

Chapter 32 : Opportunity

Layla's POV

"Layla, you have visitors downstairs", Mary peeked into my room and I turned to look at her

"Who is it?"

A smile crept onto her lips. "It's best if you come see for yourself"

I ran down the stairs and there was no one there and walked into the kitchen where I found Mary drying the dishes. I folded my arms and walked towards her with my brow raised.

"I never thought you do pranks Mary"

She laughed. "Harry took them for a tour outside in the garden"

"Them?"

Before she could answer me, the front door opened

"It's so beautiful"

"Thank you, Harry"

Seeing who they were the second they walked in, I screamed while jumping up and down, and they joined in, squealing in excitement as I ran up to them for a group hug. My girls were here.

"Why didn't you tell me you guys were coming?", I was still trying to catch my breath from all that screaming the second we released each other

"And ruin the surprise?", Stacy raised a brow and I shoved her up playfully before hugging them each again individually

"I missed you guys so much"

"That's why we came here, you've been scarce lately", Lelo poked my arm with her sharp finger and I winced in pain as we walked to the lounge

"It's been hectic, Damon's grandfather has been sick, and we had to take care of him".

"We?", their eyebrows rose. "What do you mean we?"

"Yeah, Damon and I"

"Oh", they chorused simultaneously, exchanging mischievous looks, and it dawned in me what they were probably thinking

"It's not what think"

Lelo laughed. "We know babe. We are just messing with you".

"So how is Damon's grandfather doing? Is he going to be okay?", Stacy asked, and I nodded.

"He's okay for now. The doctor said there is an improvement in his condition, so there is still hope".

"That's a relief", Lelo smiled as Mary served us juices, and we thanked her

"So, where is the Demon?", Stacy whisper joked and Lelo and I laughed

"He's at work"

"He's pretty loaded, isn't he? I mean this house is so big and beautiful, a person could get lost in here", Lelo complimented the interior of the house.

"Would you two like a tour?", I wiggled my eyebrows at them suggestively and they both quickly stood to their feet

"Say less"

After taking them on their grand tour, they both sprawled on the couch from exhaustion from all that walking

"I've honestly never seen a place like this", Lelo took a sip of her juice. "If I were to become homeless or something, I'm moving in with you guys no kidding"

We laughed. "As long as you're going to pay rent, I guess it's fine"

Stacy's eyebrows rose when she saw me heave a sigh. "Are you okay babe?"

"Yeah I'm fine, it's just that-", I was still in the middle of a sentence when they quickly sat beside me, sandwiching me in between so that I filled them in. I looked at both of them, laughing nervously. "I'm falling in love with Damon"

They exchanged brief looks before looking at me again
"I know it's crazy and you probably going to scowl me about it, it's just..."

"Why would we do that?", Lelo laughed, chipping in on my almost rumble. "We are in no position to scowl you over falling in love with your husband"

"We were pretty much expecting it sooner or later", Stacy added and my eyes widened a little

"What do you mean?"

They both laughed, taking my hands in theirs

"You should have seen the look on his face when you walked down the aisle, it was like he died and went to heaven or something. His eyes were bright and sparkling", she explained, earning a quick look of disapproval from Lelo.

"What Stacy is trying to say is that we saw it in his eyes that he probably fell in love with you right there on the spot. He was just pretending to hate you so that it doesn't become too obvious that he fell for you".

"He's not made out of steel you know?", Stacy wiggled her eyebrows.

"How could he not fall for you?"

"You're amazing Layla, and he probably knows just how lucky he is to have you in his life", Lelo gave my hands a gentle squeeze

"We all are"

"You guuuuuys", I was already close to tears they shushed me up before I could say anything because I will get their mascaras running. We just hugged me while sitting down, I was really happy they were here.

"You're lying!", I exclaimed when Stacy told me of her previous disastrous date she had. Damon wasn't home yet, so I gave me and the girls more time to continue catching up.

"I wish I was Lay", she rolled her eyes. "He accidentally-on-purpose left his wallet at home when it was time to pay the bill"

"So what did you do?", Lelo asked as she took a sip of her apple juice. She was a strong believer in this An apple a day keeps the doctor away thing that she tried to have as much apples and apple products she could get her hands on.

