore.

He needed to focus on himself.

This pain of mate bond breaking completely was stronger than he thought it will be. How long will he need to resemble a normal being? Will he be able to recover? He could barely feel his wolf.

Talia said that they could conceal this for some time, and he knew that he should snap out of it because if Alpha Edward finds out about this, George will be in trouble... but the problem was that George had no willpower to do anything.

The emptiness in his chest was expanding and threatening to engulf him completely, and he hoped that when that happens, the pain will go as well. He was tired... tired of training and fighting and trying and pretending that he is a grateful orphan who made a name for himself among warriors, and he wanted it all to stop.

Why was he struggling? To avenge people who were already dead? Surely, if his parents were anything like what he heard in stories, they would wish for George to leave all this behind and to lead a happy life, but that glimpse of happiness disappeared with Marcy's rejection. There was no point in continuing.

Darkness was consuming him, and he allowed it to happen. He wanted it to end.

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After an unknown measure of time, Talia's words echoed in George's mind, 'There must be people waiting for you... think about them...'

He remembered Estelle and other Omegas that are living in his villa. What will happen to them if George gives up and doesn't return to the Red Moon pack?

And it's not just them, there are many others in the Red Moon pack who were originally from the Frostcrest pack.

Every Friday evening, they would gather in the forest behind George's villa. There would be a bonfire and drinks, and they would reminisce the days from before George could remember. The mood was light, and George would eagerly wait for someone to whisper about Alpha Conor and Luna Eliana, and how amazing they were.

Those Friday evenings were bringing him peace and comfort, and George knew that those people were in the Red Moon pack only because the other option was to rebel and end up as rogues, or in the dungeon, or worse... dead.

If they had a choice, they would still be part of the Frostcrest pack and living their peaceful lives.

Since he found out about his background, George listened to stories of people who had professions like a baker, a hunter, a weaver, a florist, and they were proud to be members of the Frostcrest pack. Those friendly people accepted a life worse than Omegas, working dirty and hard jobs, because that's how the ones who didn't originate from the Red Moon pack were treated.

No one spoke about the future because they didn't want to think about it. They gave up hope for a better tomorrow. Their Alpha and Luna were gone, their prince was missing, and they were looking forward to Friday evenings when they could lift their heads and share their griefs with people who understood their situation.

They thought George Shaw was dead, yet there he was, hidden behind the alias Commander George, listening to their stories that told him there was a group of people happily recollecting the days when his parents were alive, and they had no idea that he was right there... and he could make their dreams come true.

Isn't that what an Alpha should do? Fight for his people?

His father fought and died, and George thought how that was valiant. Shouldn't he do the same? Fight, so that his people can have a better life?

Is that why the Moon Goddess sent him Marcy? Because he was delaying to make his move? Was he getting complacent as the Commander, and he forgot his purpose? Was Marcy a reminder that the Redmayne family is corrupted beyond redemption and that he had to remove them in order for his people to walk with their heads held high all the time?

George rolled to the side and groaned at the pain that wrecked his insides.

He curled into a fetal position and repeated silently that he needs to get through this because Talia was right. Estelle and many others were waiting for him to return, and he will kill Alpha Edward and... he didn't think beyond that, but he knew that he will free the world from the existence of the Red Moon pack. That will be his legacy.

Chapter 363 – Concealing The Secret

Maya returned from her shopping with Nora and Mindy, and as soon as they unloaded shopping bags from the car, Maya went to visit Gideon.

After training, Caden went to set up security cameras in the house where Marcy and George were.

Mindy and Kalina were eager to hear more details about the whole Marcy and George business and they met with Talia in the lounge.

After confirming that Nora was in her room, and other guys from the Lightclaw pack were resting, Talia played loud music to cover up their voices as she gave them the latest updates.

Mindy and Kalina were flabbergasted. Talia told them that morning that she suspected how something was happening between Marcy and George, but them being mates brought the whole thing to a totally different level.

Maya told them that she and Mindy will take Nora shopping in an attempt to keep Nora busy after lunch without further explanations, and now it all made sense in a completely unexpected way.

"The story of how they are sightseeing the territory won't hold on for long.", Kalina said. "What will you do if they don't wake up soon? And even if they wake up, they might start shouting how you did something to their wolves and deny the whole mate thing. It's not like you can prove it. The bond is gone now."

Talia shrugged helplessly. "Let's take this one step at a time. We hope they will wake up, and leave this place on their own, otherwise, we will need to come up with some majestic excuse as to why they came here, disappeared, and no one saw them leaving. There is no way we can deliver them in their current state, and if they get worse... I don't want to think about it."

"Don't worry, Lia.", Mindy said. "You can count on us. We will help how much we can."

"Help with what?", Nora's voice came from the door.

Mindy cursed internally. She was about to suggest how they can kill Marcy and George while they are incapacitated. Two people will wear disguises and dress up as Marcy and George in order to make appearances in the human town and leave evidence behind, with the last traces being two plane tickets to Vegas. The official story will be that Marcy and George eloped. The plan needed some polishing here and there, but it was solid. Unfortunately, now that Nora came, Mindy's brilliant plan will need to wait to see the light of day.

"We were talking about the upcoming party.", Kalina was quick to respond. "We are running out of time, and Marcy decided to check out the territory of the Dark Howlers pack."

Nora's eyebrows shot up. "She did? When will she be back?"

"Who knows?", Mindy said. "Marcy is acting like this is a vacation, and all the hard work fell on our shoulders. George is accompanying her."

Kalina bobbed her head. "Well, we were planning to make this a surprise party and we were ready, but Marcy introduced some changes at the last moment, and now we are not sure if she even wants to attend."

Nora smiled brightly. She didn't care about the pesky details. With Marcy and George out of the way, she felt like invisible shackles were gone and she could breathe freely. If it's up to Nora, Marcy and George will be away for a week, or longer. Who cares about an entitled princess and a commander?

"Don't worry, ladies.", Nora said in a singing voice while making her way toward them. "I will help. I got the perfect dress and shoes, so I am available. Let's make this party awesome!"

