Best You Ever Had

by charrmed

Notes

Season 1 and 2 happened during the group's (minus Jer) sophomore year, season 3 Junior, and season 4 is senior year.
Collide

Her magic crawled around the foundation of the ramshackle barn and threatened to take it apart. She was vibrating with power that needed a target. She wanted the Hybrid that had thrown her into the bookcase, and then she wanted the one that had taken Caroline, and then she wanted the one who had given the order.

She barged in and spotted Caroline immediately. She was chained up and tear-streaked, and she was being guarded by the one who had thrown her into the bookcase. She raised her first and locked onto his brain cells.

"What the hell are you doing?" Tyler demanded.

She screamed, "Eripui tibi est sanguis corruas! Qui furatus est sanguis extremum! Incendia! Donec cinis es nisi ardeat!"

"Stop!" Tyler grabbed her and sped out of the shed just as flames burst out of the young man's head and engulfed it.

Caroline screamed and flinched from the proximity of the fire that quickly spread to the rest of his body. Elena rushed to free her from her bindings, and the other Hybrids scrambled for anything that would put out the fire and save their comrade.

Bonnie's attention was on her next target. Until Tyler bumrushed her.

She was thrown to the ground, far enough from the shed. She sprang to her feet and faced Tyler.

"Get the hell out of my way."

"You just killed someone."

"And I have two more in there."

"You're gonna have to get through me."

"You think that'll be difficult?"

"I plan to make it."

As dark as it was, Bonnie caught the mutation of his eyes and the descent of two pairs of deadly teeth. Her shock gave way to a chuckle. "Are you going to attack me, Tyler?"

"I was responsible for him."

"You fell down on the job. He attacked me and kidnapped your girlfriend. Get out of my way."

"Bonnie, this isn't you."

"You don't know me." She flung him as far to her right as her power could reach. She didn't get three steps toward the shed before three Hybrids flanked her. They had run out of the shed and used the surrounding trees for cover as they circled her.

"I'm not looking for a blood bath," she said with a little smile, making it clear that she was nevertheless open to the option.
"We are," the one in front of her smiled back. He was the one who had grabbed Caroline.

She expected him to make a beeline for her, but the attack came from the one standing to her left. Her head hit the ground, and she was disoriented, but she lashed out with her powers, operating on instinct instead of sight and sound. The wind rose up in a torrent as she sent her power spiraling into the earth itself and channeled it. She hissed between clenched teeth, "Liga, alligat, nisu." The only time a situation had overwhelmed her ability to think of a spell was the night her mother was turned into a vampire. That would never happen to her again.

"No more sp-"

She blinked, her vision going from blurry to focused in time for her to see the Hybrid get tackled off of her.

"I'm handling this! Stand down."

She rolled onto her stomach and registered the screaming when Tyler dragged her to her feet, disorienting her again for just a moment.

"Stop it," he commanded, his face still that of a monster and animal hybrid.

"Why?" She looked at her handy work. The other two Hybrids had been thrown together, bound, and were slowly being welded together, hip first. Their skin had to boil hot enough to melt first, hence the screaming.

Her scream joined theirs when her arm was suddenly twisted at an unnatural angle behind her back.

"Throw me away again and slash your on neck," Tyler threatened as the claws of his other hand encircled her neck. "I'm not gonna let you kill them." He dug his nails into the skin to let her know how serious he was.

"I didn't start this," she panted. Chancing it, she shot him with an aneurysm. It got him to free her arm, but he exchanged it for a full chokehold.

"Tyler! What the hell are you doing?!" Elena demanded as the rest of them ran up to the scene.

The wind became more violent as her anger grew. She delved deeper into the element she used least: earth. Evidence of the magic painted her face with black roots. She would pick up that tool shed and drop it on him if she had to. She pushed her hand into his face and ripped into his brain. He screamed and his hold on her neck loosened.

"Tyler!" Kim yelled as she got closer.

Tyler snatched her hand off his face and yelled at the fast approaching group, "Stay out of this!" His growl rose above her howling winds and the Hybrids halted.

He stepped into Bonnie's space, his hand still around her throat. "I can control them."

"You're failing so far," she spat.

He suddenly let go and turned from her to address the group. "Do you see this? Do you see that?" he asked, pointing at the two Hybrids that were still bleeding into each other. "You did this," he said to Kim. "I gave you your freedom and what do you do with it? You make yourselves threats. You piss off a witch. You're all running up here, but are you prepared to lose? Because the odds aren't looking good! Dylan is dead! Cohen and Lina are on their way! And all of this because you
think I failed to protect Chris?! Does this look better? I failed one person, Kim, and you failed *three*! In one fucking night! I'm not gonna protect you all from stupid shit. I will fight for you, but I will *not* protect you from your own actions. We're supposed to be working together! If you want to kidnap, torture, and terrorize in the time it takes for us to do what we need to do, then by all fucking means line yourselves up right now so she can take you out.

If you want to do something better with your time," he said and changed his voice back to normal, "If you want to be better than what Klaus made you, then *stop*. And *focus*. Chris would've never done *any* of this! So what's it gonna be?"

The Hybrids remained silent and lowered their gaze. Tyler didn't need to turn to know the Hybrid standing behind him, Adrian, the one he'd tackled off of Bonnie, the one who'd grabbed Caroline, was acquiescing, too.

Tyler turned to her and walked back into her space. She inclined her head curiously when a new color pooled into his eyes as he came up. The yellow-red was now yellow-red-black.

"Stop it," Tyler said. He swallowed his emotions. "Put them out of their misery."

She quieted the chaotic wind to a breeze, "And if they get out of line again?"

"I'll handle it."

"No, I will," she said smoothly. His handling of it would probably involve another inspirational speech. If she got wind of them causing any harm to anyone in town, she would kill them. And she knew that Tyler knew it.

"We will," Tyler enforced.

Bonnie cocked her head. She wasn't into striking a disciplinary partnership.

"Alpha," Kim breathed.

Both turned to look at her. All of the Hybrids had kneeled to the ground. They looked at each other, and Bonnie could tell that he had not anticipated the reaction, even though he looked at her steadily.

She walked around him to the two screaming Hybrids who now shared one set of knees. "*Omne quod est, quod fuit. Sint duo existit duo. Qui sanam legem Naturae. Qui sanam legem Naturae."

Turning to Tyler, she said, "Becoming two will be just as painful as becoming one." She found Elena, who was supporting Caroline to the left of the crowd. "Let's get out of here."

She flinched when she became aware of the throbbing in her shoulder's socket. She rested her left arm in her right hand for support. Tyler ignored it.

Bonnie left the crowd and headed to her car. She didn't acknowledge Caroline leaving Elena to go to Tyler's arms. She was cutting on the ignition when Elena offered to drive and informed her that Caroline wanted to stay behind.

Two weeks later, Tyler walked into Mystic Fall High's television production classroom and rolled his eyes when he saw who was there. Just his luck. The door closed gently behind him until the loud bang when it hit the wall.

Bonnie looked up and managed to hide her surprise at who she saw. "Great. A friend," she
deadpanned as she turned her phone in her hand.

"I'm not here as your friend. But thanks for assuming I'm just in detention all the time. I'm here as your supervisor."

"Excuse me?"

"Mrs. Shaw had to leave early. Family emergency."

"So she put you in charge?"

"One of the few teachers who actually get me."

"You mean who actually like you. So I'm leaving now." She grabbed her messenger bag and grey peacoat and stood.

"Uh no?" Tyler answered with a step forward. "Ms. Rabkin is supervising me supervising you."

Bonnie let out a long sigh and dropped back down in her seat.

A long silence passed between them. This was the first time they'd seen each other since that night, and Bonnie sure wasn't looking forward to three hours of being supervised by him.

"Why are you in detention? Finally decided to start living? It's a little late; we graduate in five months."

"Still stuck on Bonnie's not as exciting as her friends? Very freshman year of you."

"And your comebacks still suck."

"My comebacks depend on the effort put in the insults, so."

Tyler took a deep breath and leaned back on the desk. Bonnie propped her chin on her left fist and scrolled all the way to the left on her phone, then all the way to the right. All the way to the left. All the way to the right.

The clock ticked on by.

"Please tell me you don't have two Hybrid bodyguards out there ready to jump me?" she murmured, still scrolling through her phone.

"Which part of wanting you to not kill off my pack would that be?"

"I dunno. Just a thought that came to mind. And I'm not trying to kill off your pack. You make me sound like the enemy," she objected and finally looked up at him. He was hot. Standing there with his arms crossed, staring at her, his jaw tight, cheekbones poking out, he was very very hot. Indigo patched tee shirt with a white bull's head, hot. It cut off his muscles very nicely.

He'd been on her radar since she watched him rise in challenge to her and not just because she'd been wondering what he was going to do next as an Alpha. She'd liked the color of his eyes once she'd gotten far enough away to ruminate. His whole face had been a work of art that night.

Tyler didn't address her complaint. "Your shoulder's healed."

"It wasn't broken. Just very uncomfortable for a day."
He wasn't going to apologize. She didn't seem ready to apologize for the horrendous pain she'd inflicted on his head.

"I trust those two are doing fine?"

"Fully healed," he reported.

Silence.

"Did you really not bring anything to amuse yourself with? Are you just gonna stand there and stare at me for the next two hours and….forty-five minutes?"

"Who says I'm staring at you?"

Bonnie took a breath and went back to scrolling.

"I have my phone," he said.

Silence.

He didn't pull out his phone. He kept thinking about being in this room, and then he was thinking about that night, and then he was in this room again, and then….and then yes he did look at her. She was pouting. Or frowning. Or some nice mélange of both. She was also wearing short black boots and black skinny jeans. From what he could see, she also wore a loose-fitting and very light pink shirt with rolled up sleeves and a necklace with pale gold beads that hung past her breasts. A brown lip gloss that closely matched her skin shined on her lips. Her hair was hanging a little past her collarbones. It was shorter than he remembered, not that he could remember the last time he'd really looked at her.

Actually, that was a lie. But why think about that now?

Instead, he chose to think that the last time he'd taken a good look at Bonnie was when she'd been chanting to put Klaus in his body. That seemed like it happened two years ago.

Tyler walked past her to open the two windows in the back of the classroom.

"Alpha," Bonnie said like she was trying to see how the word tasted. "I never pictured you for a leader. Other than the I'm in this leadership position because my daddy had it and his daddy before him and his daddy before him, of course."

She looked up from the phone and straightened slowly when she heard him come up behind her, though she didn't turn to look at him.

It was a nice try, but she was tense with anticipation of how he might retaliate. Tyler saw it flying off her body in waves. He put one hand on the back of her chair and the other on the table. He leaned down next to her ear and said, "I never pictured you for a doormat."

Her upper lip twitched. She slowly turned her to him and smiled acerbically. "It was beaten into me."

"So was my leadership."

Her smile faltered just a little. Wasn't that ironic? Life had beaten the fire out of her but into Tyler.

Tyler softened just a little. She looked sad enough that he wanted to know what she was seeing in his eyes. Her entire face was striking, and he looked at her lips when she swallowed.
They heard the door unlatch and sprang apart.

Bonnie turned so fast that she almost jostled her eyeballs from their sockets. "Jeremy," she breathed. There was no chance of her keeping the surprise out of her voice.

"Hey," he greeted slowly and looked at Tyler who tried hard not to assuage the weird guilt he felt by crossing his arms.

Jeremy stood exactly on the threshold, the door still in his hand.

"What are you doing here?" Bonnie asked. "Don't tell me you have detention, too," she smiled. Lame.

"Um. You said you were here alone. So….I thought I'd come hang out until I got kicked out. But….""

"He's supervising," Bonnie explained. Jeremy was looking at Tyler again, but she continued. "Mrs. Shaw had an emergency, so she asked him to…."

"Right." He looked at her again. "I'm gonna go. I mean. You look…."

"I'm fine," she nodded. "Thanks for stopping by."

Jeremy pursed his lips and nodded. He stepped out and closed the door behind him.

Bonnie took a deep breath and released the feeling that she'd gotten caught doing something she shouldn't have been doing. She hadn't been doing anything.

"Aren't you gonna go after him?" Tyler asked non-committally.

She was tired of him standing behind her. "Why would I?"

"Isn't he your….something? Last I heard you guys were talking again."

"We're gossip fodder now?"

"Caroline."

"Yeah well, talking isn't….anything concrete."

"Well you're letting your chance for concrete get away," he said, briefly leaning down to her ear again.

Bonnie craned her head away from him.

Tyler walked back to the front and leaned on the desk. She smelled good. Really good. Linger in your nose for the rest of the day good.

She smiled but found nothing humorous about the current topic. "There's no chance for anything."

"Why not?"

"Can we talk about something else? How's Caroline? Is she fully recuperated?"

"Isn't she your best friend?"

Bonnie sighed with a roll of her eyes and went back to her phone.
"She's doing okay." He had felt uncomfortable taking care of Caroline that night. He'd been worried about her and had been glad that she was safe, but his focus had been split. He'd not so guiltily wished she'd gone with Elena and Bonnie so that he could figure things out with his sudden new pack. Instead he'd ended up sending them off in order to comfort her.

"She's getting ready for the Christmas Eve Festival," he added.

"That's nice. You guys are good," she said distractedly. She was scrolling through her phone as if she didn't know what apps she had in there. It was just something to do to help her mind wander.

"Why wouldn't we be? Did she say something?"

"What?" She looked up at him.

"Did she say something? About us."

"Uh….no? She doesn't say anything about you anymore unless she's complaining."

"Excuse me?"

"Don't take it like that. She's not complaining about you. More like complaining about not being able to be with you: oh he's with Klaus, oh he's off in the mountains, oh this and that. I want him; I want him; I want him. It's more about her wanting you. She used to talk about you guys' happiness and the stuff you guys were doing, but I guess the newness wore off. Not that I'm complaining, because you guys heated up around the time me and Jeremy broke off, so new relationship butterflies and giggles weren't exactly what I wanted to hear at the time."

For some reason, the nature of Caroline's complaints didn't make him feel better. Sure they were about wishing he was with her, but….something about it made him feel….some type of way.

Bonnie shifted in her seat and sighed.

"Are you going to the Christmas Eve Festival?" he asked.

"Probably. With my dad." She laid her head down and went to sleep.

She woke up and heard the ugliest of snorts and hoped it was just her imagination, because it sounded like it came from her.

As was usual when she fell asleep in public, she perused the surface to make sure she hadn't drooled. She didn't usually drool. But one can never be confident when sleeping in public.

The desk was dry so she straightened fully. And looked at the clock. "You're kidding. How long was I asleep?" He'd finally taken a seat behind the desk.

"Like….17 minutes," Tyler answered while clicking the screen to get a hint about his next move in Freecell Solitaire. No more moves. He exited the game and opened something else.

"How did I only sleep for 17 minutes? It felt like at least an hour. God I'm tired."

Tyler stood and asked, "Did you know you snore?"

"I don't snore." She sniffed.

Tyler approached her. "Do." He played the audio he'd pulled up.
Bonnie stuck her lips out. That was definitely her snoring. Why did it sound so close? "Did you stand next to me to record this?"

"Yeah," Tyler answered. He smiled his first genuine smile since Chris' death.

"That's rude."

"Do you make a habit of moaning right before you wake up?" he asked as he walked back to the desk. He reclaimed the leaning position.

This is what she hated about falling asleep in public. She had no control over what her body did and anyone could bear witness. "Only when I'm exhausted," she answered.

"I thought maybe you were having an interesting dream."

She narrowed her eyes to slits, and he gave her a smile that would win her vote if he ever decided to follow his father into politics. She put her arms and legs forward and curved her back, stretching her body. A yawn made it's way out of her.

"What's got you so tired?" he asked.

"I'm the only witch in town."

"Right." In the days since their confrontation, he's been trying not to think of ways she could really help in his quest to put Klaus down. Hayley's been talking to him about a witch that she knows. In the beginning, his plan was to kill Klaus by himself. Hayley had convinced him to recruit the others, whereas his original intention where breaking their sire bond was concerned was simply to free them. He'd observed and assessed every Hybrid as he freed them and taken the risk of telling them his plans for Klaus. There were two Hybrids who were vicious enough in their own right that Klaus never had to force them to do anything, so he'd judged them to be lost causes. Now he had a pack. He hadn't thought about adding anyone else until Hayley started talking about adding a different kind of supernatural muscle in the last week. She's been talking about a witch she knows, but after what he saw Bonnie do, his choice has been veering toward her.

"Was that guy your friend?" Bonnie asked.

Tyler raised his eyebrows. "Uh," he started when he realized who she was referring to. "Not really. None of them are my friends. Klaus used to, or Klaus *does*, have dinner with all of us every Sunday. Minus me since he found out I broke my bond. It's part of his bullshit family agenda. But we don't hang out outside of that. Until I started trying to free them. I made them all these promises. I made *him* all these promises. He only did what he did because it's all he's known for almost a year."

"Are you kidding? He got his freedom and the first thing he did with it was hurt three people. So he was freed from bondage and took full advantage of being a vampire."

"Hybrid."

"Right. Perfect mix of vampire and werewolf, which last I heard is supposed to give you perfect *control* over your instincts."

"He was part animal. A werewolf. It wasn't about vampire instinct; it was a play for power, for leadership and not even *his* leadership, and why am I even explaining this to you?" He asked, agitated.

"I have no idea, especially since it seriously sounds like you're trying to excuse what they did."
"I'm not. But murder? Aren't you best friends with Damon Salvatore?"

"Excuse you? What the hell is that supposed to mean?"

"Last I heard, he turned your mother into a vampire. So if this was about getting back at someone who hurt you, who did bad, then why is he still alive?"

"Tyler? If you say another word, I swear to God I will leave, and if you make an attempt to get in my way, we will have a repeat of that night."

Tyler flexed his jaw, his cheekbones sinking, and straightened. He dropped his phone on the desk with a loud thud and walked around to the chair behind it.

"You know what?" Bonnie stood and grabbed her bag, phone and jacket. She slung the bag over shoulder and headed for the door.

Tyler didn't leave his position of slouching in the chair. He turned his neck to look at her when she reached the door. "And what the hell am I supposed to say to Ms. Baskin?"

"Compel her," Bonnie snapped. "You want me to believe you're the only one who doesn't use that little trick?"

She shoved the door open and left.
A Vision in Black

It was a week and a half later, and Bonnie sat with her hands on her lap and wondered if there was a breeze in the cool air tonight and there was just way too many people walking around for her to feel it.

The town square was spectacularly lit, but she'd found herself a bench in one of the few relatively dark spots. She had no idea how whoever had been hired to put this whole thing together managed to make the whole square feel like one big cozy living room, but that was the effect she got. She felt that she appreciated this Christmas Eve festival more because she'd skipped out on last year's. She was in a better place this year. No one she cared about had died before Christmas. Well, Elena had died. But that was more of a crushing disappointment than a soul-destroying heartbreak.

Anyways, she was having a good time. She'd mostly spoken to people who weren't her friends, which helped. She liked having this moment by herself. She was appreciative of the fact that she actually wasn't ruminating on everything that was wrong with her life, despite happened with Jeremy the night prior.

No, she was enjoying how she looked instead. Wearing black on Christmas Eve wasn't typical. She couldn't remember if she'd ever done it before. But she simply could not have turned this dress away. Caroline had said it had a certain charm when she'd seen her earlier. Bonnie felt it had more than charm. It was sexy and sultry. It was a long maxi dress with a tiered, sheer, crinkled chiffon skirt she could swirl around if she wanted (and she had); it went past her ankles but didn't touch the floor. The part holding her chest was embroidered with tiny metal sequins in the front and the back. The whole thing was held up by very thin but comfortable spaghetti straps. She'd accessorized it with two silver bangles on her right arm and a pale gold necklace that draped down to the very top of her cleavage and gave the illusion at first glance that she was wearing at least three necklaces. Her feet were encased in black heels with straps that began just below her calves. She'd curled her hair and pulled it up in a messy updo with tendrils running down the right side of her face.

She felt like she owned Christmas.

Savage Garden started playing softly over the speakers, and she swayed to Truly Madly Deeply.

"Bonnie."

She opened her eyes. Tyler was standing to her right. "Hi."

Tyler inhaled and walked over to sit on her left. "I need to ask you about the cure."

"Merry Christmas."

"You're going after it?"

"Why are you asking?" she asked, still swaying to the last notes of the song. "I didn't even know that was on your radar."

"Stefan and Caroline came to talk to me about it an hour ago. It's on Klaus' radar, so they want me to-" He cleared his throat. Caroline went and told Stefan about his plan, but he didn't know how much Bonnie knew. "They said Klaus can help them. Are you seriously looking for this thing?"

She turned in her seat to face him. "Something tells me you don't want me to."
"A cure for every vampire? What, are you gonna take a survey to find out who wants it or are you just gonna force it on everyone?"

Bonnie narrowed her eyes. "Hold on, are you telling me you don't want to be cured?"

"No," he said as if the idea of being cured was preposterous.

"Tyler, you were killed."

"I know the history. After all the shit I've been through, do you really think I can just go back to being a werewolf and make it all meaningless?"

"I have no intention of absolving every vampire on earth of the crimes they've committed."

"So you're not looking for it?"

"I didn't say that. If Stefan and Damon or Klaus figure it out, then I'll go. I'll have no choice."

Tyler thought that was bullshit, but he kept it to himself.

Bonnie turned and faced forward.

"What happens if it's something that can't work unless you apply it to everyone?" he asked.

"I'll cross that bridge when I get to it."

Tyler tightened his lips in frustration. He watched the people walking past them and then he slowly turned his head to look behind them so he could give Bonnie a once-over. She looked great. Not very Christmas-y but also kind of Christmas-y. He liked the hint of legs the sheer material of her skirt allowed. She wore jeans so often. He couldn't remember the last time her bare legs had been on display.

When she'd turned to face him, he'd noticed that her necklace had a green centerpiece that kind of matched his dress shirt.

"Looking for someone?" Bonnie asked.

"What? No." He turned his head to the front, but his body still faced her.

Bonnie frowned when a thought occurred to her. She looked at Tyler and asked, "Do Stefan and Caroline want you to snoop through Klaus' things to find out if he's hiding anything?"

"No."

Clearly an elaboration wasn't on its way. He was looking at the crowd and frowning. "What happened?" she asked.

"Nothing," he answered. "A lot of stuff."

"Did you and Caroline fight about this?"

"If you want to call it that," he said and looked at her. She was truly radiant tonight. Among the sea of white, red, and, yes, green outfits, she was a vision in black. It made him feel like she was apart from the celebration; as if, unlike the rest of them, her Christmas wasn't tomorrow. Maybe it was today. Maybe it had been yesterday. Maybe it was every day or whenever she wanted.
"She disagrees with me, sided with Stefan. And I just know she's gonna try to change my mind."

"I know how Caroline became a vampire. I'm not surprised she wants to be human again."

"Except she doesn't. She and Stefan were talking about Elena. No one else. Caroline sometimes misses being human, but….I don't know. We haven't talked about it since we first got together. Maybe she's changed her mind about not wanting to go back."

"Does she know you don't want to go back? Or did she know before?"

"I was excited about being a Hybrid when I was first turned, but that went south. I think she figures because of what I've gone through, I'd want to go back to being a werewolf. But that's not how she sold it to me. She talked about-"

"Elena. Right."

Right. Elena was why he doubted Bonnie would hesitate to turn every single vampire into a human again if she had to. So he made another plea for his case. "I don't think you should do it. When you find it, and when you're thinking about turning everyone back, remember that not everyone wants it."

"No one in your pack wants it?"

"I don't know." He squeezed his eyes. "Some of them were there when Caroline and Stefan came to me about it. Stefan got kind of threatening."

Bonnie curled her lip in disgust.

"Talk about a problem I don't need," he muttered.

"You don't want your pack to want the cure?"

"We're supposed to be-" He cut himself off.

Bonnie faced forward. She wasn't going to beg him for information.

"Listen," he started. "I know you care about Elena; I know she means a lot to you-"

"Tyler?" she cut him off with a sharp turn of her head. "I know you think I'm a doormat, but if there's a cure for vampirysm, I'm not giving it to Elena. Least of all if there's only one." She faced forward again. He was ruining her good time.

"You're looking for it….for your mom," Tyler realized.

"Good thing no one can compel that out of you. I'd appreciate it if you didn't tell Caroline. No one knows except Jeremy."

"Jeremy-"

"Can't be compelled anymore," she cut him off. "I guess that hadn't gotten to you yet."

He and Caroline haven't exactly lied in bed and shared information since Chris died. Not since the night he'd gotten shot by the overzealous Hunter, really.

"Your secret's safe with me," he said.
"It might not even be real," Bonnie said with a shake of her head.

He turned his body to face the crowd. "I think that's why they need Klaus."

They sat together in silence. Bonnie's forehead was still tense, and Tyler was playing out his apology in his head.

"You're not a doormat," he said.

"Oh please," she said with a bitter smile. "Don't try to apologize now; it's a little insulting."

"I'm serious." He faced her profile and put his arm on the back of the bench again. "You said something to hurt me, so I said something to hurt you back."

She turned her neck to look at him. "Were you hurt by what I said, Tyler?" Acid dripped from her voice.

"Making me feel like I couldn't be shit? Let's just say it was a little familiar." His tone quickly copied hers.

Bonnie faced forward again.

Tyler closed his eyes and rubbed them. "I didn't think you were trying to hurt me," he admitted. "I think you were being a smartass."

Bonnie stretched her mouth into a plastic smile. "That's what I thought."

"I wasn't hurt. I was annoyed, so….I did want to hurt you."

Bonnie blew air out of her mouth, the shell of a chuckle.

"I'm sorry."

"No need to apologize."

"I am apologizing. I'm sorry. I'm not saying I don't think you could do better; I do. You have a lot of power. I've seen it three times now."

"Three times?" She scrunched her face skeptically.

"Homecoming night junior year, the possession, and that night. You have a lot of power; you just….seem to choose not to use it. But you can stand up any time you want to."

"No one would be comfortable with me standing up, Tyler."

"So you choose to be uncomfortable in their place?"

Her face softened at that.

"Look at me."

She shook her head. Her ears were tickling her, and she wished all of her tears away.

"Bonnie," he called her softly.

"I forgive you, Tyler," she said sullenly.
"You're not looking at me."

She took a deep breath and looked at him. She might as well have said there, happy?

Tyler was so familiar with his own pain. He'd never really been faced with someone else's before. Caroline had been sad plenty of times, sure. She's cried. But she always recovers. Her pain and sadness weren't ongoing, these things that linger and stir just below the surface, always. And while he and his pack shared an experience, they didn't sit around pouring their hearts out to each other. They'd lost Chris, but Kim's reaction had been less about wanting revenge for someone who didn't deserve to die and more about filling what she perceived to be a vacuum. He and the pack weren't close.

But here he was faced with Bonnie's sadness, a sadness that had been borne of his callous twisting of something that pained her. Her sadness looked different from his own. It looked….sweeter, softer, a deception considering the concentrated fury she'd displayed that night. But her sadness looked full of possibilities for healing.

She faced forward again.

