

And Then There Were Four by Lilith Carrie

Chapter 101: Back from the Grave

Damian.

Waking

on the cold ground, I took in my surroundings. After hours and hours of torture, I couldn't take any more and

quietly slipped into oblivion. It was clear I had been placed in the dungeon of whatever building they had taken me to.

The damp smell of the air filled my senses, causing the sweeping feeling of nausea to flow through my body. Alokaye had tricked me. He had come after me, even though he had seemed satisfied with Ivy's response before.

Deep down, I knew he wasn't done with me, and even though I had known that, I let myself get carried

away hoping to save myself. I was a fool, and looking around at my confines, I now understood now how much of a fool I had been.

Placing my hands on the floor, my

wrist shackled with silver, I pushed myself up into a sitting position and groaned at the pain surging through me as I moved. At least the silver reminded me of what I was.

Otherwise, I wouldn't be as affected.

The words of the woman in the woods burned into my brain.

I wasn't dying per se, but I wasn't living either. At the end of the day, my relationship to Ivy had been both a blessing and a **curse**.

The creaking sound of iron doors opening caught my **attention** in the darkness. Turning my gaze to the left, I looked

up towards the long, dark staircase waiting for my tormentor to approach me again.

Alpha Richard was the man who had taken pleasure in tormenting me for hours. He was convinced I was the one who had

killed his son. That there was no way a woman had taken down the son of an Alpha.

Especially one who had no prior knowledge of our ways.

Little did he know, though, Ivy was not any ordinary woman, and even though the whispers through the halls of the building said so, he refused to believe it. He refused to believe that some girl who didn't know anything about our culture could outwit and outsmart him.

As the footsteps approached, I glared at Richard's shadowed figure as it stepped into the light. He didn't seem as pleased now with being here as he had been hours before. Instead, he seemed uncertain, and as he moved toward me, he hesitated.

Furrowing my brows, I heard the shuffling of feet and spotted Alokaye approaching from where Richard had come. "Ah, good. You're awake."

"Yeah, you could say that," I croaked as I lifted my burning wrists to show the blood still slowly pooling around me. "I don't think I would give these accommodations five stars, though."

Laughter escaped Alokaye as he nodded.

"It pains me **to see** you like this, Damian. You are a great alpha. The problem is, you have a habit of not listening to what I tell you. We all know Ivy was the one who killed those people. She is a **threat** to us all."

A scoff echoed from Richard's lips as **he crossed his arms** over his chest.

"What's wrong, Richard? Do you find it hard that even Alokaye **believes a woman** is capable of something like this?"

"Go fuck yourself, Damian." Richard snapped. "If your mate did it I will kill her."

"My mate didn't kill anyone! Instead of accusing her you should be out there finding the murderer."

Alokaye glanced over his shoulder at Richard and laughed. "You think this idiot wolf is the one who actually killed the three people in that cabin? Do you honestly think that Damian would have been able to kill a Nephilim?"

"A Nephilim?" I replied, narrowing my brows.

"Oh, she didn't tell you? I'm sure that she knows, considering she has such a close connection with the gods, they would have told her what she did. Yes, your dear mate ingested Nephilim. Disgusting, isn't it?"

Alokaye seemed absolutely delighted by the notion, even if that was problematic. Those creatures were rare to find, and even when they were found, they were typically used for the raw purity they possessed.

“If you know that I’m not the one that killed them, then why am I here?”

Hesitating, he seemed to think over what I asked, and slowly he nodded his head from side to side before shrugging his shoulders.

“**I can see where** you would be confused, but that actually is a

surprise. Patience is an important attribute to have. In time, you will get the answer you seek.”

His words sent a chill down my spine I didn’t recognize. For hours I had been trying to reach my brothers or even Ivy, but with the silver in place, I was unable to.

I wanted to reach out and warn them to tell Ivy I loved her, that I was sorry for the things that had happened, and I should have listened to her. I wanted more than anything to travel back in time and never leave the pack, but that was not the path I chose.

“Then get on with it, Alokaye, stop playing games, and finally explain what it is you want, because you and I both know that I’m not leaving this place, so what’s holding you back?”

Running his tongue over his teeth, he took a moment before his smile grew wide.

“Perhaps you’re right. Maybe I should get on with it. Although, if I rushed into what I wanted to do, there was a chance would fail. I have to wait for the perfect moment to make my move.”

Groaning in frustration, I rolled my eyes and looked down at the bloodied floor beneath me. Was it honestly hard to get a straight answer nowadays?

“It’s always the same with you people,” I muttered, shaking my **head**.

“What’s on your mind?”

Taking a moment, I let laughter **escape me as my eyes looked** up to meet his again.

“**Do you really** want to know what’s on my mind?”

Alokaye smirked, nodding his head. “Yes, actually. Please enlighten us about what intrigues you.”

“Okay...” I chuckled, readjusting the way I was sitting. “I think you’re both ridiculous. I don’t think either of you knows what’s going on, and honestly, I don’t think the council knows I’m even here. So instead of the bullshit, take me to someone who knows what the fuck is going on.”

Richard growled, taking a step forward as if he wanted to strike. Yet he stopped when Alokaye lifted his hand. “Very well. If you want to know exactly what is going on, then I will give you that much information.”

He didn’t waste time gesturing for two guards to grab me. Their rough manhandling as they moved me from the dungeon towards the stairs had my jaw clenched in pain.

“Where are you taking me?” I seethed as my eyes met his briefly.