Talia thought how this will work. This can keep Nora busy and away from the packhouse. Besides, didn't Mindy just volunteer to help?

"That's very generous of you, Nora.", Talia said. "Before dinner, you can go with Mindy to the party store and finalize choices of balloons and streamers. Marcy mentioned that she wants white and purple. Feel free to add a third color."

"Golden!", Nora said immediately.

Talia remembered that in the Red Moon pack everything is glitzy and there is a lot of golden accents. No wonder Nora chose that one.

But just agreeing might be suspicious, so Talia added, "Don't forget that this is the Dark Howlers pack, so you should have some dark gray or black items." Nora nodded earnestly and Talia continued, "In the morning you will check the bakery. We ordered the main cake and pastries. You will need to ensure they are on time and taste samples... With you checking all these, I can focus on watching that everything is set up here properly... The butcher will prepare a boar. Remind him that it needs to be here by noon so that we start roasting it... Soup and appetizers will come from a restaurant..."

The more Talia spoke, the more Nora's face fell. With so many things left to do, she won't have much time to mingle with guys. She was planning to go to the training center and ask a hunk (possibly Alpha Damon) to show her some moves!

Nora reminded herself that she will have plenty of time to flirt at the party. Also, this will be a great chance to show what she can do and leave her personal touch for tomorrow's party, and Alpha Damon will definitely be impressed. Who knows? With Marcy out of the way, Maybe Nora ends up dancing with him tomorrow, and then they will do much more than dancing!

Nora was all giddy while thinking about it.

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By dinner time, Damon arranged guards around the house where Marcy and George were, Caden set up cameras so that they could see two patients and if anyone comes close the house, Maya met with Gideon and returned with a bundle of herbs, and Talia spoke with Travis after his evening visit.

Everyone had updates to share, and since Talia didn't have the mind-link, the four of them headed to study after dinner.

They were all thinking about the situation with Marcy and George, and didn't notice that James was trailing them.

"Alpha Damon...", James called as Damon reached to open the door of the study. "Can we have a word?"

Damon looked at the teenager. "In private, or...?"

James glanced at Maya, Caden, and Talia. "They can be present."

Damon had a bad feeling about this. Normally, James was absentminded or trying not to attract attention, yet now he was confident and slightly cocky.

Damon sat behind his desk, and Talia stood by his side. Maya and Caden were also there, with their backs to the wall, and James took a seat on the chair opposite Damon.

"How can I help you?", Damon asked.

"This is about my sister.", James went straight to the point. "Maybe Nora believes nonsense how Marcy and George went sightseeing, but I don't."

Chapter 364 – Negotiating With A Teenager

The air in the study stilled.

James just said how he knows that something was fishy with Marcy and George, and he was not wrong.

Damon, Talia, Maya, and Caden were looking at James, and all of them wondered the same thing: how much did he know?

Damon's expression didn't crack as he asked James, "What are you trying to say?"

"I'm saying that they didn't go sightseeing and you are trying to cover it up.", James responded with confidence.

"That's a serious accusation. How about you explain what gave you the courage to say something like that?.", Damon spoke icily, releasing some of his aura as a warning.

James shrunk a little, feeling as if someone pressed on his shoulders, but he was determined to move on with his plan. Besides, it was too late to back away.

"They didn't join us for dinner. Your Beta made sure that Nora was away for the afternoon while I was stuck in training. Why would Marcy spend a day with George when her goal for coming here was to get close to you? And you said that she might be away longer. Assuming that my sister wanted to see something, she wouldn't go with just George, and she would definitely be back by now. She came here to be your Luna and she can go sightseeing later. But even if my sister would do something like that, George is a different story. He always followed orders and his orders were not do to anything that would jeopardize Marcy's chances to become your Luna. With the two of them alone for a prolonged period, it will create an ambiguous situation." James ended by giving Damon a knowing look.

Damon looked at James in a different light. A dimwitted teenager was actually quite observant.

By now, Damon confirmed that James wanted something. If he already had all those things figured out, he would alert his father, if he wanted to, yet he didn't.

"I also doubt that you want to make my sister your Luna.", James said, and his eyes moved to Talia.

"Even a blind person would see that your attention is on Miss Talia. Mistresses stay invisible when the wife is around, or in this case, the future wife, yet you are acting like my sister doesn't exist. Even if you don't want to make my sister your Luna, you shouldn't provoke her openly. My guess is that Miss Talia is to you more than a mistress." James looked at Damon and smiled cockily. "Feel free to interrupt me if I am wrong."

Damon waved at James to continue. "I am interested to hear what else you have to say."

James raised his hands, palms toward Damon. "I didn't come here to provoke you."

Damon leaned over his executive desk, closer to James. "And why are you here?"

"I will keep my assumptions to myself, as long as you give me something in return.", James said.

Damon couldn't believe it. Was he being blackmailed?

"And what is to say I won't kick your ass into the dungeon?"

James was alerted. "There is no need for hostility. You need me."

It was Damon's turn to be surprised. "I do?"

"When George doesn't give his daily report tomorrow morning, my father will start asking questions."

Damon expected that Alpha Edward will keep tabs on Marcy, but he didn't expect daily reports. This might be a problem. But the bigger problem right now was the pompous teenager who caught onto something, and Damon needed to settle things with him first. "And you will go against your father and help me?"

"This is not really against my father. It's just giving you extra time to deal with whatever you are facing. If you can't fix it, my action will only delay my father finding out the truth, and if you fix it, then no harm will be done. In the meantime, I can give reports instead of George. George is my mentor, and he was never good with electronics. I know his passwords and style of writing."

Looking at James' annoyingly confident expression, Damon regretted allowing the group from the Red Moon pack to come here. Surely, just rejecting them from the start wouldn't be this complicated. In less than a day, Marcy and George were bedridden, James was scheming something, and Damon had a

feeling that the fourth one (aka Nora) will also cause trouble. During the whole dinner, she was smiling and looking his way, even though he didn't spare her a glance.

Damon was tired of playing games, so he went to the point. "What do you want in return?"