He cupped her cheek and turned her attention back to him and kissed her.

It was a shock to Bonnie's system. She frowned in surprise, but the softness and fullness of his lips erased her frown, and she abandoned herself to the kiss, and it felt very good.

Tyler pulled away and smiled at the fact that her eyes remained closed. She opened them, and he saw the question in her eyes. He kissed her again before she could voice it. This time he moved against her, capturing and releasing her top lip while she took care of his bottom lip. Bonnie softened into him, and he gathered her body into his arms. She traced her hand up the back of his neck and further melted into him when he licked the inside left corner of her mouth.

Tyler sighed. If he pulled her any closer, she'd be sitting on his lap. And the longer they kissed, her lipgloss rubbing off her lips and onto his, the farther away his sense of decorum went.

Bonnie was moaning now. She was positive that sound was coming from her. She couldn't help it. The kiss reached into something deep inside her. He kissed her like stopping wasn't an option, like he'd been waiting to kiss her, like he was already an expert at kissing her. And he was a damn good kisser.

Tyler reached under her knees so that they rested on his arm. Step 1. The way she gripped his face turned him on. All ten fingers were steepled on his skin and her palms touched his cheeks. She held his face as if she wanted to make sure she got all of him. He wanted to give her all of him. Aside from trying not to wonder how much she would add to his pack were she to join, he'd also been trying not to involve her in his thoughts about Alpha Sex. He was in a new territory, so naturally he wondered what about him was going to change.

He slid his hand down between her back and the bench and wrapped it around her torso. Step 2. Bonnie's blood cooled when a scream rang out from the crowd. She straightened her back in fear and panic and gasped out of the kiss. His reaction matched hers. She swiveled around in search of the distress.

"You jackass!" she heard a woman chastise and a man's laughter followed. Great. Someone had just gotten the crap scared out of them, that was all.

"Jesus," she exhaled and put a hand over her racing heart.
Tyler raised his eyebrows in agreement. He licked his lips and tasted her lip gloss. It was pleasant, not a strong flavor.

Bonnie looked at him. His lips were shiny. She wiped it away and looked around. "We just….we….we just kissed. We were making out."

Tyler grinned.

"Are you forgetting your girlfriend's here?"

"Yes? I mean you pretty much knocked every thought out of my mind."

Her thumb paused on his upper lip. She would replay that comment later. "I saw her earlier. I don't know where she is, but I know she's around."

Tyler stared at her.

Was he going to say anything, or did he plan on letting her say all of the appropriate things all by herself? She'd been ready for him to slide his hand down her underwear for goodness sake.

She faced forward again because clearly looking at him was not helping. She swiped her curls behind her ear and tried to calm her body down.

Her skin was giving off something different now. Not tension like in the classroom a week and a half ago. It was a mix of things, some of them still forming: she was definitely excited from both the scream and their kiss. She was relaxed, not sitting ramrod straight like she was before the kiss when she'd been upset. And the more her chest heaved, the clearer the arousal signals flying off her skin became. What he didn't pick up from her, despite the words coming out of her mouth, was shame.

He cupped her face and turned her attention to him.

"We can't do it again," she said softly when he leaned into her.

He traced her bottom lip and took off more of her lip gloss.

She turned her lips into his thumb and said, "Tyler, please."

She didn't move away. Her resolve was beyond flimsy. He smiled. "You're beautiful."

That got her to look at him.

"I mean it. You look beautiful tonight, and I've been thinking about it."

She smiled. "You look great, too. Handsome. I like the shirt."

"It matches your necklace," he said and took his hand off her face.

She looked at the piece and grabbed it. "It does," she said with a smile.

They faced the crowd and sat in silence.

"Jeremy pretty much told me he still has feelings for me. Yesterday," she elaborated.

He looked at her profile. "Is that a good thing?"

She chuckled. "It's a frustrating thing. I was happy for a second. Just one second. And then I was
confused, and then….

Tyler waited.

"I don't know. I feel like I was ready before. Back when we broke up and for a while after that. He never said anything like this. But now he's ready? And what, I'm supposed to have been waiting this whole time?"

"Have you?"

"No," she answered and looked at him. "When things aren't working out for me, I move on from them. Even if I'm physically there, mentally and emotionally I move on. And considering all the crap that's happened to me since our breakup…those helped. I'm not there anymore, and...I don't know if I want to be. He's a friend. He makes me feel…nice. I still love him in that sense. I know he cares. But going back there….I just don't know if I feel it. It doesn't feel like before."

"Seeing us in the classroom probably inspired him," he said.

"It wasn't that. Or maybe it was. He's a Hunter now. Like the guy who shot you? Long story short, I was important in helping him gain some control, and I couldn't have been if he didn't have some….very strong feelings for me. It just….doesn't feel like what I need right now."

"What do you need right now?" he asked.

She smiled and shook her head. "I don't know. Or I do and I just don't know how to put it into words." But kissing Tyler, this boy who was taken, had definitely cemented her feeling that she wasn't interested in going back there with Jeremy.

They sat in silence again. They sat closer than they were supposed to and looked at the talking, laughing, marveling crowd.

"I'm not….completely sure what I'm doing," Tyler said.

Bonnie looked at him, so he looked at her.

"I can't go into detail, but….I'm starting to question what I'm doing. Something doesn't feel right. This girl, Hayley, I don't think you've ever seen her-"

"Caroline talked about her."

Of course. "I met her while breaking my bond. She helped me through it when I was ready to throw in the towel and just stay crippled. She motivated me and helped me fight. But now…."

"Now?"

"The longer I'm an Alpha, the more different I feel about her. We're working together, and she's a lot of help, but sometimes….I get this feeling like she's trying to run things for me. And I'm not talking about her being overly helpful. She wants me to trust her, and I swear every time she tells me to, something in me…."

"Shudders? Backs away? Slows down? Stands at attention?"

"All of the above."

She smiled. "That's your instinct, Tyler."
"It could be me doubting I can really do this. I never saw myself as a leader either. Football was one thing, but even then it's not like I was the quarterback."

"Maybe. But this is about Klaus, right? Who knows him better than you? Don't doubt everything you've been through. What you said earlier? Nothing could make what you've been through meaningless: not becoming a werewolf again, absolutely nothing. You've been up close and personal with Klaus. He's shown that he can't get enough of you. If you're questioning anything relating to him, then it's probably with good reason. Because you know. Trust in the fact that you know. Trust…your experience. Don't ignore your instincts, Tyler. It very easily becomes a habit. Trust me."

"You ignore your instincts?"

"On a daily basis. Doormat, remember?"

"Hey."

"I know. That wasn't toward you. Klaus is alive because I ignored my instincts. I freed his mother and my mom paid the price because I ignored my instincts and opened that coffin. She even told me not to open it, and I ignored that, too. That's how bad it gets. Don't let that happen to you."

"What do your instincts tell you about the cure?"

"To ignore everyone telling me to find it for Elena."

"So your instincts haven't dulled."

She smiled. "No. And I do trust them. It's just become very easy to do what everyone else wants, no matter how many times or how severely I lose out in the end."

"If you need backup on this cure thing, I'll support you," he promised. "I already told Stefan no. I can tell him no for you."

She smiled. "Thanks. I'll remember that. But not to tell Stefan no. I don't want him to hear no from me. We're all gonna find the cure. And then I'm gonna do what I want with it. I don't want any infighting or tension before that."

Tyler smiled. Then he said, "I don't trust her." Talking to someone else helped him say it out loud. "Something doesn't feel right."

"That's because something's not right."

Tyler nodded. That wasn't something he'd ever experienced since this whole Hybrid thing started: someone who agreed with him and helped him be sure of what he felt. Caroline always cautioned him against taking actions he felt he needed to take. He always either had to convince her or do it anyway and hope she'd come around, which always made him question whether he was doing the right thing or not. But Caroline always needed assurance and reassurance. Not since when he'd first transitioned into a werewolf had she ever been more sure of something than he was. He'd always thought the discomfort and lack of confidence stemmed from him and him alone. He always thought that she just worried (and he knew she did).

It was nice to hear something different.

And Hayley: he'd seen less of her since he became an Alpha, even though she was still staying at his house. She was always gone, so they mostly talked on the phone now, but she was starting to have
an alternative for every idea he put forward, as if his weren't good enough, and for the past two or
more weeks she's been telling him to free the Hybrids who were still loyal to Klaus. She's been
making him question himself and after airing it out with Bonnie, Hayley's behavior was officially on
his nerve. He needed to talk to her about it.

"Come with me," he said to Bonnie.

Bonnie stood and began to follow him. "Where are we going?" she asked loudly over the music.

Tyler turned to answer her so that he wouldn't have to raise his voice. "Somewhere private."

"Why?"

Tyler raised his brows and cocked his head forward.

Bonnie bit her smile. "We can't do that. I know you and Caroline aren't in a good place over this cure
thing, but it'll pass. It's temporary."

Tyler put his hands in his pockets and stepped closer to her. The cure was only the latest example of
the huge difference of opinion that suddenly existed between him and Caroline. But that wasn't what
he wanted to talk about.

"I want to have sex with you," he declared.

The fact that he looked right into her eyes when he said it made Bonnie's stomach flip so hard she
had to place a hand over it.

"I wanted to yesterday," he continued and glanced at her parted lips. "The day before yesterday, in
detention a little bit, and even--"

Bonnie slowly raised her brows as she fathomed the rest of that sentence. "The night we fought?"

"I've relabeled it a negotiation."

She closed her eyes and laughed. It was kind of messed up. She'd killed one of his teammates. And
she knew Tyler wasn't into that kind of morbid stuff. Which was why she was into him being into it.
It wasn't exactly the kind of impression she'd been looking to leave that night, but she sure wasn't
going to complain about this bonus.

Tyler wrapped an arm around her waist and pulled her flush against him. "Tonight, Bonnie. Follow
me if you want to."

He turned and made his way through the crowd. Bonnie took two steps to follow him then stopped
when a reminder knocked her back: Jeremy had cheated on her.

Jeremy had cheated on her; Jeremy had cheated on her; Jeremy had cheated on her. Jeremy had
cheated on her.

She swallowed. She was losing sight of Tyler in the throng of people.

She'd been cheated on. And she hated that she was thinking about this now instead of-

"What was that?"

She was so deep in her inner battle while simultaneously trying to see Tyler that she didn't register
the voice. It was a miracle she didn't jump out of her skin when she saw who it was. Her heart didn't
even skip a beat, though she was surprised.

"Caroline."

"Please tell me I was seeing things," Caroline said with a genuine smile. She couldn't help but be genuine. She wasn't sure what to feel. It was atypical of her, but she wasn't even jumping to conclusions. She was that shocked. She'd been looking for Tyler when she'd come up on the bench. Scanning the crowd still, she'd spotted him talking to Bonnie, but before she could take one step toward them, he'd pulled Bonnie to him. And Bonnie had just let it happen. He'd been looking at her like….her mind didn't let her go there. She'd been so shocked and confused that she hadn't even used her super hearing to glean what he was saying to her.

"Is this part of a big plan or something? I ran into Klaus down the street at the Grille. What were you guys talking about?"

"Nothing." She swallowed. "You know we had a disagreement a couple of weeks ago."

Caroline nodded slowly. "So he needed to grab you to talk about it?" Her mind automatically tried to buy the explanation. Yes, she could accept that Tyler was trying to intimidate her. His face….his face had looked….like he was admiring Bonnie's. Not threatening at all.

"Well he babysat me in detention a week and a half ago, too. I ended up walking out. He was being supervised, so when Ms. Rabkin came to check on him I'm guessing he didn't have much luck explaining why I was gone." God she sucked at this. "Listen," she said and touched Caroline's arm, "I gotta go find my dad. I'll see you later?" she asked as she started to back away. She turned and headed in the direction opposite of Tyler's.

Caroline watched her leave. She forgot to listen to Bonnie's heartbeat for a sign that she was lying. Maybe she only looked like she was lying because of a completely different reason. The short witch had been pissed the night of the sleepover. When they'd finally gotten a chance to talk about it, Bonnie told her without judgment that trying to get Elena to see Damon's fault was pointless. Caroline had argued the bond, said it was the only reason Elena could actually open her mouth to argue in favor of Damon. Bonnie hadn't bought it. She believed Caroline about the existence of the bond, but she didn't believe it was why Elena had said what she'd said. Too many experiences of Elena acting the way she'd spoken, even before she became a vampire.

So maybe all of that explained Bonnie's weirdness. Plus she'd killed someone for the first time, which was never easy. Caroline realized now that she hadn't asked her how she felt about it.

And Bonnie was also looking for the cure for Elena.

The girl had a lot on her plate, and that was just with the supernatural world. There was prom, senior exams, graduation, college applications.

But none of those explained Tyler. They could explain why Bonnie had been immobile; she was probably drained and didn't have the energy to protest. But Tyler had pulled her to him. What had he said to her?

She could easily ask him. She could. But she turned in the direction he went with absolutely no intention of letting him know she'd seen him.

"Hey you."

Tyler looked up from his seat on the side of the water fountain and smiled politely at Caroline.
"Hey." He took his elbows off his thighs and sat up straight.

Her off-white dress swirled around her knees when she turned to sit next to him. "I've been looking for you," she said with a smile. She slid her right arm around his left and scooted over until their bodies touched.

"Enjoying the festival?" he asked.

"I was. I am. Are you?"

"Yeah, it's fine," he said and looked at the passing crowd.

"Have you done anything special?" She held her breath.

Tyler looked at her. "Not really."

Caroline swallowed. "I know things were weird earlier, but....They might get weirder."

"What do you mean?"

"I saw Klaus at the Grille an hour ago. He was donating a painting to the charity drive."

"Adrian texted me earlier that Klaus had asked him to take a painting to the Grille. I didn't know he'd actually show up to be with it."

"Yeah so, if you see him walking around, don't be surprised."

Tyler looked up at the sky. The stars were paled by all of the festival lights. He sighed.

"I know this is frustrating for you," Caroline said softly. "But everything you want to happen can happen. Both things can happen. We can use Klaus to find the cure and then-"

"I really don't want to talk about this right now."

"Tyler, I feel like you're asking me to choose, and I can't. I love you, but Elena's also my best friend. Her life is being ruined by this vampire thing."

"You do need to choose. And you know what? You have." He took his arm from her and stood and left.

"Tyler. Tyler!"

Half an hour went by before Bonnie felt it was safe to look for Tyler. If he was even still at the festival. She hadn't sent him a text that she wasn't coming, and he hadn't texted her to ask. Caroline had most likely found him. Maybe she'd confronted him and they'd gotten into a fight. Perhaps he was off apologizing and trying to make it up to her.

But Caroline wasn't big on confrontation. When it came to issues that really bothered her or that could end with her feelings hurt, she defaulted to ranting to a third party about it. Rather than direct confrontation, she took the passive aggressive road. Only when she was pushed beyond frustration did she burst open with her true feelings.

That didn't explain why Tyler hadn't contacted her.

She found him by accident. She casually looked at one of the giant candy canes on the outskirt of the
festival and saw the shape of a head that looked familiar. Like, was-talking-to-it-less-than-an-hour-ago-familiar.

He looked her way when before she reached him. "Hey," she greeted.

"Hey. For a second I thought you were someone else."

"Caroline?"

"Glad you made it."

"Don't tell me you've been waiting here the whole time."

"No, I got here like 10 minutes ago."

"Have you seen Caroline?"

Tyler moved backward and around the candy cane so that he was completely behind it and in shadow. Bonnie followed him around, and they stood parallel to the roaming crowd.

"I did," he answered. "I saw her talking to you. I heard Klaus' name, so I left."

Bonnie stood stunned. "Back up. You saw your girlfriend talking to me less than a minute, no, less than \textit{tenseconds} after you asked me to have sex with you-" Her heart suddenly jumped. She needed to be careful. For all she knew Caroline could be close by, and her and Tyler alone behind a giant red and white candy cane, away from light and sight, would probably come off a whole lot worse than him pulling her to his body. Especially after...he'd pulled her to his body. She lowered her voice, "And you just left?"

"I didn't abandon you."

She crossed her arms. "Really."

"She's gonna talk to me, too, trust me. You're fine. Caroline's not the type to get in a public fight, not a physical one, at least."

"No, she's more the type to compel. Which I'm sure she would've done to me if she could've."

"Was she mad?"

"Honestly, I have no idea. I was more focused on trying to leave. She asked me questions. She sounded suspicious. She hasn't talked to you yet?"

"Not about what she saw. She warned me that Klaus was walking around."

"Great."

"She asked me if I'd done anything special so far, which I'm positive was her way of fishing."

Bonnie closed her eyes and inhaled deeply. "It was. And she's not gonna confront you about it, trust me. Not unless you give her more reason to. I told her, well I hinted that you grabbed me because of all the confrontations we've had. I mentioned detention, so. If you wanna run with that or build on it-Why are you smiling?"

"No reason; I just...you told her we were standing that close because I was confronting you?"
"I didn't know what else to say," she defended. "I'm not an expert at this. God I hope she wasn't listening to me breathing when I walked away, because I was so clearly trying to calm myself down."

"Okay, do that again," Tyler said, grabbing her shoulders. "Right now. Breathe. Calm down. You're about to full out panic." Her body was sending out a ton of signals.

Bonnie closed her eyes and practiced breathing.

At some point, Tyler relaxed his hands and dropped them to the side of her shoulders.

Calmed, Bonnie opened her eyes.

"This was it," he said. At her confusion, he elaborated, "This was the spot I'd chosen. The one where we were going to…."

"Oh," Bonnie said suddenly, and she gave the spot a once-over. "It's public. But not too public. And dark. But not too dark. Someone could see us if they really looked." She wondered how….

Tyler stepped closer to her and caressed her cheek. "We can still give them a chance."

Bonnie looked at him and snapped out of her wonder. "Are you serious? I just spoke to your girlfriend like 30 minutes ago, and you're-Tyler, we can't do this. We can't," she repeated when he dropped his hand in frustration. "Especially if you think Caroline's going to confront you about what she saw. What, do you want a bigger lie to tell?"

Tyler didn't answer. He just wanted her. He wanted the skirt of her dress bunched around her waist and her underwear around her ankles. He wanted her bent over and holding on to the candy cane. He wanted her rearing her tight ass back so she could fuck him with as much fury as she'd displayed that night. He wanted her to work it all out on his cock. He wanted her to almost get them caught with all the noise she was failing to hold inside. He wanted one or two people to find it odd that one candy cane out of the group was wobbling, and he wanted them to walk around the perimeter until they were adjacent to the giant fake sweet and could see that two people were indeed fucking their way to an orgasm behind it. He wanted to spill come as white as the fake ass snow that lay at the base of every candy cane, and he wanted it to be the most intense orgasm he's had so far. And at the most extreme end of the spectrum, he wanted Caroline to be able to tell on sight that Bonnie's pussy was wet with remnants of the come that hadn't managed to drip out, his come, and he wanted her to be able to tell that his thighs were still shaking from his orgasm. He wanted her to read it on their faces.

That was how he was able to ask her for sex despite the fact that Caroline was quite possibly on to them. The little reminder that Caroline had outed his plan for Klaus to Stefan did the opposite of deterring him from what he wanted. It wasn't about being disloyal to Caroline or sticking it to her. He wanted.

But Bonnie was saying no.

"We can't," Bonnie repeated a third time. "I should go find my dad."

He nodded.

"Merry Christmas," she said.

"Merry Christmas."
Bonnie felt like she was leaving her vagina behind with Tyler. The phenomenon of the "protesting vagina" had appeared in many of the adult romance novels she'd read from 6th grade to 10th grade. She'd always chalked the phenomenon up to being a flowery way of talking about someone with a vagina being very, very, incredibly horny. No. There was nothing flowery about how she was feeling right now. It felt like she was literally leaving without her vagina. It felt like her vagina had grown into a separate entity and it was standing next to Tyler and watching her walk off and judging her to be an absolute idiot. *Look at her walking away from this. What an idiot.*

Despite her righteous chastisement of Tyler, she'd been wondering how they could've had sex behind the candy cane. The fake snow on the ground wasn't large enough to serve as a makeshift bed. She'd figured out that they could do it standing up with him behind her, and she'd been picturing the stretching of her vagina by his dick when he'd caressed her cheek and pretty much offered to bring her picture to life.

Saying yes hadn't been an option. Not with Caroline's face, voice, and presence so fresh in her mind. If she and Tyler were to ever sleep together, she wanted it to be before they ran into Caroline, not after. It wouldn't matter if Caroline was in the next room, in the building, close by, it wouldn't matter. As long as she didn't see her on her way to doing her thing.

Because she'd decided. Right before Caroline had walked up to her, she had decided.

Jeremy had cheated on her, and she would have essentially been helping Tyler cheat on his girlfriend. So she'd done this weird thing where she'd decided Tyler was no better than Jeremy: unfaithful and disloyal. And she'd made the decision to follow him. Because she wasn't *making* him disloyal; he had come to her that way. He had asked her to follow him even after she had reminded him of his commitment. She *had* been thinking about him on and off for the past three and a half weeks. She *did* want him. But she didn't have to have him. But he'd offered. And she had not wanted to say no.

But then she'd run into Caroline.

She was walking away now not because she'd seen the light but because her arousal had been dampened. But if by some miracle Tyler asked her to follow him again, on another day, at another place, she would.

"Hello?"

"Hi. It's me. And you know that."

"How's it going?"

"Um. There's a problem that I was really hoping to resolve and not have to bring to you."

"I meant how's it going in terms of your well being, but if you want to skip to business, that's fine."

"We don't have twelve Hybrids anymore, Shane."

"What do you mean?"

"One of them's dead. Killed by someone Tyler refuses to tell me about. We're down to eleven, and I've been talking to him about breaking one more Hybrid's bond, but he's resisting. The ritual can't happen tonight. Besides, he's called it off."

"How did this happen?"
"I have no idea. For the first time since I met him he's actually being secretive. He won't tell me what happened, just that Dylan pissed off the wrong person."

"Was it Klaus?"

"Not Klaus. And none of the Hybrids will tell me what happened. They won't even tell me where the body is or what happened to it, nothing."

"That's not good; they're shutting you out."

"They're being loyal to Tyler, which is mutually exclusive, because, um, that's another thing: Tyler's an Alpha now."

"Excuse me?"

"He's an Alpha. Again, don't ask me how it happened because he's being vague with the details. Just that it happened the night Dylan died. My guess is that he got pissed at whoever killed Dylan and tore them to pieces."

"An Alpha who is also a vampire. That's not possible."

"Really? Knew a whole lot of Hybrids in your day?"

"I hate the changes in this world. Sometimes I really do. And Hayley? You're supposed to update me at the end of every week. Something like us losing a Hybrid or Tyler growing into an Alpha is absolutely an excuse to update me sooner. How long have you been hiding this?"

"Okay, I haven't been hiding it. But maybe two weeks."

"I don't make it a point to remind you that this issue is time-sensitive. Do I need to start?"

"No."

"This is a ritual. I need those twelve sacrifices, and I need them to die together, and I need them killed less than an hour apart, and I need them killed by the same entity. I have twelve more humans set up to die, but the way I have this set up they cannot die until the Hybrids do. The Hybrids are the supernatural kick, and they were your idea. They're your project. Complete it."

"I will."

"And Hayley. Advice. Don't waste your time convincing Tyler to free another Hybrid. Especially not now that he's an Alpha. Stay close to him. Offer advice; help him adjust just like you did when he was breaking the bond. And then have him lead the others to the location where they'll die. He is the twelfth Hybrid. I know you like him. I know you wanted to spare him, but-"

"I know. Time-sensitive issue."

"Time-sensitive issue. And Hayley. If whoever killed Dylan was dead, then he wouldn't have a problem telling you who they were. Whoever it was is probably still alive, and he probably has reason to keep their identity a secret and to ask the others to do the same. But do not ask around. It will absolutely get back to Tyler, especially since they all trust him enough to let him lead. Stay close to him."

"I will."
Bonnie arrived home with her father at 1:43 in the morning. She'd had trouble concentrating because of the blunder with Tyler and Caroline, but she'd had a pretty good time at her table with her father, two of his friends who served on the county school board, their husband, wife, and their pre-teen kids. She didn't see Tyler or Caroline for the rest of the night.

Now she was ready for bed, teeth brushed and face washed. And Tyler was on her mind. She didn't fight it, quite the opposite. She flipped onto her back and got comfortable. Slipping a hand down her shorts and underwear, she ran her middle finger down her slit and hit wetness before she reached her entrance.

She closed her eyes and floated up into the alternate world where Caroline didn't interrupt. She inserted a finger inside and used the wetness to ready her clit for play. Using three fingers, she brought herself off to the image of Tyler driving her crazy behind the candy cane.
I'm so excited about this story. I literally think about it every day, and I've been working on it every day. Literally, when I have nothing to do at work, I pull it up and type. I decided that it was finally time to start posting, since I'm way ahead in the chapters and don't see an end yet.

Btw, I'm creating a playlist for this fic. It's kind of hard since it's not done yet, but I have some songs down for the big moments. If anyone is interested, the theme song for Forwood is Drake's Doing it Wrong. I'll reveal the theme song for Tonnie's heart to hearts when they start getting more frequent, which I think kicks off in the next chapter.

Enjoy!

"And last but not least, well not last but not least, but the last of the fun senior activities is prom," said Tikki Watson, President of the senior class. "The prom committee has narrowed it down to four themes: Mardis Gras-

"Mardis Gras is such a bad idea," Caroline whispered to Tyler like the theme gave her physical pains. "The seniors did it three years ago. Three! Not enough time has gone by."

Tyler looked at her. He wasn't hot about the theme either. He'd grimaced when Marcella had suggested it at the second senior meeting in the fall. Most of the seniors had said no. But she'd apparently pushed it through. It probably helped that she was Tikki's best friend.

Tikki continued, "Pictures of you-

"Arabian Nights-

"I don't want Arabian Nights," Bonnie whispered from her seat next to Matt. "The idea is pretty, but they want to use pillows instead of chairs, and I don't want to sit on the floor in my dress."


Bonnie playfully nudged him with her shoulder. She looked at the bleachers across the gym and easily found Tyler and Caroline. It wasn't the first time she'd looked at them. And this wasn't the first time that she focused on how Caroline had an arm slung through Tyler's and was holding on to his bicep, all but leaning her whole weight on him. Bonnie blinked slowly. They'd been inseparable in the hallways since school opened back up. Bonnie knew, because Matt couldn't reference what part of the school Tyler was in without mentioning Caroline, and Elena couldn't say where in the school Caroline was without mentioning Tyler.

Alright, I have to wait for Tyler. He's coming from the football field. He stopped by to see Caroline during her cheerleading practice.

So apparently Caroline's gonna be a little late. She got roped into helping Ms. D pack up all the
crap they tried to sell to the freshmen in the fall. She's calling Tyler to help out.

All of this because Tyler had pulled her to him at the festival? Maybe it wasn't Caroline. Maybe the two really had come to a compromise over winter break.