“To get answers, of course. That is what you wanted, isn’t it?”

Staring at him for a moment, he turned back in front of me and continued walking. The stairs were longer than I thought, but as soon as we stepped from the dungeon, I was blinded by the light of the halls. The crisp white coating making me flinch back in protest as I was taken down long white corridors straight for a set of double doors.

The same double doors my brothers and I had gone through **once before**.

“Don’t look so shocked, Damian. If you honestly think that the

Council has ever been on your kind side, you are sadly **mistaken**.”

Pushing the doors open, I was dragged inside before the **elders** and dropped onto the marble flooring. The blood dripping from my body slowly pooled on the floor, drawing gasps from the elders I hadn’t expected to hear.

“What is the meaning of this?” The Grand Elder said as glared down at me. “Why is Damian in the state he is in?!”

My current state outraged the Grand Elder, but as Alokaye stepped forward, I had a feeling it wouldn’t last very long. “Damian helped in the murders of elder Harrison and the son of Alpha Richard. I brought here him to seek his punishment.”

“Lies,” I snapped as I let out a low growl.

“You will hold your tongue, Damian. I will speak with you in a moment.” The Grand Elder replied as he turned his gaze back to Alokaye. “What proof do you have of this to accuse the Alpha of something this severe and punish him from the looks of it without approval?”

"I have plenty of proof."

"Damian, what do you have to save for yourself?" The Grand Elder asked, turning his attention back to where I kneeled upon the cold ground.

"They are lies, Grand Elder. I had nothing to do with those murders, nor did anyone in my pack. The elder left our pack perfectly healthy, and Alokaye was given proof of that. Richard is simply using this as an opportunity to kill me. He **wants** my land and my pack."

"Lies," Richard growled, hitting me. The blow caused two guards to hold him back, and the Grand Elder looked down on him in disappointment.

"You will refrain from touching him. Do not make me cast you into the same position that he is. Everyone is allowed a fair trial, and I demand to see the proof."

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"It's proof you want, your honor. It's proof I have. Not only do I have proof that Damien's mate was the one who had killed those three people in the cabin, but I have somebody who can testify against his nature that he has slowly lost his mind, considering that he is no longer whole."

Alokaye's smooth words seemed to go over well with the council, but my mind blanked, trying to think of who would be a witness. There is nobody outside of my pack that knows of Ivy. Nobody except the elder counsel, of course. Everybody had heard words, but Ivy had met none of the people that were there.

So who in the hell could he possibly have someone who would have known me when I was younger and known Ivy when she got her powers?

With my mind rattled, I waited to see whom it was Alokaye had on his side. His eyes peering towards the side door of the room as a blonde figure I hadn't expected to see waltzed in as if nothing bad had ever happened to her, and smiled.

It was Allison. A woman who had long thought dead stood **there** with a wicked grin on her face, staring at me.

"That isn't **possible**. **She was sentenced to death**. Why is she still alive?" I growled in anger as I tried to **stand to my feet, to have** only three guards hold me back to the ground.

"I stopped her sentencing," Alokaye said with a grin across his lips as he looked down at me. "She had a much larger purpose, proving that you and your pack have committed great sins."

"You cannot believe a thing this woman says," I yelled out, turning my attention to the council. "She has lied and manipulated the system for many years, and she even allowed her own mate to be killed in the process. She is the worst kind of woman, and she cannot be trusted."

Silence befell the council, and as they stared at the situation before them, they seem completely confused. "I think we should deliberate and reconvene on this in the morning."

"Of course. That won't be a problem," Alokaye said.

The Grand Elders' words seemed to please Alokaye, but before the Grand Elder left with the others, he stopped, turning back to Alokaye, and frowned. "If I see him in the dungeons again, we will have a problem. He is still an Alpha and should be treated as one before being judged."

"You're giving him a room?" Richard sneered as his angry glance looked upon me. "He is a murderer."

"Enough from you Alpha Richard. We will decide this tomorrow. Until then, he will be treated as I say. This is my choice. Do you challenge my authority?"

Richard hesitated for a moment before shaking his head and **stepping back**, remaining quiet. There was **no reason to say** anything else when the elders have made their final say. The best thing to do is to be quiet and accept it.

At least for now.

"Did you miss me?" A soft, wicked voice said in my ear as I realized Allison had slowly made her way towards me while the elders' words distracted me.

"Go fuck yourself," I snapped, watching as she laughed at my comment with nothing but amusement in her eyes. "I will kill you if I get the chance."

"Well, I guess it's a good thing you won't. I told you before, Damian, you won't win."

Chapter 102: Longing for Captivity

Ivy.

Twelve hours had gone by since I birthed my children, and even though everything was perfect on that front, my mind kept going back to Damian. Talon and Hale went out to his last location only two hours ago, and I panicked every moment they were gone.

I couldn't feel my connection to Damian anymore, and as my mind tried to make me think the worse, I couldn't allow myself to.

I had to stay strong.

That to believe he was alive.

The pain I had felt earlier in the day, before I had given birth to my children, was unlike any pain I had ever felt before, and it didn't take until the pain subsided for me to realize it wasn't labor pains I was feeling.

Instead, it was the pain being inflicted upon Damian, and because I was bonded to him in a way nobody could explain; I

could feel every infliction.

I cried and cried for hours after the twins were born. Pleading with Hale, Talon, and James to allow me to go to him.

I could feel the bond weakening, but they just simply said it was in my head.

Something deep inside me, though, told me his life was

ending, and I couldn't allow that to happen, not after everything we had fought for since I had arrived.