"Well, I asked to be excused to the ladies room and never looked back, I left him there", she flipped her hair to the side, causing Lelo and I to laugh

"So you mean...?"

"Yes, I left him to settle the bill himself. I didn't give a flying fish whether he washed the dishes or found another alternative way to pay the bill", she said confidently and Lelo and I exchanged looks. Stacy has always been unpredictable and crazy, that's one of the reasons I missed her terribly whenever she's not around, she knew how to handle situations effectively.

"So, Layla you mentioned something about Damon scarring some other fellow the other day at his work", Lelo sipped on her drink and both their gazes fell on me. I briefly mentioned it in our group chat the other day, and they've been dying to hear the full story.

"It was so terrifying, it's like he switched form in seconds. One second he was like this, the other like that".

Stacy let out a lazy yawn. "We know that part, get into the juicy details already"

"So this guy, Jack, was flirting with me, getting all touchy and stu..."

"While you were waiting for Damon?", Lelo questioned I nodded my head in agreement

"The nerve!", Stacy clicked her tongue while clapping her hands

"As I was saying", I rolled my eyes. "Damon just appeared out of nowhere and grabbed him by the collar forcefully and towered over him and threatened to kill him if he touched me again. There was something in his voice, that terrifying tone he used, it's like some evil spirit took over him".

Their jaws dropped

"Oh my god!", she exclaimed in union, exchanging looks yet again

"I know right?"

"That's sooooo sexy", Stacy exclaimed excitedly, causing Lelo to burst out in laughter

"I know, it was so unexpected-", I paused, throwing Stacy a glare.

"Wait, did you just say that was sexy?"

She gave a short nod

"Didn't you hear the part where I said he threatened to kill him?", I asked in disbelief and she laughed

"Obviously I did Lay but honestly, there is nothing sexier than a man who fights for his woman and isn't afraid to show it", she shrugged and Lelo nodded her head

"You're one lucky girl Lay"

"You two are crazy"

The sound of the door opening caused silence to fall upon our laughter as Damon walked in and the three of us looked at him. When he saw us, he smiled and walked towards where we were sitting.

"Ladies", he air kissed both Lelo and Stacy on the cheek, and they were a bit taken aback by that as we all exchanged looks but greeted him back with a smile. I was expecting an air kiss too, or nothing because well I wouldn't be amazed, but to my surprise, he kissed my forehead and cracked a side smile before pouring himself a glass of juice.

"Please don't stop on my account, continue with whatever you were talking about"

"That will be a tiny problem with you here", Stacy joked and he chuckled

"Oh, I see", he seemed amused as he looked at the three of us. "So it's me who's being discussed"

We denied in union while laughing, and he took a quick sip of his drink

"I'm just kidding", he laughed. "Since you don't want me to overhear your chat, how was your flight?"

"It was amazing. First class is the real deal", Lelo exclaimed excitedly.

What were they talking about?

"We didn't get to thank you yesterday for arranging for us to come here. We really are thankful", Stacy said and Damon nodded.

He arranged it?

"It's nothing, really. It's been a while since you all got together".

"That it has", Lelo added and we laughed

"Well I'll leave you ladies to it then", he was about to get up from where he was sitting but the girls quickly stopped him

"Aren't you going to join us for dinner?", Lelo asked, and he shook his head

"I had a big lunch, so I'm kinda full", he gave a small smile

"But please do stay", Stacy asked, and he looked at me as if asking for permission to the girls asking him to stay

"I don't want to intrude", he said still looking at me

"Nonsense, it's more like a get together now. We hardly even know our best friend's husband", Stacy gave me a sharp look, raising a brow at me. "Is it going to be a problem, Layla?"

"Of course not", I coughed out. "Please stay"

"Okay then", he shrugged his shoulders as he sat back down again and the girls grinned

"Damon?", I called out to him just when he was about to go into his bedroom. The girls had already been shown theirs and were both fast asleep from the long trip. I stayed till late because I couldn't sleep, so I went downstairs for a glass of milk.