James' face exploded into a grin. He was waiting for this. "I will fake George's reports, and you fake mine."

Damon didn't get it. "Fake what reports?"

"The training ones." James turned to look at Caden. "Create reports on how I am doing great, but not too great. If it's too good, my father will want a demonstration."

"You want to skip training.", Caden concluded.

"You can call it that way if you wish.", James said to Caden, and turned back to Damon. "Assign one or two warriors to drive me around when I need it. I don't have a driver's license and I want to check out Darkbourne and human city. I won't cause trouble. I want to visit arcades, interactive museums, shopping malls, and anything that can be interesting for a teen like me. I have a list..." James reached into the back pocket of his jeans and placed a randomly folded piece of paper. "After breakfast, I will send a report to my father. If you want me to put anything specific in the report, let me know. After that, I will head out and return in the evening. I expect that you give me a credit card for expenses or some cash. If I use my card, my father will find out about it. In exchange, I will make sure that my father doesn't suspect a thing."

Damon looked at the paper that had a number of places like a bowling alley, skydiving center, and go-cart, and he realized that James wanted to have fun outside Alpha Edward's grasp.

James remembered one more thing. "Oh, and if this lasts more than a few days, I want a television and a game console in my room, to keep me busy."

"You are not going to ask what happened to your sister?", Damon asked.

"No.", James said without missing a beat. "The less I know, the better. However, be aware that my father invested a lot to make Marcy your Luna. If you plan to get out of that, you better prepare a good exit strategy and watch your back. There are people in your pack that are supporting my father's agenda in making Marcy your Luna."

Damon frowned at this. He knew about Elder Charlie and Elder Samson, but why did James sound like there are many?

"Do you know who from my pack is involved?"

James shook his head. "I found out this much by pretending to be stupid. George might know since he is the Commander who came to escort my sister here. I'm sure that my father gave him special instructions, but how special... you will need to talk to George about it."

James looked at Damon expectantly. "So? What do you say? Do we have a deal?"

"What about Nora?", Maya asked.

"What about her?", James responded with a question. "She is Beta's daughter no one cares about, and she cares only about herself. To be honest, I can't stand her. If Nora goes missing, people will assume she ran off with some high-ranking member. If you want, I can include that in one of my reports..."

Chapter 365 – James Redmayne

James left the study in a good mood.

He never had a chance to relax and enjoy his youth, and this might be his first and last chance to do so. James was not exaggerating to think that.

From a young age, James was training to improve his strength and stamina. When he was not training, he would study the history of werewolves, military tactics, economics, and anything his father deemed important for an Alpha.

At first, James tried his best to please his father, but soon he realized that no matter how much he tried, and no matter how good he scored, it was never good enough. His father would parade him as some

kind of a trophy in front of other Alphas, but when it was just them, James was almost ignored. However, he still pushed himself with the hope he will get the praise that never came.

James was confident that when he gets older, his achievements will also soar, and he will get his father's approval. Little did he know how those were the good days and that the troubles were yet to come.

James was about twelve years old when his wolf stirred, and to James' horror, there was no Alpha aura present.

His trainer at that time said how that was odd. Alpha's aura is not related to age, but it's in one's DNA, and when the wolf just starts appearing, the aura would come out uncontrollably, which didn't happen with James.

James was quick to set up his trainer for stealing and to discredit him. That's how James got as a new trainer the latest rising star in his father's army, George.

George assessed James and he said how there are cases of late bloomers, and James must be it, and Alpha Edward bought it.

James didn't ask if that was the truth or if George lied for him, but it worked for both of them. Since then, James was training hard and trying not to stand out in any way.

However, James was aware that even if the late bloomer story was true, he was running out of time. If by eighteenth birthday James doesn't show he has the Alpha aura, his reputation as the promising Alpha of the next generation will be tarnished.

Does he have that aura? With every passing day, James' hopes were fading, and when he took into consideration his parents' debauchery, James started suspecting that he is not Alpha Edward's biological son. Luna Layla has in her ancestry people with Alpha and Beta genes, but she herself didn't have them until Alpha Edward marked her.

James could dispel his doubts with a DNA test, but his father has people everywhere, and if it turns out that James and Alpha Edward are not related, and Alpha Edward finds out about it... James had no idea

what the consequences would be. Would his father kick him out, kill him, or maybe pretend that everything was fine? After all, his father pretends about many things.

Whatever the case will be, James had just over two years before he ran out of time, and he was determined to make it count.

When his father was watching, James was an obedient son, talking only when asked and otherwise pretending not to notice things, but now that he got some leverage, he will have fun, like any other teenager.

Yes, his sister might be in trouble, but James was aware that Marcy wouldn't move a finger for him so, why would he do anything for her?

And did she really think that James didn't notice how Marcy and George spent the night together in the motel? And when George returned, he smelled of Marcy! Gross.

James didn't want to think about Marcy, George, his non-existent Alpha aura, or anything unpleasant, because in the next few days he will have pure fun!

He fist-pumped in the air and entered his room. He wanted to sleep early because tomorrow will be an exciting day!

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In the study...

After James left, Damon, Talia, Maya, and Caden looked at each other helplessly.

Of course, Damon agreed to collaborate with James, but no one knew if James was an ally or a blackmailer. Probably both, for now.

Damon rubbed his forehead forcibly. He felt like an invisible leash was tightening around his neck, and he didn't like it.

"We need to find out who from our pack is working with Alpha Edward.", Damon said. "When things escalate, I don't want anyone backstabbing me. Now it's about Marcy, tomorrow will be something else, but the constant is that those people are willing to act against me. I want them found."

Damon spoke to Caden. "Talk to Elder Samson and Elder Charlie. See if they know others who are supporting Alpha Edward's agenda. Find out who is their contact in the Red Moon pack, and then see if anyone from our pack was in touch with that person."

"We asked them that and they refused to answer.", Caden said.

"Tell them that this involves the safety of their Luna. If anything happens to her, I will hold them accountable. Exaggerate more if needed."

Caden nodded in agreement, and Damon turned to Maya.