It was constantly the back-and-forth motion of love and hate and fighting, and confliction and secrets and lies and I was done with it. I was done with all of it. I only wanted to be with my mates and my children and be whole, normal.

With the protection of the pack, we were a united front.

The only problem was outside forces sought to destroy us because we were different.

No matter what they said, though, I was not a monster. I was a normal person with unique abilities and a large heart able to love more than just one man.

I wanted to be the Luna this pack could be proud of, but I was so devastatingly misunderstood I didn't know if I could ever overcome and be what they wanted me to be.

Pushing away my fears and thoughts, I kept a wary eye out on the horizon, waiting for two of my mates to arrive, praying Talon and Hale would go to this cabin in the woods and find Damien there.

Find him alive... Maybe slightly wounded, but still alive.

Deep down, though, I knew that wouldn't be the case. I knew without a doubt who had him, and I was terrified because the person who had him wanted nothing more than to see his head on a spike.

And, eventually, mine, right next to it.

"Ivy, you must eat something," my mother said softly as !

looked out the window of the nursery, scouring the horizon for the return of my mates.

"She's right," Priscilla added as she stepped closer. "You may be worried, but your twins need you, and placing all of your concentration on things you can't change doesn't help them."

With a heavy breath, I turned from the window to face the two women who had helped keep me together over the past few weeks. "I know."

Letting my eyes sweep towards the two small bundles freshly cleaned and sleeping in their beds, I couldn't help but find myself at a loss for how I had created something so beautiful. Something so angelic.

"I don't want them to never know him," I whispered, forcing back the tears that threatened to fall. "I have been such a fool lately."

"Ivy, this isn't your fault," my mother replied as her hand fell upon my shoulder. "The gods have things planned for us, and we must accept the fates they choose."

"No," I snapped, shaking my head as I wiped away a loose tear that had escaped my eyes. "I refuse to believe he is dead. He will be back soon."

Silence fell around us as a soft knock on the door drew my attention. "How are we doing?" James asked with a smile spread across his lips.

"I'm okay. Just worried,"

Clearing the space between us, he wrapped his arms around me and kissed the side of my head. "He isn't dead, Ivy. I can

still feel the connection as his brother. It's just faint."

Looking up at him, I held back a sob. "What does that mean?"

"Oh, Ivy, don't cry. It means he is alive, but they are using silver to dull his senses."

"See, you have nothing to worry about," my mother added, trying to reassure me. "You need rest."

There was no way I was going to sleep, though. Pulling back from James, I went back to the window and continued to stare out over the horizon. Until my mates were home, I could not feel comfort.

"I need them all back, James. Until they're home, I won't find peace."

Something deep inside me was growing, and every moment my mates were a way, I felt it sending me into a spiral I didn't know if I could come back from. It was just another piece of the puzzle that left me confused.

"We must do whatever it takes to bring him home," I said.

"We will, Ivy," James said firmly. "But we won't be able to do our job if we are worrying about you. So I need you to rest and eat so I know that you're okay."

Nodding my head slowly, I moved from the window and walked toward my bed. After having the twins, I needed something of Damian's to calm my racing mind, and the only thing I found comfort in was the bedding from his room James had brought to me.

Laying upon my bed, I wrapped myself in the blanket and

closed my eyes

I didn't have to worry about the twins and them being okay. With my mother, Priscilla, and James here, I would be able to rest. At least for now.

Damian.

Dragged down the hallway after I met with the Elder Council, I was tossed into a white room and locked in. The silver shackles upon my wrist had been removed, but then an injection of silver had been placed in my veins.

It didn't matter what I did. They were going to prevent me from reaching out to the others. Realizing I had no form of communication made my heart sink. I would have given anything in that moment to contact them to make sure the pain I had felt from Ivy wasn't because of the pain I had received.

My eyes swept around the room, taking in the all white decor and the blood that was slowly dripping from my body onto the floor.

I was creating a mess, but it was a mess that the elders had caused.

That Alokaye and Richard had caused.

That stupid prick Alpha was going to meet his end if it was the last thing I did. Even in my weakened state, my brothers were not forgiving.

And Allison-I couldn't believe she was still alive.

To know they had spared Allison's life for something so meaningless as an accusation I had murdered somebody, or that someone from my pack had murdered them and I was protecting them, was absolutely ridiculous.

I mean, yes, I was protecting Ivy.

She had killed those people, but that didn't justify the right for Allison to still be alive after everything she had done, after the betrayals and pain she had caused, not to mention trying to kill Talon.

That woman was evil, and no matter how they tried to spin this, I would find a way to break free and kill her. I would rip her to shreds... unless Ivy did it first.

Nothing was what I would be able to do until I got rest.

My energy was absolutely depleted, and I desperately needed a shower. Making my way towards the bathroom, I turned on the shower's hot water and stood beneath it, letting it wash away the grime and dirt upon me.

Multiple lacerations and cuts marred my body, and I knew without a doubt they would heal, but the pain was mentally inflicted by them would always remain.

I had been careless and had not thoroughly thought about the consequences of my actions before I trekked out on the journey to find that creature.

Now, in the mayhem of everything, Allison was going to get her way of destroying the pack and taking it over for herself.

That was the only thing she had ever wanted: power and authority.

She may have had it for a short while when Zane was alive, but the moment I came of age, everything started becoming a complication. At first, she complained about me, and after months and months of trying to prove I was unfit to take over, she started coming on to me, wanting me to see things from a different light.