"Yeah?", he turned around to face me

"Thank you for bringing the girls here, it means a lot, and I really appreciate it", I smiled politely at him, and he smiled back

"It's only a pleasure. It was the least I could do", he said, and I gave a little nod before turning on my feet to walk to my room. "Why are you still up at this time?"

I shrugged. "I couldn't sleep"

"Neither can I", he also shrugged his shoulders. "I'm going for a walk in the garden, would you like to join me?"

"Sure, I'll just go get something warm to wear in my room"

"I'll lend you my hoodie", he put out his hand for me. "Come"

"Okay", I walked towards him, placing my hand in his, and he pulled me into his bedroom and once we were in there, he walked over to the closet to get a hoodie for me but came back with a warm top. He dapped it over my shoulders, covering me with it and I turned to look at him as he zipped it all the way up

"Thank you", I pulled the strings a little, before feeling him grab my face in his hands

"You're welcome", we grazed into each other's eyes for a few seconds, a smile instantly playing on my face just by looking at him

"We should probably go"

"Yeah in a minute", his hands traveled down my arms to hold my hands in his, and I felt some kind of comfort having his strong hand covering mine. "I would like you to move in the master bedroom with me"

"Really?", my eyes widened in surprise and he nodded his head. "Can I ask why?"

"Because you're my wife, it's only right", he laughed a little. "I'd like to have you in here with me. I asked Mary to start moving some of your stuff to my bedroom this afternoon, so you can start sleeping in here tonight if you want to"

"Oh", I said quietly, dropping my eyes from his, and I felt him tilt my head up

"It's no pressure though, why don't you think about it and get back to me when you've made up your mind?"

"I'll think about it"

"That's promising enough", she smiled, before kissing both my hands.

"Let's go take that walk now, shall we?"

"Sure"

"Do you really have to go today?", I whined as Harry carried their bags to the car. The week they were here quickly went by faster than I thought it would.

"Unfortunately", Lelo wrapped her arms around me for a tight hug and I tried my best not to cry. Stacy also engulfed me in a tight hug and I never wanted to let go.

"Next time it's your turn to come to us"

"Something for the way", Mary made them her famous jam scones, and they could not stop thanking her

"It was nice to meet you, Mary", Stacy smile and Mary nodded her head

"You have to come with Layla when she visits us next time, so that it'll be our turn to spoil you", Lelo said and Mary laughed

"It was a pleasure to have you two around", she added as they hugged her again and then me and bid us goodbye. I nearly cried as the car drove away and then blowing kisses at me only reminded me that they were leaving me. Mary gave me a side hug as we watched the car exit out of the gate and I heaved a sigh.

"How about some ice cream?"

I smiled. "You know me so well Mary"

Later on that day there were continuous knocks on the door and stood up to go open while chewing on an apple. I stopped chewing the second I pulled the door and her eyes landed on mine.

"Hello Layla"

I froze on the spot, staring down to her now big swollen-can-pop-anytimebelly, with her hands so ly rubbing it. I forced the half chewed apple down my throat only to choke terribly.

"Oh my God", she gasped a little before patting me on the back and I gestured with a thumbs up that I'm fine. I signalled for her to come in and closed the door behind her.

"Are you okay?", she seemed really concerned as she turned to look at me and I gave a little nod

"I'm fine", I coughed a little to get rid of the tingly feeling at the back of my throat. "Damon's not here"

"I know, but he's on his way", she said and long silence followed as we kept stealing awkward glances at each other

"You mind if I sit down? My feet are killing me", she asked and that was then I came to my senses that I'm just letting a pregnant woman stand on her feet without offering her a seat.

"Where are my manners? Of course", I lead her to the lounge. "Please sit down", I helped her sit down comfortably on the couch, and she thanked me.

"Can I offer you something to drink?"

"Not at the moment but thank you for offering"

"It's only a pleasure"

"Did Damon tell you about my decision?", she asked when I took a seat beside her and I nodded my head. When the paternity tests came back positive, proving that Damon was indeed the father of her baby, she was still insistent on giving the baby up claiming that she was incapable of raising that baby on her own and made the decision to let Damon and I to keep and raise the baby as our own.