"What did Shaman say about fixing people whose bond was broken?"

"Shaman said that everyone is different, but overall, it's about them finding their will to live. Just as Doctor Travis said, there are ways to calm the mind in order to ease the suicidal tendencies, and they need a strong will and support to snap out of it. Unfortunately for Marcy, her brother doesn't want to know about her state, and her best friend seemed happy that Marcy is not around."

"We shouldn't tell Nora about Marcy's state.", Talia said. "She will only use it to her advantage."

They all agreed with this.

"As for Commander George...", Maya continued. "He is an orphan, no family on file, fanatic about training. He is in a better state compared to Marcy, but there is no guarantee it will improve."

"You brought some herbs.", Talia reminded Maya.

"Yes.", Maya responded and reached into her pocket to get a piece of paper. "Shaman gave me instructions on how to use them..."

Talia took the paper and skimmed through it.

Talia leaned to give Damon a quick kiss. "I will go and handle this. Zina and Dawn are waiting for me in the kitchen."

Damon didn't approve. He knew that Talia wanted to go and visit Marcy and George, and it was dark outside! "Wait until I finish here, and we will go together."

"You deal with things here, and I will do what I can.", Talia said. "It will be faster."

Damon wanted to go with Talia, but he had a lot of things to handle and he knew that Talia had a point. "Be careful. Don't be alone. Keep your phone handy."

"I will. I won't. I will.", Talia said and giggled at his frown. "Don't worry." She winked and left the study.

Damon let out a long breath and shook his head at the silly girl who was adorable even while getting him worried.

Chapter 366 – Nyotaimori

Damon had tasks for Caden, "Put extra cameras around James. I want to know when, where, and with whom he is communicating. Monitor the wi-fi traffic."

"You think that he will talk to Alpha Edward?", Caden asked.

"Maybe he already spoke to him.", Maya said with a frown. They didn't anticipate this mess, so they didn't tighten their security.

"I don't think he did.", Damon shared his thoughts. "James looks like a smart guy. If he wanted his father to know, he would tell him and continue to lay low until Alpha Edward makes his move."

"So, you think he is an ally?", Caden asked thoughtfully. "The kid obviously knows more than he allowed us to see. Will he reveal information about the Red Moon pack and Alpha Edward?"

"I don't know.", Damon admitted. "But I know that I don't like our current position. We should treat as a priority to get Marcy and George on their feet. When that happens, James will lose his leverage. I will leave it to Talia and Doctor Travis to take care of the patients."

If Talia could use her power to bring them into reality, that would be great, but Damon didn't know if Talia could actually do something like that. She healed him, but those were physical injuries, and this is different.

Unfortunately, they couldn't just test it out recklessly because of the risk of exposing Talia's powers to Marcy, George, and anyone who might be nearby. They can't use the mermaid excuse when things start flashing in the forest.

When thinking about the pros and cons, Damon decided that it's better for Talia to stay low. Her safety comes first, and he will deal with anything else to the best of his abilities.

Damon spoke to Maya, "Your role is to keep Nora busy. Get some soldiers to distract her. If she can be around and oblivious, that will be for the best. If we put her in the dungeon and ask James to cover up for it, it will be one more thing he has on us."

Maya looked at Damon with a smirk. "What soldiers? She has eyes only for you."

Damon frowned. "What?"

"Didn't you notice how she was looking at you?"

Damon's frown deepened. "I don't care where and how she is looking. Do your best to keep her busy. If Talia loses her temper..." He shook his head.

Maya remembered how Talia forced Jill to kneel in the restroom of the Shifters nightclub and Maya couldn't decide if that would be a good or a bad way to deal with Nora.

While Maya was thinking about Talia making others bow (and kneel) in submission, Damon was talking to Caden, "Let's reinforce security there so that no accidents happen..."

Damon didn't have a problem faking training reports and allowing James to have some fun, but the idea that James had something on Damon was unsettling. And James had more than just a few things.

Rumors were already spreading how Talia came from the Red Moon pack, and if Alpha Edward suspects that Talia is Damon's mate, he won't spare efforts to get his hands on her.

Tomorrow's party couldn't come fast enough.

The best course of action would be to cut ties with Marcy officially and then to introduce Talia as his mate, but now that Marcy was unconscious and rumors about Talia were spreading, Damon needed to do things out of order, and hope for the best.

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Talia entered the kitchen to see Dawn and Zina wiping the countertops.

"Did you wait long?", Talia asked.

"No.", Dawn responded. "We are almost done cleaning up."

Both Dawn and Zina looked at Talia expectantly and Talia knew that they wanted to find out about the big secret.

"Give me a minute to compose myself.", Talia said.

Talia was dazed by the overload of events. Her greatest fear was that Marcy will recognize her and cause trouble, or throw herself at Damon, but the reality was that so many other things happened, and Marcy placed Talia as Damon's mistress, and the most Marcy got to touch Damon was a handshake. Once. The whole day was crazy, and it was still not over.

Talia was eager to finish her evening visit to Marcy and George, and then to sink into Damon's comforting embrace.

"Are you OK?"

Zina's question reminded Talia that her expression was not good.

"Yeah. Help me prepare food for one. We should have plenty of leftovers from dinner, right?"

Talia frowned at the sight of Dawn and Zina elbowing each other. "What?"

"Food for one?", Dawn asked with a sly smile on her face. "Small bites?"

Talia shrugged. She didn't really think about the size of bites, but George was sick so... "Sure. If it's not very messy, that will be great."

"I knew it!", Dawn exclaimed. "Nyotaimori. That's so hot! Where are we doing it? Here? Or should we go to your bedroom? Or do you have another place on your mind?"

Talia was confused. Did Dawn just speak a foreign language? "What?"

Zina explained, "Dawn and I had a bet related to why you asked us to stay here for a secret mission. Dawn said that it will be food-related. It's obvious that she won."

Yes, the secretive thing was food-related, and it included taking food to George.

There was no need to take food for Marcy. Talia confirmed through the security video feed that Marcy was still unconscious.

