

Chapter 66: Slate

Layla's POV

Damon let a couple of days after New Years, there was an urgent meeting to discuss the years budget plans. Dylan stayed behind and insisted on spending his last remaining days of his holidays with me. Harry would pick him up on Sunday because I was due back to work on Monday. I decided to spend the last couple of days back home with my father and grandfather. I missed them terribly.

Dylan and I just finished packing our bags and were now preparing sandwiches and snacks for the road

"What kind of fruits do you want me to pack for you?", I opened the fridge

"Apples and pears", he said, and I laughed to myself. This had Lelo and James written all over it. Apples were Lelo's favorite and pears were obviously James favorites. I know this because Dylan wasn't a fan of eating fruits that much, I had to literally beg him to at least eat a fruit a day.

"Since when do you like apples and pears?", I questioned, and he rested his face on his tiny fingers on the counter

"Auntie Lelo always says an apple a day, keeps a doctor away", he said, and I laughed as I packed them in his bag for him. "And Uncle James told me that if I eat pears, I'll be big and strong like him when I grow up", he emphasized on strong by flexing his invisible biceps.

"Okay then Mr Big and strong, go fetch Mr cuddles so that we can leave", I said, and he got of his seat and went to this room. Mr cuddled was his favorite stuffed teddy bear, he didn't go anywhere without him.

There was a knock on the door and I went to open. When I pulled on the knob to open the door wide, my breath got caught on my throat.

"Hi Layla", he greeted warmly, and I gave a simple nod. He stood tall opposite me, and he looked a bit better than the last time I saw him. There was yet again life in his eyes.

"Daniel, what are you doing here?", I asked, and he asked if he could come in, I hesitated for a second before I invited him in

"What brings you here?", I asked again, closing the door, and he turned to face me

"I just wanted to make sure you're doing okay", he pocketed his car keys and then studied his surroundings, starting to walk around.

"Nice place"

"Thanks"

He stopped in his tracks when Dylan ran back in to the room carrying Mr Cuddles, nearly bumping into him. Dylan looked up at him and Daniel's lips spread into a smile.

"You must be little Dylan", he extended his arm for a handshake and Dylan gave a little nod before placing his tiny hand in Daniels, and they shook hands for a second

"Who are you?", Dylan cradled Mr Cuddled to his chest, seeming a little scared as he strode towards me slowly

"I'm Daniel, I'm your Mommy's brother", he said, and I was taken aback by his answer, Dylan was too as he looked at me

"I didn't know Mommy had a brother", he reached up to take my hand in his

"Well now you do", Daniel stated, and he was about to say something else before I interrupted him by telling Dylan to go play in his room, and I'll tell him when we leave. He nodded his head and he walked past Daniel, keeping strict eye contact with him before disappearing to his room.

"I don't know what this is, but you can't just show up at my place unannounced just because you feel like it", I scooped, walking past him to the kitchen, and he followed after me

"I know, and I'm sorry", he sounded sincere. "I just wanted to make sure you're okay"

"Since when do you care about my well-being?", I started packing the remaining items into our bags, and he leaned on the sink. "Not so long ago you didn't even give two shits whether I was dead or alive"

"That was then Layla. I told you I changed", he said, and I scooped mockingly, keeping myself busy with making the sandwiches.

"I thought I told you that just because I forgave you doesn't mean that we can play happy family all of a sudden"

"Yeah well, that doesn't work for me", he folded his arms. "Nothing changes the fact that we're siblings, Layla"

"Half-siblings", I corrected, and he paused for a second before slowly nodding in agreement

"I want to be a part of your life Layla"

"You're already a part of my life Daniel, after what you put me through"

"I know that."

"You put me through hell", I held back a sob. "You kidnapped me. You assaulted my father, you're the reason why I lost my bab-", I couldn't continue with my last statement, and he walked towards me. "Seeing you just brings everything back, I just can't forget it ever happened."

I felt him pull me to his chest, comforting me as tears streamed down my eyes

"I want to fix that Layla. I know what I did was wrong I put you through the unthinkable. I just want us to start on a clean slate", he held me at arms length as I wiped off my tears. "I'm not saying you should forget the past, but I want to do right by you, if you just give me a chance"

"I don't know if I can", I shrugged a little, and he shook his head

"Of course you can, just one chance. I promise you won't regret it. Give me a chance to rectify all my mistakes. Give me a chance to be a brother to you", he said, and I took a minute to study him. He was legit genuine and was looking forward to me saying yes.

I heaved a sigh. "I guess we could try"

He sighed heavily before he pulled me in for a warm embrace. "Thank you"

He chuckled as he thanked me again multiple times before releasing me. "I promise you won't regret it", he said, and I nodded as he stood beside me.

"So, where are you two going?", he asked curiously as I packed our sandwiches

"We're going to visit my father for a couple of days", I said, and I remembered it came out a little inconsiderate. "I mean our father", I facepalmed, and he chuckled as he shook his head.

"It's okay", he reassured me. "You mind if I tagged along?", he asked, and I hesitated whether I should say yes or no. I don't know how my father will react if I came with his estranged son home.