When Damon mentioned it to me, I was a little shocked because I thought him and Scarlet will work out some kind of routine to co-parent once the baby arrives, but she made it clear that she wanted nothing to do with the baby and would prefer if the baby acknowledged me and Damon as the birth parents

"Yes he did"

"Layla, I know that this situation put you and your marriage to Damon in a compromising position and I do admit I had my own selfish reasons when I deliberately fell pregnant with this baby, but I need you to believe me that I have no intentions whatsoever to cause anymore havoc in our lives. I know you and I started out on the wrong foot, and I'm sorry for disrespecting you, but this child shouldn't suffer for my actions. I just want what's best for this baby, and it would give me great reassurance to know that the baby will be raised by the both of you"

"Scarlet, I honestly have nothing against you and this baby. I'm not going to lie, but it came out as a huge surprise that you wanted me to raise the baby as my own considering what happened between us, but babies are a blessing from God, and I'm in no position to punish an innocent baby because of what you and Damon did, so I'm willing to give this baby all the love there is to offer and raise him as my own"

A short sob left her lips before she threw her hands around my shoulders, embracing me in a warm hug

"Thank you, Layla", she covered her hand with mine when we withdrew from the hug. "I can't imagine what it's like to be in your shoes, but you really are a strong woman and I applaud you for it"

"So I heard we're having a baby boy", I smiled a little, staring at her baby bump

"Yeah, he's kicking so hard right now", she rubbed it a little. "Do you want to feel?"

"I'd love to", I said, and she grabbed my hand to place it on her stomach, tracing his tiny motions

"I don't feel anything-", before I could even finish, gentle flutters started accelerating underneath my hand, frequent but so strong causing me to gasp. "Wow"

"I know right?", she laughed. "That's not all though, look at this", she lifted her top to show me her belly, and it started moving at every kick, at one point I thought I saw seeing an entire footprint on under the skin of her lower abdomen.

"That looks painful", I cringed, laughing a little as I placed my hand again where I could spot the frequent ripples. "Doesn't it hurt?"

"Not really, you just get used to it", she covered herself again. "I think he likes you, it's the first time in ages he's kicked like this"

"I'm flattered, I just hope he keeps the same energy when he gets here"

"You're going to be an amazing mother", she smiled at me. "I just know it. All I want for him is that he grows up in a loving, stable household. I don't want him to feel isolated as he grows older. I want him to have a normal childhood like any child would, in a real family and I have no doubt in my mind and heart that you and Damon are perfect for him"

"Are you absolutely sure about not having no contact with him as he grows older? Just because you're giving him up doesn't mean you can't have any relationship with him at all"

"He'll be better off without me in his life", a sad smile appeared on her face. "And don't worry, I won't regret this. I know this baby will be in great hands"

The sound of the door opening caused the both of us to look at Damon walking it with his suit jacket in his hand and he stared in confusion to see me and her talking and getting along. He greeted the both of us before sitting next to me.

"Layla had agreed to raise the baby", Scarlet announced happily and Damon looked at me, seeking confirmation that what he was hearing was true because we last left the issue that I needed more time to think about it and I nodded in agreement

"Thank you, I really appreciate this", he entwined our fingers together and kissed the back of my hand before looking directly at Scarlet

"Are you absolutely sure about this?"

"One hundred percent", she nodded in agreement. "I'm certain that this is what I want to do"

"I'll have my lawyers draw up the papers then"

"You do that", she stood up to her feet. "Do you guys mind if I use the bathroom?"

Damon and I both shook our head, and she started walking in the direction of one of the bathrooms downstairs

"Layla", Damon turned me to face him as soon as Scarlet disappeared from sight. "I hope I haven't pressured you in any way for you to agree to this, and you don't have to go through with it if you're not completely comfortable"

"I've been thinking about this for quite some time now and in the beginning I thought I wasn't strong enough to accept the situation but the more I thought about it, I realized that I can do this. I can give this baby all the love he deserves, and I'm prepared for it. I'm ready to be a mother"

His features softened, overwhelmed by emotion as he grabbed the side of my face to plant a kiss on my forehead before embracing me in a tight hug

"Thank you so much", he tightened his arms around me gently. "You have no idea what this means to me"

"You're welcome"

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