"And A Bit Whimsical," Tikki continued. "Booths will be set up starting tomorrow, and you guys will have the rest of this month plus all of February to vote for your favorite. Tickets will go on sale the second week of March, and then it'll be graduation! But we're gonna talk about graduation during our March meeting. Our next senior meeting will be on the second week of February, and we'll be talking about the senior trip to Shenandoah National Park. Maybe. On that note, Mr. Hill would like to say a few words before we go."

Tyler looked up from Tikki giving the mic to their principal and found Bonnie. It was officially winter. It was cold and windy enough outside for people to be wearing ugly jackets, but Bonnie stood apart once again. She wasn't wearing anything crazy like a dress that was more fit for late spring and thus might attract suspicion like Caroline was. She wore jeans, a blouse, and a cardigan. It was the color of her blouse and cardigan that made her stand out. The deep orange of her shirt and subdued colors of her cardigan made her look effortlessly warm, like the area surrounding her was on a completely different seasonal cycle. She looked beautiful and ethereal, and every time he looked at her he completely tuned out what anyone holding the microphone was saying. It was like he could not split his attention if she was involved.

She rubbed her lips together, and he wondered if she was wearing lipgloss. He felt Caroline about to look at him, so he surreptitiously averted his eyes to Mr. Hill, Bonnie's father's best friend.

He was connected to the government thanks to his parents; Caroline had law enforcement; Elena had the most useless with the medical world (what, was she not gonna pay medical bills?). Bonnie had the schools.

Unlike the rest of them, she had gone to Amelia Bennett Elementary School, named after her great-grandmother (formerly Amelia Bennett's School for Negro Children back when it was run inside the education pioneer's home in the 1930s and 40s, then transferred to a proper building in the 50s). Amelia died at a ripe 84 when Bonnie was 13, and it had been a tremendous affair.

The principle of Sage Middle School, where he'd officially begun a friendship with Bonnie and the rest of the girls, had been Sheila Bennett's best friend. He wondered if she planned to go to Whittmore College. If her grandmother was still alive, she'd have a connection there, too. Although, judging from the past, she most likely had someone higher than a professor. Maybe the dean or the president. He knew that her father was a Whitmore alumnus, so he more than likely has a few connections.

"Kimberley."

"It's Kim. For the thousandth time."

"But Kimberley is much more sophisticated. For the thousandth time."

"I didn't realize you were out."

"Mmmm, more like awake. And I'd appreciate it if you kept that from my brother. I don't want him to know I'm back until I'm ready," Rebekah said.

"So you followed me to a grocery store," Kim said.
"I know he's not home at this time of day. I've been watching. But I'd also like you to keep this from your Hybrid brethren, too, so yes: I followed you to the grocery store."

"And why me?" Kim had had a sinking feeling the moment she'd looked up from the avocados and saw Rebekah walking toward her.

"I need a favor," Rebekah said and stepped up to her. At that moment, Kim could feel every bit of hair on her body. They were standing on end, and they were screaming that something bad was about to happen. She knew that "One Step Forward" move well. It was what vampires did right before they compelled someone. Klaus had used it on the more petulant Hybrids, including her, or just when he was especially pissed and wanted to exact even more control over them. And now it seemed Rebekah wanted to have her go.

"Who took the dagger out of you?" Kim asked, fear making her throat dry. Her only option was to get at least one bit of useful information that she could take back to Tyler. Maybe she'd even tell Klaus and get rid of Rebekah that way.

Rebekah made her pupils dilate. "You will go to Mystic Falls High School. At 3:30, you will go to the track field where you will shift into your werewolf form. From there, you will rampage through the library where you will tear the flesh off of Matt Donovan. You will not stop until you are gnawing on his bones. The hows and whys are none of your concern," she said and patted Kim's cheek. "Understood?"

"Understood," Kim responded.

"It's my turn to make a statement."

Back in the gymnasium, Mr. Hill continued, "Now maybe graduation is too far away. Maybe the consequence for pranks like spray-painting all of the vending machines should be banishment from all senior activities. Or how about cancellation?"

The gym erupted in protest.

"They can't just cancel everything," Elena objected. "This is so stupid. We're seniors; what is this, their first time at the rodeo? Seniors pull pranks."

"Did you just say first time at the rodeo?" Matt asked.

"Public schools are government property," Bonnie informed her. "That makes what they did vandalism."

"Spray-painting any part of this school isn't a prank. It's vandalism," Mr. Hill continued.

Elena and Matt looked at Bonnie, and Bonnie raised her eyebrows and pursed her lips, smug. Elena smiled and shook her head.

"It's illegal. We have the perpetrators on camera. I know you planned for the football shoulder pads to throw us off track, but we will find you. Everyone on the football team swears it wasn't them."

"It wasn't," Matt whispered. He didn't know their identities, but he knew that two of the four pranksters were girls, and the four hadn't borrowed those shoulder pads from anyone on the football team. They'd most likely bought them for the occasion.
"But it did give me an idea," Mr. Hill continued. "You all have made it through these last four years together. You plan on receiving those diplomas together. So how about you all stay home from prom together? How about you stay in Mystic Falls together and not go anywhere near grad bash?"

A cacophony of gripes spread across the bleachers.

Bonnie sullenly propped her left elbow on her knee. She didn't want anything to get cancelled. She was finally getting into this whole senior thing. Other than planning for the cure and losing her shit the night Elena had thrown Damon in her and Caroline's faces, her life was pretty calm. Then again, there was pretty much nothing that could compare to the absolute hell of her junior year. Starting with her breakup, her life had fallen to the darkest pit in the earth at breakneck speed and then exploded. And then someone had come along and incinerated what was left by presenting her with Elena the vampire at the end of summer.

So compared to all of that, she's been having a pretty easy time the past two and a half months. And she wanted to go to grad bash, and to prom, and then she wanted to graduate and leave.

The assembly was over, and most of the students had filed out. This was one of Tyler's favorite parts about being a senior: on the days that they had meetings, they left class forty minutes before the final bell rang and spent the rest of the day not in class and then they just went home. Beautiful.

Caroline had gone down to the court to speak to Tikki and the rest of student government. Matt was gone, home he presumed, and Elena was off somewhere. This left Bonnie by herself, and she seemed to have decided to start some of her homework on the bleachers.

He was wondering if he'd crossed her mind at all since they'd last seen each other when blood suddenly rushed to his ears. He felt a panic coming on. Before he could wonder where the feeling had come from, his attention was stolen by the sound of someone hurriedly approaching him.

"Kim? What are you doing here?"

Kim sat down next to him. "I'm in trouble, Tyler."

"What's wrong?"

"Rebekah's back."

"What?" He was barely getting questions in, because she was speaking so fast.

"She found me at the grocery store, but I don't know who took the dagger out of her. She compelled me; well she thinks she's compelled me, but I don't know why it didn't work, but she expects me to present her with a mangled Matt Donovan in the library-"

"What?"

"I need your help; what the hell do I do?"

"Kim, slow down," he said, and he put his hands on her shoulders.

"No, I can't slow down! This is supposed to happen at 3:30, and it's 3:15, and if I don't give her a dead boy, she'll know something's up, and guess who she's gonna take that to."

"You need to calm down. It's gonna be okay." He looked across the room to where Bonnie was. He looked back at Kim. "Listen. It's gonna be okay. I promise. Klaus isn't gonna find out about this. Just
give me a second."

He started down the bleachers to get to Bonnie, and Kim stood and went to the exit. She needed to be on the track field at 3:30, whether she was shifting or not. She anxiously waited at the door for Tyler to come back with good news.

Bonnie looked up from the long list of ingredients Lucy had faxed her and saw Tyler running up to her.

Caroline saw him, too.

Bonnie closed her notebook and knitted her eyebrows.

"Hey," Tyler greeted as he sat next to her. "How did you desiccate Klaus last time?"

He'd taken a seat on her left, so she had to turn her body to face him. "What?"

"We need it for Rebekah. She's back, and she's compelled Kim to kill Matt, only it didn't work, but we need to get rid of Rebekah before she realizes that."

"Okay, slow down."

"Bonnie."

"I desiccated Klaus by stopping Jeremy's heart; that's not gonna happen again. Um," she closed her eyes and tried to think. "There are other things I can do. Uh, I can trap her somewhere, a room or something: I can put up a seal."

"I was hoping for something where she'd be unconscious and unable to talk."

Bonnie suddenly grabbed Tyler's jacket, though a complete sentence eluded her. "Tyler!" She pointed at the exit, and her notebook and pen fell. Kim was disappearing with Rebekah.

Tyler rushed off the seat. Fuck all the mortals who were still in the gym and littered in the hallways. There was no way he could run at top speed.

Bonnie was hot on his heels, and Caroline, having long dropped her conversation with Tikki and having caught a glimpse of Rebekah when Bonnie pointed, ran after them.

Rebekah took Kim to one of the empty hallways. Now, someone could of course round a corner at any moment, but she could take care of them.

"The gym isn't the track field," she said with an air of perplexion.

"It's 3:18," Kim said in her best dull voice.

Rebekah smiled. "Kim. I was so so so very excited about making my statement that I didn't realize something until after you left."

Kim almost asked what, but she decided that a compelled person would ask no such thing.

Rebekah smiled again. "Your pupils didn't dilate," she said softly. Her hand flew to Kim's throat. "What's going on?"
Kim struggled to jab some fingers between the skin that stretched from Rebekah's thumb to her index and her throat so that she could create space for herself to breathe. It was like losing a limb but still feeling it there. Her heart did not beat, but she still had sensations that felt like breathing.

"Answer me in the next second, or I will pin you to this floor and pummel your lungs. Did you know it was possible for a vampire to-"

"Rebekah!" Tyler yelled as he rounded the hallway.

Right behind him, Bonnie waved her arm to the right and slammed both Rebekah and Kim into the lockers. It was her best chance at freeing Kim from Rebekah's grip.

Tyler took off his jacket and ran straight for Rebekah while Caroline ran to Kim who was trying to move away from Rebekah and clear her mind at the same time. Her throat was dry, and her brain was foggy from the disruption in blood flow.

Bonnie looked at both ends of the hallway and tried to think of a spell that would make sure no one discovered them.

Tyler let go of all reservations, and he straddled Rebekah and punched her across the face. The vampire was more stunned from the act than the impact. She has never been hit. Tyler bared his claws to slash her face, and that snapped her out of it. She caught Tyler's hand before he could make contact. She pulled him down by the collar of his shirt and slammed his head on the floor.

"Tyler!" Caroline yelled. Her face contorted into its monster form, and she rushed at Rebekah. Rebekah used her speed to stand and caught Caroline by the throat and slammed her on the floor like she'd planned to do to Kim.

Bonnie abandoned the plan of keeping them from being discovered and stretched her hand out to Rebekah's head and made up a spell on the spot, "Dormite jam, et mundus transit. De luminaribus, cerebrum quiescit, et recipit vos in mundum…..proxima septimana!" She exhaled in relief when Rebekah slumped over Caroline. It worked.

She ran to Caroline and rolled Rebekah off of her. She looked back at Tyler, and Kim was helping him stand. It was the person at the end of the hallway, however, who made her blood run cold.

"Dad?"

Kim stopped helping Tyler. Her instinct was to run to the man and compel him to forget what he'd just saw, but maybe Bonnie had it under control.

Rudy looked down the hallway he'd come from to ensure no one was coming and then walked to Bonnie who left Caroline to meet him halfway.

"What are you doing here?"

"I was meeting Calvin-"

"Okay, you need to leave. Now." She started to physically move him down the hallway. "Tell Mr. Hill to meet you outside, but you need to go."

"Bonnie-"

"Now, dad. Now!"
Rudy realized he wasn't going to get anywhere with her, so he placated her by leaving.

"Shit," Bonnie breathed when she turned back to the little group. This was not what she needed.

Tyler gave Caroline his attention. "Care, are you okay?"

Still a little dazed, Caroline moaned and touched her forehead.

The head didn't care if the rest of the body was supernatural. Hit it and one would be rendered less than coherent.

"What did you do?" Kim asked Bonnie when the witch rejoined them.

Bonnie looked at Rebekah. "Put her to sleep until two weeks from now. I almost said until tomorrow."

"Nice save."

Bonnie nodded. She kneeled on Caroline's right and asked, "Caroline, are you okay?"

Caroline began to sit up and Tyler and Bonnie each put a hand behind her back to support her. "God I hate her," she seethed Rebekah's way.

"What are we going to do?" Kim asked. Her eyes widened, and she looked down the hallway when she heard four distinct voices approaching from around the corner.

"Shit." Bonnie stood up and moved a little ways down the hallway. Thinking quickly, she stretched her right hand up to the ceiling and whispered, "Ego lux in mea."

She immediately felt strange. The lights in their hallway went off. The rest of the school was still lit, and she heard the students get closer to rounding the corner. She started to panic, but nevertheless took two more steps and threw her fist up at one of the darkened light panels. She heard one of the ones around the corner explode. The students chattered their surprise as shards of glass crashed on the floor.

Bonnie took another step and threw her fist again. A second panel exploded around the corner, and it served to reverse the students' course. She opened her hand and whispered, "Lux mea accipio! Id opus in tenebris!"

An empty silence filled the building as all of the lights abruptly disappeared.

"Nice," Kim commented.

The strange feeling that had come over Bonnie intensified. She shivered. Something delicious caressed every inch of her skin, from her forehead to the skin that covered the little bone that jutted out of the ankles to the pads of her fingers. She was suddenly very sensitive, and she realized the electric energy that powered the artificial lights was now coursing just beneath the top layer of her skin. She licked her lips and tried not to embarrass herself. "Oh my God," she whispered. It might be a losing battle.

"We need to move her," Tyler said of Rebekah.


"We need something close. Bathroom," Tyler decided, and he lifted Rebekah.
"I can put up a seal -" Bonnie cut herself off and gathered her nerve. She let the blissful sensation pass. "Make it so no mortal can walk in."

"Good," Tyler said and led the way to the boys bathroom. Kim ran to the end of the hallway to grab his jacket and then followed.

Walking was very interesting for Bonnie. She smiled the whole way. At the entrance of the bathroom, she asked Kim to turn on all of the faucets and hold the door open. Every seal needed an elemental component, the more elements included, the more powerful the seal and the longer it lasted. Bonnie only needed the seal up until they could figure out what to do with Rebekah. Seals also needed the room to be as open as possible so that the spell could lock it down.

She held her hands out, elbows bent at her waist, palms up, and trembled her way through the spell. "Phasmatos salvis. Qui-qui habitat in terra eademque aqua locus. Hoc enim omnes mor-mortales in carcere extra aqu-qu-quam, ut non possit intrare. Hoc….signum pervadat ad h-hanc portam, et haec dicuntur manere fortis testi-monium in hac esse venefica dixit: Vultis dimittam tenuit….hanc meam."

Magic mixed with the electric buzz. She badly wanted to be naked and touch her skin.

Tyler watched as the faucets turned off all by themselves, signaling the creation of the seal. All of the bathrooms in Mystic Falls High operated on a switch. Students turned them on when they entered and off when they left, so any light that had been turned off during Bonnie's spell was still operable. Caroline had turned this one on when she'd walked in behind Tyler.

Bonnie lowered her hands and stepped inside. She took the door from Kim and closed it. "Now no mortal can come in." She leaned against the door and tried to compose herself. She wished she was alone so that she could enjoy this feeling. Doing magic had only intensified the current, and now it was making it's way through her clitoral hood to touch her clit. She was getting wet in the middle of a crisis. This Blackout spell, that's what she would call it, was a blessing, one she wished she'd discovered sooner.

"Okay, now what?" Kim asked as she walked to the end of the room where Tyler had laid Rebekah.

"Now we dagger her again," Caroline answered.

"We need to fi-figure out who-who woke her," Bonnie tried not to whimper.

"We didn't get to that part," Kim informed the room. "She just said she wanted to make a statement, and she didn't want Klaus to know she was back until she was ready."

"We need to find that dagger," Tyler said. "I'm not comfortable just letting her sleep. I feel like she'll wake up any minute."

"Kim and I can….we can find it," Bonnie sighed.

Tyler looked up at her and frowned. He didn't understand why she was leaning against the door with her back to them.

"You think she just has it lying around her house? She'd know that that's the first place we'd look," Kim said.

"That's if she was planning on getting beaten her first day out," Caroline pointed out.

Kim acquiesced to her point, but she said, "This wasn't her first day out. She's been awake long
enough to know Klaus' routine."

"Why is she so concerned about making a statement?" Tyler wondered.

"Because she's embarrassed," Caroline said. "Stefan and Klaus conned her into giving up this
important sword that has to do with the cure, and then Klaus put her down."

"And this Matt Donovan dying would've made an impact?" Kim asked.

Bonnie and Caroline gasped, though gasping only made Bonnie short of breath. Her nipples were so
hard that the skin around them was stretched to its limit.

Tyler was thinking along the same line as the girls. "We need to make sure Matt's okay. If Rebekah's
working with someone, they might have him."

"I'll find Matt," Caroline said.

"Rebekah wanted me to tear him apart in the library," Kim told her.

Caroline frowned. "Okay?" What a random location for murder.

"Kim let's go," Bonnie said.

Tyler was about to say something to her when Kim spoke.

"Can we bite her? Just as a little extra precaution?"

"Rebekah hallucinating in her sleep and not able to wake up? Sounds like the perfect idea to me;"
Caroline said.

Tyler smiled at Kim. She joined him by Rebekah's body, and they each grabbed an arm.

Bonnie turned to look, but she didn't just turn, she slithered, rubbing her body against the cool door.

Kim and Tyler bared their canines and sank them into Rebekah. They concentrated, necessary as
they had spent months only honoring their vampire half, and released their poison. Rebekah's blood
stung their gums in return, but it was a mild discomfort. Having gotten a taste of vampire skin, they
gnawed on her until they touched bone.

Caroline grimaced and turned her head away from the nasty display.

Tyler remembered that he was in more company than just Kim's and unhinged his jaw. He wiped his
mouth and felt a little disgusting. The shame disappeared when he looked at Bonnie mid-wipe and
saw her staring at him with her mouth open and tongue over her bottom teeth. He licked his lips and
then licked his gums to wipe away the blood, and Bonnie's vulva spasmed. She crossed her arms and
turned away and closed her eyes. Tyler didn't know what to make of that.

Caroline didn't hear munching anymore, so she turned around. And saw that Tyler's attention was at
the door. She looked at Bonnie and saw that her back was turned. She hid her confusion and looked
at Tyler. He wiped his mouth again and looked at Rebekah.

"Now we can go," Kim said. She stood and walked to Bonnie.

"I don't-don't think we need the blackout anymore," Bonnie said. She shivered. She couldn't ride in a
car with Kim like this. She felt like running to the nearest room, locking herself in it, dropping her
pants and underwear and masterbating until she screamed in orgasm.
"We don't," Tyler answered, but Bonnie was already chanting.

"Egomet libera….et dimittam structura in te-tenebris lumen."

The vibrating energy left her like a rude lover, wham, bam, thank you m'am, and she suddenly felt like less than what she was before. It was like the orgasm that never came. She couldn't let the others see that, so she trucked on and opened the door. The hallway was lit.

"Bonnie, are you okay?" Tyler asked.

"Fine," she answered and stepped out without sparing him a glance.

Tyler looked after her and was completely bothered by her strange behavior.

Caroline had enough. She kneeled down, Rebekah's body between them, and touched his forehead. He looked at her like he'd forgotten she was in the room. She frowned. "Are you okay?" She didn't think he and Bonnie had spent any time together over winter break, but she might have been wrong.

"I'm fine," Tyler answered and wiped his mouth again for good measure. "Are you?"

Caroline brought her hand down to caress his cheek. "I'm fine."

"Are you sure?"

"I'm sure, Tyler," she said with a smile. "I mean it hurt like a bitch, but it wasn't like I could do anything else. I told you I had your back."

Tyler smiled. It was small, but it was there.

Caroline pulled him in and kissed him.

Tyler closed his eyes out of habit, but he opened them when his mind stayed completely aware of everything that was happening. It didn't get foggy or hazy; it operated like normal. He pressed his lips against hers, but it didn't go any deeper than that, mentally, physically, or emotionally.

The most unnecessary thought formed in his mind after Caroline ended the kiss: he wondered if Bonnie was okay. Obviously she was okay: she was the only one that hadn't been choked or slammed by Rebekah. Yet he still wondered how she was faring after the ordeal. He should've asked.

Caroline wasn't the type that was turned on by blood, so the smell of it on Tyler's mouth, more than the taste of it, made her cut the kiss short. She licked her lips and tried hard not to wipe it instead. Sex and blood weren't married where she was concerned. Blood was food, nothing more. Now she could get turned on by someone drinking blood or otherwise exposing it in a violent act (the thought of it alone was enough to get her going), but she didn't need it in her kisses or her sex life. Tyler poisoning Rebekah hadn't been savage enough to turn her on, so it had only stirred the part of her brain that processed disgust.

"I'm gonna go find Matt."

"Okay," he answered. "Be careful."

She nodded. She still felt like wiping her mouth after she left the bathroom, but she dealt with the smell, thinking that Tyler would somehow feel it if she wiped it off, and it would give him more reason to look at Bonnie like that again. She couldn't fathom why the hell he'd be looking at Bonnie
Bonnie stopped by the gym to collect her things and then led Kim to her car.

"Rebekah's car is here," Kim realized after Bonnie unlocked the doors. "Not here in this parking lot," she amended when Bonnie looked around, "But it's somewhere around the school. I know she drove here. Maybe there's something in there about the person who woke her up."

"Maybe, but Tyler's sitting on a bathroom floor, waiting for that dagger. Text him, and he'll tell Caroline to look for the car," Bonnie said. She entered the car and threw her bag on the back seat. If Mr. Hill was incensed over the vending machines, a knocked out and poisoned Original vampire in one of his bathrooms would send his blood pressure through the roof.

Kim almost said that Caroline doesn't know what Rebekah's car looks like, but then she remembered that Tyler could tell her, and then she remembered that Rebekah was for some reason a student in Mystic Falls High School, so Caroline probably knew exactly what the car looked like.

Bonnie turned on the ignition, and they were off. Her body felt empty without the buzz, but the space between her legs felt heavy. She was horny with no opportunity for release in sight.

She and Kim were silent during the drive. She drove ten miles above the speed limit whenever she had room while Kim gave directions, and they arrived at Rebekah's place.

"What if her partner's inside the house?" Kim asked.

Bonnie looked at her as she parked. What an ugly possibility to bring up now. "We'll just have to deal with it."

They got out and cased the neighborhood. Quiet. They walked to the door, both paranoid that someone was going to see them and ask them what business they had at the house.

"There's an alarm in the house," Kim suddenly remembered.

"Are you serious?" Bonnie whispered. "She can't protect herself from getting daggered by Klaus, but she can safeguard her house? What do we do now?"

"Break in," Kim said like it should be obvious. "And get the dagger before the cops come."

That didn't sound like a good idea at all, as far as Bonnie was concerned. "You don't know the passcode?"

"No. I stand a better chance of knowing Klaus' passcode. And I don't know that one either."

Bonnie sighed. Her stomach was in knots. Setting off an alarm and alerting the neighbors had served perfectly well to kill her arousal. Better than a cold shower, truly.

"Alright. Let's do this." She pushed her right hand forward and threw the door open, breaking the lock in the process. The alarm immediately started to shrill.

The girls ran inside, and Bonnie went to close the door, but Kim sped to her side and grabbed her wrist. She gasped and balled the hand Kim held into a fist when death crawled on her skin.

"Fingerprints. Relax," Kim said. It was her idea to break in, but she didn't want to get caught. She was on edge after this whole thing with Rebekah.
Bonnie rubbed her fingers when Kim let go of her hand, and she used her telekinesis to close the door. "A little tip for the future? Vampires touching witches is not very pleasant for the witches, so you might want to….ease into it."

"It's not just vampires. It's ghosts and zombies and anything that's not alive. You guys are, like, allergic." She paused. "You do know that, right?"

"I missed that class."

"I miss the days when I used to be able to detect anything supernatural. I can't even make out a vampire anymore. My vampire side has killed that sense dead." She sighed and turned from Bonnie to assess the living room, and she realized the task before them. "Please tell me there's a spell you can use to make this go quicker."

"Actually, there is," Bonnie said. She'd completely forgotten. "But it's an ability, not a spell."

Kim sighed in relief and then waited for her to do whatever it was. She lifted her shoulders when Bonnie did nothing.

"What if it's not here?" Bonnie asked.

"Don't do that."

"If I woke an Original, I'd want to keep the dagger as leverage."

Kim dropped her head back. "Do you see Rebekah going for that?" she asked after she righted herself.

"Do you see her having a choice?"

"Okay, well we won't know until you do your thing, so," she gestured at Bonnie, "do your thing."

Bonnie breathed and closed her eyes. She held her hands at her side, similar to when she'd done the seal. This type of locating put no stress on her body. She envisioned a lot of things in order to call the dagger: the dagger itself, to the best of her memory, Rebekah, the fact that it was harmful to Rebekah, the possibility that it might be stored in something, the fact that it's tucked away somewhere. Without a picture of the dagger in it's current state, she had to work with all of that. She felt herself connect to something and pulled. And then her body relaxed.

When she opened her eyes, the dagger was hovering in front of her. She reached out and grabbed it by the handle, and then looked at a smiling Kim.

"Let's get out of here," Bonnie said.

Caroline ran to the library and yanked the door open. She searched around wildly and found Matt pushing a cart nearly empty of books. "Thank God. Hey," she called his attention when she was close enough. "What are you doing here? Since when do you help out at the library?"

"I don't. But April does. I ran into her after the assembly, and she asked me to help her out."

"Did you see anyone else hanging here? Anyone suspicious?"

"Uh, no? Why?"

"Because Rebekah Mikaelson is back, and she put a hit out on you in the form of a compelled
Hybrid who was supposed to tear you to pieces."

"What?"

"Yeah. But it's okay. It didn't work, and now she's knocked out in the bathroom and awaiting a comfy little dagger in her heart."

"Who woke her up?"

"No idea. But she wanted to make a statement."

"By killing me." He thought Rebekah liked him.

"Yeah. Guess your looks have their limits," she said sympathetically. She smiled when Matt looked dubious. "Okay, I have to get back to Tyler," she said as she began to walk backwards, "But be careful."

"I will."

She turned then stopped. She looked back and asked, "Hey Matt, where's April?"

"She had a lot of homework, said she had to leave."

Caroline nodded slowly.

"Please don't tell me you're thinking she took the dagger out of Rebekah. She's still wearing the vervain bracelet Jeremy gave her; she wouldn't know anything about any of this."

"Wait, vervain? When did April get vervain?"

"Jeremy gave it to her after you compelled her to forget the Connor thing. What is it?"

"I also compelled her to forget a conversation she overheard me having on the phone with Stefan. I'm pretty sure I mentioned where Rebekah was! Are you kidding me?!"

She swung towards the door, blonde hair flying, and left.