But seeing Dawn's and Zina's elated expressions, Talia had questions. "What is a Nyo-ta-i-mo-ri?"

Dawn grinned. "It's when you lie down naked, and there is food all over you, and Alpha Damon gets to eat the food, and then he eats you. Traditionally, it's done with sushi, but considering that you are looking at leftovers from dinner, we can improvise..." Dawn paused when she saw Talia's bewildered expression. "Wait. It doesn't seem you are doing that."

"Hehe...", Zina giggled, happy that she didn't lose the bet. "What are we doing?"

"I am amazed at all the ideas you have.", Talia said while shaking her head. "I am intrigued about the human body being used as a serving plate, and I hope to hear more when we have time to chat. But now it's getting late, so we should focus on why we are here. This food is not going to be arranged on me, and it's not for Damon. It's for George..." Talia explained the current situation, and as she talked, the playful atmosphere turned solemn.

Dawn couldn't believe what she heard. "Marcy rejected her fated mate. That's a lot of bad karma right there. The Moon Goddess will punish her harshly. We should stay away from her, so it doesn't rub off on us."

"Why did she reject him?", Zina asked.

Talia shrugged. "Your guess is as good as mine."

"Aww...", Dawn whined. "I would give anything to have a mate like that."

"Like what?", Zina asked.

"Like Commander George.", Dawn said. "He is just the right combination of handsomeness and muscles. I bet that he can give his mate nights filled with carnal pleasures and endless orgasms. Marcy was blind or stupid to say no to that."

"The man is bedridden, and you are thinking about orgasms.", Zina teased Dawn.

"My orgasms have nothing to do with his condition.", Dawn responded matter-of-factly.

Chapter 367 – A Second Chance Mate

While thinking about how George was rejected by Marcy, Dawn felt her chest tightening. "I feel sorry for him, and I hope he gets his second chance mate."

Talia's ears perked up. What was that? "What's a second chance mate?"

Zina responded, "Sometimes, fated mates are not destined for a future where both of them grow old together. This is my first time to hear that mates rejected each other, but there are cases where one dies premature death, leaving the other mate behind. They say that the Moon Goddess rewards the worthy ones with a second chance mate, the one that will fill in the gap and make their lives worth living. The legend says that if a mated she-wolf is marked and her mate perishes, if her second chance mate exists, the mark on her neck will fade to make space for the new one."

Talia thought how that was fantastic. She didn't see the mark on Marcy (or George), but she hoped that George will get his second chance mate, someone better than Marcy.

Talia decided to go back to the topic. In order for George to get a second chance mate, he will need to recuperate from his current predicament.

"George is not in a good shape, you can think of him as a patient in a coma. Marcy is still unconscious. If this leaks out, Damon might get in trouble, and this can escalate quickly. Considering Damon's strained relationship with Alpha Edward, and the expectations for Marcy to be Damon's Luna, this situation can easily be misinterpreted. That's why Doctor Travis is working on getting them better. I want to ask you to go there twice a day to take food and ventilate or clean the place when needed. I will go at least once, so we should decide on shifts..."

Talia ended by asking Dawn and Zina to keep it a secret. "Other than the three of us, Damon, Maya, Caden, and Travis know about this. Even the warriors guarding the place don't know who is inside. Be mindful that it shouldn't spread further."

"Of course!", they responded in unison.

Dawn and Zina knew this was important, and Talia told them about it which meant that she trusted them. It was a big deal. After all, Talia was more than just a friend, she was their future Luna, and she shared with them something that might jeopardize the safety of their pack! Suddenly, Dawn and Zina felt the seriousness of the situation pressing on them.

Talia's heart warmed to see her friends were on board. She knew that they would do wonderfully. The whole concept of being a Luna was foreign to Talia, but with her friends helping her out, Talia thought how being the Luna of the Dark Howler's pack won't be so intimidating.

Since Dawn and Zina were aware of the current situation, it was time for planning the practical part.

"I want one of you to deliver breakfast and the other one dinner. You can decide which one of you will be responsible for which. I will handle lunch. In case you want to switch, let me know in advance. Is that fine?"

Damon asked Talia not to go herself, but she wanted to check on Marcy and George. Going once a day won't take much time, and it will give her a chance to get fresh herbs when needed.

Dawn and Zina played rock-paper-scissors and decided that Zina will deliver dinner, and Dawn breakfast.

Talia told them that she will go with both Dawn and Zina the first time, to show them the place.

While chatting, Dawn and Zina helped Talia pack the containers with leftovers from dinner, and a few fresh fruits and Talia got herbs that Maya brought from Gideon.

Dawn stayed to finish up cleaning the kitchen, and Zina went with Talia to deliver dinner to George.

Talia was comforted because her friends were part of this.

And it was not just Dawn and Zina; Maya, Kalina, and Mindy were doing their part also.

...

Zina and Talia returned shortly after Dawn finished cleaning the kitchen.

Zina went to the trashcan to dump the food they brought back.

"What's the situation there?", Dawn asked.

"Everything smells great.", Zina responded. "The flowers Talia put in those rooms are fantastic. I decided to get the same for my place."

Dawn rolled her eyes. She was asking about Marcy and George (well, mostly George), and Zina knew it.

Zina was obviously in the mood to tease Dawn, so the latter turned to Talia to ask, "How are they doing?"

"The same.", Talia responded.

Dawn gestured toward Zina who was busy dumping stuff into the trashcan. "I assume Commander George didn't eat."

"He didn't touch the food.", Talia said dejectedly. "He didn't eat anything since morning. How can he get better if he starves himself?"

"You should see him, D...", Zina said sadly, her playful mood gone. "He is such a yummy man, lying there, unmoving, like a sleeping beauty, waiting for a kiss of his true love to wake up from his slumber."

"So, why didn't you kiss him?", Dawn asked Zina. "Maybe you are the one to break the spell."

Zina made a face. She was almost serious, yet Dawn pulled her back into a playful mood. But that's why Zina loved Dawn, she always knew how to cheer her up. It was impossible to be sad with Dawn around, and Zina was always ready to do the same for her friend.

