

Chapter 44: Instincts

Two years later.....

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Layla's POV

"Layla, hurry up we are going to be late", Lelo called me from downstairs. She was driving me to and from work every day since I moved back here and got myself a new apartment. I stayed with my Dad for a couple of months to nurse him back to health while deciding to do something with my life.

I had a passion for literature and went back to my old job as an editor at the cities publishing company, and before I went to beg for my job back, my boss was already on my doorstep, ready to drag me back to my office as soon as she heard I was back in town

"Coming", I jogged downstairs to grab a couple of fruits to put in my bag because we were already late for me to eat breakfast. I hated doing this to Lelo, sponging off her for a ride to work, but she insisted and told me she would gladly give me a lift until I was back on my own two feet. I wasn't making a lot of figures, but they were enough for me to keep up with the cost of living. I just recently moved in my very own apartment, to my father's disapproval and was saving just enough to buy myself a car soon, next month hopefully.

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It wasn't much, but it was enough. Most of my savings went to preparing a room for Dylan in one of the two bedrooms to accommodate him and make him feel at home. Spider-Man was his new favorite superhero and I had to go all out to even have the Spider-Man wallpaper on the wall and a blue and red themed interior. He visited me twice a month on weekends, those were Damon's conditions on the custody agreement contract he requested me to sign. He didn't want to keep Dylan away from me, and he didn't want him to lose his mother either. Dylan and I shared an unbreakable bond, my life now revolved around him, nothing else. I'm his mother, and he is my son.

When he just learned to utter his very first words, Mary called me one evening and put Dylan on speaker so that I could hear him screaming my name in excitement as she told me he was coming over that weekend to visit me. It was so adorable, I couldn't stop laughing and crying at the same time. I blamed Lelo and Stacy for always referring me as Layla instead of Mom when talking to him.

But then one day he was running around the house and accidentally broke my favorite vase and then hid under the sink. I looked all over for him and was at the verge of calling the police, but then I felt his tiny arms wrapping themselves around my thighs, and he looked up to me and said,

"I broke your vase Momma, I'm sorry his stormy grey orbs were glowing with tears, and he thought I was going to spank him. I couldn't, I wouldn't either. He just called me Momma for the first time. I just knelt and hugged him tight and thanked him for being honest, and he must never worry me like that again. He nodded his head and rested his head on my shoulder and mumbled that he loves me.

"Momma?" he said one night as I just sang him his bedtime song, and I was about to switch off the bed stand lamp

"Yes sweetie?", said as I sat back onto the bed, and he fiddled with his little fingers before looking up at me

"Why don't you come back home?" he whispered, and I just stared at him, he stared back, waiting for my response. Where would I start telling a four-year-old why I wasn't coming home?

"Did Dada do something to you?" he asked again, and I shook my head

"No sweetie, it's just that Dada and I are going through a rough patch right now", said, and he furrowed his thick little eyebrows

"What's a rough patch?" he asked curiously, and I just smiled and kissed his forehead

"Get some sleep okay?. I love you", said, and he nodded his head and closed his eyes.

"I love you too" he whispered as I got up from the bed

It was hard to believe that it's been two years since I last saw or spoke to Damon. Ever since I last spoke to him at the hospital, he hasn't made an effort to try and keep in touch with me, to even know how I was doing. I called him last year to let him know that Dylan was sick, and I was taking him to the clinic, and that Harry can come fetch him on Wednesday instead of Monday, and he didn't pick any of my calls. I left him a message and minutes later Carla called to let me know that he said it was fine.

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I was hurt, did he despise me that much he had to pass his messages to me through his receptionist?

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"Are you ready to go?", Lelo asked as I grabbed my laptop bag and I nodded

"Do you think we could pass by the grocery store on our way back?. Dylan is coming this weekend and I have no decent food for his growing body and mind".