Elena was over the day. She was annoyed by Mr. Hill's threat, but the real problem was the emptiness that she felt. Something was missing. Damon was missing. She wanted so badly to touch him and be with him in the most intimate way possible. She would give anything to be in the same room as that abrasive personality that only softened around her; for the wild baby blues and dispassionate demeanor that was his default because years of upbringing by his father had instilled in him a sense of always being judged. The last was her own diagnosis. But she would give anything to be with him. Yet she was barred from giving a single scrap. He'd used the sire bond to make her keep her distance. And now her heart ached and calling him was no use because he'd made up his mind about what he thought was best for her. She was tired of people underestimating her, insisting on covering her in the purest of pure white. She was fine with it when she was human, had even subtly encour-

"Elena."

She froze. Which was a stupid thing to do when an Original vampire was nearby, and she had very much come to associate a British accent with the Originals. This one was male. And lacked the gravel always present in Klaus' voice. She turned and standing across from her was Kol Mikaelson.
"I don't believe we were ever formally introduced," Kol said as he continued to approach her.

Elena swallowed. She hadn't seen Stefan at school today and had no idea where Bonnie or Caroline was. She stood her ground. "We have. You were watching my brother and waiting to kill him in Denver."

"Ah. Life is full of so many more interesting things; I forgot."

"What are you doing here, Kol? Running another errand for Klaus?" It was completely unnecessary for her to antagonize him, especially without backup, but she wanted him to know that she saw the two of them as being on equal footing.

"Rebekah, actually," Kol answered. He looked around the hallway like Rebekah might've left arrows pointing him in her direction.

"Rebekah's lying in a coffin with a dagger in her chest."

He smiled at her. "No. A benevolent someone was so moved by the Christmas spirit that they freed her. After which she called me back to this sad town to help her extract some information out of you, Stefan Salvatore, Caroline, and whoever else she'd corralled into this building."

"You woke her up?"

"You're not listening." With that, he walked around her and continued his search for Rebekah.

Elena turned after him. "Wait! What did you do to Stefan? He's not here!"

Kol smiled at her over his shoulder and continued walking.

Elena pulled out her phone and dialed Stefan. No answer. She dialed Caroline.

In her part of the school, Caroline stopped running and pulled out her vibrating phone and noticed she had a text. She answered the call. "What is it?"

Elena balked at her tone. "What's wrong?"

"Crap's hitting the fan, what else? What's up?"

"I just ran into Kol Mikaelson."

"What? It's a freaking infestation!"

"What are you talking about?"

"I had a nice run-in with Rebekah earlier."

Elena looked behind her. "Caroline, be careful what you say. Kol's still in the building."

"Oh my God. Hold on." She pulled up the text. Maybe the message was a S.O.S. from Tyler.

The text was from Tyler, but it read: Did you find Matt? Rebekah's car is outside. Might find who she's working with. Check it out.

Well, that was going to have to wait. Besides, it looked like they had an answer to that question. Two answers, maybe. She texted Tyler: KOL MIKAELSON IS HERE!
She then copied and pasted the message to Bonnie.

"Caroline," Elena stressed.

Caroline put the phone back on her ear. "What?"

"I think he has Stefan."

"What? Did you call him?"

"Of course."

"Okay, you know what? I cannot deal with this. Call Damon and tell him to get his ass over here."

"He's training Jeremy at the lake ho-"

"Call him! And where are you? We need to stick together."

Tyler picked up his phone when it buzzed, and he read the text. "Shit."

He stood and ran to the door and turned off the light. The seal would be useless in keeping Kol out. He texted Caroline to ask her if she was okay and hoped Kol wasn't doing something stupid like honing in on the minute sounds of fingers typing on a screen. There was no way they were lucky enough to subdue two Original vampires on the spot.

"Shit," Bonnie cursed when she read the text.

"What?" Kim asked.

"Kol Mikaelson's here. At the school."

Kim would've sank into her seat in defeat if she had less dignity. All that was left was for Klaus to show up, and she was a dead girl. A permanently dead girl.

"Okay," Bonnie said, already raking her mind for defensive spells. "When we get to the school, you stay out of sight."

Sounded like a magnificent plan to Kim.

When they got to the school, Bonnie grabbed one of the jackets she could never remember to take out of the car and wrapped it around the dagger. There was no way she was going to risk poking a hole in the precious and expensive cardigan that she was wearing.

She walked inside the school and made a decision. This dagger was for Kol first and Rebekah second. Rebekah was already out of their hair for two weeks. Kol, on the other hand….

She prowled up and down the hallways, ready to bump into him at every turn, ready for him to sneak up behind her, ready to telekinetically send the dagger into his heart. But she saw sign of him. She then nervously made her way to Tyler.

Tyler heard the hurried shuffle of feet coming toward him and hoped it wasn't someone he'd have to kill. He backed away from the door and widened his stance.
At the door, Bonnie looked down the hallway to make sure no one was spying, and then she pushed the door open. She gasped as her heart jumped up to her throat, and she raised the jacket-covered dagger when she saw Tyler just standing in the dark.

"Jesus," Tyler sighed in relief. He turned on the light and pulled her inside and gently closed the door in case her gasp had attracted Kol's attention. He turned to Bonnie. She still looked shocked. The hand holding what he presumed was the dagger was still in its attack position. Hugging her was a no brainer.

Bonnie wrapped her arms around his neck and tried to relax. "I suddenly got so scared. There's no one in the hallways, and I kept expecting him to come up behind me."

Tyler hugged her closer, but it was he who closed his eyes and relaxed against her. He'd been scared too, isolated with an unconscious Rebekah while Kol looked for her. For him.

Bonnie was on the balls of her feet. He almost had her off the ground. And he was strong and soft but hard at the same time and kind of warm for a vampire. Maybe it was the Alpha part that gave him more heat. Maybe being an Alpha made the werewolf part of him more dominant than the vampire part. And he smelled really good.

Tyler lowered one of his arms to her waist, but stopped himself short of picking her up. She was tinier than he was used to. Both of his past serious girlfriends had been taller than him.

He sobered at the fact that he'd just compared Bonnie's height to two ex girlfriends as if he wasn't still with one of them.

He wanted to feel every part of her as she separated from him, so he ended the hug slowly.

Bonnie felt like she'd been interrupted. She wasn't ready for the hug to end. But that didn't matter, because the door burst open and Elena walked in with Caroline. Matt bumped into the seal, and the door closed in his face.

Tyler turned abruptly, his skin prickling, not because he thought Kol was coming in, but because he thought Caroline was coming in. And she was. But thankfully, Elena walked in first. This wasn't something he wanted to halfway explain.

Bonnie was about sick and tired of her stomach twisting itself in knots. She left Tyler and followed Elena to Rebekah, because she didn't want to deal with looking at Caroline and whatever she might've seen, even though she and Tyler had stopped touching when the door opened.

Caroline noticed that Tyler and Bonnie were apparently hanging out in the bathroom while a homicidal Original was stalking the school? She couldn't figure out why they hadn't texted to let everyone know they'd reunited. She'd taken Elena to join Matt and the librarian who was getting ready to lock the doors, and then Elena had gotten impatient and insisted on joining Tyler.

But now wasn't the right time to question Tyler on why he hadn't sent out an alert.

Tyler was trying to figure out why the bathroom suddenly had a hell of a lot more people than before. Not that he wasn't glad to see Matt and Elena safe, but he wanted to know what they knew about the situation.

"I have the dagger," Bonnie announced to the room.

"Where's Kim?" Tyler asked her.
"Where's Kol?" Caroline asked her.

"Uh, guys?" Matt interrupted from behind the closed door. "I'm kind of stuck out here?"

Bonnie hesitated.

"We mainly need it for Kol now, and you said it was only mortals, right?" Tyler asked.

"Oh, right," Bonnie said. She was getting mixed up with the spells. She'd been envisioning lowering the seal so they could pull Matt in before Kol showed up. She walked to the door and opened it. She recited the words to release the seal. "Vultis dimittam tenuit….hanc meam."

The fauces turned on, and she stepped back to let Matt in. Matt tested it by putting his hand over the threshold. He walked inside, and Bonnie closed the door behind him.

Caroline turned the faucets off.

"I told Kim to stay outside," Bonnie revealed as she walked to where the others were huddled. "Kol doesn't need to see her. And I think he left. I went up and down the hallways hoping to drive this into him." She unveiled the dagger. "But I didn't see him."

"That's not good," Elena said and stood up from where she'd been inspecting Rebekah. "He's got Stefan."

"Anybody got Kol's number?" Matt asked with just a tiny bit of sarcasm. Stefan hadn't exactly come to his rescue when Damon had threatened to kill him for Elena becoming a vampire. It was one thing for him to think he was beyond indebted to Elena. It was another for the two people who had killed his sister to be telling him the same thing.

Tyler crossed his arms and asked Elena, "What exactly do you know about what's going on here?"

Caroline chastised him with a look.

Tyler acknowledged it and then waited for Elena to answer.

"Um, I know she tried to have Matt killed. I know you guys stopped her in time. Why?"

"No reason."

Caroline gave him a look that said see?

"Uh, guys?" Bonnie questioned. "May I have the honor?" Not that they had much choice. Only her and Matt could wield the dagger.

"Wait," Elena said. "We need her to tell us where Stefan is."

Bonnie looked at Tyler who said, "No way."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean no way. The guy's been alive for 100 years, Elena; we don't need Rebekah to find him. Besides, Kol's still in town; go knock on his door." He walked to Rebekah's body and kneeled opposite Bonnie and told her with his eyes to do it.

Bonnie held the dagger over Rebekah's heart.
"Bonnie," Elena protested.

Bonnie made the dagger touch Rebekah's chest and then leaned her weight on it. Piercing someone's heart took a lot more force than she expected. Before she could use her power to sink it in to the hilt, Matt came over.

He dropped his backpack. "Here." He added his strength to hers and they drove it through.

"Thanks," Bonnie said with a smile. She had wanted to do it by herself.

They all watched Rebekah ashen as grey veins covered her body.

"Good riddance," Caroline said.

"Now we hide her," Tyler said. He hated that Elena was here. He might as well call Stefan to hide the body for him. He'd planned on telling Caroline and Bonnie that no one could find out about Rebekah waking up. But now there was no point. Elena would tell either Stefan or Damon, which meant Klaus was going to find out. He needed to keep Kim's name out of it. Caroline had kept her from Elena, for which he was thankful. But he still felt like explicitly stating that the others must not know how exactly Rebekah planned to kill Matt.

"We can hide her in the Salvatore boarding house," Elena volunteered. When she looked at Tyler, she knew her idea was about to get shut down.

"I'll hide her," Bonnie said, knowing that Tyler and Kim's secret needed to stay with Rebekah. The chances of that were low if Stefan and Damon could call up Matt or Jeremy to take the dagger out. "And no one needs to know where."

"How are you going to carry her out of the school?" Tyler asked.

"I'll help," Caroline volunteered quickly.

Tyler would rather be the one to help Bonnie, considering Caroline and Klaus seemed to talk more and more lately, but he kept quiet.

"What are we going to do about Stefan?" Elena asked. She barely succeeded in keeping the impatience out of her voice. She had called Damon, but he hadn't been successful in reaching Stefan either. He'd said he was on his way back, but she'd told him to hold off, that she and Bonnie could find him.

"You and I can look for Stefan," Matt said.

"I think we should go to Klaus' place, let him know Kol's here, and he'll find him and find Stefan."

Tyler grabbed his jacket off the floor and walked out. If he stayed for any more bullshit that weren't in his interest or that of his pack, he would go off.

"What is his problem?" Elena asked.

Caroline sighed. "Nothing. Let's get this over with," she said to Bonnie.

Bonnie's solution was to hide Rebekah in the tomb under Old Fell's Church. Caroline carried the unconscious vampire deep inside the tomb, and Bonnie locked her in with two separate seals. Earth would keep vampires and Hybrids out. Fire, which she made by lighting the old torches, would keep humans out. Splitting the elements into two seals instead of combining them in one made the seals
Weaker, but combining them for a stronger seal also meant a stronger spell needed to be performed which meant more health risks for the witch.

She used her telekinesis to place the door in front of the entrance. Emily's inverted pentagram stared at her.

"That was creepy," Caroline said as she patted her dress. "I've never been inside the tomb before. I felt like I wouldn't be able to get out."

"It certainly has a reputation," Bonnie said and turned to leave.

"Hey listen, are you into my boyfriend?"

There went another knot in her stomach. "Excuse me?"

"Are you..." Caroline asked as she slowly walked up to her, "into...my boyfriend? Are you into Tyler?"

"No. Of course not."

"Good. I really hope not," Caroline said and walked past her. On her way out of the tomb, she said, "If you're really hard up, the creepy professor seemed to like hanging around you."

Bonnie looked after her and blinked faster than she needed to when she realized she'd been insulted two-fold.

She was beat when she made it home. She took a warm shower and explained to her father what had happened. Being honest with him was still strange even after almost a year of it, but as long as he kept himself from physically getting involved, she would tell him almost anything he wanted to hear.

It was now 10:58pm, and she's been ready for bed since she came home at 5:30. She was washing her plate and fork after the second dinner she'd eaten when someone knocked on her door. She paused her soapy hands in the sink and hoped it wasn't Klaus. She'd dropped Caroline off at the school after a very silent ride. Tyler and Kim had left, and Elena had texted to say that Stefan had called her from his front door after waking up from a snapped neck.

So who was at her door now?

She answered it before her father came back down to the television. And then remembered that she was in her sleepwear: an old shirt she'd received as a gift during her summer as a lifeguard and shorts so short that her buttocks hung out of them. Her hair was wrapped, and she was wearing flip flops. So of course the person on the other side of the door was Tyler, showered, wearing a different outfit from earlier, but still as hot and actually ready for company. The only thing they had in common was that he looked as tired as she did.

Tyler cocked his head. Here was an unexpected visual.

Bonnie closed her eyes. "Can we please pretend I'm not wearing what I'm wearing?" She thanked God for a small favor: she was wearing a bra.

"Uh, sure. What would you like me to pretend you're wearing?"

Bonnie opened her eyes. She was a little rusty, but she was positive that counted as flirting. She crossed her arms over her chest. "What are you doing here?"
"I came to check on you. Can I come in, or do you make all your guests stand at the door?" The question was out of his mouth before he remembered that he was a vampire, and she might have reservations about inviting him in.

Bonnie didn't need time to ponder his danger level. "Come in." He hesitated, which she appreciated, and she raised her brows.

Tyler smiled and walked in.

Bonnie led him to the kitchen and made sure to keep her hands over her butt. Tyler wasn't looking at that, however. He was interested in the layout of her living room.

"Who is it?!" Her father screamed down.

"Tyler! Lockwood!" Bonnie yelled up. She got to the sink and turned and crossed her arms again.

Tyler put his hands in his pockets. "How are you?"

"I'm fine."

"I just….wanted to make sure you were okay after the whole thing earlier, you know, with Rebekah."

Bonnie smiled. "I'm fine. I'm the only one who didn't get hurt."

"I also wanted to thank you. For everything you did."

"It was nothing," she said with the shrug of a shoulder.

"You saved Kim's life, and you put Rebekah down. You found the dagger. Klaus won't find out what she found out. You saved my entire pack and me. That sounds like everything."

Bonnie smiled, bashful. Apparently instant shyness when a cute boy complimented her magical skills was a thing with her. Her heart trembled. In an effort to snap herself out of it, she asked, "So why didn't compulsion work on her?"

"Because I'm an Alpha. She's not just a Hybrid anymore; she's part of a pack. Werewolves can't be compelled by vampires, and she thinks that because our werewolf side is dominant enough for us to be a pack; it's protecting us from compulsion. I think she's right."

"That's very good. But it could also mean trouble with Klaus since they all still live with him."

"I know. She's going to tell the others not to give him any attitude."

She nodded. "So, um, where's Caroline?" she asked with a shrug of one shoulder.

"Uh, home, I think."

"Oh. I'm surprised to see you without her. She's been stuck to you like glue since school opened. Which is probably a bad thing to say considering what happened to her today," she said and rolled her eyes at her inappropriateness. Caroline had gotten slammed so hard on the ground that she'd been out of it for a good minute, and here she was being petty because of the comment she'd made in the tomb earlier.

Tyler smiled.
Bonnie cleared her throat. "Did you hear Stefan's okay?"

Tyler blinked slowly. "Yeah."

Bonnie chuckled. "You really don't like him." The group got annoyed with Damon all the time, but no one spoke a word or displayed any emotions against Stefan as far as she knew. Jeremy was disgusted by him for what he'd done to her mother, and he now really hated him after he'd forced Jeremy to kill a freshly turned convict two months ago. Other than that…..

Tyler said, "He doesn't give a damn about what I'm trying to do, said that what he wants is bigger than me, and then I kept his ass hostage for a little bit because I could."

"When did this happen?"

"The day of the festival."

"Wow. No wonder Caroline was mad at you. He's like her third best friend."

"Yeah, she was kind of there, too. She could've left any time she wanted, but she chose to stick with him." In more ways than one.

Bonnin nodded. "How's Kim doing?"

"She's fine. She found Rebekah's car after you told her to stay outside. The passenger window was smashed. Someone probably grabbed something, and that something was probably Rebekah's cell phone."

"Question is: was it Kol or was it April? If it was Kol, and there's something in there about April, then she's screwed."

"I don't know, but Kol's staying in town."

"What?"

Tyler nodded. "He was there when Kim got back to Klaus'. Turns out he won't bother looking for Rebekah himself, but he will fill Klaus in on what's going on so that he can look for her. He was all set to leave, but Klaus asked him to stay until he figured out what was going on."

"Does he know that Kim…?"

"No."

Bonnie understood now why he looked tired. The crisis wasn't averted. Rebekah was down, but Kol was still around. "He told Elena that Rebekah had hoped to compel her, Stefan and Caroline to get information. I'm guessing Kol was reinforcement. Did Klaus say what he planned on doing to find Rebekah?"

"He came to my house. He wanted to know if I'd seen anything or heard anything. I told him no. I'm positive he didn't believe me, especially since Caroline was involved. Shit."

"What?"

"I need to call Caroline and tell her not to tell Klaus anything."

"He might compel it out of her." Or he might not. She wasn't sure what their common mode of operation was.
Klaus could've tried to compel him. Which is why he had wanted to give him Bonnie. He'd wanted to tell him as much of the truth as he could: Bonnie had incapacitated Rebekah and then daggered her. But he hadn't wanted Bonnie to be blindsided, so he'd taken the risk and lied to Klaus.

"Listen," he began, "This is the worst thing I could possibly ask, and I really hate doing it, but...I need to be smart about this. For the sake of my pack. And smart is you. Remember I told you Hayley had a witch that she wanted to use to help me out with something?"

"Yeah."

"I'm going to kill Klaus. That's the something. That's what all of this is about for me, and the only people who knew were the pack, Hayley, and Caroline, but she went and told Stefan once this whole cure thing came into play-"

"And that's why they told you they needed Klaus: because he has the sword." More than anyone, Bonnie knew how bad it was for a Salvatore to be aware of a secret plan.

"Yeah. They want me to hold off on killing him until after they get the cure, and I still don't care. But this is getting out of hand. Rebekah knows at least one Hybrid can't be compelled, and now Kol's here. We need to move in on Klaus as soon as possible. I still don't trust Hayley." He hesitated. "But I do trust you. I've seen what you can do. Can you please help us?"

Bonnie lifted her shoulders and looked up at the ceiling.

"You don't have to say yes."

"Oh, I'm going to say yes," she chuckled.

"But you don't have to."

"I'm just thinking about how that's going to complicate what I'm trying to do. Going after Klaus is working against the goal of getting the cure; it's working against Stefan, Damon, and Elena, and if I do that-"

"So you can't do it, then."

"I didn't say that."

"You just said that killing Klaus would work against you-"

"Yeah, but I don't need him to find the cure, especially if I get my hands on that sword."

"But you need him alive to have Stefan believe you're looking for the cure for Elena. Even if he does die, you can't have anything to do with it, otherwise they're going to question you."

"What are you doing? You asked for my help."

"Yeah, but I don't want you to say yes just because it's what you're used to saying! I'm not some nameless nobody that you can just say yes to without thinking about it. If you can't do it, then say no. I need your help, but it's not gonna break me or my pack if I don't get it."

"You know what? I think it's time for you to go. Clearly we're at the part of the conversation where you tell me I'm a brainless witch on auto pilot, which means you've said everything you need to say, so let me show you the door." She walked around him and didn't look back to see if he was following. She pulled the door open and put a hand on her hip and waited for him to leave.
Tyler kicked himself the whole way. When he got to the door, he paused in front of her.

Bonnie kept her eyes on the dark and quiet street.

"I'm sorry."

"Deja vu," she responded.

Right. He'd insulted her in detention, and then he'd insulted her at the festival and apologized at the festival. "I know," he acknowledged. "I really am sorry. I just...that's not how I wanted it to come out. That's not how I wanted any of it to come out. It wasn't even what I wanted to talk about. I want you to help me because you can and you're able to, not because you can't help but help. This day turned upside down in the blink of an eye: I almost lost someone else from my pack; we almost got caught; we could still get caught; the others are wondering why I'm not just going with Hayley's plan, and while all of that is going on they are still living with Klaus. And now with Rebekah figuring out that our pupils don't dilate, how long until Klaus figures it out?

I just feel like we're more behind than we were when this all started, and that's what I've been thinking about since I left the school, and it got worse after Kim texted me that Kol was staying in town. But at the end of this stressful ass day, I just wanted to kiss you. We dodged Rebekah, and we dodged Kol, and I just wanted to check on you and kiss you. Just hold you like before, in the bathroom, and just...relax. But I can't. We can't, because you walked away, and I have a girlfriend who's sticking to me like glue. So we're talking about this instead."

Bonnie swallowed. She wanted to kiss him, too. Now that he'd put it out there, she wanted to kiss him, and it would be really nice if he held her like earlier. She'd thought maybe the rest of winter break had cooled whatever he'd been feeling during the festival and even before that. She'd thought that their lack of communication meant the desire had passed. But here he was, telling her she'd thought wrong.

But she let him walk out of the house. He apologized again, and he wished her a good night, and she remained silent, and he left.
Tyler's Physique

Chapter Notes

As promised, here is Tonnie's heart to heart theme song: Falling For You by The 1975.

Let me know what you think after you give it a listen! It seriously works as nice background music for every bonding moment they have from this chapter on.

The next day, Bonnie was crabby. Her vagina was protesting again.

After Tyler left, she'd turned off the light in the kitchen and gone upstairs, told her father good night, and slid under her covers to satiate her libido. Getting to see Tyler's physique during his surprise visit had provided her with up-to-date material for her fantasies. But she'd wanted to do it differently this time. She'd wanted her body to be vibrating and buzzing while she brought herself off. So she'd tweaked the Blackout spell to capture the light in her bedroom.

And all she'd gotten for her effort was a warm palm. Just a palm! No buzzing, no vibration, no electricity, nothing. Because apparently, the light from a lightbulb was different from the artificial light in ceiling panels. Different energies. So lamp light captured just beneath her skin made her skin warm. And that was it. Her disappointment had been colossal.

And she was still disappointed when the sun came up. And her vagina was looking at her sideways. Because after the disappointing result of the spell, she'd decided not to masturbate at all last night, despite being horny. She'd saved it and fallen asleep with a half thought. Something about her birthday being in two months and Tyler looking like a present.

So now she was getting ready to leave for school and thinking that her next orgasm needed to come from Tyler, not herself. She wasn't going to orgasm again unless Tyler was stroking it out of her. Now that wasn't a goal, per se. Because that would mean she was intentionally on purpose planning to sleep with Tyler. And he had a girlfriend. And last she'd been told, her desperate kind needed to settle for a "creepy professor."

So it was a complete coincidence that she was lamenting the cold weather and wishing it was warmer so that she could wear something short enough to show off her mile-long legs in hopes of arresting Tyler's attention. At least her her black-washed jeans stuck to her legs like a second skin.

She grabbed her bag and keys from the dining room table. "Dad, I'm leaving," she announced when she got to the living room. "Are you doing visits today?"

"No, I'll be home all day working on this report."

"The one on the competitor?"

"Yeah," Rudy said and looked back at her and smiled.

Bonnie smiled and shook her head. He really got a kick out of how competitive drug companies were. "Have fun," she said.

"Will do. Have a good and safe day in school."
Bonnie gave him a look. "Well the problem's been taken cared of," mostly, "so, will do."

She stepped outside and found Klaus Mikaelson leaning against her car. She closed and locked the door so as not to disturb her father.

"I said to myself," Klaus began when she got close to the driver's side, "That with Stefan out of commission and Damon gone training young Jeremy, you are the only cause left for my sister's current state."

"Get away from my car."

"Where is she?"

"Nowhere I'm gonna tell you."

"Break into her house, did you?"

"I'm surprised she had the dagger just lying around. I would think you would keep it with you for next time."

"Ah, but it was not I who woke her. That answer lies with her. Literally. And with all of...us...looking for the cure, it would behoove us to know if there's a new player in the game. Stefan agrees with me."

"So why isn't he having this conversation with me?"

"Crisis at the lakehouse. Caused by yours truly." He saw the change in her expression and said, "I'd assure you that young Jeremy's fine, but I don't know. Stefan will be back by this afternoon."

"This conversation is over, Klaus."

"Do you really think your father will stay inside all day long?"

Bonnie stared at him with immense disinterest. "My father was married to a witch, had a witch for a mother-in-law, and," she shrugged to indicate herself, "is living with his witch daughter. Do you really think he's walking around this infested town like any old mortal?"

She savored his reaction. "Get out of my way."

Klaus stepped aside.

"And if you're telling the truth, and you didn't wake Rebekah, and there is someone else at play, I'm sure they'll reveal themselves sooner or later."

April Young stood behind the school's auditorium and dropped her cigarette on the ground and crushed it with her boot. She's been smoking more since her father died. After the funeral, she'd been sneaking a smoke during school once a day. Since she found out about vampires, Hybrids, werewolves, and witches, she's been sneaking two smokes during school.

She waved at the air around her. It wasn't effective for getting the smell off her clothes, but she was out of body spray.

"Aren't you brave."

She looked over to see Caroline Forbes walking to her. She'd been expecting one of them. "Excuse
"Your bodyguard's out of commission and here you are in a school filled with the same people you wanted to help kill yesterday."

"I have no idea what you're talking about," April answered.

"I'd say don't play dumb, but you did wake an Original vampire. How did you even know that that would work?"

April contemplated staying silent. Then she answered, "I didn't. I wanted that dagger to use on you. Or Elena. Or whoever could tell me what really happened to my father. I was sitting there thinking about my next move when she woke up."

"We're trying to figure out what happened to your father, too, April."

"Was lying to me part of that? How about compelling me? How about feeding off of me?"

"No one fed on you on purpose. Being a vampire comes with growing pains. I saved your life. And we compelled you to keep you safe. You have no idea how dangerous this world is."

"I'm still standing, aren't I?"

"Barely. Did Rebekah tell you she has a psychotic older brother who doesn't like surprises? You're on thin ice, April. He's asking around, and he doesn't know about you, but he could. Very easily."

April smiled. "Is that a threat? What do you think me and Rebekah talked about over winter break? Like you said, I was going to help kill you all and yet here I am where any one of you could attack me. If you were stupid enough."