It was disgusting how she acted, and I was repulsed by her, but out of respect for the things she had done for my brothers and me, I had allowed her to live back then. If I

knew what I knew now, back then I would have done things completely differently. I would have ripped her apart the moment I turned eighteen.

Cleanly dressed, fresh from the shower, I sat on the edge of the bed and waited to see if somebody would come to the door. From prior stays here, I knew it was close to dinnertime, or at least that's what I had assumed by the things I had seen in the hallways on the way to the room.

If it was, it meant they should bring me food soon. I just wasn't entirely sure who that was going to be. I had a chance. A chance to break out of this place, and even in my weakened state, I would fight that, the last breath, to get home to Ivy.

When my waiting seemed to be never-ending, the sound of voices floated towards me from the other side of the door.

"Why is he being treated like a guest?" the feminine voice said.

"Because that is what the Council wants, and you will do well to listen to them. If this is going to work, we need them to believe us," Alokaye replied with a voice I knew distinctively.

"It isn't fair, though. This isn't what was promised to me."

"It doesn't matter what you think is fair, woman. You will do as you're told. At the end of the day, when the Solstice moon rises, things will be righted," Alokaye replied as if he was seething in anger at the question she was asking.

It took me a moment of processing before I realized the female speaking was Allison. For her to be acting this way, it meant she wasn't at the top of the information pyramid, and that itself was curious.

Whatever they discussed revolved around the moon that was to take place in a week's time. What did the moon have to do with me?

Slowly the voices died down, and the echoes of their footsteps drifted away. Left reeling with questions, my brows narrowed in confusion.

Whatever they were planning was directed towards my pack, and the longer I was away, the more unprepared they would be. I had to protect them.

I had to get out.

My pack... my brothers... my mate and children... they all depended on my escape.

Chapter 103: A New Alpha

Hale.

Three days had passed since Ivy had the children, and Damian was pronounced missing. I wasn't sure what to expect, but I stepped into my role as alpha of the pack to ensure everything ran smoothly.

We had gone to the cabin where the seer was Damian

supposedly met. It wasn't hard for us to find the location with the information he had left on his desk. However, as soon as we got there, it was clear the woman had been long gone, which was lucky for her, considering I would have torn her to shreds to find my brother.

The disheartening feeling of coming home empty-handed wasn't something I wanted to do again. The look in Ivy's eyes when she threw open the front door only to find that Damian wasn't with us... it haunted my mind.

"Have there been any recent signs?" I asked Talon, who walked through the office door looking grimmer than he had the day before.

"No, but I do have patrols watching the borders expecting the worst if it comes to it. We have to find Damian. Have you seen

the state that Ivy is in?"

I had seen the state of her.

Every single day she refused to eat the right amount of food or get the right amount of rest, and every time we tried to

force her to do it, she would snap as if she was slowly losing **herself**.

For the first time in my life, I had questions I didn't have the **answers** to, and it burned a hole through my heart, knowing there was nothing I could do right now to help Ivy. We knew who had done it. We knew the Council had Damian, but without proof, we couldn't just storm in there and accuse them of something.

"I'm at a loss for what to do to help her. She's spiraling, and I only see her smile when she's with the twins. She is happy and content one minute, and then it's like someone flips the switch as soon as they're asleep. She becomes unstable."

Talon stared at me. His facial expressions were unreadable, but I had no doubt he saw the same things I did in his mind, "What do you want to do, then? We have to find a way to be able to help her."

Talon was right. We had to help her. I was just at a loss for how to do that. It was hard trying to decipher what was wrong with her while trying also to find my brother.

Letting a heavy sigh escape me, I shook my head. "There's been nothing that's been brought to the border, no sort of message or anything."

"It's only been three days, though," Talon replied. "If they were going to come, they would have surely come by now. The only thing I can think of is the Council didn't do it, and someone else is behind it."

Talon's reasoning had crossed my mind more than once, but I didn't want to be so hasty as to believe the Council was actually on our side. They weren't pleased by the outbreaks

that had happened the day we were all taken to court before.

I have thought about that situation a million times over. Tried to contemplate what exactly was going to happen, but every single time I searched for answers, I came up empty-handed.

"I can help with that," Kate said from the open doorway as she stared at Talon and I with determination on her face. I hadn't even realized she had gotten back from her trip. The day after the children were born, she had made her way back home in search of answers from her own family.

"Did you just return?"

"Obviously, I'm glad to see that the two of you are happy to see me," she replied in a sarcastic tone as the corner of her lips turned up into a small smile.

"Did you find anything out, anything at all that could be useful?"

With a tight-lipped expression, she glanced down at her feet, rocking back and forth as she shook her head no. "In all honesty, they didn't want to let me come back."

"Yet you're here, anyway. What changed your mind?" I asked,

confused why she would come back if her mate and her family had told her not to.

"Nothing changed my mind, Hale. I was planning to come back regardless of what they said. Ivy is my friend and you

guys have become like family to me. She needs me here and my help whether or not she chooses to see it right now."

“Well, do you have a plan in mind? Because being the alpha isn’t something I’m particularly good at. I’m a book nerd.

Talon deals with patrols, James helps with training. Damien **was always** the one that ran everything. And yes, I knew some of what he did, but I was nowhere as good as he was. So any kind of help I can get right now would be brilliant,” I sighed as I plumped down into the chair behind the desk.

Laughter escaped Kate as she smiled at me. “You do make a very good book nerd, though.”