"I completely forgot my little minion was coming over this weekend, I have to get him something"

And by something, she meant toys. Dylan knew that every time he came this side, Lelo and Stacy always showered him with gifts and toys, and he wasn't even complaining, I sometimes wondered whether he was insistent on visiting this side because he wanted to spend time with me, or to be showered with gifts.

"Lelo, I think you've bought him toys to last him a lifetime, he could do with a toy-less weekend for once", I rolled my eyes as I buckled my seatbelt on

"Layla, nothing you say or do will stop me from spoiling my minion, okay? Unless you want me to take him out to McDonald's and stuff him with all the food that could fit in his little mouth plus sweets and ice cream", she smiled mischievously.

I shivered at that thought. There was no way I was letting her do that again. Dylan becomes this hyperactive monster whenever sweets and ice cream are combined.

"Fine, fine, fine, but only one toy", I warned, and she laughed

"I'm outside. Hurry up and get your ass out of there!" Lelo's text read, and I smiled to myself and started packing my stuff.

"Already calling it a night?", a deep, husky voice asked behind me, startling the breath out of me

"I'm so sorry", he said while laughing and my lip turned up in a scowl, he always did this creeping up on me thing

"It's not funny", I hit him on his chest and he continued laughing

"It gets you every time, you look so cute when you're startled", he finished off, and I gave him a glare

"It won't happen again", he put up his hand and I walked past him

"Layla?", he called behind me and I stopped to look at him. "You haven't answered me"

"On what?"

"I asked you out on a date"

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Michael Winters. A tall, pale skinned, brown eyed with curly blond hair gentleman that's been trying to work his way into my pants from the first week of working here. He was also one of the editors, and we spend most of our time working together and spending late nights in the office. He was cute, but something was missing from him. Yeah, he was funny, he was not bad on the eye either but there was just something weird with him, I just can't put my finger on it.

"I'm genuinely not interested", I turned to continue walking and in a flash he was already in front of me, blocking my way

"You haven't even given it a shot"

"Michael, please"

"Just one date, this weekend?"

"My son is coming over this weekend", I said in hopes to discourage him in asking me out, but he smiled instead

"Even better, then I'll get to finally meet him"

"Maybe next time", I pushed past him, and he grabbed me by my waist

"I'm still not giving up on you", he whispered near my ear before turning on his feet and returned to his desk

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"What took you so long?", Lelo asked as she folded her arms as I got inside the car

"I'm sorry, Michael delayed me", I complained, and she smirked mischievously

"He's still asking you out on a date?", she wiggled her eyebrows at me and I nodded, before she could give me the move-over-with-your-life lecture, I stopped her

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"I'm just fine with one man in my life, which is Dylan, so don't even go there", I said, and she shrugged before turning the ignition on

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I turned on the radio to my favorite station, Radio 99 and Reminiscent by Patty Monroe was playing on. I turned the volume up and Lelo and I sang along.

Are you up?

I can't sleep, I've been thinking about you and how we messed up

Thinking about my old self, how you want no help

Damn it was rough

But we came a long way since then

I know that it's late, but I got things to say to you,

I know that we've changed, but I got things to say to you

We don't really say anything anymore and that's okay

Since you were mine, and I was yours

Remember those days?

I'm just reminiscing, reminiscing, reminiscing

I smiled as we listened to the rest of the song playing on as I looked out of the window. We always sang along to songs together so much when we were still in high school, and this one was one of our favorite songs.

"Do you miss him?", she asked, breaking the silence between us

"Damon?", I asked still looking out of the window

"Yeah"

"Every minute of every day", I blurted out in a whisper and didn't bother looking at her to see the expression she would have on her face that second, because there was no denying it, Damon was all that I thought about, most of the time. I heard Lelo sigh as she pulled up at the parking space of the grocery store.

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"Then why don't you go back to him?"

"It's not that simple", I shrugged and stepped out of the car. I don't want to talk about him anymore. I impulsively made it clear that I no longer wanted anything to do with him anymore, so why should he?

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