"You're bluffing."

"So call it."

Tyler stood from the table he was sharing with Matt and went to throw away his leftover lunch. He then went to deposit it at the designated return spot next to one of the six lunch lines. When he turned to head back, he saw Bonnie walking toward him. After upsetting her the night prior, he didn't expect her to bother speaking to him unless it was absolutely necessary. Which was a disappointing prospect.

"Hi," she greeted anxiously.

"Hey."

She was quiet, though she seemed to be trying to figure out what to say. Maybe she had come over just to talk to him.

"Listen, um. I just wanted you to know that I still mean what I said last night. If you want my help, I will help."

"Uh, yeah. I want it. Thanks."

She nodded.

"I really appreciate it," he added.
Bonnie smiled. He was trying.

"Are you okay? You looked a little worried when you came up."

"Uh, Klaus came to see me this morning. Well, he was waiting for me when I stepped outside, threatened my dad and everything. He wanted to know where I was keeping Rebekah."

"Why does he think you know?"

"Process of elimination. Since it wasn't Stefan or Damon, then it must've been me. And get this: Stefan agrees with him that we need to figure out who woke Rebekah."

"Wait, Stefan was there?"

"No," she sighed. "He's at the lake house. Apparently Klaus is so impatient about growing Jeremy's mark that he sent a brood of vampires out there to attack him. Kill or be killed. I called Jeremy on my way to school. He says he's fine, but…"

It was inappropriate, because obviously there was cause for her to worry about Jeremy, but in light of his blunder last night he didn't feel spectacular about her worry for Jeremy. He knew that there was nothing better than the possibility of death or pain to bring two people closer. She might worry herself into reconsidering Jeremy's feelings for her.

"I'm sure he's fine," he responded. "But if you want to go out there and check, then you should. But I don't think he would lie to you," he said.

She smiled, "Oh, he'd definitely lie to me if it meant I wouldn't worry. It's just bad enough that he's out there with Damon; now he's got to fight off Klaus' goons."

"Bonnie, your dad-"

"He'll be fine. Klaus can't touch him. Literally. A little gift from my mom from when they became serious. My grams continued it after she left. He should be good through the end of this year, but I don't even know if it'll be any good against Klaus and his Original Hybrid-ness. I might've bluffed a little bit. But don't worry."

"I am worried. This is what I was talking about yesterday."

"Yeah, but I put Rebekah down before I agreed to help you," she pointed out with a smile.

Tyler smiled back at her.

"Anyways. Stefan knows that April Young woke Rebekah. I mean Caroline knows, and Elena knows, so I can't imagine one or both of them didn't tell him."

"So, he's protecting her from Klaus," Tyler concluded.

"She needs it. I can't imagine why she'd agree to help Rebekah."

"I can. It doesn't take much to agree with an Original. They're quick with the threats."

Suddenly, Caroline's voice sounded behind Bonnie. "She thinks she's tough shit."

Tyler looked up and Bonnie turned around. "Who?" she asked.

"April Young. I just spoke to her by the auditorium, you know, tried to scare some sense into
her, *reason* with her, but she basically told me to do my worst. She's out to get us because she thinks we had something to do with her dad's death."

"April's human; how does she hope to survive all of this, especially without Rebekah?" Bonnie asked.

"Maybe she's got Kol, too," Tyler posited.

Bonnie took a quick moment to appreciate how much closer to her he'd moved and how sexy his voice sounded from this proximity.

"She did make it sound like she had backup," Caroline reported. "Or like she and Rebekah had come up with a contingency plan. I just wish I could rip that bracelet off and compel her to forget everything."

Bonnie's phone buzzed in her back pocket. She took it out and opened the text from an unknown number. She gasped and held on to the phone with both hands when the picture of a battered Shane loaded with the caption *any old mortal*. "Oh my God."

"Who is that?" Tyler asked

"What is it?" Caroline asked at the same time.

"It's Shane," she whispered. "He's the professor who replaced my grams. He used to be her TA, and he gave me a tour of Whitmore, and he's into-I need to go. No, I need to call."

Tyler trained his ears on the call.

"Bonnie Bennett, I presume."

"You're not Klaus."

"Kol Mikaelson. I don't believe I've had the pleasure."

"Oh, you've had the pleasure. I'm the reason you and your line are still alive."

"Whitmore College, parking lot G, ground floor, near the broadcast building, two and a half hours. I think that's fair, given traffic. Come with either my sister or with her whereabouts. Fail to come, and I beat him to death. Come late, and I beat him for every minute you're late until you show up or he dies."

Bonnie stared at her phone when he cut the call off. "I need to go," she said quietly, and she headed off.

"We'll come with you," Caroline said.

Bonnie turned and said, "He'll expect me to come with people."

"So what? So we give him what he expects," Tyler said.

Bonnie nodded and let them follow. They stopped by their respective tables to grab their things. They had B lunch, which meant they were going to a different class after.

"Are we giving him Rebekah?" Caroline asked once they managed to sneak out of the building.

Bonnie looked at Tyler, and he answered her silent question, "If we have to."
"I want to kill Kol," Bonnie said to him.

"Well, the Salvatores have the White Oak Stake, and we can't use it on him without killing off his entire line," Caroline said.

"I think if I could just get that stake, I could rework it so it doesn't do that. Maybe scrape off some of the ash or something and make another weapon." Perhaps with the sword in Klaus' possession.

"It's indestructible," Caroline pointed out.

"But I wouldn't be trying to destroy it," Bonnie countered.

Caroline lifted her head slowly as she realized her point. "There's no one at the Salvatore house right now."

"We have two and a half hours," Tyler reminded them.

"So are we splitting up?" Caroline asked.

Bonnie looked at Tyler who looked at Bonnie.

Caroline licked her lips. It was obvious how they'd already handled the split in their heads. "If Klaus finds out you went up against Kol, and he will, he'll make you pay for it," she told Tyler.

"Not if we give him Rebekah," Bonnie said. "He'll be fine."

Caroline looked at Bonnie. She doubted that. Still, she smiled and nodded.

"It'll be fine, Care," Tyler said. "We'll be back."

"How long will this take? Will the stake be back in its place before they realize it's gone?"

"Probably not," Bonnie answered. "But when they ask, I'll tell them the truth. I need it to make a weapon against Kol and Klaus because of what they did today."

When the two got inside Bonnie's car, Tyler felt like bringing up the look that Caroline had just given Bonnie, but he really wasn't ready to address it. Besides, he was at the root of that look. He knew that it was because of what Caroline had seen at the festival. He could've gone to the Salvatore house to get the dagger, but he preferred to be Bonnie's backup, especially after how much she'd done to help with Rebekah.

"Do we have a plan?" he asked when they were well on their way.

"I'm going through options in my head: if we give him Rebekah, that means we have 13 days until she wakes up, which means you have 13 days to kill Klaus."

"Can't you cast another spell on her while she's sleeping?"

"I'd either need to get close to her or get something that belongs to her. I guess the latter's easy. But if Rebekah's awake, then that means Kol stays in town, and then there's the April factor, and then there's what Rebekah knows."

"Can you erase her memory?"

"There's a spell in my mom's grimoire, but it comes with a powder component. I'd need to be close
enough to throw it in her face."

"So that's out."

"Then there's the taking out Kol option. If we do anything to him, Klaus finds out. Knock him out, bury him, if he doesn't contact Klaus with memories perfectly in tact, then we have Klaus' wrath to deal with."

"Yeah, and he's been calm about Rebekah so far."

And Bonnie knew that this was indeed calm for Klaus.

"So then we give him Rebekah," Tyler said. "And we have 13 days."

"Yeah," she nodded as she thought it through. "I included time in the spell, so it's binding. There's no reversing it; it has to play out."

Tyler reached for her hand on the emergency break and covered it with his. She looked tense. "It's gonna be okay. Everything will be okay." It was rare that he got to be the one doing the comforting as opposed to the one being comforted.

Bonnie's smile was tight. "You know, Caroline's right: Kol will tell Klaus you were there."

Tyler pushed the boundary and interlaced their fingers. "I'll deal with it."

Her tight smile relaxed, and she squeezed his hand. It was incredible how she could want him in the middle of all of this. She remembered what he'd said last night, about wanting to kiss and hold her at the end of the day. She very much wanted time to stop so that she could hide in his embrace.

Tyler started to stroke her thumb, and he didn't stop until they arrived.

Over at the Salvatore mansion, Caroline had checked both occupied bedrooms (and shaken her head at Elena's possessions in Damon's room), the bathrooms, the unoccupied rooms, the kitchen, and the library (including the empty spaces between some of the books). She found nothing. Unless there was some secret wall safe she didn't know about, which was very likely, then the dungeon was her last shot.

She walked down the stairs and pushed the creaky door open. Even as a vampire, she realized the thing was hard to push due to years of rust. Considering how much use Stefan and Damon got out of it, shouldn't they oil it up?

She looked at every corner. Nothing. She sent up a silent prayer, (her mother still insisted on taking her to church and held her hand tight during every sermon out of some irrational fear that she'd get struck down), and removed the new-ish blankets and worn mattress from the tiny bed. Just as she suspected, the bed had two small drawers. She opened the one to her right and saw a long, bulky black cloth and smiled. She gently lifted it out and turned it until she found the ends of the cloth and unwrapped it. She unveiled one jagged, silver and white White Oak stake.

She wrapped it back up and closed the drawer. She put the mattress back on the bed and caught a figure in her left peripheral.

"Jesus! What is wrong with you?!"

"Me?" Stefan asked. "I live here."
"You scared the hell out of me."

He smiled. "What are you doing, Caroline?"

"What are you doing? You're supposed to be helping Elena, Damon, and Jeremy with Klaus' vampires at the Lakehouse. I thought you moved out so Damon and Elena could….."

"I know. But I go out of town and when I come back I go where I'm used to. I was taking off my jacket in the living room before I remembered where I'm actually supposed to be. Jeremy's fine. Some of Klaus' vampires are dead. Most ran away. I guess he didn't compel them. Your turn: what are you doing?"

"Grabbing the White Oak stake for Bonnie." She sat down on the bed and held the stake between her legs. She looked at the bed and said, "This thing is hard and uncomfortable."

"It's been a dungeon for a while now," he said as he walked in. "And I'd hazard a guess that the person who first claimed this room and this bed back when it was a sleeping quarter wasn't comfortable either." He sat next to her. "What does Bonnie want with the stake?"

"Kol's kidnapped professor Shane on Klaus' order. Bonnie wants to scrape some ash from the stake to make a new weapon. That way no other vampire needs to die when we stake an Original."

"That's a good idea," Stefan said thoughtfully. "I didn't tell him about April. I had no idea he'd go to Shane."

"Bonnie's going to give him Rebekah; she doesn't have a choice. Which means we're gonna be up against Klaus and Rebekah for the cure."

"Don't be so sure. After what Klaus did, Rebekah's more likely to try to get in his way."

"That seems to be her intention, but she always goes back to him. Right?"

Stefan sighed. "Right."

Five seconds was too long a time for Caroline to be quiet, especially when there was a crisis, so Stefan said, "I'm sure everything will be fine. It's gonna be hard, but it's gonna be fine. It always works out."

"Barely," Caroline mumbled. "But it's not that." She turned her body towards Stefan and said, "You know Tyler's still mad at me over this whole cure thing, right? He's still mad that I told you about his plans for Klaus, and he's still mad that he has to wait."

"Well that's just something he's gonna have to get over. Look, I didn't mean to put you in a tough position—"

"No, I can handle it. Trust me, I know how important this is. I've watched my best friend spiral into an abyss and she thinks she likes it there. I'm one second away from washing my hands and leaving her there, so, yeah, we do need to find the cure."

"I know this is hard for him after what Klaus has put him through. Revenge and impatience tend to go hand and hand, trust me I know. But we need Klaus to find the cure."

"I know. I thought my biggest problem was his suicide mission against Klaus, but….."

"What?"
Caroline weighed her options.

"What is it, Caroline?"

"I think he's seeing someone else, or….is at least into someone else."

"What? Who?"

"I don't know," she lied. She wasn't ready to put Bonnie out there. "But he's distant and just….not how he used to be."

"You must have it wrong. Tyler loves you; you've been through a lot together; you've survived a lot-"

"You mean like you and Elena?"

"That's different."

"Is it? Didn't you sense when she started to drift towards Damon? Did you doubt yourself about it?"

Stefan sighed and clasped his hands between his legs. "That was a special circumstance. I wanted Damon and Elena to get close. I knew right away that she'd be good for him, a good influence, because, heck, she was a good influence on me. And it worked. It was working. Shaky, but working, which I guess is the most you can ask for of Damon. But….yes, I sensed it. But I counted on his hot temper and general bad side to always repulse her. And I guess that was stupid, because I always expected her to love me no matter how ugly I got. I'm the Ripper."

"That's different," Caroline consoled. "You try. It's not stupid to expect your girlfriend to be loyal. Damon doesn't try, which is why I'm thankful for the sire bond in a weird way, because otherwise Elena would be a complete stranger to me."

"She stayed at the lakehouse with him. They'll be coming up together."

Caroline shook her head.

Stefan looked at her and said, "Tyler would be stupid to cheat on you. You're the best thing that ever happened to him."

She smiled.

"Which is why I think you're wrong: Tyler's a lot of things, but he isn't stupid."

"Okay, so you know I don't judge you on your Ripper thing. I judge you based on who you want to be, who you've shown me to be, right?"

"Right," Stefan answered, skeptical of where this was going.

"Okay, so I need you to do me the same favor, because I'm about to say something, and I know it's stupid; it's super stupid and dumb and makes no sense and couldn't possibly be-"

"Caroline."

Caroline exhaled sharply. "I'm not wrong about him being into someone else. And I know I'm not wrong because on some level I kind of think….the universe is punishing me."

"For what?"
She inhaled and lowered her chin to her chest, "Because," she sighed and dropped her chest. She closed her eyes and continued, "Because of how I feel about Klaus."

Silence.

She opened one eye and found Stefan looking at her inquisitively. "What?" she asked.

"What, what? I'm waiting for you to continue, because you can't possibly mean what I think you mean."

"I do. I mean I don't like him like him; just...he kind of grew on me."

"Caroline."

"What? Are you not the same guy I spoke to the night of the festival who agreed that it was kind of sucky that we're basically using Klaus for this cure knowing he's gonna get jumped by the Hybrids and die at the end of it?"

Stefan sighed.

"You see some good in him; I know you do, or at least you see something you relate to, am I right?"

Stefan thought a moment. "Klaus knew me during a period of my life that....no one else got to witness. When he dies, if he dies, that'll be it. Rebekah was there, but I didn't talk to her about it the way I did with him. He was the first person who ever...valued that side of me. Not that that's anything to be thankful for, but I...I kind of am. If he dies, then that's gone, and it becomes something only I know. After living a century, I can tell you that there are some things about yourself and your experiences that you need at least one person to know about and understand. You need at least one person who knows you completely. Lexi was that kind of someone, too, but she wanted to fix me. Klaus, I guess, appealed to the side of me that didn't want to be fixed."

"The Ripper side?" Caroline asked.

Stefan looked at her and told her what she expected to hear: "Yeah."

She faced forward. "He appeals to a side of me, too," she admitted softly. "It's this weird side that I don't wanna explore or know about, but he does."

Stefan wanted to ask how anything about Klaus could appeal to her when he's hurt her so many times, but he figured that'd be akin to asking Elena what she sees in Damon: nothing he'd understand or want to hear. He had known Klaus before the Original had turned his monstrosity on him. Caroline only met Klaus because he'd turned his monstrosity on her. Maybe she had more in common with Elena than she was willing to admit.

"But I love Tyler," she continued. "Which is not easy. It hasn't been easy for, God, so long. But I don't wanna talk about that."

"You can if you want to."

"No, it's....it's bad. It's not something I should be thinking, especially since he didn't ask for any of the stuff that's happened to him. He's still figuring it out. And on the other side, Klaus already has it all figured out, which he never fails to point out."

"Klaus has made Tyler's life a living hell," Stefan said, and he suddenly felt like he and Tyler were wearing the same shoes.
"I know. Okay, that's enough talking about this. I'm done. It's an ugly topic, and I'm done. The point is that Tyler's straying, and I know it for a fact. Call it woman's intuition."

Stefan didn't say anything. He knew she wasn't really done. She couldn't be. Elena never was, and look at the choice she'd made. But maybe Caroline would end up being stronger than her. He doubted it. But she could surprise him. At least she was worried about losing Tyler. It was Tyler who seemed to be making the stupid decision.

"Shane?" Bonnie crouched next to him and stopped herself from lifting his head. "Shane, you're okay. You're safe now. God, he's so messed up," she said as she used the sleeve of her jacket to tenderly wipe the blood on his face.

"Not for long." Tyler bit his wrist and fed it to him. He trusted that if Bonnie didn't think he should expose himself to this professor, then she would say something.

Feeding him was slow-going at first. Kol did a number on him; he could barely open his mouth to drink. Tyler forewent his wrist and bit the fleshy part of his arm. There was no point in him wasting so much blood. He had to bite himself two more times before Shane grew strong enough to suck.

Shane yanked his mouth from Tyler's arm as soon as he was able. He sat up, barely able to see, and coughed uncontrollably. "That's not something I've ever had before," he said when he could speak. "Not that I don't appreciate the gesture." He wiped his mouth and broke into another coughing fit.

"Don't move so fast," Bonnie cautioned. She looked around the garage. It was a pretty secluded spot. "We need to get you home."

"I need a minute," Shane said.

"I know. I'm so sorry about this."

"This was your doing?"

"He was trying to force my hand."

"I hope it worked."

Tyler remembered now that he'd seen this man speaking to Hayley at the Miss Mystic pageant.

"Can you tell me what happened?" Bonnie asked.

"Uh. I was going to my car to get some papers I'd forgotten-oh man, my class probably thinks I disappeared on them. This man with a British accent called out to me when I got to the garage. I knew I didn't know him, but he insisted that he had business with me. Next thing I know I was hit in the face."

Bonnie closed her eyes and shook her head. "That was Kol Mikaelson, an Original vampire."

"Ori-My specialty iswitches."

Bonnie smiled. "Yeah, well they're kind of a big deal. And dangerous," she added and gently touched his face.

"I'll be fine. Thanks to you," he said to Tyler. "This stuff works like magic."

"You're taking this pretty well," Tyler said.
"Well, I know that Bonnie is a prodigy of the Bennett line. I know what comes with that territory, although considering we haven't spoken since before the pageant, this really did take me by surprise," he said to Bonnie.

"Did Kol say anything to you?" Bonnie asked. "Anything at all?"

"No, just that this was necessary and that I would be rescued any minute."

"Okay, can you stand?"

"I think so."

"Okay, let's get you home."

"I think I'll be okay."

"You just got jumped by an Original. That's not something you can just walk off, even with vampire blood," Tyler pointed out.

Shane nodded. Bonnie and Tyler helped him stand while he racked his brain trying to remember if everything in his apartment was in order. He didn't want them in his place, but he couldn't protest without raising suspicion. This attack was exactly what he'd needed to get Bonnie back in his orbit.

He divined his future at the beginning of every month, sometimes at the beginning of the week if he deemed it necessary, a cultural holdover from his original time. Since Hayley had made contact with Tyler and he'd positioned himself in Connor Jordan's life, reading his future once a week had become very necessary.

When he'd divined earlier in the week that terrible fortune would befall him, he hadn't known how to interpret it. He'd contacted Hayley to make sure everything was okay with Tyler. She was still having trouble getting back in, though Rebekah's attack had opened their line of communication again.

When Kol called his attention, he hadn't thought anything of it. When the man switched to intimidation, he'd realized that his fortune was playing out. And he'd surrendered to Kol's beating in hopes of gaining the sympathy of Qetsiyah's youngest daughter.

Now he let Bonnie hoist him in her car as Tyler went back to his office to get his keys in order to drive his car.

When they got to the apartment, Shane was able to carry himself up with no support. Still, Bonnie doted on him. Tyler found it weird, though in a good way.

The heavy odor of Shane's apartment accosted them as soon as they walked in. Tyler had to cover his nose.

"Uh, sorry," Shane apologized.

Tyler shook his head. He couldn't figure out what the hell he was smelling, just that they were all herbs, probably with some incense mixed in.

"Where's your bedroom?" Bonnie asked.

Shane chuckled. "Really, I'm fine." Bonnie gave him a disapproving look, so he relented and pointed to the hallway that led to his bedroom. He wanted them gone. He didn't want Tyler picking up any
smells, and while he'd taken the appropriate steps to dull Bonnie's premonitions and psychic readings, there was so much energy contained in his apartment, something might set her off.

"You should take your clothes off and get in the shower," Bonnie prescribed.

"Okay."

"I'll make you some tea. Do you have tea? Oh, do you have more of that spirit incense you gave me? It calms me down, so it would really work wonders for you right now."

"I'm out of that," he lied, "but I do have tea: chamomile, lavender, and this really nice California Poppy tea."

"Poppy?" Tyler questioned. "Like the opium kind?"

Shane chuckled. "A lot more mild. But I do collect the dried seed pods for that incense, Bonnie."

"Okay, I'll go make the tea while you….take care."

Tyler followed her out of the bedroom. "I'm getting the sense that this guy touches himself to the idea of being a witch."

"Hey," Bonnie whispered and smacked his arm. He smiled. "I'm serious. Like, what is this smell?" He covered his nose again.

"I have no idea. I can't make any of it out, but I'm not surprised his place smells like this," she said as she searched the cupboards for the California Poppy. "He really does love this stuff."

Tyler began a search of his own.

"What are you doing?" Bonnie whispered when she noticed he was wandering.

Tyler put his index finger over his lips and continued his search.

Bonnie looked toward Shane's bedroom and hoped Tyler was ready to not get caught. She heard the faucet running. Shane had a fancy-looking hot water dispenser, and she figured out how to work it. She poured filtered water in and waited for it to get hot. She procured a tea cup, saucer, a container of sugar, and a teaspoon.

"There's a second room," Tyler said quietly when he came back into the kitchen. "It's locked, though. But there's more of that weird smell behind it. I couldn't hear anything."

"What are you so suspicious about?" Bonnie asked quietly. She looked at the kitchen's entrance to make sure they were still alone.

"I think he knows Hayley."

"What?"

"I saw them talking at the Miss Mystic pageant."

"He was judging that. It was probably small-talk."
"Damon didn't think so."

"Da-okay, Damon? Damon thinks everything and everyone is suspicious."

"Maybe. I asked Hayley if she knew him, and she said no."

"And you don't believe her?"

"I don't know if I can trust her, remember?"

Bonnie thought a moment. "Damon is usually right about the people he doesn't trust. But let's talk about this later."

Tyler eventually had to step out of the apartment. The smell was just too much.

Bonnie sat in front of Shane's bed and watched him sip the tea.

"What's gonna happen next?" he asked.

"Well, I gave Kol what he wanted. They're waiting for me in Mystic Falls to, um, complete my end of the deal. There's one more thing I need to do before he can really get his sister back. I just never thought they'd come all the way to Whitmore to make a point."

"Who's they?"

Bonnie shook his head. "No one you need to worry about."

Shane nodded.

"I'm really sorry."

"This wasn't your fault. Vampires are known for this type of stuff, right?"

"A lot of them, yeah." Bonnie reached out and touched his hand. "I'll call you to find out how you're doing."

"Okay. And listen, this type of stuff doesn't scare me. I've seen magical rituals that were downright terrifying. I'll be fine. And if you need anything or... just anything: you can call me."

Bonnie smiled. "I'll remember that."

"And thank your friend Tyler for me."

"I will."

The clean afternoon air had a debilitating effect on Bonnie when she stepped outside to join Tyler. Her nose prickled, and her stomach rolled, and her vision swam. She thought it was going to pass, but then she saw black and her head became very light.

"Woah!" Tyler exclaimed and caught her when she started to fall back. He propped her head in the crook of his arm as she came back to herself. "Everything's fine," he said to a tenant who was heading inside the building and trying not to look at them. Nice neighbors.

Bonnie's vision cleared, but blood rushed to her head. She pressed the heel of her palm against her
"What's happening?" Tyler asked.

"I don't know. I think it's those smells. Delayed reaction, I think."

"Delayed reaction? You almost passed out."

"I think I'm okay now," she said. She hoisted herself to a sitting position. "That was weird."

Tyler looked back at the apartment building.

"Something in that room must've affected me. Like, I was fine while I was there and once I was away from it, the effect kicked in. Or maybe it's an allergy."

"That's a crazy allergy, and what you're talking about needs prolonged exposure. You were in there for like twenty minutes tops."

"It must've been strong," Bonnie said. She stood up with Tyler's support. "I'm okay now. Promise." She pulled at her nose to try to get rid of the remnants of the smell.

"Let's go," Tyler said. He wrapped his left arm around her waist and held her left hand with his right. He looked back at the apartment building a final time before they left.

Rebekah was free from the tomb but trapped in a troubled sleep. She had let Tyler out of the car when they got back to Mystic Falls and met up with who she'd thought was going to be Kol in the tomb. It had been Klaus. And the first question out of his mouth had been, "Where's Tyler?"

Kol had squealed.

"Picking up his car at school," she'd answered truthfully.

Instead of bringing the seals down, she'd saved her energy and walked inside the tomb to telekinetically retrieve Rebekah. When Klaus had seen the infected bite gashes on Rebekah's arms, she'd made a mental note to text Tyler ASAP. Klaus had glared at her and then grabbed Rebekah from midair and carried her out.

She had also driven to Caroline's house and retrieved the dagger and updated her on Shane's condition.

Now she was home, showered, had already called Shane to check on him, and had laid out the spirit incense in her bedroom. After the strong scents in Shane's bedroom, she felt like mellowing out with the spirit incense before she went to sleep.

But first, Tyler was coming over.

When she opened the door in a semi-sheer, purple, quarter-sleeve shirt and black skinny jeans and black flats with her hair down, Tyler looked her over and said, "Don't plan on going to sleep tonight?"

"Ha ha."

"I liked the going-to-bed look."

She closed the door behind her and went left to sit on the big swing daybed that had been a staple on
her porch since she was in 6th grade. She'd read most of her romance novels while lying down on it during the summer. There was no way to sit on it and have the feet hang, so she and Tyler took off their shoes, sat, and scooted back twice. That was all it took for their backs to be resting comfortably. There were three bright throw pillows on each side, her choices: one yellow, one floral with blues, pinks, and yellows, and one coral on the left; one yellow, one with a white and grey chevron, and one with a white and green chevron on the right.

She folded her legs while Tyler bent his right knee and let his left leg lie straight. The tip of his black sock covered heel hung off the bed. She grabbed the white and green pillow and held it to her chest.

"Klaus came to see me," Tyler said and began tugging on the right hem of his pants.

"I knew it."

"Wanted to know why I lied to him about Rebekah. I asked him if he was surprised. He said he should've compelled the truth out of me the first time, but that he'd given me the benefit of the doubt as his first Hybrid."

Bonnie scoffed.

"I told him that Rebekah did mean to compel me, and she would've succeeded had it not been for you."

"Nice."