"I would kiss him if his eyes were not open. It really killed the romance.", Zina said with a grin.

"The man is in a coma, yet you think about romance." Dawn made a thoughtful expression. "You know, if you went for a kiss, it would be a win, no matter how it ended."

Zina cocked an eyebrow, "What do you mean?"

"If he doesn't react, you got a kiss. And if he slaps you, you woke him up.", Dawn said cheekily.

"Oy!", Zina protested. "What do you mean, SLAP me!? How can a man slap a woman because of a kiss?"

"He can. When the kiss is forced."

"Who said anything about forcing? It would be nice and gentle, and I'm sure he would love it. Besides, you will see in the morning when you go to deliver breakfast. He is right in the middle of the bed, not resisting at all. Will you give him that magical kiss? Or will you touch him?"

Dawn's face fell. "You are making it sound like I am a molester." In the next moment, she grinned. "Or... is he naked? I could touch that."

At the thought of naked George, Zina's eyes lit up. She turned to Talia and looked at her expectantly. "When are we going to give him a sponge bath?"

Talia was not sure if she should laugh or cry, but she knew that she shouldn't entertain their wild imagination. Things were getting out of hand quickly. Can she allow Dawn or Zina to go there on their own? George is defenseless! Talia didn't want to think about it.

"OK, ladies. I am leaving now."

Damon was waiting for her. The last text he sent was about him working in the study and that she can find him there when she finishes her work.

Chapter 368 – A Late Visit From Nora (1)

In the study...

Maya and Caden left a while ago, and Damon was reading reports. There was always work to do, and he decided to keep busy until Talia finishes with her visit to the patients, so they can go upstairs together.

Everyone was planning to head to the Shifters nightclub, and Damon asked Talia if she wanted to go, but she refused. With everything going on, Talia wanted to stay home, and Damon accepted that wholeheartedly. He would never say no to a night of cuddles (and much more) with his kitten.

Damon told Maya and Caden to go ahead without him and he will join when he finishes work, but Maya and Caden knew that Damon had no intention of joining them.

As a bonus for staying home, Damon got to wrap up extra work while waiting for Talia to finish with Dawn and Zina.

'KNOCK-KNOCK!'

Damon raised his gaze from the monitor to look at the door while wondering why would Talia knock. Maybe she was not sure if Caden and Maya left, or... was she doing some roleplay?

Damon remembered that Talia mentioned see-through nightwear and Damon's imagination went wild. What if she was wearing a sexy number and a coat to cover it up? Should he act like a boss, and Talia will be a disobedient employee that needs punishing? He will punish her until she moans his name breathlessly right on his executive desk, and then they would move on the sofa. Or should they start from his chair? Ah, the options!

'KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!'

This series of knocks came with more urgency.

Damon adjusted his hard-on, ruffled his hair, and leaned lazily in the chair to look extra attractive, and then he called, "Come in!"

The door cracked open, and Damon's expression froze when he saw the person.

Nora.

Damon craned his neck to see if there was anyone behind her and he frowned when she closed the door. It was just Nora.

Somehow, Damon had a bad feeling about this.

So far, three out of four guests from the Red Moon pack caused him trouble, one way or another. Is this the part where he gets four out of four? This must be some kind of a record!

But the worst part was that Nora dared to come to the study without being summoned. If that were Tony or Maddox, Damon would assume they have something pack-related to discuss, but what can Nora talk about with Damon?

Her sickly-seductive smile told him that she didn't come to talk.

"Alpha Damon...", Nora called in a sultry voice that made his insides churn. "Am I disturbing you?"

Yes! I am very much disturbed!

'Kick her out of here!', Damon's wolf growled.

"Miss Nora, can I help you?", Damon asked stiffly while struggling to contain his wolf. Crippling Nora didn't sound like a wise thing to do. 'Calm down! She will leave. No need for violence.'

His wolf grumbled but eased up with hostility.

Nora smiled while making her way toward Damon in slow motion. "I heard that you are working late, and I was wondering if I can help you."

Damon's senses for danger were tingling but he kept his cool expression on. "You are a guest, Miss Nora. It would be impolite if I asked you to work. You should be having fun with..." He wanted to say Marcy, but he realized how that would take her attention to the topic he should avoid. "...other guests."

"Oh, I don't mind. I like to be useful. Besides, who said that working won't be fun?"

Damon remembered that Maya told him how Nora was taken care of. Maya wouldn't lie to Damon, but why was Nora here? "Shouldn't you be in the Shifters nightclub?"

Nora bobbed her head. "I told Mindy that I will go with Maya, and I told Maya that I will go with Mindy, and here I am, available to help you. Is there something I can do to ease your load? Anything is fine." She paused and gave him a seductive look. "Anything."

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Damon's brows came together in a frown. The fact that she tricked both Maya and Mindy in order to stay in the packhouse, told Damon that Nora won't give up easily.

"Miss Nora, there is nothing here for you to do. I will get one of my warriors to escort you to the Shifters nightclub so that you don't waste your evening here."

Nora pouted. "Come on, why are you so cold? Don't pretend that you don't remember."

Damon's insides tightened as the sense of crisis enveloped him. "Remember, what?"

"You were visiting the Red Moon pack and I came to your room. I offered you tea, singing a song, a massage, or myself. You picked the last."

Damon thought that the room was spinning as images of him taking Nora from behind flashed in his mind.

Damn it! It would be easier if she came to his study with a knife in her hand.

The only good thing was that Talia was not present to hear Nora's nonsense. Actually, it was not nonsense. It was the only time Damon was with a woman (other than Talia) after he found out that Talia was his mate.

He was stupid and he didn't understand the bond, and he was lucky that Talia's wolf was deep in slumber because if that beast was awake, Talia would feel the pain of her mate betraying her.

Yes, Damon didn't acknowledge their mate connection then, and he didn't know Talia's name or feel the addictive sparks that make him feel alive... but none of those changed the fact that he betrayed Talia. He will never forgive himself that ignorant act, and it seems that Nora didn't forget it.