Of course, that would be what her response was.

Standing still for a moment, she stepped forward. “Look, the Council knows I wasn’t here when the murders happen. I have an alibi, and I didn’t arrive until the day the Council came seeking answers from you... ..”

“Okay, but what do you suggest doing?”

“I could go there,” she replied, shrugging her shoulders.

A scoff left Talon’s lips before the laughter erupted from him. “Angel would fucking kill us if he knew we allowed you to go there.”

“I guess it’s a good thing I came with her then,” Angel said as he stepped up behind Kate. A smile spread across Talon’s face upon seeing Angel.

Through the time Kate and Angel had been here before, Talon and Angel had formed a wonderful friendship and kept in touch with each other often. I was happy for Talon because he honestly didn’t have many friends.

“It’s good to see you, my friend” Talon said happily as he **pulled away**.

“**We can take care** of the situation,” Angel replied, “Kate and I will head to the Council, scope it out and see if we can find anything. It wouldn’t be abnormal for us to go there to pay our respects while being in town. Alokaye may turn around and think something’s up, but the Council would toss the idea out the window.”

Angel had a point. He and Kate could go up there and the Council would have no reason to suspect them of anything. It was times like this I wondered if I could really do this type of job.

I may have been an alpha, but I wasn't the oldest and I wasn't trained for this, and every day Damien was gone reminded me how much I should have paid attention to what he tried to teach me when I was younger.

"All right, then the two of you can leave at dawn. That way, it'll give you enough time to get up there as the morning sun rises, make your way around and get out of there before anybody really notices you."

"How's she doing?" Kate finally said, speaking up softly. "Is she talking much yet?"

Once again, silence enveloped us, the tension high as I cast my gaze towards the window. Ivy had spoken little in the last three days unless she was talking to the twins, and even then **it was** baby talk and cooing.

I wished more than anything to see the light of joy in her eyes once more. But now, when she gazed out staring out the window as if expecting for Damien to come strolling back up, **I saw nothing** but pain and sorrow.

"She is great with kids. They are everything to her, but outside of that... she isn't herself. Something inside of her is changing."

I wasn't sure what it was, but Talon knew exactly what **I meant**. There was something within our bond that it was changing.

"I'll see if I can talk to her. Start the conversation out slowly and see if she opens up to me." Kate's offer made me smile. Perhaps she would have better luck.

As soon as Kate, Angel, and Talon left the office, and the door was closed, I rested my head within my palms, and tried to understand where I had gone wrong.

We had gone from exotic moments of sexual bliss to chaos that consumed us. A battle for her. The loss, the love, the reuniting, almost bringing death and now? It was as if everything we had gone through was for nothing, because everything was shattered once more.

More than anything, I couldn't wait for the day when things would be normal. I didn't understand what evil out there could cause so much complication for our relationship. Never had I ever heard of wolves that went through the things we do.

It was honestly beyond ridiculous.

I wanted my mate back.

I wanted my brother back.

Deciding I would turn in for the night, I stood up from where I sat, turning off the small lamp at the desk and made my way out of my office, closing the door behind me.

I didn't get far, though, before I ran into Priscilla, coming out from the kitchen, a hot cup of tea in her hand and a low, concentrated look on her face.

"Are you retiring for the evening as well, Priscilla?" I asked her, trying to be polite and keep the conversation.

She stopped in her tracks, taking a moment as she processed my question, her eyes gazing up at me with an intensity. "I'm actually taking this cup of tea up to Ivy. She's currently speaking with Kate."

A sense of understanding washed over me, realizing Kate didn't miss a beat when it came to the opportunity of trying to make Ivy feel more at home, considering our current circumstances.

"That's good. Hopefully, she can get answers to the questions that we cannot. Why is it you looked so troubled, though?"

Priscilla was a very mysterious woman, and while my brothers were not as observant as I was, I could tell she was not saying something that may have been important.

Her wrinkled expression creased up as she smiled at me, a clicking of her tongue as she looked off down the hallway and then back at me once more.

"You have always been the most perceptive of children," she said as she let out a small sigh. "I've had visions lately, and the visions I've had are not good. There's something brewing on the horizon, and unfortunately, I cannot see past that future anymore."

Her words weren't as riddled as usual, and the concern was etched in her eyes. I'd never once heard her say she could not see into the future any more.

"That doesn't make any sense. What do you mean you can't **see past what's** coming? You're a seer who sees the future."

“Trust me, boy, I know it is my gift. However, things have changed. Fate has changed, and with it, I can no longer see past what is coming.” There was a hidden meaning behind her words, and I couldn’t understand why her gift would deny her

the ability to see the future..

If I wasn’t as worried before, I definitely was now. Priscilla was the seer of our family. The secret we hid deep within our own bones. She was the unwanted child of mates who were more complicated than usual and with her life, she had given us great reason to live.

Chapter 104: Losing Control

Ivy.

Burning fires, distant roars, signs of blood, and many more.

These were things that filled my mind every time I closed my eyes, and though I sought comfort and love that I had for my children, I felt incredibly vulnerable.

It had been three days since I’d had the children and three days since I had even touched Damien. He was still not home, and my heart broke every moment he was away.

Some might think I was being selfish because I had three more mates here that doted on me endlessly and wanted my attention, but the problem was, it was hard when part of you was missing.

I wasn’t trying to be complicated.

I wasn’t trying to ruin the relationships that I had. Everybody seemed to think I should just be okay, but nobody knows what it’s like to have a piece of you torn away.