Tyler smiled. "He assumed that's why I bit her twice. Said she's not gonna be 'fond of that,'" he imitated Klaus' accent, "when she wakes up."

Bonnie smiled. "Hopefully she'll be dead by then. Or he'll be dead by then."

"I'd rather he be dead by then."

"Yeah, but just in case, I need to talk to my mom about something."

"How are you doing?" he asked.

She looked at him and smiled. "I'm fine. I haven't felt light-headed again or anything."

"Good."

"Thanks again for coming with me."

"It's no problem. I'd do it again," he added.

Flattered, she smiled.

They sat in silence and listened to the cars still driving on the main street by Bonnie's neighborhood. It was 10:53, and Tyler had come this late because Caroline had gone to his house after Bonnie had picked up the dagger. And while Caroline had been upset and ranting in her head about why Tyler hadn't bothered to call her to tell her how everything had gone, she had let none of that show when he opened the door. Besides, Bonnie had told her about Klaus asking for him, so she'd figured maybe he was distracted and trying to figure out how to lie to Klaus. She'd wanted to hang out at his house, just the two of them, but of course Hayley had shown up. Of course, she understood why Hayley was staying in his house, but she was still annoyed and wished the girl would take a hint.

So she'd ended up asking Tyler to come to her house later. They'd cuddled on her couch and
watched a stand-up comedy special, her idea to get him to relax and be in the moment. When she'd reached down in the middle of him laughing and grabbed his penis, Tyler had grabbed her hand and spoken one of the four excuses he'd come up with before he left his house in case things took a turn in that direction.

"So why do you think Shane's suspicious?" Bonnie asked.

"I don't. I'm just trying to figure out what's bugging me about Hayley."

"Have you talked to her?"

"Yeah," he sighed. "I talked to her over winter break. She's still gone most of the time that I'm home. But I let her know that I didn't want to move as quickly as she did; that my gut was telling me to take a little time and not rush into it. And I also told her that we've gotten lucky with the people we've changed. Some of us really didn't mind Klaus' lifestyle. There are two Hybrids who have never been compelled because they see eye to eye with Klaus, and that's something I don't think she got. She told me we also can't let the opportunity pass us by, especially with Klaus looking for the cure."

"He wants Elena human so he can make more Hybrids."

"I know; Caroline told me."

"So I guess we should talk about our plans for killing him." She set the pillow aside and hugged her knees. "What did you have in mind?"

"Well the original plan was for us to maul him to death in our werewolf forms. It'd be kind of poetic, you know?"

Bonnie smiled.

"Then Hayley got the idea of using a witch, and I figured it'd be better if she did the spell you did a couple of months ago: put Klaus in my body and then bury him in concrete until the others could get away." He looked at Bonnie and got the exact reaction he'd expected. She looked horrified.

"Tyler, how in the world is that better?"

"Because the first idea has too many risks, number one being Klaus managing to kill one or more of us. Us turning into werewolves doesn't make him any less invincible."

"Yeah, but if you became werewolves, then he'd have to switch, too, in order to fight you. And powers are like muscles: if you spend years not using them, they don't grow. My mom and my cousin told me that. They say it's like that for everyone. So Klaus is a very strong vampire, but as a werewolf he should be nothing. Basically on your level."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive. They've been witches a lot longer than me. And I'm not burying you in concrete. How long did you plan on being buried?"

"Until there was a way to kill Klaus."

Bonnie was astonished. "You planned on being possessed indefinitely? What about your life?"

Tyler smiled ruefully. "What life? I have no life, Bonnie. And what I can claim of it consists of running and of being away from everything that I know. I can't remember the time before I was
scared of Klaus. Caroline had the same reaction as you: what about prom? I don't-I don't even remember the schools I applied to. I honestly couldn't tell you. I only applied because of my mom, but I only see as far as Klaus. There'd be nothing to miss."

"What about the people who'd be missing you?"

He smiled and asked, "Would you have missed me, Bonnie?"

She smiled. "If it had happened before we talked at the Festival, I wouldn't have missed you as much as I would now," she answered honestly. "I would've been sad, but it would've been more like 'this life sucks' and not 'I really miss Tyler.' And I wasn't talking about me; I was talking about your mom and Caroline. And Matt?"

"This is bigger than them. To borrow Stefan's words." He smiled.

"It's brave," Bonnie said.

Those words touched his heart. He thought of his goal to kill Klaus as more stupid than brave. Her spin on it was unexpected and nice. And suddenly he was at the part of the day where he wanted to kiss her. "As soon as I brought the others into this, I became responsible for them. And I've been failing so far. I lost Dean and Chris, not to mention Dylan, even though he brought that on himself. If nothing else, even if Klaus doesn't die, I need the others to get away. Because I promised them freedom before anything else."

"I can make that happen," Bonnie promised.

"What about you?" he asked and scooted closer to her. He folded his legs and rested his left arm on the back of the bed. "What's your plan for saving your mom?"

"I'm working with her on it. Her and my cousin Lucy. We're doing it all by phone. Lucy's been asking the spirit realm through her ouija board. The risk with that is that spirits talk. If we're too loose with the information, they could get it out to living witch. The one thing we've got going for us is that most witches, most supernaturals, have either never heard of the cure or think it's a myth. But they want me to get my hands on Klaus' sword to see if there's a magical reaction when I touch it."

"That's a thing?"

"Oh yeah. There was a talisman that's now destroyed. It belonged to my great-great-whatever-great grandmother: Emily Bennett-"

"Emily Bennett? I know that name. I don't remember from what, but I know that name."

"Is it from your ancestors' journals? Cause that's pretty much where she shows up."

"No, my family burned their journals-when she got caught," he remembered. "She got caught, so they burned every record that could point to them as werewolves."

"So how do you know this?" Bonnie wondered.

"Because they switched to writing their accounts on this cave that's on our property. Damon discovered it last year."

"Yeah, I remember that. I went down there once. I only saw stuff about the Originals."

"That's at the entrance. There's more if you go deeper."
"Does it say anything else about Emily?"

Tyler licked his bottom lip. "Why don't I take you down there sometime and you can find out?"

Bonnie was sure she made quite the picture: squeezing her lips together so that she wouldn't smile, which just ended up being its own form of a smile. She bit the inside of her bottom lip and looked out into the street. She was warm all over. "So anyways, once I had the talisman."

"Is that a yes?"

"*It wouldn't leave me alone,*" she answered with a wide smile that lit up her face.

Tyler chuckled and felt his dick swell in yearning. She was absolutely beautiful. He decided that asking a girl to go spelunking with him to learn about her ancestor might be the smoothest thing he's ever done.

"I tried to get rid of it," Bonnie continued, "and it just kept coming back to me. I chucked it into a field. Next thing I know it was in my purse. Damon tried to take it off my chest and Caroline tried to take it off my chest, and it zapped them. And there was this other thing," she said thoughtfully. "Shane brought this tombstone to school for an exhibit, said it's thought to be the world's first tombstone. He said it was put on the grave of this very old witch named Silas. I helped him set up the display, and when he showed me that rock….I swear it called to me. I fell into a trance, I do that sometimes, and next thing I knew Shane was grabbing my hand and turns out I was about to touch it."

"Did he notice?"

"No. He said it was too priceless for me to touch. He said the curator only wanted him handling some of the items, which he'd told me at the beginning. I haven't thought about that rock again until now."

"Why do you think it was calling to you?"

"I don't know. But magical objects have...a temperament. That's why the sword might react to a witch touching it. I almost forgot what we were talking about," she said with a chuckle.

"You think the tombstone is magical?"

That was something else she hadn't considered.

"Why would a witch have a magical tombstone?" he asked. "Wouldn't they just have a normal one like they do today? Or maybe that was how witches did it back then?"

"I don't know," she answered. "But he was killed by a witch."

She told him Qetsiyah and Silas' story.

"Maybe she buried him out of love and then cast a spell on his tombstone," Tyler posited when she was finished.

"But why? What was the spell supposed to do? Why make it magical at all?"

"To keep people from finding him? Or she loved him but thought his grave should remain unfound by other people because he was such an asshat?"

She needed to talk to Shane about Silas and his headstone. Did magical objects randomly pull
witches? When Elena's necklace had floated in the air and zapped her, there had been more to the story than met the eye. A whole lot more. Perhaps it would behoove her to get close to the headstone again.

"Are you okay?" Tyler asked. She looked like she was figuring out a thousand things.

"Yeah. I just wonder why I never thought the tombstone might be magical."

"Well, it's not like you have a buttload of down time."

She smiled.

"So we need to get the sword," he declared.

"We?"

"Yeah. I don't see why this can't be fifty-fifty."

She smiled. "Tyler, I don't want you to get hurt."

"I don't want you to get hurt either. And you can't just sneak into Klaus' house like you did Rebekah's. I, on the other hand, have every believable reason to show up at his house."

She nodded and smiled through her pursed lips. "That's a good point."

It was easy for him to lift his hand from the back of the bed to play with the hair at the nape of her neck.

Bonnie's vagina quivered, and she looked at the house across from hers. Jesus. But it felt really good, and the way he used his thumb to stroke her hair and the skin around it inspired thoughts of him using his thumb exactly like that on her vulva.

"Hey, I wanted to ask you something," he said. "Yesterday at school when we were in the bathroom with the others, what was happening to you? You looked off, and you sounded off."

"Oh. Um." She smiled nervously. "It was the spell. She slumped her shoulders when he waited for her to elaborate. "It had an effect on me, one I wasn't expecting. When I caused the blackout, I literally took the light. I didn't think it was going to turn out literal, but it did. So I held the energy that creates those lights….inside me. And it was….kind of like a….vibration."

What she was saying sunk in and Tyler raised an eyebrow. "Really," he said, his voice dropping.

"Oh. Um." She smiled nervously. "It was the spelling. She slumped her shoulders when he waited for her to elaborate. "It had an effect on me, one I wasn't expecting. When I caused the blackout, I literally took the light. I didn't think it was going to turn out literal, but it did. So I held the energy that creates those lights….inside me. And it was….kind of like a….vibration."

Bonnie rolled her eyes, mostly embarrassed, a little bit hoping the information was having an effect on him the way him stroking her neck was having an effect on her.

"So in the bathroom, were you…?" He lifted his eyebrows.

Bonnie mimicked him.

He grinned. "Were you having an orgasm?"

She'd known that that was going to be his question and yet she still wanted to clutch some invisible pearls. The way he'd said orgasm….why wasn't her birthday sooner?

"No," she answered. "I wasn't having….an orgasm. I was just…." She cleared her throat. God he was cute. "Turned on."
Tyler's lips parted. The memory of her by that door suddenly became a whole lot better. He traced the skin behind her ear. "When you were looking at me while I was biting Rebekah, what were you thinking?"

"I really don't think I should answer that," Bonnie said, transfixed.

"I want you to," Tyler said quietly.

But there was nothing quiet about the look in his eyes. The porch light showed all, and he was looking at her like the right answer would have her spread-eagle on the swing bed. That look made the inner walls of her vagina sweat.

"Sexy," she said, though that spoke more of her opinion of his current state than his state in the bathroom. Of the moment in the bathroom, she said, "Strong. Powerful. You just….oozed…."

She was literally staring at him with her mouth agape. Tyler swallowed with some difficulty and thought about that mouth taking care of him where he needed it most right now. He shifted in his seat.

The movement snapped Bonnie out of it. She looked down the left side of the street and closed her eyes to get her bearings.

She tried for nonchalant when she looked back at him."So, um. Are you going to the 80s dance next Friday?"

"Uh. Yeah. Are you?"

"I don't know. I should. I've been feeling gung-ho about being a senior since the night I killed….Dylan. Today kind of put a dent in it. But I will be setting up the decorations after school on Friday."

Tyler nodded. He was going to the dance for Caroline, but now he was going to stay after school and help decorate for Bonnie. And he'd only been into decorating that school once, at the very beginning of his relationship with Caroline.

They sat in silence for a long moment, each trying to wrestle their rowdy thoughts.

Later, Tyler cupped the back of her neck. "Come here," he coaxed.

Bonnie first thought that he was going to kiss her, but he didn't lean forward when she scooted closer. Instead, she found herself being guided to his chest. He wrapped his arms around her, and she smiled. It didn't soothe her protesting vagina, but it was the hug she'd wanted earlier.

Tyler stroke her side slowly, up and down until she was lulled to sleep. Each slide of his palm on her body only bolstered his desire for her.
There's Something About Bonnie Now

"Thirteen days," Bonnie murmured as she listened to the phone ring on the other side while she drove to school. "Well, twelve now."

"Hello?"

"Hey," she spoke louder. "Good morning."

"Morning. Why are you awake at this time?"

"Because I'm a high school student?"

"Oh right. Give me a second, my brain isn't working yet."

Bonnie shook her head. "Get Lucy."

"I hated mornings when I was human and as a vampire I hate them more."

Bonnie listened to Abby shuffle to wherever Lucy was. "Bonnie," she heard her mother say, and then she was put on speaker.

"Morning, sunshine," Lucy greeted.

"Good morning. Listen, I need you guys' opinion. What's the minimum number of days you need to create a prophecy or a curse?"

"Uh, at least seven," Abby answered.

"Good. I have 12 days."

"What are you trying to prophecy?" Abby asked.

"Things are getting crazy here. I can't really go into detail, but I have an Original vampire problem. Rebekah Mikaelson was daggered by me two days ago, but I had to give her to Klaus yesterday, or else the professor I told you about was going to die. But she's also under a sleeping spell, and she's supposed to wake up in 12 days. She knows something that I don't want her telling Klaus, so if she happens to wake up before Klaus dies, I need some way to keep her quiet."

"Wait, since when was Klaus dying?" Lucy asked.

"Separate plan by a separate someone, but if Klaus finds out there'll be a blood bath."

"If you want to create a prophecy, a strong one, then you need time and things that you don't have. Some spells even require you to meditate for a certain number of days beforehand or cleanse yourself or the place where you're going to cast it," Abby said.

"Yeah, I get it. I just want it to be something like her memory of what she knows is erased, or every time she tries to tell him her throat burns. Something along those lines. There's werewolf poison in her system right now, so she's going through that hell, but I want it to continue when she wakes up."

"So you want a curse. My specialty," Lucy said. "Right away, you need to use the number 12. Would've been better if you did this yesterday and used 13, but 12 is good, too. Now there's a whole numerology component that you're gonna have to research, because as much as I love my curses,
numerology is way too broad for me to have learned like the back of my hand. My favorite curse and prophecy numbers are 7 and 13 anyways, so I can talk to you about those all day."

"Yeah, I know," Bonnie said warmly. Lucy had happily taken up the task of thwarting, i.e. cursing, anyone who might cause them trouble after they got the cure. Bonnie had magically sent her personal belongings from Stefan and Damon, taken during the girls night at the Salvatore house, Elena and Caroline. She needed something from Klaus-

"Hey, if that woman is going to wake up, then you need to steal something from her for my curse, too," Lucy said.

And now, something from Rebekah.

She told the two women about Kol's involvement.

"Steal something from him, too," Lucy said. "Just in case."

"That's gonna be impossible," Bonnie said. "He doesn't live in town, and he's way more-I don't know how to say it-erratic? than his brother and sister."

"Then you'll have to incapacitate him," Lucy said.

"No, leave him be, and if he comes along for the cure we'll deal with him then as three. She needs to preserve her strength," Abby said.

"Yeah," Bonnie said. "About that. That separate plan by the separate person? I'm helping them with it."

"Bonnie, you can't stretch yourself thin," Abby warned.

"I know, but this is important."

"We have no idea what we're up against, what this cure is going to look like, or what it's going to take to get it. Not to mention that we're already at a disadvantage with just two witches," Abby fretted.

"Hey, it's not that big of a disadvantage," Lucy took mild offense.

"Still," Abby said to her.

"She's kind of right, though, kiddo," Lucy said to Bonnie.

"Listen, guys, this is really important. It's personal for them, and I completely get their side of it. I'm not going to do any heavy lifting. I'm just gonna be the boost."

"Cursing this Original sounds like heavy lifting to me," Abby said.

Bonnie sighed quietly.

"Just be careful and conserve as much energy as you can," Abby relented.

"I will. Any more tips about the curse?"

"Reach for the stars," Lucy said. "Tonight's a full moon."

"Oh, crap," Bonnie responded.
"Mmm-hmm. Use the celestial bodies. Jupiter has 12 moons!" she exclaimed suddenly. "Sorry, psychic hit."

Bonnie smiled. It felt really good to hear someone else talk about their innate magical powers. Then she had a fleeting thought about the fact that she hasn't had a psychic hit in a while. "Okay, think big. Got it."

"Spirits, gods-"

"Gods? Like mythology?"

"Oh hun, there's a whole history. Remember that the theme is 12. And then make her act or react like you want."

"Be careful," Abby cut in. "That stuff can be dangerous, especially when you're not ready for it."

"I will," Bonnie repeated. "I'll talk to you guys later."

"Have a nice day," Abby said.

The first time Abby had said that, she'd clearly been trying to establish a connection. Bonnie had responded in-kind so as not to be rude. After all, she cared enough to try and make her human again. Over a month of phone calls later, and she liked to hear Abby wish her a nice day now. "Have a nice day," she responded. "You too, Lucy."

"Mmm-hmm."

Bonnie and Abby hung up.

*Especially when you're not ready for it.*

*When.*

Bonnie was mildly offended. Shane had called her a prodigy, and she was quite proud that he'd done so.

"In all the years I've known you, this has got to be the craziest, most dangerous thing you've ever done," Hayley fussed on the phone outside of the Lockwood mansion.

"It was necessary," Shane answered.

"You could've been killed!"

"Not killed. Fallen into a coma, maybe, but not killed. And if I had fallen into a coma, I know you would've taken me to the appropriate company to wake me up. But this is what I needed. Bonnie wasn't so much the loss and wide-eyed orphan witch I was expecting. Getting her to spend time with me, to trust me and rely on me has been a no-go other than the incense I've given her and the time she called me to help Jeremy Gilbert. But since the attack yesterday she's contacted me twice. I've left the door open for her to come to me with any problems. What I need, and soon, is for her or the others to figure out where the cure is so you can tag along."

"What if they don't figure out where it is before time runs out?"

"That's why I need those Hybrids dead. Twelve sacrifices is nothing to sneeze at, but unless I link it with the Hybrid sacrifice, the Pastor and his flock will soon become just twelve deaths. A second
sacrifice extends my window. How is it going with Tyler?"

"He texted the other Hybrids before he left for school this morning to meet him in his family's old cellar. I'm invited."

"Perfect," Shane said enthusiastically. "Sounds like the right time to alert Klaus to me, especially with the full moon tonight. Twelve deaths on the full moon would be of great help."

"Wait a second; it's not just a matter of outing them to Klaus. We need him to react badly enough that he kills them all. A little meeting might not get him to do that."

"Then tell him his sister was hurt because she knows Tyler is planning an insurrection."

Tyler's pack lived with Klaus. Hayley wondered how the hell she was going to speak with him without one of them seeing her.

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At school, Tyler pounded the pavement as he rounded the track and crossed the starting line to begin his fourth lap. He was skipping lunch to run. After holding Bonnie last night, plus the day he's had so far, he needed to exhaust his body and clear his mind. He'd woken up with a mighty boner this morning. She has given him morning wood before, but this one had legitimately woken him from sleep, no alarm clock needed. It was as if he hadn't masturbated when he'd arrived home the previous night.

So he'd gotten out of bed, undressed, grabbed his towel, and walked to his bathroom. He'd started the shower and stepped in the bathtub. Then, one hand against the wall adjacent to the shower head, he'd rubbed his cock to the image of him thrusting into her on the swing bed while she bit the pillow that she'd been holding so that she didn't wake the neighbors or her father. By the time he'd spilled his semen against the wall, he'd been standing on his toes.

And he'd arrived to school twenty minutes late. It was worth it, as far as he was concerned.

He'd then preceded to spend the first couple of classes thinking about the last time he'd taken a good look at Bonnie Bennett. In detention a month ago, he had silently pretended that the last time he'd seriously thought about her was when she'd been chanting to put Klaus in his body. That wasn't true, because he'd been too busy preparing himself for Klaus to enter his body, as if preparing one's self to be hit by a car made the initial impact any less surprising.

No, the last time he'd seriously thought about Bonnie had taken place almost six months before the possession, back when she was still with Jeremy, back when he and Caroline had just gotten started. It had taken place on the last night that he'd lived as a full werewolf. And it had been one confusing experience.

Before school had opened for junior year, he had cooked up the idea of pulling a couple of stupid pranks on the school. The catch would be that the administrators would suspect that year's seniors. It was exactly the type of stuff he would come up with before he'd discovered that he was a werewolf, making sure he didn't get caught so that he wouldn't have to deal with his dad of course, and he'd had such an easy-ish summer, and he had a new girlfriend. It had been time to get back to his regular career as a high school student.

He'd shared the idea with Caroline in passing, and she had not only supported it but she'd thought it was the perfect opportunity to take Elena's mind off of Stefan and spend some time with Bonnie, who had not only been gone all summer but was going through some weird ghost thing with Jeremy.

The more participants the merrier, had been his opinion. At the beginning of the night, everything
had been exciting and fun, and Caroline had been worrying about making sure the group had a great
time. And then Bonnie and Elena had arrived together.

The closer they'd walked to Caroline, the stronger the odor had gotten. It was warm; excessive;
metallic; dead but not the kind of dead that Caroline was, it was a natural death. His first coherent
thought came in the form of an image, and it was of him in his wolf form frolicking in some densely
wooded place. It pulled at his basic instinct, the thing just smelled so essential. It felt powerful,
strong, and it was enduring.

His eyes had shifted when the girls had stopped in front of Caroline, and Elena had asked him what
was wrong. And because she had spoken, he had associated the smell with her and he'd been
horified. He'd ducked his head, mumbled nothing, and relocated to the other side of the room.

Caroline had come to ask him if he was okay, and he'd answered yes before asking her if she smelled
something in the air. She'd answered no, and he'd specified that it was something that regular people
wouldn't pick up. So she'd leveled up and sniffed. And answered, "Ugh. Oh yeah. Bonnie's on her
period. Thank God I'm not a new vamp anymore."

His frozen look had made her wave her hand in front of his face and call out his name before she'd
cracked up. "You'll learn to ignore it. Lucky you that you guys don't hang out. You can leave the
room, if you want."

He had gladly left the room. But they'd ended up in Alaric's classroom together to set the mouse
traps, and he'd thought the whole thing had passed because he didn't smell her anymore. But while
Elena had been whisper-asking Caroline if the whole werewolf/vampire feud affected her
relationship with Tyler, Bonnie had groaned in pain and squatted. The aroma had risen something
fierce and trapped Tyler's attention.

He had closed his eyes to take his concentration away from it, but taking away his eyesight only
heightened his sense of smell. It hadn't helped that he'd inhaled at that exact moment. It didn't smell
good in the sense of something you'd bottle up and sell to people, but it smelled fucking
amazing. Fucking amazing had literally popped up in his head, and it had sent him bumping into two
chairs in his hurry to get away.

"Maybe you should just, like, stay away," Caroline had counseled sympathetically when she'd come
out to check on him in the hallway.

He'd nodded and then found the nearest bathroom so that he could Bing werewolves and periods in
privacy.

He'd found links about how having a period is like being a werewolf and had sat on the toilet and
avidly read the reasons why. Was he really being accosted by Bonnie's scent because she
"transformed" once a month like he did, "went through pain" once a month like he did, and "had her
emotions affected" like he did? And why her? He'd probably walked by a hundred girls who were
on their periods over the summer, including his mom, but he had never smelled them. The only girl
who gave off a scent was Caroline, and it was easy for him to overlook the decay of it, because he
was in love with her.

Then he'd looked up what periods were made of, and he'd become downright mystified about why
it….attracted him. That was exactly it. He was attracted to it, and it wouldn't be the worse thing if he
got closer to it. But his lofty thought about getting closer to the scent was successfully dashed when
he read the part about the uterus shedding. He was good on that.

And then luck had struck a third time, and he'd gone to the school's pool. Bonnie had been sitting
with her feet on the first step of the pool, and she had turned around to look at him.

"Uh. Sorry," he'd stammered.

Instead of answering, she'd turned back to the pool.

"Nice job," he'd said as he looked over the teepeed room.

"It was me and Matt," she'd answered glumly.

He could have left. He could have. But he hadn't smelled anything, and she'd sounded sad, and Caroline had wanted her to sound anything but sad that night, so he'd gone in. And been greeted by her period as soon as he'd sat next to her.

So now he was running, because he'd spent the first half of his morning thinking about the boner that came closest to the one he'd woken up with this morning.

"Hey!"

He snapped out of his head and realized he'd sprinted past the starting line again.

"Tyler!"

He slowed down and looked back at the entrance-exit of the track. There stood his temptress, waving to him. He ran back to her.

"In the zone, huh?" Bonnie asked when he came close enough.

Tyler stopped across from her, the fence separating them. "Sorry," he heaved, having run fast enough to become mildly out of the little breath he possessed as a half vampire. "I was thinking about some things. Hi, beautiful."

Bonnie was pleasantly taken aback. "Beautiful, huh? Are you calling me that because I drooled on you last night?"

"You didn't drool," he reported and folded his arms on the fence.

"Snored?"

"Nope."

"How did I make it back to my room?"

"I carried you."

Bonnie had figured as much, but her stomach still shimmied at the confirmation.

"You managed to open the door while holding me," she said.

"Wasn't hard."

He'd carried her to her opened bedroom and placed her on the bed, at which point she'd immediately rolled to her left side. He'd gone back outside to retrieve her flats and placed them by the bed. He'd taken in her relaxed face and even breathing and grazed his knuckles over her soft cheek. He'd felt the urge to touch more of her, so he'd leaned down and rested his forehead against her right temple and closed his eyes and breathed in all of her.
"Thank you. I didn't mean to fall asleep. And my dad woke me up this morning to ask why I'd forgotten to lock the top part of the door."

Tyler smiled. She smelled great now, too, the same scent as last night.

"Thanks again for stopping by last night," Bonnie said softly.

"It was no problem at all."

"Um, you should know that lunch time is almost over."

"Right. Thanks. I totally lost track of time."

"What were you thinking about?"

"Nothing really important."

Bonnie nodded slowly and understood that he didn't want to talk about it. She stepped closer to the fence and ended up having to squint up at him with the sun half in her face. "Well, I'm ditching."

"You're leaving?" he asked. She was standing so close.

"Yeah, I have a lot to do. I'm gonna put a curse on Rebekah, and I have to do it tonight during the full moon. I've been doing research on my phone all day, totally not paying attention in my classes. So I might as well not be here. Plus I need to go to Rebekah's house to steal some of her hair. And her hairbrush."

"Do you think that's a good idea? You were just there to steal the dagger, and Klaus knows that."

"I don't have a choice. I could make a doll to represent her, but I still need a personal item from her for-for my cure mission," she said with her voice lowered.

Tyler looked down at her mouth, and his dick woke up like he hadn't so much as skipped along the track.