Guilt was eating Damon from the inside, and he felt the urgency to get Nora out of his sight.

"That was then, Miss Nora. Please leave before someone sees you here and gets a wrong idea." And that someone would be Talia.

Nora cocked an eyebrow. "Are you worried about Marcy? She is not here. I waited for everyone to leave for the Shifters nightclub before coming here. Only some Omegas are around, and I'm sure they are not important." She moved closer to his desk and leaned over it. "No one will know."

Damon felt rage bubbling inside him. He was about to respond, but the words got stuck in his throat when he realized that the door behind Nora was open. He craned his neck to see Talia narrowing her eyes at the scene of Nora leaning over his desk.

He failed to realize in time how the rage that consumed him was not his.

Cold sweat drenched Damon's back. Based on Talia's expression, this was not good. How much did she hear?

Chapter 369 – A Late Visit From Nora (2)

Damon cursed internally. Stupid Nora! How is it possible that she ignored the fact that Damon didn't spare her a glance since she arrived at the Dark Howlers pack? Did she think how he was playing coy? And why did she come to the study and flap her mouth?

Damon felt like strangling Nora. The mental image of her dying felt oddly satisfying. Didn't James say no one would miss her?

'Now we are talking!', Damon's wolf exclaimed in his head.

Damon cursed silently. 'Stop with that nonsense. We need to pacify Talia who is about to explode.'

'Mate will be pacified when we snap Nora like a twig.', Damon's wolf said excitedly while urging Damon to spill blood. 'If you did that right away, we wouldn't be in this trouble. Tear her limbs off!'

'You are NOT helping!'

Damon decided to ignore the voice in his head and focus on what mattered. Talia.

"Kit...", he swallowed the rest when Talia shot him a glare, and he understood that the soft approach won't work. He needed a different strategy.

Damon cleared his throat. "Talia, good that you are here. I was just telling Miss Nora how she should go and have fun with other guests."

Nora eyed Talia condescendingly. Yes, Nora noticed the cozy mood between Damon and Talia during dinner, but Nora saw Talia as an assistant who was warming Damon's bed. Surely, a Beta's daughter has an advantage over some skinny nobody, and also... Damon didn't kick her out, which should mean Nora has a chance, and this was not a chance she was willing to pass on easily.

"You think that Miss Nora should go?", Talia asked Damon without removing her gaze from Nora. "I would like her to explain why she is here. It must be important when she came to visit you so late in the evening. I must wonder, if you were not here but in the bedroom, would she go to look for you there?"

Nora rolled her eyes at Talia. "There is no need to talk in riddles. You know very well why I am here."

Talia felt her insides boiling from anger. "What gave you the courage to come and offer yourself to Alpha Damon?"

"What makes you think that you can monopolize him?", Nora responded with a question. "A man like him has a big appetite that little you can't satisfy. Why don't you think about what Alpha Damon needs?"

Talia couldn't believe this. "And you think that he needs you?"

"Well, I am still here. If he didn't want me, he would tell me to scram."

Damon swallowed a mouthful of air. Didn't he tell her to leave already? It seems that Nora filtered out those parts.

Talia's eyes moved to Damon. "Do you want her here?"

Damon shook his head like a rattle drum, but he was behind Nora, so she didn't see how panicked he became.

"Why do you make it sound like I need an invitation?", Nora asked Talia with a frown. "I am a guest in this packhouse, and it's not like I sneaked in without permission. I knocked and Alpha Damon said I can come in. Who are you to decide if I should stay or leave?" Nora's lips lifted into a grin. "Alpha Damon and I are not strangers. You see, when he visited the Red..."

'PAK!'

Damon karate-chopped Nora at the back of her neck and she fell on the floor like a ragdoll.

When Talia appeared, Damon was caught by surprise and he needed a moment to find the right approach and minimize his losses. He knew that if Nora continued talking, he will be in a heap of trouble. He needed to shut her up, and he needed to do it fast, and he did... but how can he explain that he just knocked Nora out?

And here it was, Talia's question full of anger, "Why did you do that?"

Damon felt beads of sweat forming on his forehead.

Think, Damon! Think!

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And just like that, in a moment of crisis, Damon got an idea.

"Your eyes."

Talia was confused. "My eyes?"

Damon nodded earnestly. "Specks of silver were emerging, and I had to take Nora out before she realizes how awesome you are. You saw the situation. Nora was here throwing herself shamelessly at me and trying to sow discord in our relationship. I could deal with all that, and I wanted to send her away amicably in order not to escalate and potentially owe James a favor, but if Nora saw your ability, we would be in trouble. I had to act swiftly."

Talia's brows came together. Specks of silver in her eyes? Talia was not sure if Damon was telling the truth or if he was trying to swindle her. Yes, she was angry, and she wanted to slap Nora into tomorrow, but she was not out of control, and there was no hot sensation in her stomach.

After all, everyone knew that Nora was sleeping around and targeting high-ranking members, and Talia was mentally ready that Nora will make her move on Damon. It was just a matter of when.

However, the biggest giveaway of how something was off were Damon's emotions. He was a nervous wreck, and Talia could feel it.

"What was she trying to say, Damon? It sounded like you know each other very well. How come you were not friendly with Nora during dinner? Don't tell me that you fucked her also!?! Is that why you made sure she can't talk?", Talia squeezed through her teeth.

Damon's insides were tied into painful knots. Talia said the word 'fuck', which meant she was furious. His kitten never uses such crass words.

He wanted to deny it, but he knew that would be just one lie on top of another.

Damon didn't tell Talia about Nora because it would only upset her, and it wouldn't change anything. When they were at the Lightclaw pack, Damon pretended that he didn't know why Nora would come to his room.

The truth was that Damon barely remembered Nora from the Red Moon pack. Taking Nora from behind was just one of the thousands of similar experiences, and it didn't stand out in any way other than him feeling unsatisfied because he wished that was Talia. If Damon knew that Nora would repeatedly come for seconds, he would chase her away from his room at the Red Moon pack, even without Talia in the picture.