"Um", I was about to come up with an excuse on why he can't come along

"Don't worry, Cedric and I are okay now. We sorted out our differences while I was still in prison. He said I could come home whenever I wanted to", he said, and I felt relieved. But also didn't know why my father didn't tell me he was in contact with Daniel. But I think he didn't want to upset me.

"Oh okay", I shrugged. "Well I don't see why not"

"Great", he said enthusiastically

"We might need to pack you a sandwich", I said, and he laughed

"We can take my car. I'll drive us there", he suggested, and I breathed out a sigh of relief.

"Great idea, between me and you, its exhausting travelling back home on car, thank you", I said while preparing a sandwich for him

"Do you have any luggage?", he asked, and I directed him to my room and asked him to tell Dylan were about to leave. He helped carry one bag to the car as Daniel pulled our suitcase. They started a conversation on the way and when they returned, they were both laughing.

"Uncle Daniel is coming with us?", he asked as they walked into the kitchen. Well that was fast. The calling Daniel his Uncle. That's the thing about my Dylan, he got along with people easily and quickly made friends.

"It looks like it", I handed Daniel the food bag and I told them I'll stay behind to lock up

The drive to my father's house was long and exhausting, even if you're not driving. The 7-hour-long drive was enough to make the backache for sitting to long. Luckily Daniel made several stops so that we could stretch our legs and grab a bite to eat at the garage shops. Dylan didn't even fall asleep once because he and Daniel were busy talking about Superheroes and cars whilst I read a book. I joined in their conversations when they started talking about Audi's, but then I lost them again when they started talking about the fastest planes. I didn't even know how Dylan knew so much stuff about racing cars and the fastest planes.

"What do you want to be when you grow up Dylan?", Daniel questioned as he looked at him strapped on his car seat via the rearview mirror

"A pilot", I heard him say, and I turned to look at him

"I thought you wanted to be an astronaut, so that you can float in space", I said, and he shook his head

"Change of plans", he shrugged and Daniel laughed

"You're really clever boy, do you know that Dylan?", Daniel asked him, and he answered yes

"Momma and Dadda always tell me", he said and Daniel turned to look at me whilst raising a brow

"Dadda?", he questioned curiously, and I told him by Dadda he means Damon

"Ahh, I see", he chuckled as he focused on the road and silence fell heavily as Dylan was now distracted with his casual conversation with Mr Cuddles.

"I've never been on a road trip before", he confessed, and I turned to look at him

"As in ever?", I questioned, and he shook his head. "This is my first road trip"

"Let's hope this is the first of many", I smiled at him, and he smiled back

When we arrived, my father was already standing outside to meet us because I texted him when we were near that were 5 minutes away. Dylan had already undone his chair and as soon as the car came to a halt, he bolted out of the car towards my father, and he picked him up and hugged him close to his chest. He probably whispered to him that Elsa made her famous muesli bars.

He was surprised when he saw Daniel step out of the driver's seat. His lips spread into a smile as he approached him, and they shared a heartfelt hug. I actually felt neglected to be honest and jealous.

Minutes after they broke from their hug, he finally noticed my presence.

"Baby cakes", he opened his arms wide and engulfed me in a hug

"Hi Dad", I hugged him back, and he kissed my temple

"I didn't think you'll come", he turned his attention to Daniel again, and I blinked in surprise. Not even an "I missed you Baby cakes, I'm glad to see you Baby cakes".

I walked into the house to be warmly greeted by Elsa, and she guided me into the kitchen. She had already made a fresh pot of tea, and we sat down and enjoyed along with her delicious muesli bars.

"You should really give me the recipe Elsa, these are stilled delicious", I munched down on my second muesli bar, and she laughed. Dylan was probably on his fourth and I didn't mind because they didn't have too much sugar in them.

"You remember how much you loved them when you were little? Your mother had to bribe you with one so that you could agree to go to school", she smiled as recalled the memory and I smiled at the memory of my mother. Being here always remained me of her, like I'd see her walk down the stairs or see her stroll in the garden. Everything reminder me of her.

"I remember", I said stopping a tear from streaming down her face

"Your father tells me you and Damon are back together again", she said, and I nodded my head, she took my hands in hers

"You two belong together", she said and my eyes rose to look at her.

"I mean it, look at you right now, glowing and beautiful", she complimented, and I gave a little smile.

"You think so?", I asked, and she nodded her head. "You're just like your mother", she said as our gaze focused on the two men walking with our bags, talking like there was no tomorrow.

"Daniel, I would like you to meet Elsa", my father said as they let our bags in the lounge and walked into the kitchen. Elsa walked towards him for a handshake. "Elsa is the woman who's keeping this house in order, I would be lost without her", he joked. "Elsa, this is my son, Daniel Woods", he said and Elsa smiled politely at him

"Pleasure to meet you Daniel"

"Nice to meet you too, Elsa"

They broke their contact and Elsa poured them tea, and they joined to indulge in the muesli bars with me. Elsa took Dylan by the hand, and they walked out of the kitchen.

"So Layla, how are you my darlin?", my father asked as he sat down

"I've been good, how have you been Dad?", I sipped on my tea

"I'm more than great now that the two of you are here", he said delighted. "It's good to have both my children under my roof", his hand reached out for mine, and I placed his hand in his. Daniel also reached out for my other hand as they also entwined their other hands together.

"We're a family now"

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