To have someone you love taken from you, and not knowing whether they are alive or dead. That feeling was incredibly raw.

One moment you’re trying to pretend you’re okay, and the next you’re sobbing.

“Hey, you,” Kate said, knocking on my door. I hadn’t seen her since the day the babies were born. She was full of life, but

when we found out that Damian was taken, she headed back home in search of answers.

“You’re back,” I said with a small smile as I stood from where

hug I feared would end.

“I told you I’d be back now. Where are my little babies at?”

With a small giggle, she strolled over to the crib and looked down at the two sleeping babies within. They were beautiful in every way, and I was still amazed every day at how lucky was to have them.

“Castor is the sleeping beauty, as always. But her brother Pollux does not enjoy sleeping for more than three hours.”

her nose. “I still cannot believe that those are the two names that you chose. Castor is such a boy’s name, and Pollux, are you trying to have the poor kid picked on?”

Laughter erupted from my lips for the first time in days, and as it did, I watched James pop his head around the corner, staring at me with surprise.

“Holy shit, how did you make her laugh? I’ve literally been trying to do that for the past few days.”

Wide-eyed and brows raised, she stared at him, absolutely dumbfounded by his outburst. “I asked her why she picked those baby names.”

Realization dawned on him, and as he looked at the children,

tried to talk her out of picking those names and sticking with

them, but she is adamant that those are the children’s names and so, therefore, I will not argue with her.”

“They’re not that bad. Castor can be shortened to Cassie, which I’m sure that she will go by, and Pollux is a strong, sturdy name, and if he really wanted to shorten, he could shorten it to Polly, which is unisex.”

Kate stared at me in disbelief, absolutely speechless, as James sighed at my response.

“Yes, but that is not the only reason you named them that,” Mom called from the other side of the nursery where she was folding baby clothes. “Why don’t you tell them the other part of the reason why you name them that?”

Shaking my head, I had breathed out heavily and took a seat back in the small rocking chair I had near their crib. My eyes fell onto my sleeping children.

“It was a dream that I had. They were the first set of twins born in Gemini. Their bloodlines are strong and if you pay close attention, you can feel their power within them...I can’t explain it.”

“So they’re Gemini twins?” Kate muttered, scrunching her brows as in confusion. “That’s impossible. There haven’t been Gemini twins in what-”

“In the last one hundred years,” Priscilla said as she walked through the door with a cup of hot tea. “Sorry it took me so long, my dear Hale had a few questions to ask me.”

Taking the teacup from her, I smiled and gave her a silent thank you. The steam from the piping hot liquid filled my nostrils, and I closed my eyes, sighed in satisfaction.

“This smells absolutely delicious.”

“Oh, it is, and the herbs infused in the tea will help to loosen you up and clear your minds so that you can sleep.”

I knew Priscilla was right, but the problem was every time I closed my eyes, I saw Damian dying. I knew it was my mind tormenting me because I was so concerned, but to picture him on a boulder as a sacrificial lamb being slaughtered, it was a horrible sight to behold.

“I will try to get some sleep. The problem is whether Pollux will allow me to get some sleep.”

Everybody in the room chuckled, and my mother smiled, standing to her feet as she walked towards me. “Did you express milk today like I told you to do with the pump?”

Staring at her for a moment, I nodded my head slowly. I had a breast pump, but being a new mother, it felt unnatural. Even though it was super convenient, I enjoyed the feeling of having my children nurse from me. Having my body supply them with an ability to live.

“I did. I stocked just like you said. There is enough for tonight, and tomorrow morning.”

“Good,” she replied with a smile on her face as she glanced at Priscilla. “Priscilla and I will take tonight’s feeding shifts with the milk that you’ve stored. You will sleep and not wake until morning.”

“That’s easier said than done, mother,” I scoffed as I lifted the teacup to my lips.

“It isn’t as hard as you think, and instead of trying to deflect

the situation, try to accompany it and agree.”

There was no winning with this woman. She refused to leave, no matter how many times she had talked to her mate Blake. He was growing impatient, but she told him he could come up here if he was so concerned.

“Oh, speaking of that, I wanted to let you know that your mate sent me with parting words to give to you,” Kate said as she turned to my mother, whose eyes narrowed slightly before she crossed her arms.

“Is that right? And what were those words?”

“He simply said that if you don’t come home, he is going to come here and drag you home, regardless. He wants your one-on-one game night fun. Whatever the fuck that means.”

A twinkle in my mother’s eye caught me off guard, and I knew exactly what that was a reference to. “Kate, you literally just passed a sex message,” I said nonchalantly, watching as Kate’s eyes widened and a look of disgust crossed her face as she glanced between my mother and I.

“OK, that’s just absolutely fucking disgusting. I am not your sex correspondent person over here. You two need to learn how to figure out your arrangements.”

Laughter filled the space around us as we enjoyed Kate’s disgust over what she had just done. Moments like this were the ones I looked forward to.

“I know that you’re trying to keep my spirits high, but I have to know... did you find anything okay, Kate?”

The change in conversation seemed to bring silence to the

room. Each of them looked at each other before Kate sighed. “I wasn’t able to find anything, but we have a solution.”

“Solution? What kind of solution?”

“Angel and I are going to the council at dawn,” she said, catching me off guard.

“No,” I said quickly, shaking my head. “It’s dangerous... you can’t, Kate.”

“Hey, it’s going to be okay.”

“I said no!” I roared, jumping to my feet. Those in the room jumped back from me in fear. “I will lose no one else to these people.”