Bonnie saw what he was looking at and subconsciously twitched her lips. He parted his in response, which made her part hers. She felt herself becoming spellbound again, just like the night before. "Um. I should go."

"Yeah," Tyler responded. He grabbed the back of her head and pulled her to his lips.

It definitely wasn't the type of goodbye Bonnie had expected, but she didn't slack for a minute. His hair was wet; he was shirtless; he was glistening with sweat, and she'd been walking around with a hard clit all day. He took her mouth, and she pawed at his collarbones and his neck. Her hands slid against his skin, and it was a little gross, but it turned her all the way on. His body was fever-hot, and she would be alarmed if she could manifest any emotions that weren't carnal at the moment.

They moaned into each other, and Tyler grabbed the collar of her shirt and searched for entrance in her mouth. Bonnie quickly acquiesced and pressed herself into the fence and buried a hand in his wet hair. She wrapped her other arm around his shoulder and raised herself onto her toes.

Their lips smacked as they captured and released each other's mouths in quick succession, and then Bonnie caught his upper lip between hers and then caught it again when he started to slip it out, letting him know that she was done with the short kisses. The way her full lips slid on his, the feel of her flavorless lipgloss: Tyler's dick pressed against his briefs.
He was still pulling at the side of her collar, and he wasn't gentle about it anymore; he pulled at it as desperately as he felt, and it made Bonnie think about him tearing her clothes off. She tightened her arm around his neck and moaned in his mouth.

Tyler used his other hand to unlock her arm from around his neck. He let go of the collar as well as her lips, and he walked around the fence to join her.

Bonnie's hands hung in mid-air for a moment. She didn't understand what was happening. Then she saw him exit the track and stalk to her. She slipped her bag off her shoulder and walked into his arms right before he reached her. They resumed kissing, and she immediately reaped the benefit of them being closer when he laid a possessive hand on her butt and pushed her pelvis into his impressive erection.

He pressed her into the fence now, and he broke the kiss to speak on her lips, "This isn't supposed to happen. This wasn't supposed to happen, not until you said okay. But you can't look at me like that, and you can't do that with your mouth."

After he'd insulted her for a second time in her house and she'd waited to accept his apology and given no indication that she'd felt like kissing him back, he'd promised himself that nothing would happen between them unless she explicitly stated that she wanted it.

But he was failing to keep his promise, and it felt so good.

"Tyler?" Bonnie breathed up at him.

"Yeah?"

"Okay."

Like a stroke of lightning, his eyes had opened to her the night that they'd fought. He'd thought about and analyzed that night so often between the night itself and the end of winter break, that he had eventually realized that she was the first person he had seen after he'd become Alpha. His transition had literally happened as he'd been looking at and walking to her.

So he sometimes wondered if that was why he burned for her so damn much. Just thinking about her made his body react; the blink of her eyes made his body react; her spellcasting made his body react; her thoughtfulness, her willingness to help, the way she'd fought him that night, the way she dressed; her lipgloss, the way she carried herself; even the way she helped too much. The way that, at the beginning, especially in detention, she'd spoken to him like she actually couldn't have cared less if he'd fallen down a hole, because they'd disagreed. All of it was an opportunity for his body to go over the top.

He liked talking to her. He liked listening to her; he liked hugging her; he felt that their conversations were on another level, like there was a level of understanding between them that just fit with where he was in his life now. The way he felt when he wasn't with her, however, was why he stopped himself short of thinking that someone else standing in her spot that night wouldn't have made a difference. It was what made him sure that it went beyond seeing her through the eyes of an Alpha.

Not anyone would do. It was Bonnie. There was something about Bonnie now.

And that something had him kissing her neck and ready to pull his dick out and bury himself to the hilt.

Bonnie felt so burdened by her clothes. She just wanted to be naked and air out her vagina in Tyler's face. She felt herself being lifted off the ground, which was a nice start. She wrapped her legs around
his waist and continued to plow his mouth. She really liked how he responded to a green light.

She was running her hand down his muscular back when they were suddenly interrupted.

"Hey! Excuse me."

Bonnie jerked away from Tyler's mouth and tensed. One of the softball coaches was walking their way.

Tyler's reaction was a lot more calm than Bonnie's. She was wrapped around him, nothing could send him scrambling. So while she tried to put her legs down, he frowned from the absence of her mouth, looked back at the coach, and then faced forward. "Shit," he said, and he let her down.

He had half a mind to compel the man so that he and Bonnie could get back to what they wanted to be doing.

"Bell's about to ring," the coach said. "I think you two should get back inside, huh? The track's closed to students during school hours."

"Just getting in a good run," Tyler answered and licked his lips.

"Get back inside now, please. And don't come back out here."

Bag slung over her shoulder and still trying to catch her breath, Bonnie gave the man a tight smile and proceeded out of the field, wiping her hands wet with Tyler's sweat on her jeans along the way. She stopped when she realized that Tyler wasn't following her. She waited for him to grab his things and then they walked out.

Tyler had swung his duffel bag in front of his pelvis. He didn't need the coach to see his erection.

"I have to go to the locker room to drop this off and get dressed."

"Okay," Bonnie said. She smiled, "You're gonna smell."

"I have cologne," he smiled at her. "And I'm meeting the pack after school. I want to tell them that you're gonna be helping us."

"Okay."

He looked back toward the field and saw the man watching them. He looked at Bonnie and asked, "Are you okay?"

"Yeah," Bonnie answered and looked back. "I'm fine. I need to split off, though."

They got to a corner where Bonnie could head straight to the back parking lot. "This is me," she announced.

Tyler nodded. The bell rang, and Bonnie smiled. He cupped her face and kissed her. This kiss was devoid of the hunger from earlier, though hunger still baked in their bellies. A thin line of saliva connected them for a brief moment when they ended the kiss. Bonnie sighed and licked her lips and broke it without noticing.

Tyler opened his eyes and wiped his thumb across her bottom lip, and Bonnie turned her head to follow his thumb, delaying the moment when it would stop touching her skin.

"Be careful," he said.
She nodded, her mouth open and pressed against his thumb. It wouldn't take much for her to start sucking it, as far as she could tell. It wouldn't take much at all for her to reach into his shorts and grab hold of his dick with one hand and use the other to rid them both of their bottoms and guide his dick to her entrance. It wouldn't take much at all.

She lowered her head when he dropped his thumb, following it, and it made Tyler smile and shake his head in amazement. She unbelievably hot.

Bonnie touched his chest and said, "Gotta go." She pushed away from her hand and left.

Her reaction to his thumb held Tyler's mind prisoner for the rest of the school day. All he thought about was fingering her.

April had broken into Rebekah's house after school to search for anything that could give her an upper hand. The front door's lock had already been broken when she'd arrived, which had made her pause. The alarm had been chirping, but, heart in her throat, she'd forged ahead. She'd found nothing that could help her uphold the bluff that she had given Caroline the day before.

Now she was walking to Klaus' house, and a hand stopped her. She grabbed the wrist and whirled around.

"Woah there," Hayley said. "Jumpy?"

April none too gently dropped her hand.

"How rude."

"Sorry. I'm sorry." She's been so stuck on Elena and her group that she was forgetting how to treat normal people.

"Are you heading to that house over there?"

"Um, yeah. Why?"

"I need you to get me the owner. I need to talk to him."

"And you can't go up there yourself?"

"No. Long story. Restraining order from his hot brother. But ask for the owner, and when you see him tell him it's a matter of life or death. Tell him to meet me across from Founders Hall."

"Okay."

"I'll be watching to make sure you do it."

April nodded and continued toward the house. Change of plans. And a new player. This girl didn't compel her, so was she not a vampire? Maybe it was just that not all vampires were like Elena and Caroline.

She rang the bell and waited.

A tall, dark-haired and clean-shaven man answered. She was positive he was the hot brother. "Hi," she greeted.

Kol frowned.
"Um. I was wondering if you'd like to donate to… the food bank? To help the poor? I'm Miss Mystic Falls." She did not know how to improvise.

"We write checks," Kol answered. "For tax purposes," he smiled.

"Right. Um. Is the owner home? I mean, are you the owner?"

"Yes and no."

It took her a moment to remember that she'd asked two questions. She swallowed when he just stood there. Anyone else would've gone to get the owner. It was only natural! She hated awkward situations.

"Would you like to come in?" Kol asked and cocked his head to the right.

For some reason, that move made him look more creepy than Rebekah with a dagger in her chest.

"No," she answered quickly. "I just have a message for him. There's a girl down the street," she pointed, "Who wants him to meet her across from Founders Hall. She said it's a matter of life and death."

Kol craned his neck out the door to look, forcing April to back up. He indeed saw a girl waiting, though, looking at her back, it wasn't any of the Mystic girls he knew. "Is that all?" he asked.

"Yeah. Just make sure he gets the message. She seemed intense about it." She wondered then if Rebekah's body was inside the house.

"Thank you for stopping by," Kol said. "Have a nice day."

When April stepped onto the sidewalk, she shrugged at Hayley.

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Hayley could admit that she was a lot nervous. This was it: sink or swim. When Tyler had told her about a whole group of other people who shared his predicament, she'd asked him for a number. And then she'd conceived an idea and shared it with Shane. He'd encouraged her and trusted her judgment, and now she had to deliver. Klaus was either going to be so angry that he showed up at that meeting and killed them all, or he was going to choose to investigate first. She hoped he reacted like the hot head that Tyler had told her he was.

She wasn't scared of Klaus, per say. She served someone much more powerful. But Klaus was nothing to laugh at. Which was why as soon as he started the massacre, she was going to get the hell out of the cellar.

"Hayley?"

She whipped around to the voice coming from behind her. "Adrian."

"Hey."

Shit. "What are you doing here?"

"Um, I'm here on behalf of Klaus."

"Klaus? Klaus sent you?"

"Yeah. Something about life and death?"
"Yeah. It was Tyler's idea. A way to misdirect him."

"Really? He hasn't said anything to us."

She shook her head at him like he was a child, "We don't tell you guys everything. And look at why: he told his girlfriend about killing Klaus the day of the Festival, and she spilled to somebody else. But he wanted me to do this before the meeting later. This is what he's going to announce to you guys."

And she just oversold it. Now she really needed to tell Klaus. She didn't have a weapon to use against Adrian, and even if she did she couldn't kill him because he needs to be sacrificed, which would leave him able to wake up and tell Tyler about the attack. And even if she were a vampire old enough to compel him, it wouldn't work. She had learned from Tyler and Kim that Tyler's status as an Alpha protected every half vampire in his pack from being compelled.

"So what do you want me to tell Klaus?" Adrian asked.

She shrugged one shoulder. "That someone's trying to kill him."

"Who, Hayley?"

She paled when she heard the new voice. Behind Adrian and to his right: Tyler.

"Oh, you made it," Adrian greeted him without taking his eyes off Hayley.

"Who's trying to kill Klaus?" Tyler asked as he walked closer. "What are you doing?"

"Going with my plan. Look, the others are right: you are wasting too much time with this. I'm not comfortable spending months in the same town as a psycho, just waiting to kill him. You said this guy was the worst news ever. I don't do worst news; I don't do people like him. I'm supposed to be helping you, but I'm not as comfortable with this as you are. This is taking too long, and I'm starting to get nervous. Now, I have my witch on standby."

"How does telling Klaus someone's trying to kill him work in getting him killed?" Tyler asked.

"It distracts him."

"Hey, is this a stall tactic so that Klaus can discover us?" Adrian asked. "'Cause he's supposed to be here in, mmm, seventeen minutes."

"The plan sounds like it makes things harder for your witch," Tyler continued. "What's her name, by the way? Your witch," he clarified when Hayley failed to answer. "What is her name?"

"It's a he," Hayley answered, barely opening her mouth.

Tyler smirked. "Adrian. I know you've been impatient to rip out Klaus' throat-"

Adrian lacerated a gash into Hayley's throat. She gasped and started to choke. She was still able to squeak, so he tore deeper into her larynx.

Tyler gathered his mettle, bared his claws, and grabbed Hayley by her collar. Her blood flowed onto his hand. Adrian moved out of the way, and he slashed her face. His irises transformed from dark brown to gold-red and black as instinct took over. He felt the veins crawl around his eyes.

More blood flowed out of Hayley's throat as she tried to speak her pain. Her stomach constricted with the need to cough. Instinct told Tyler to go for the inside of her elbow. It was easy to drop her to
the ground. He roughly removed her right arm from her jacket, and he clawed his way into her brachial artery.

As Hayley quickly bled to death, she thought of Silas. She’d known this was too rash, but they were running out of time. She only hoped he could make up for this flaw. She hoped they hadn't lost everything.

"But this'll do in the meantime," Adrian finally answered Tyler.

Tyler stared at the gash he'd sliced into Hayley's face. "Klaus is gonna know it was a werewolf." He looked at her arm. "Hopefully he'll think it's too precise for it to be one of us. I knew I couldn't trust her."

"Were you gonna share that with us?" Adrian asked.

"Yes," Tyler answered. He changed his eyes back.

They left Hayley in the shade by the bushes where she'd been planning to meet Klaus. Hopefully he would find her.

"Meeting's off," Tyler said. "I have something for us to do while Klaus is out of the house."

"You won't believe this," Kim said to Tyler on the phone. "Kol left the house with Lily and Dai. Klaus called him."

"Probably to retrieve Hayley," Tyler said.

"It's exactly that," Kim said, a big grin on her face.

"Get the others to help you look for the sword. If you find it, leave it."

"And if we find it?" Adrian asked as Tyler drove them to Klaus' storage unit.

"We take it."

"Why do we need it?"

"We don't. The witch who's helping us does."

Tyler and Adrian drove to the outskirts of town, passed the storage unit, parked in a McDonald's, and walked back.

"When Klaus first turned me, he showed me all of his artifacts. I was his first successful Hybrid. I was flattered by the attention at the time. I'm pretty sure that was when my sire bond to him strengthened. It cracked when I almost helped him kill one of my friends, this guy Jeremy. But I've since realized that his excitement was just him being fucking desperate for that family he could control. He keeps all his artifacts and expensive paintings here. If the sword is here, I'm thinking he's compelled everyone who works the front desk not to give the key to anyone except him. And if the sword is here, I'm also thinking he's got vampires guarding the unit. Old vampires. He wouldn't trust this to young, inexperienced Hybrids."

Bonnie had reminded him that he knows how Klaus operates; she'd made him see the value in that. Trusting his gut had just saved his pack from Hayley, and now it was going to help him steal the sword. If it was here.
"So we need to stake out the place," Adrian concluded.

"We stake out the place," Tyler confirmed. "Or not," he changed his mind. He stopped walking.

"The thing about old vampires is that they missed out on the free daylight jewelry. It's evening. Still a little too early for them to be out."

"Maybe," Adrian doubted.

So Tyler had him use his speed to creep through the lot first. It wouldn't be any use if the vampires were already there, but it was worth a try.

Tyler wished he'd told him to check the rooftops, too.

Adrian came back and said, "No one's guarding anything."

"Okay. Let's go."

"What number is it?"

"I forgot."

Adrian stared at him, but Tyler walked right to the tiny office. He was about to ask the two brown-haired, bearded, middle-aged men for the number of Klaus Mikaelson's unit when a stale smell disturbed his nostrils. Undead flesh.

"Vampires," he said for Adrian's sake.

The two men adopted a defensive stance, but Tyler attacked the one standing behind the desk and in front of the filing cabinets.

Adrian dragged the other one from his seat and over the desk.

The fight taught Adrian that Hybrid strength over vampires had a limit. He didn't know how the fuck old this man was, but he got too many hits in. Adrian couldn't even subdue him long enough to poison him.

Tyler wanted to throw his vampire out of the office and let the sun take care of him, but the star was too low in the sky, and there were too many people driving by. People who could just pull over and stare. Although that would provide a nice distraction while he and Adrian retrieved the sword.

There was nothing sharp or long enough in the office to use as a stake, so he and Adrian relied on their violent first nature. They transformed into rabid animals, almost literally, and Tyler's strength powered Adrian. They both connected to a full moon's reach for the first time in a year.

Tyler finished his vampire first, tearing into the man's throat and spitting out the chunks.

Adrian's vampire lay dead, but he wasn't satisfied. He reared back and roared. He bit off the vampire's cheek and spit the foul flesh out. He grabbed the vampire's right arm and started to gnaw at his elbow joint.

"Adrian. Adrian!"

Tyler rushed to him when he abandoned the elbow to claw his way through the stomach. Tyler got him off of the man and held him against the wall by the door, and Adrian struggled and growled ferociously at him.
"Stop it! Stop it! Calm down! Calm! Calm." He felt his power reach Adrian in a different capacity. "Calm down. That's it. Just calm down. You're okay."

They were both out of breath when Adrian sunk to the floor. Tyler held onto him until he sat, and then he dropped on his butt adjacent to him and next to the mangled vampire.

"What the fuck was that?" Adrian asked.

"I don't know. But there's a full moon tonight. I think you went crazy for not submitting to it in a while."

Adrian closed his eyes and licked the blood on his lips.

Tyler was sure his own face looked just as bad. He felt the stickiness. They couldn't walk to the car looking like that. "Use his clothes to wipe your face," he said. "Unless doing so will set you off again?"

"No, I'll be fine." Adrian moved to make himself presentable.

Tyler stood and went to his man behind the desk and did the same.

They were cleaner, though their shirts and jackets were bloody.

"Let's get them out to the sun," Tyler said. "They can't scream now."

"This was tough as shit," Adrian commented. "I thought you said they wouldn't have rings."

"They don't. Check his finger. It's the glass, keeps the sun out. I've heard Klaus talk about a vampire who invented it."

They carried the men around the building. They started to smoke as soon as they were brought outside, but the boys found a large rectangle of bright, shiny evening sun. They dropped the vampires on the ground. They watched them roast and disintegrate to ash.

"I've never actually seen a vampire turn to ash before," Tyler said.

"I have. Klaus' daddy."

They went back to the office and searched through the paper files. M for Mikaelson. "L-72," Tyler read from the file.

They ran around the back, past the ashes, and rounded two more corners before they found the unit. Tyler grabbed the lock and pulled it until it broke off. He bent down and lifted the door. He heard a sharp click, then a shot, and he flew back into the opposite unit.

"Ty!" Adrian yelled.

"Shit," Tyler said between clenched teeth as he looked down at the long, thick stake protruding right below his chest. He knew it well. It was the same one the Hunter Connor had shot him with in the church.

Adrian tried to pull it out, but it burned his hand. He tried a second time and resisted the pain.

Tyler screamed as the wood's path was reversed. He rolled onto his stomach and tried to catch his breath when it was out. "Shit."
"Are you healing?" Adrian asked worriedly after he dropped the stake. His palm burned.

"Not fast enough," Tyler wheezed. He was going to feel this for the rest of the day, just like last time.

Eventually, Adrian helped him stand. They examined the unit from outside, looking for any more booby traps, and they spotted the bow that had been set to release the arrow. They risked walking inside.

"How does Klaus manage to open the door?" Adrian wondered.

"I don't think it was there before he put the sword here."

"That sword better be here. Imagine if it isn't."

"Let's not," Tyler deadpanned.

They didn't disturb anything. They looked for obvious signs of the sword first. Adrian found it wrapped in a heavy brown cloth. He was reaching to touch it when Tyler stopped him.

Remembering what Bonnie had said about magical objects, he said, "You don't know what kind of reaction it'll have. It might incinerate you."

Adrian wrapped it back up.

"Unless he's been checking on this place daily since he put this in here, we should be good for a while," Tyler said. He untied the rope that was rigged to the bow, and then he unwrapped one of the smaller paintings and took the cloth.

"Good," Adrian said.

Tyler grabbed the bow. He put the door down when they stepped out of the unit, and then he used the cloth to grab the bloody stake. "I hope this thing can be used more than once."

Tyler cinched the towel around his hips and stepped out of the shower. He'd sent his mom to buy a change of clothes for Adrian after being very very vague about why they had blood on their clothes and why he was holding a crossbow and what those things were inside the cloths. Adrian had showered before heading out. He was going to wait a couple of hours before he went to Klaus', because that was his norm. He always came home last.

Tyler dropped the towel on his bed and opened the fourth drawer of his dresser to select underwear. He chose boxer-briefs and stepped into them while looking at his bed. The sword was hidden underneath. He'd gone to the cave to hide the crossbow and stake while Adrian had been in the shower.

The doorbell rang, and he finished dressing. His mother knocked on his door, and when he opened it she pointed toward the stairs with her thumb. Tyler nodded and held his index finger to his lips. He'd told her not to answer the door for the rest of the day.

As expected, Klaus was on his doorstep. Time to perform.

"Good evening, Tyler," Klaus greeted somberly.

"Hey."

"I'm afraid I come bearing gruesome news."
He frowned. And was curious about the fact that Klaus really seemed to be trying to deliver the news gently.

"It's about your friend Hayley."

"What about her?"

"I'm afraid she's dead."

Don't react too quickly. "What?"

"She's dead, Tyler. She's been killed."

Insert confusion. "I don't...." He laughed and crossed his arms. "I don't even know why you would know that. You don't know Hayley. You guys...."

"This afternoon she came to my home and asked to speak to me. She wanted to meet with me. She wanted to warn me. But by the time I got there....There was only her dead body."

"There was only her dead body? That sounds ridiculous. Why would Hayley—she hasn't said a word about you since she met you. I just....this doesn't make any sense."

"I'm sorry. I know you were fond of her. I promise you I will find out who did this."

He softened his voice. "Where is she?"

"In my home. I needed to examine the body."

He closed his eyes like he couldn't stand the thought.

"I will give her a proper burial after."

"I wanna see it. I wanna see her." That was impromptu, but he realized that it would only appear natural to Klaus.

Klaus nodded and indicated that he follow him.

He began to step outside and then stopped himself. "Wait, I have to tell my mom I'm going out."

Once he was upstairs, he remembered that his phone was in his bedroom. But he should be too shell-shocked to remember to grab it, so he left it.

He and Klaus drove in silence, and it was the first time he'd ever seen Klaus be sincere about someone's misfortune. Usually he was busy causing it. But he knew there was a selfish bent to this: Klaus had missed out on critical information about his safety.

When they arrived, Klaus took him to one of the empty rooms. It was the same one in which he'd drained Elena's blood at the end of last spring.

Hayley lay atop a glass table covered in a tan cloth. Kol stood at her feet.

Tyler stopped in the middle of the room and then slowly walked to the body. He held the back of his wrist to his nose and shook his head. "I don't understand."

"We think there was more than one attacker. She was a werewolf; the full moon is tonight; she should have been primed to defend herself," Klaus said.
"Unless she felt bound by being in a public place," Kol pointed out.

"Obviously not that public," Klaus countered. To Tyler, he said, "Her wounds were fresh when I arrived. Probably not more than thirty minutes since she was killed."

"Her face is slashed," Tyler said.

"Yes," Klaus answered. "Werewolves. The coup de grace was the wound on the inside of her elbow."

"Why was that the coup de grace?"

"Because that's where the brachial artery is. Major artery. It means she bled to death," Kol answered.

"Whoever did this knew what they were doing," Klaus said.

"So….there are werewolves in Mystic Falls?" Tyler asked.

"It appears so," he confirmed.

"Why?"

"My brother and I are talking it over," Klaus said.

In other words, it was none of his business.

"Did she have any enemies?" Kol asked Tyler.

Tyler shook his head like he was trying to remember. "She used to be part of a pack, but they disbanded. She's never talked about any personal enemies."

"It's curious that she'd try to save my life after what befell her friend Chris," Klaus realized for the first time.

"Yeah," Tyler answered softly. "I don't get any of this. It doesn't make any sense."

"Where are her parents?" Kol asked.

"She was an orphan; she told me at the pageant. She was adopted, but….she left home when she started to realize what she was." That was partly a lie, but there was no reason for Hayley's adoptive family to get two unhinged vampires at their door. If she even really had an adoptive family.

"I need to bury her," he continued. "She deserves that."

"Of course," Klaus said. "You are free to take her."

"I need you to tell me when you figure out who did this," he said.

"I promise you will share in the spoils."

He carried Hayley's body to Klaus' car and then asked for a shovel. Klaus grabbed two and drove him to the outskirts of the Mystic Falls cemetery where they dug a deep grave.

Tyler kneeled in front of Hayley's grave and felt a genuine string of emotions. He was confused. He didn't understand what happened. He didn't know when things had changed for her. He didn't understand why.
When he arrived home, he checked his phone for any messages from the others. He had two from Bonnie instead. The first had arrived forty-nine minutes ago: *Wanna watch me do the curse?*

The second had arrived forty-four minutes ago: *Starts at 10:19 :).*

She'd included the address plus extra directions and: *Call me if you get lost. As long as it's before 10:19!*

He looked at the time on his phone: 9:40. He'll have to drive above the speed limit the whole way. He texted her back: *I'm coming :).* And he was bringing her a gift.

He arrived at the woods at 10:05, and then he sped to the house, having to stop and check his phone a couple of times to make sure he was hitting all the marks that she had said. He finally saw a clearing. A stocky structure stood tall within. He checked his phone: 10:12.

He started toward the house, and his confidence grew with every step. He was proud to have retrieved what she wanted, and he was proud to present it to her. He felt like he was coming with triumphant news after a conquest.

On the first floor of the house, Bonnie was purifying while at the same time filling the room with Rebekah's essence. To begin, she had gone home and showered. Once she was clean, she had come to the house. She had three candles working in a circle. She had lit three sticks of white sage from each candle and set them to burn in the middle of the circle. Tangible plumes of smoke had been wafting through the house for an hour and thirty minutes now. Also inside the circle was the clump of hair from Rebekah's hairbrush. She sat on three blankets in a corner of the room.

She felt Tyler as soon as he stepped on the porch. She had no idea how, but her heart jumped, and then she heard the front door slowly open. Footsteps sounded closer and closer, and that feeling in her heart increased. It wasn't nervousness or excitement. It was just….a feeling. It was something that he was giving off, something that she was picking up. He walked into the room, and she was speechless.

"This is, like, a lot of smoke," he said when he walked in. "Hey. Are you okay?"

"I'm fine," she answered a little breathlessly. She touched her heart and stood up. "Hey. What's that behind your back?"

"A present," he answered with a smile.

She inhaled deeply. "Tyler…where-is something wrong? Did something happen?"

"What do you mean?"

He stepped further into the room and her breath caught in her throat. She touched her chest again.

"Bonnie," he said with a frown.

"I'm just….feeling weird. And it's coming from you."

He turned his head to indicate that he had no idea what she was talking about.

"What's behind your back?"

He smiled, and her feeling swelled. She rubbed the valley between her breasts with her knuckles. He removed his hands from behind his back and held the shielded object horizontally.
They met a little past the middle of the room, on his side, and he said, "Unwrap it."

She followed his direction. Her movements slowed when she saw what it was. "Is that….?"

He smiled wider, and she grinned big. "You took it?"

"Stole it. Had to kill two old vampires for it, and took a gnarly stake in the chest, but…."

"Tyler," she said gratefully.

Something in him took off flying at the look on her face. His pride knew no bounds.

"Thank you so much!" she threw her arms around him. "I didn't think you'd get it this soon; I thought we'd talk about it first, come up with a plan or something. But wait, you got hurt?"