But this was not about one annoying she-wolf who wouldn't take no for an answer. This was about Talia and his guilt that was clashing with Talia's anger and wreaking havoc in his body. His insides were churning, and he thought that he was about to throw up.

Damon shoved his hand into his hair. There was no way he would say that he fucked Nora, but he couldn't lie.

"Do you really want me to answer that?"

Talia pressed her lips into a line, and Damon was quick to approach her.

He wanted to hold her hands, but she stepped away to avoid him. "Don't touch me!"

Chapter 370 – A Late Visit From Nora (3)

Talia knew that Damon was promiscuous, and she told herself many times that the past will be in the past, but Nora was right there, and Talia couldn't stop all kinds of thoughts from surfacing into her mind.

"I didn't realize that you came to the Red Moon pack to shag both Nora and Marcy. Did you have more women on your list?", Talia spoke angrily.

Damon cursed under his breath. If he denies sleeping with Marcy, it will confirm that he slept with Nora. Sure, Talia already caught up on that, but he didn't want to say it. And Talia was still talking.

"Did bumping into me at the Red Moon pack disrupt your plans?" Her eyes moved toward Nora. "It seems it didn't because you were dipping your pecker in whoever was willing even after you found out that you have a mate!"

Damon knew he deserved it, but he didn't want to allow this to escalate more than it did already.

"Kitten, listen... you know I was a scoundrel, and I did all kinds of despicable things. However, since I realized what the mate bond is and what we have, I am a changed man." This was the truth. "Don't judge me based on my initial ignorance. Yes, I needed some time to understand what's important, but since you came here I didn't touch any other woman. Please, don't let my past spoil what we have."

Talia's chest was hurting, and she could barely breathe. She felt his remorse and she knew he meant it, but still... "It's easy for you to say. What if that was my past? What if men who bedded me were popping up every few days? How would you deal with it?"

The thought of Talia's non-existent exes was making Damon's temper rise as smoldering jealousy that can only be calmed by spilling blood, but he was aware that he had no right to be upset, so he swallowed all those emotions.

Talia knew everything already and he didn't know how to fix it, so he kept quiet.

If she was shouting at him or hitting him, things would be better, but she looked at him with hurt and disappointment, and that was killing him on the inside.

Seeing that Damon was not saying anything, Talia turned on her heel and moved to leave the study.

"Where are you going?", Damon asked with urgency, and Talia's steps halted.

When she entered the study, Talia felt fury swelling inside her and she thought that she will rip Nora into pieces, but the truth was that Talia was tired of fighting with the ghosts of Damon's past.

Talia's wolf was still sleeping while her powers were emerging, Axel wanted to take her away, more and more people were talking about her as a future Luna, Marcy's and George's situation was threatening to bring many problems, and Talia was not sure how much more she can handle without crumbling.

Her biggest pillar of support was tainted with women who experienced his intimate embrace and that was like a knife lodged into Talia's heart, and every time one of those women emerged, Talia felt like someone twisted the knife, causing her soul to cry in agony.

She wanted to drown in the comfort that came with Damon's proximity, but how can he comfort her when he was the source of her pain?

Talia felt the need to curl into a corner and hide her presence until things get better, or at least until she learns to blur out the mental image of Damon and Nora.

"I'm tired, Damon. I want to rest."

So many things happened, and Talia was looking forward to snuggling with Damon, but instead of belonging his embrace could provide, Talia ended up seeing Nora trying to get her hands on Damon, and she found out that Damon slept not only with socialites, models, princesses, and other women of high society that were trying to be his Luna, but he slept with certified sluts also. How could she be OK with that?

"Kitten...", he called. "Can I say one thing?"

Talia stood motionlessly, silently giving him permission to talk.

"Do you remember when we met in the kitchen of the Red Moon pack?"

Talia nodded. How could she forget? Damon spoke to her, and he examined her bruises under the refrigerator light, and he looked genuinely concerned about her.

Damon continued, "That was the first time I touched you. That was the first time I felt the sparks and knew that the mate bond was real. After that, I didn't touch any other woman. That's the truth."

Talia pressed her lips into a line. She knew he was telling the truth, but did this change things?

Seeing that Talia had no intention to respond, Damon asked, "What do you want me to do with Nora?"

"She is your mess. I don't want to think about her or you. I need time to calm down." And she continued moving toward the door.

The moment Talia's form disappeared from his field of vision, Damon felt rage and anguish swelling within him and he didn't know if those were his or Talia's.

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Damon looked at Nora and he wanted to punch her until she turns into a meat paste. He never hated a person so much.

He hated his past self that was ignorant and stubborn, and he hated the most that he couldn't take it back.

Damon wanted to rush after Talia and fix things, but the reality was that he didn't know what to say. The truth would only make things worse and lying was not an option either because she already knew everything and... he didn't want to lie to her.

Damon moved swiftly behind his desk and opened the security video feed on his computer. His heart calmed a little when he saw Talia entering their room. At least she didn't leave, and that should be a good sign.

He could feel that Talia's anger was morphing into sadness and if he knew how to make it better, he would do it without a second thought.

A minute later, two soldiers were in the study, awaiting orders.

Damon looked at Nora and thought about his options. If he removes the personal hatred he feels due to his predicament, Nora's crime was being a slut, and he didn't know how to punish her for that. Technically, he should warn her to stay away, but he had a feeling that won't work, so he thought of something safer.

"Take her into the dungeon.", Damon said.

He will think about what to do with her later.

The warriors dragged Nora out, and Damon groaned in frustration. He will need to ask James to come up with a coverup story for Nora's absence and he hated the idea of owing another favor to the teenager.

Damned Nora! If she didn't come, he would be enjoying his time with Talia. Talia said that she will wear sexy nightwear, and he imagined ripping it off and feasting on Talia's delicious body... but after this fiasco, Damon will be lucky if Talia doesn't chase him to sleep on the sofa with damned plush toys!

And this time, jumping into a waterfall won't save his sorry ass. He needed something drastic... something that will show Talia how she is special and how he will do anything to make her happy.

Talia's sadness was killing him, and he needed to fix it. Somehow.