“Ivy, my love...” James said softly with his hands in front of him as he stalked toward me. “I need you to take deep breaths and calm down, please.”

“Don’t tell me to calm down.”

"Ivy. Look at yourself... like actually look," James said, causing me to flinch at the tone of his voice. Unsure for a moment, I

let my eyes cast toward a mirror hanging on the wall. The reflection was one I didn't recognize, and flinching back, I gasped.

My eyes were no longer the celestial blue but pitch black, and my hair a flaming white with tendrils of darkness spreading across my body.

"What's wrong with me?" I whispered, trying to understand what was going on. However, soft cries caught my attention

and turned my focus toward the crib.

As if a switch had been turned off, all the anger and fear washed away from me, and quickly I made my way towards Pollux, picking him up. "It's okay, don't cry."

"Ivy, how long has this been going on?" Priscilla asked from where she was standing.

"I have never seen that before..."

It wasn't a lie. I had never done that before, but it didn't matter. My baby needed me, and the time to visit was over.

"Ivy, this is important. It's clear to everyone that things are not well with you right now. Your emotions are all over the place. You're changing... not eating right-" James replied.

I knew he was right. I didn't understand my feelings, and deep down I felt something inside me growing that was different from before.

"Something's wrong with me, but I'll be fine. We need to find Damian."

Turning my back to them, I was done with the conversation. There was nothing else to say, and even though I knew I needed to take care of myself, I refused to think about being right now.

I could only think about making our family whole and getting revenge on those who had harmed us. No one could deny what happened to Damian.

Thad felt his pain, and as the darkness deep inside me slowly grew, I found a new determination. One that would lead me on a path of war if it must.

I would kill anyone who betrayed me, and I would protect everyone I loved.

Chapter 105: Prisoner

The next few days went by slowly, and as they did, I slowly followed further and further into the darkness, unable to bring myself up. I wasn't sure what I was getting myself into with everything going on, but I had, without a doubt, the darkest of feelings.

Every day not knowing if Damien was safe was a step putting me one step closer to completely losing myself, and the only thing holding me grounded was the twins silently sleeping upstairs in their crib.

I was an utter mess. A complete disaster.

Making my way downstairs, I tried to push away the darkened thoughts evading my mind. Heading toward the kitchen, the indistinct murmurs of conversation drew me to a complete stop as I turned and watched the many figures through the cracked-open doorway and Damian's office.

What the hell?

"We have to tell her what's going on," James said softly as I watched him gaze towards Hale, whose back was towards me, staring out the window as if in deep thought.

"No," he replied firmly, letting out a heavy breath. "We all saw how she's changing, and you, James, of all people, saw first hand what Damian not being here is doing to her. Since she had the twins, she's completely different."

Hale's response broke my heart just a little. He was never the

one to keep information from me, and hearing him tell James not to include me hurt. I didn't find myself to be completely different, and yet he was acting as if I was turning into some kind of monster.

"This isn't right. It was delivered to the border for her. We need to let her see it." Talon all but growled, stepping forward, his fists clenched at his side. He was obviously angry, and I wanted to know more than anything what he was referring to.

What had been delivered at the border they didn't want me made aware of?

"It may have been delivered for her, but the thing is, I am the acting alpha right now, and I do not see it in her best interest to read this shit, Talon. It doesn't matter what they say, we cannot give in to their demands."

Tired of listening to what they were talking about, I pushed back the anger threatening to lash out if they made one more comment about me. Its shadows twisted and rolled through my veins as if seeking an outlet.

Pushing open the doorway, I stood there, watching as their eyes turned to me. Kate's face fell as she seemed to pale. I hadn't even realized she and Angel had made it back

from the council land yet, but here she was, standing there with a grim expression on her face that spoke a million words without even saying anything.

“What is going on here?” I asked, narrowing my gaze as I stared at each of them. “We don’t hide secrets, so somebody needs to start talking.”

It’s nothing, Ivy. Honestly, just some bullshit. Why don’t you

head back upstairs and get some rest?” Hale replied as he turned to me with a small smile, stuffing whatever paper it was into his back pocket, as if I wouldn’t notice.

“Don’t talk to me as if I’m a child, Hale. I’m going to ask you one more time to give me whatever you just put into your pocket that was supposedly addressed to me per your conversation. Before things get worse.”

My warning was clear. If there was something he was hiding from me, he would face my wrath, mate or not. “Ivy-”

“No,” I said firmly, clenching my fists at my side. “Don’t you dare act like this towards me after everything we had been through?”

Stopping in his tracks, he stood staring at me with a grim expression across his face I had never seen before. “This isn’t up for discussion. My word is final.”

When the hell did Hale decide he was going to act like this? I knew Damian had made him the acting alpha before he left, but that was no reason for Hale to let this go to his head. “Don’t you dare act like that towards me?” | growled.

I watched the tick in his jaw as he gritted his teeth. The beast within him lurked just beneath his skin. “As I said. You have seen certain sides of me, but don’t think I will let you speak to me this way for one moment. I’m doing this for a reason.”

“Hale, come on, man,” Talon said softly as he and James looked at me with soft eyes.

There was clear hesitation in Hale’s eyes as he looked around at everyone in the room. I could see he didn’t want to involve me, but everybody staring at him was clear enough of an

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answer that he needed to.

With Hale distracted, I didn’t waste another moment as I quickly snatched the paper from his back pocket and took a step back. A low growl came from him as he reached for it, trying to take it back from me, but the cold glare I gave him made him hesitate in his movements.

He didn't want to fuck with me right now, because I was not in the mood.

Slowly opening the letter, my eyes peered down at the information, and my heart almost stopped. It was a letter from the Council, and they were requesting my presence in order to exonerate Damien from anything that had happened with the elders, stating they knew for a fact I was the one who killed those people.

If I didn't reply or show up in person, Damien would be sentenced for the crimes committed, even though they had no proof of who did it.

"What is the punishment for this?" I whispered softly, without looking up at the others.

"Ivy-" James replied as if he didn't want to say it.

Glancing up at them with parted lips, my eyes filled with tears as I tried to register what was going on. "What... is... the punishment?"

Hale stared at me for a moment for letting out a heavy sigh and staring down at me. "Death."

I looked at Hale, Talon, and James in absolute disgust. They were willing to let Damien die for something I had done, and

then hide it from me.

"Are you fucking kidding me? You weren't going to tell me about this? He is basically on death row for something that! did!" The betrayal ran deep.

How could they do this to me? How could they not want to inform me?

"We will not allow you to go in there like the fool and cause yourself to get caught. It's a trap, Ivy. They will not kill him," Hale snapped with anger in his eyes.

"I'm a fool? Are you really going to go down that road with me? I have done nothing but try to make this work. You're my mate, and I understand you want to protect me, but if you honestly think I am going to allow Damien, who is also my mate, to die because of something that I did, you are sadly mistaken."

Turning on my heels, push towards the door, not sure what would do, but knowing I had to do something. At least give them a reply, and then settle my twins before going there.

They couldn't hold me. I destroy them all.

However, I wasn't quick enough. Talon wrapped his arms around me as I thrashed about, kicking and screaming at him to let me go. I couldn't believe they were actually doing this, that they were going to let him die for me.

“Let me go right now, Talon!” I screamed even louder as Talon tried to help hold me back.

“Ivy, you have to stop. You can’t go. You have children to think about. They cannot afford to lose their mother. Are you

freaking insane?” James cried out in aggravation.

I didn’t want to listen to them, though. It was my fault this had happened, and the council gave me less than forty-eight hours to respond to their sentencing, or he would be killed.

“We have to save him,” I cried repeatedly, my mother standing in the doorway with tears in her eyes. They didn’t know what it was like to lose a mate.

None of them did, and it was as if no one truly understood how much pain I was in.

Held back against my will, I watched Priscilla whisper something in my mother’s ear and then watched my mother disappear up the stairs, more than likely towards the children.

Kate disappeared right behind her, as if unable to watch what was about to happen before her. As Priscilla strode forward, though, she looked to Hale and nodded her head. Some secret untold agreement between them I wasn’t privy to.

“Ivy, unfortunately, I understand how hard this is for you. But you cannot be given to them. It is part of the plan, and I need you to trust me when I say they will not kill him. They will not kill him because he is the bait they need to get to you.” I didn’t want to listen to her. No matter what she was saying, I couldn’t listen to her.

“Bait or not, I am not going to let him sacrifice himself for me,” I replied as tears streamed down my cheeks. This was the most agonizing thing I ever had to go through.

I knew I could save him, but also knowing they would not allow me to do so,

A rush of tingles crossed over my skin, and as I looked out the window, I watched a strange woman I had never seen before walking the perimeter of the house. A blue cloak over her head and sapphire eyes staring back at me.

“Who was that?” I asked, watching as Priscilla’s gaze turned towards the window and then back to me with a small smile.

“Unfortunately, that is an insurance policy that we had to make.”

Insurance policy? What the fuck did she mean that was an insurance policy?

As James and Talon lost their hold on me, my eyes darkened over as the power and rage ran through my blood. Throwing James aside, I bolted towards the door only to be thrown back five feet when I met an invisible barrier.

“What is this?” I screamed as I stood up, banging against the barrier once more, only to watch the blue-cloaked woman walk towards me, her dark black hair hanging loosely over her shoulders with a sorrowful look on her face.

“Hello, my queen,” she breathed. “My name is Alavandra from the fae realm. We have allied ourselves in a way with your family. I feel for you when it comes to my mate because I to have lost my own, but this isn’t about you. It’s about your people.”

Staring at the woman in disbelief, I smashed my fist into the barrier once more.

“Unleash me now, or you will see what I think about alliances,” I growled as I felt the darkness wash completely over me.

The woman seemed slightly startled by my comment as she

glanced toward the men I knew were staring behind. “I’m sorry, m’lady. I can not. This is to protect everyone.”

She didn’t give me a chance to say anything to her again before nodding her head and vanishing into thin air. “No!” I screamed as my legs collapsed under me, sinking to my knees. “Please let me out.”

“Alavandra is from another realm, Ivy. What is going on here is drifting elsewhere and has become much bigger than you can hope to imagine.”

Priscilla’s words weren’t comforting. Damian’s life depended on me, and while I knew the fate of the pack did as well, I couldn’t just let things go.

“Ivy-” Hale said softly as he dropped to his knees behind me. “I’m sorry... please forgive me for what I’m doing, but I promised him I would keep you safe no matter the cost.”

I was speechless, and with a broken heart and tears flooding down my face, I didn’t reply. Instead, I stood to my feet, slowly staring off at the woods that bordered our world from civilization and wept. I wept for the man I loved, and for the fate that was coming.

But most of all, I wept for the future that wouldn’t happen.

I knew my mates were trying to protect me, but I would tear apart the realms to get him.