"I'm fine. My chest is a little sore, but I'm fine. Klaus rigged a bow in his storage unit, and it went off when I lifted the door."

She delicately placed a hand on his chest.

"I'm really fine, Bonnie," he said as he searched her eyes. Though she could keep her hand on his chest.

She smiled. "I can't believe this. Thank you."

"I didn't do it alone. Adrian needs your thanks, too. He's, uh, one of the people who crashed the sleepover."

"Huh. Did he know he was helping me?"

"No," he shook his head.

She smiled. "Well, give him my thanks. If you think he'll accept it."

He wanted to tell her about Hayley, but he would wait until after her ritual. "What time is it?"

"Oh crap," she ran to her phone and checked the time: 10:17. "Two minutes," she announced. She grabbed the white chalk. She was 48 dollars and some change poorer just from the sage sticks and chalk. She'd brought the candles from her house. She needed to take a page from her mother's book and grow her own herbs.

"You can have a seat." She cut herself off when all of the smoke disappeared and the candles flickered off. "Anywhere," she finished as she looked at the ceiling. "The house is clean."

Tyler set the sword next to her things, and then he took a seat just after the entrance of the room. He wanted to see everything she did.

Bonnie moved the candles to her little depot, and then she pulled three sheets of paper from her right pants pocket. She kneeled and placed them in front of her, and then she copied the vèvè that she'd printed at her house after school onto the floorboard. "This will connect me to Him, help Him hear me," she told Tyler while she drew carefully. "I called my cousin after I got Rebekah's brush, and she said that some Spirits demand extra effort. Some of them have their own logos, kind of like a channel."

She finished the drawing. It wasn't perfect, but it was sincere. She returned the chalk to her belongings and grabbed the bottled water she'd bought. She trickled it inside the symbol until the
bottle was empty. She was encouraged when the water stayed perfectly inside the vévé. She put the cap back on the bottle, grabbed the paper with the symbol, and returned both to her blankets.

Tyler registered how deliberate her movements were, as if placing the objects back constituted part of the ritual. "You came up with this?" he asked.

"The ritual? Yeah. The cleansing idea is mine; the cleansing ritual is from my Grams' Grimoire. The pouring water part is mine," she explained as she picked up the second sheet of paper and kneeled. "And the spells are mine."

She closed her eyes for a while and kept herself alert to the vévé beside her. "Clermeil. Clermeil. Clermeil." She opened her eyes and began reading from the paper. Spirits didn't care about language, so it didn't matter where one was from. They understand intention, devotion, and desire. Those things were universal.


She lowered the paper and closed her eyes. She waited.

She opened her eyes and looked at the vévé. The water was gone, though the floor inside the symbol was wet. Something suddenly entered her body, and she gasped long and hard. She leaned forward and then was slowly pushed back on her thighs, her arms hanging at her side. Her head was gently dipped back, and her mouth dropped open. She felt very light, very airy.

Tyler started to get nervous when she didn't move from the position. And then the invisible force straightened her, and Tyler's eyes widened when he saw that hers were a bold blue, from the irises, to her eyeballs, to her lashes, to the skin around her eyes. The blue stretched from below her eyebrows to the top of her cheeks.

Bonnie suddenly felt heavier when the force burrowed deeper inside her, became one with her. She slowly turned her head to the right, to the left, to the right. She couldn't see Tyler anymore. She couldn't see the room anymore, though she knew that that was where she dwelled. She saw energy. Power, which included Tyler's. She saw her desire and her spell. They all flowed before her eyes in dynamic waves. Her sight was her overruling sense. In front of her, the vévé glowed.

She dropped to her hands and drawled, "Full moon," as she looked through her borrowed sight. "Luna plena. Luna sancti. Luna plena. Luna sancti."

She reared back as she connected with more supernatural energy, and then she was thrown forward, guttural sounds escaping her mouth. She stretched her hands before her and splayed her fingers. She wailed, "Luna sancti! Luna sancti! Luna sancti!" Her voice grated on the air and made the energies in her sight vibrate.

With her objective for doing the ritual floating in front of her, she didn't need to look at the last paper to recite the curse. "Rebekah," she seethed, "A die duodecimo post orationem dicere veto quod scitis. Quae ad me de te, nego. Et incarnatus est de duodecimo, Iuppiter et Luna dea regulante Lysithea, Oceanus filia, et MALEDICAM maledicentibus tibi, et flumina Clermeil! Clermeil scis quid flumina, quae et res Clermeil clausas. OPUS MEA ET FLUMINA INTRANT PER TE!"

She dipped her back and gasped to the ceiling as the lights in front of her shined to blinding. She finally felt her own power as the spell locked into place, and Rebekah's hair burned. The lights dimmed, and she moved her gaze from the ceiling to the ones floating in front of her and marveled at
their exuberant beauty. She was being lulled when a premonition bathed in blue light suddenly pierced her mind, and she cried out.

*A large field, a house, the flame from a lighter, an explosion.*

She gasped out of the vision when the fire raced to incinerate her, and right before her vision cleared of lights, energies, and powers, she connected with a thought: *duodecad.*

She gently laid on her side and craned her head up to look at the glowing symbol. She blinked slowly, and the dull mortal world came in stark focus. The symbol didn't disappear so much as it sunk into the house. A rumble sounded from underground. In a less lucid part of her mind, she thought the occurrence odd. The curse was in place, and she was out of the trance, but some other magical working seemed to have taken place.

She took a moment for herself, and then she turned on her stomach and found Tyler. She felt like she'd been interrupted from a nap, like she'd slept but not really. She felt no remnants from the spell, though her eyes burned just a little, enhancing her *just woke up* feeling.

"I'm back," she said.

Tyler swallowed. "Where did you go?"

"Nowhere. I was here. I couldn't control what I was seeing, but I was aware. I had control. A little bit. It was like an active trance."

"As opposed to….?"

"One where I don't know what I'm doing until I've snapped out of it. I've had those more than once." She sat up and looked at where the vévé used to be.

She and Tyler sat on the large porch in front of the house. She needed the cool night air. He needed to sit close to her, so his left side was flush against her right side.

"How did I look?" Bonnie asked.

Tyler scoffed and shook his head, a smile trifling on his lips as he gathered his thoughts. "Incredible. Scary. *Weird.* You looked wild. Powerful and sexy."

"Sexy?"

"In the middle and the end, though, right before you lied down. Most of the time, I was dealing with incredible, powerful, and scary."

She chuckled.

"What did it feel like?"

"Good. Strange. Foreign. It was very pretty."

"Pretty?"

"Yeah. I was seeing all these colors and waves. It was like…. magic in colors."

"Your eyes looked nice."
"My eyes?"

"They were blue. And I'm talking all around your eyes." He gestured at his own eyes to show her.

"The curse worked, though."

"Yeah, I felt it."

Bonnie looked at him and frowned.

"What?"

"You felt it?"

"Yeah, the ground shook, and there was a noise. What is it?" he asked when Bonnie looked pensive.

"Nothing. I'm not sure. I just don't… I feel like that wasn't part of the spell. It didn't come from me,"

she shrugged. "I had already disconnected."

"Then... what was it?"

"I have no idea," she answered. She thought of the symbol seeming to sink into the house.

Tyler watched her let it go, so he asked, "Is it easy for you to do that? Come up with the spells? Like, how do you know what to say?"

She chuckled. "A whole lot of studying. And the studying forms an instinct, I think. It's the only reason I can think of for me surviving this long. Because there must be a magical effect to staring at magical words all the time, right?"

That made sense to him.

"My Grams showed me her Grimoire just in time for me to learn my first spell, a little practice before we did this tomb spell, and I just understood the words. I knew exactly what each word meant. She said it came with the territory. The language itself is magic. Not all of them are. Some spells are in English; any spoken language can be used for spells. But there are a few languages that came about through magic and exist solely for magic. And my family uses one of them."

Tyler nodded.

"As for knowing how to arrange the words, that's studying and practice. I literally studied the composition of the spells after I memorized all the defensive ones in Emily's Grimoire. The order of the words, why they're sometimes ordered this way and sometimes that way; why some are short and some long; when do I command and when do I ask? I praised that Spirit in there like three times. I realized that I had to learn how to write my own spells after this warlock stole my powers."

"That's amazing," Tyler said.

"It's not perfect. Sometimes I don't realize the double meanings of my words or the literal meaning of the word. Like with the Blackout spell. Not all of spellcasting is about intention."

"You taught yourself all of this; that's a huge deal. I think Shane was right when he called you a prodigy."

Bonnie chuckled, and the sound tickled the air.
"Come on," he said and bumped her with his shoulder. "Aren't prodigies people who teach themselves?"

"And are talented," she pointed out.

"You're talented."

She laughed. "Oh, I'm not saying I'm a slacker, trust me. I love casting spells. I love magic; the way the words feel in my mouth," she said and swayed to the left.

"It looks good on you," Tyler said.

Bonnie looked at him, and her smile wobbled. "Thank you."

"So, what did you curse her with?"

"Every time she tries to speak what she knows, the rivers of Clermeil will flow from her mouth. Clermeil is a Haitian water Spirit. And I invoked the Goddess Lisythia, her father Oceanus…."

"Damn. So the theme was water."

"And 12." She thought of her vision and that word.

"So Gods and Goddesses are real."

"Most of them. I just learned this today, and it was a quick lesson through text after I left school, but: Goddesses and Gods are usually witches who gained a following. More so the Goddesses. You know how there's a female version for each God?"

"Mmm-hmm."

"Well truthfully, it's the other way around since women, by design and also doing more with the earth and nature, are more open to magic; they have more opportunities to access it. And of course a lot of them did. Now Spirits, capital S, and I mean the kind like Clermeil, not the ghost kind, were never human. They can take on a human form and literally walk the earth, but they weren't born. Made, thought into existence, formed with floating magical energy, but not born. And some of them who came to earth, they, uh…they procreated."

Tyler widened his eyes. "Wait, hold up. Are you….?"

Bonnie smiled, excited to share what she'd learned.

"You're kidding."

"I don't know who; my cousin didn't get into that, but yeah. Our magical line started with literal magic: a Spirit."

Tyler took a moment to absorb the information. "So, some dude came down-"

"Dudette. Excuse you. It was a woman, and there's a difference between a line starting from a Spirit's seed and a line being cultivated in a Spirit's stomach and everything that means in a pregnancy. I don't need to tell you which one's more advantageous."

Tyler smiled.

"But yeah: my magical line…is magical. Most lines just come from people worshiping Nature and
the earth and eventually developing literal powers. I thought that was how we started until Lucy set me straight."

"So you're like a Goddess," Tyler marveled. "Or some kind of Spirit-priestess big deal royalty."

"Shut up," Bonnie chided and nudged him.

"I'm serious. Royal blood makes you royal, so Spirit blood makes you….a Spirit-witch-Goddess."

"You have to stop calling me a Goddess. It's not the same thing."

"I won't," he assured, shaking his head.

Bonnie laughed. She was loving the attention.

"Spirit-witch," Tyler named her. It was hot as hell.

Bonnie pursed her lips and rolled her eyes, though her smile burst through.

"So was Jesus a witch?"

"Uh, not all of that information is clear," she laughed. "Not for Jesus or any of the other religious Gods. But I do know that Spirits are stronger than witch Gods and Goddesses, for obvious reasons, and none of the witches who gained a following or forced people to follow them got to continue their genes."

"Woah, why?"

"Can you imagine being able to tell people you're Zeus' direct descendant or Isis'? I mean it's heresay that most of the Gods and Goddesses even had kids, but it's like why humans procreate, you know? It's natural to want to continue your line. But a lot of the drama about the Egyptian and Greek deities, and many others, came from witches being able to say, well my father, mother, great-great grandmother, whatever, are Gods, worship me, too. It was chaos. So the Spirits ended the lines."

"Like killed?"

"I don't know. Probably. My cousin doesn't think they could just take away something that's biological, especially if it didn't come from them, but that's just her opinion."

"Damn."

"My Grams once told me that our family history is longer than our family line. I didn't understand what she meant until today."

They sat in silence a moment, at this point physically leaning into each other.

"Listen," Tyler began, "There's something I need to tell you. Something bad. Good. But also bad." He waited for her to ready herself, and when he saw that she was about to ask him what, he said, "Hayley's dead."

"What?"

"I killed her."

Bonnie stared at him, aghast.
"She was going to sell me out to Klaus. She stopped by his house. Kim overheard Kol telling Klaus that a girl wanted to meet him and that it was a matter of life and death. I told them to eavesdrop on Klaus whenever they can," he said of the pack. "She texted Adrian the location and told him to intercept. Adrian called me. I'm actually glad she relied on him to solve it instead of contacting me directly. It's good for them to work together. But, Adrian told me what was up, and I told him to capture the person if he got there before me. When I got there….."

"Oh my God. Tyler."

"We killed her right there. She tried to bluff, to say that she was going to tell him someone's trying to kill him to distract him, but that makes no sense."

"She was going to sell you out," Bonnie said. Tyler had said it, but she needed to hear it again. "She was going to get you killed."

Tyler clasped his hands between his knees and lowered his head.

Bonnie gently laid her hand on his bicep. "I'm sorry."

"I don't understand. I don't know why this happened. I don't know what she was thinking, or….This isn't what I imagined when I stopped trusting her. I didn't trust her plan, but I still thought...I still thought she wanted to help."

"She didn't say anything?"

"Nothing that was a real answer. And it makes me wonder why she helped me in the first place. She's the one who helped me think of the idea to break the other Hybrids' bonds. And then she sells me out? But I couldn't question her. We only had a couple of minutes before Klaus came. We left her body for him to find. And then he came to my house to break the sad news."

"Oh my God."

He nodded. "I had to do this whole thing where I asked to see the body, then asked to bury her, and I told him to tell me when he found out who did it." He took a deep breath. "He thinks it was a werewolf. One of the wounds that I gave her, the one that made her bleed out, I tore into the vein on the inside of her elbow."

"You could've been killed. You could've died today," Bonnie said distantly. She'd said goodbye to him earlier this afternoon. She could've been sending that text tonight to a boy who was dead.

"Hey."

Tyler lifted her chin and saw the horror in her eyes. He caressed her cheek and said, "I'm okay. I'm okay. Hey," he called her again when her eyes started to wander. He caressed her bottom lip with his thumb, and she leaned into it. "I'm fine."

Bonnie nodded. She pursed her lips to lay a gentle kiss on his thumb. She looked at him, and he licked his lips. She looked down at his thumb again and closed her eyes this time before she kissed it again. When her lips separated, he caressed both of them. "I'm happy you're okay," she said against his thumb. "Really happy."

Tyler smiled and folded his thumb under the other four fingers.

"But it sucks," she said. "When you meet someone, and they offer to help you, and you think they're helping you, and it turns out they were in it for themselves. Shane made himself available to me, but that warlock who stole stole my powers had made himself available to me, too. Shane seems to be sincere, but that experience, on top of the hell that was last year, is why I haven't been playing patient
to his therapist. I just can't go through that again. But he made the offer again yesterday."

"The difference is that I don't know what Hayley was in this for," Tyler said. "But it does suck. A lot."

Bonnie pulled him into a hug, and he settled in her arms. As they held each other, something Bonnie had overlooked while in Shane's apartment clarified itself in her mind, and she frowned. She chose to wait to ask Tyler.

When they went back inside, Tyler asked Bonnie if she was going to hold the sword.

She rubbed her cheek. "Uh. What time is it?"

Tyler pulled out his phone. "11:33."

"It's a little late to go on another magical ride. This was enough for the day, plus this stuff with Hayley; I can touch the sword tomorrow."

Tyler smiled. "Okay."

She packed up her stuff, and Tyler picked up the sword. When she got to the front door, she magically snuffed out the torches.

Tyler loaded the sword in the back seat of her car when they cleared the woods.

"Goodnight," Bonnie said when they stood by the opened driver's door. Their cars' headlights illuminated the space around them.

"I was planning on following you home," Tyler said. "To make sure you're okay."

Bonnie started to play with his shirt. "You've had a rough day. You should go home."

"I really would like to go to bed right now," he chuckled.

Bonnie laughed. "Go. I'll be fine, and I'll text you when I make it home. You do the same for me too, okay?"

Tyler nodded. And then he leaned down and kissed her. Bonnie rose to his lips like she was taking her first breath. They kept their lips closed, but the kiss still managed to be the furthest thing from demure. Tyler pressed her against the car, and Bonnie grasped the lapels of his jacket.

It felt very nice, just pressing their lips against each other. It felt complete. A tease, but complete.

Tyler ended the kiss and touched his forehead to the top of hers.

"Thank you for the sword," Bonnie said softly under him.

"Any time." He looked down, and she looked up at him, and not for the first time her face reminded him of a heart, a soft one now, whereas the one screaming her curse before had been sharp and dangerous.

Bonnie watched him get in his car. He let her pull out first, and then they went their separate ways.
The God, Silas

When Klaus woke up the next morning, he reached on his antique nightstand and grabbed Hayley's phone. Her killers had left her shoulder bag untouched.

Unfortunately, despite 1,000 and an even number of years between them, a simple cell phone passcode thwarted him and Kol.

And despite his persistent paranoia and distrust of everyone around him, he slept like a rock. So he had not heard the phone ding when the text came in.

He saw the message icon at the top of the prompt for the passcode, but he couldn't retrieve it. He couldn't even see the telephone number of the sender, simply the text icon.

He hoped whoever was on the other end got frustrated by the lack of response and called.

For now, he got out of bed. He had a house call to make.

April woke up and remembered that she'd slumped on the floor of her bedroom and fallen asleep mid-prayer. She'd woken up in the middle of the night, blown out the candles and crawled to her bed.

Deterred from her plan to speak to Rebekah's family, she'd wandered for the rest of yesterday. She'd visited the church where her father had preached during so many Sundays, the same place where parishioners had gathered to remember him, and she'd visited his grave.

When she'd returned to her somber home, she had gone to her father's altar room, a room she hadn't stepped foot in since he died, and gathered the materials of his shrine. She'd reconstructed it in her room, drawn His symbol and everything.

Her father had been a priest, but, like many people, his personal belief had a syncretistic bent. He'd worshiped the Almighty God. He'd also prayed to Silas.

She'd stayed away from both, unable to understand why her father couldn't just choose one. She'd been annoyed by the number of Christians who admired him and relied on him for advice all the while he fervently prayed to someone else. Personally, she found Silas cooler than God, simply because of all the setup that went into praying to him, but it was God that she had questioned when she had received the news of her father's death.

Now she got on bended knees and lit the two candles from last night. She closed her eyes and bowed to the altar, touching her forehead to the hardwood floor, and rose. She did so four more times. She rose with her eyes closed and said, "It's me. It's April." She chuckled. "I guess I'm not off to a good start, falling asleep in the middle of praying and all. Not that I've never prayed to you before. I have, twice or three times. But I guess you know that. Or not, since I didn't keep it up. Anyways. My dad always mentioned me when he prayed to you, so I hope you know me through him." She quieted it as her heart cracked anew. "He was murdered, killed, and there are people covering it up. There are people who know, and I want them to answer. I don't just want a confession anymore. These people are heartless, and...I want them to answer. I know you can do that. I believe you can do that. You're my last option. Praise onto you, Silas."

Bonnie stretched her body and yawned. For the first time since her attraction to him had started, she'd
dreamt of Tyler. In the dream, he bit Hayley in the neck and drained her blood, vampire-style. Then he bit her arm with his werewolf teeth. She was suddenly in the school bathroom with him, because he was killing Hayley in the bathroom now, and he looked at her and licked his bloody mouth. Then he was in front of her, and he was pressing her against the side of the Witches' House, and she was naked from the waist down, and her body was full of magic. His hands pinned her wrists above her head. She grinned up at him, and he grinned down at her, his mouth clean, and he said "Spirit-witch," and she closed her eyes and lifted her chin, basking in the way he spoke those words because those words were magic. He was still grinning when she opened her eyes, and then she gasped, because her left leg was around his hip; his other hand had a punishing grip on her ass, and he was thrusting into her.

She opened her eyes now and moaned her happiness. She didn't get to orgasm in the dream. He fucked her, and it was great, and his dick felt great, and he kept kissing her neck, but then the dream switched off, and she was just in deep sleep. It was a great dream, one she planned to think about for the rest of the day.

She didn't consider him a disloyal cheater who was no better than Jeremy anymore, and she pinpointed that she had abandoned the thought up on the drive to rescue Shane. Tyler was a good person. He still owed Caroline loyalty, but comparing him to Jeremy felt disingenuous now, because it was a comparison meant to downplay him. And doing that didn't feel natural anymore. She liked him.

She picked up her phone from the nightstand and checked the time. She had stopped her alarm twelve minutes ago. She sat up and swung her legs to the floor. She set the phone next to her left thigh, and when she lifted her eyes from the phone she gasped at what she saw.

The sword that she had placed under her bed when she'd come home last night was now free of the cloth and standing unaided on her floor at the foot of the bed. She stood and approached it. "Uh."
She circled it. "Okay."

Time for the moment of truth. If the thing was standing by itself, then it definitely had some power in it.

She grabbed the handle and lifted the sword. The power that was helping it stand yielded immediately, and Bonnie's hand dropped with the weight of the sword. She grabbed it with both hands and picked it back up. The weapon felt old in her hands. It looked like it would be at home in some wealthy old White or Arab man's "personal collection," the kind that he only brought out when he wanted to show off to leaders of countries.

The blade was a grey-black color now, though the edges and tip still looked sharp and deadly. She put the tip on the floor and got on one knee to look at the designs that were just below the hilt. She traced her thumb over the one that matched the mark on the back of Jeremy's hand, and she wondered what the second generation of Hunters had thought when a strange tattoo had appeared on their hand. She moved her thumb up and traced the spirals that went up to the pommel, and she noticed that there were carvings on the hilt. She traced every groove. The pommel itself had several designs forged into it: several spirals, a snake, and what looked like the bottom half of a sun.

Bonnie touched three fingers to the blade and came away with red rust, soot, and grime. She grimaced and wiped her fingers on her shorts and made a mental note to put them in the hamper when she took them off.

She stood and grabbed the sword with both hands and widened her stance and bent her knees. She lifted the sword and pointed the end at an imaginary opponent, lifting her hands no higher than her waist. Then she wondered if there would be a difference if Jeremy was the one holding the weapon.
She sighed. No vision had come. She put the tip on the wood floor and slowly removed her hand. The sword remained standing. She wondered if that would happen for Jeremy, too. Following a sudden idea, she walked to her bedroom door. She turned around and extended her hand toward the sword, no power, just a gesture. The sword lifted and drifted to her, hilt first.

She smiled.

"Oh, crap." She held the sword with both hands and ran to her phone. She stood the sword on the floor and checked to see how much time had passed. If she didn't leave in twenty-four, she was going to be late.

She got on her knees and lifted the covers of the bed and saw the opened cloth. The sword had rolled itself out. She pulled the cloth out and wrapped the sword again, and then she went to shower. She was going to start working on marrying the sword and the white oak shavings from the stake that afternoon.

She greeted her father when she entered the kitchen.

"Morning," Rudy answered from the floor. Everything they stored under the sink, from baking soda to used frying grease, was on the floor.

"What are you doing?" Bonnie asked.

"The faucet turned on about 10 minutes ago, and I can't turn it off."

Bonnie hiked her bag on her shoulder and moved the cold right handle of the faucet to the on position, then off. She tried it with the left handle.

"Nothing's leaking," Rudy said from under the sink. "But I can't turn it off, and I need to leave for work. I should go to one of the other houses and ask if they're having the same problem. Is the sink in your bathroom okay?"

"Yeah," Bonnie answered. She stuck her hand under the water. Cold. She tried the cold handle again. Nothing, and the water was coming out like the handle was all the way on.

She backed up when her father started to move out from under the sink.

"I'm heading to Sister Leonora's place to-"

Rudy frowned and blinked, his attention caught by something behind Bonnie.

"What?" Bonnie asked and half turned to look behind her. The sword was standing just inside of the kitchen.

She hurried toward the artifact and spun to face her father.

"What is that?" Rudy asked.

"Nothing."

Rudy gave her a look that asked her if she wanted to try again.

"It's nothing. It's a sword that's like 900 years old."

"And it's in the house because?"
"I need it? Tyler got it for me."

"You need it for what?"

"A spell, dad."

"What kind of spell?"

"That's the part I can't get into."

"Bonnie, you got into a magical fight at school; you rushed in and out of here last night; didn't come back home until 12, and why is that Lockwood kid suddenly here every night? And that's just the stuff that's been happening this week. Listen, I know I messed up; I know you're not used to talking to me about this kind of stuff, and that's completely my fault. But I'm going to need you to start making an effort, because I'm listening."

"Dad, it's not just…that stuff. Knowing is dangerous. Do you have any idea how many of the people who knew have gotten killed? I can't….I can't lose you."

"You're not going to lose me."

"I'm not talking about it, okay? I'm not."

She went to the living room and dumped her bag on the couch. She then walked up the stairs and went to her bedroom.

Rudy looked at the sword, and just before he was able to touch it it lifted away and drifted upstairs, hilt first.

Caroline stepped out of her house and locked the door. She left the porch and headed toward her Ford Fiesta. There was an SUV parked behind her car. She didn't note anything special about it, other than her car looked better, and then the driver's door opened and Klaus stepped out.

"Good morning, Caroline."

"This isn't really what I wanted first thing in the morning."

Klaus smiled as he walked up to her. "So we're back to this again. And to think we had such a lovely conversation at the Festival."

"Chuck it up to the Christmas spirit. What do you want?"

"Your help. I am looking for someone, and, as the only person I know who has their finger on the pulse of this little town…." He smiled.

He had her attention. She did know everyone and of everyone who was worth knowing.

"I don't know her name," Klaus said. "She was described to me as a young girl, a little younger than Elena, maybe even a lot younger. Dark hair, kind of awkward, talks a little too much, takes a little too long to get to the point. She came to my house, but unfortunately I was not the one who spoke to her, and I don't know where she lives."

The phone in his left pants pocket started to vibrate. He quickly fished it out and looked at the screen. A. That was the only identifier. "Excuse me," he said to Caroline, and he answered. "Hayley's phone."
On the other side, Shane was at a loss. British accent. But it didn't sound like the man who had beaten him up. He let the person speak.

"I'm afraid Hayley's forgotten her phone. Would you like to leave a message, or will you be calling her back?"

Shane closed his eyes. He hung up.

Klaus inhaled deeply and looked at the phone. He swiped the screen and was prompted for the damn passcode. "I don't suppose you know how to hack a cell phone," he said as he looked up at Caroline. He stopped short when he saw how she was looking at him.

"Why do you have Hayley's cell phone?" Caroline asked quietly.

"It's not what you're thinking, love." He cocked his head. "Do you not know?"

"Know what?"

Klaus gritted his teeth. She was giving him that look he hated: the one where she was seconds away from slowly backing away from the big bad dangerous Hybrid. "I assumed Tyler told you. His savior, Hayley….she's dead."

"What?"

"And I found her."

"What? How?" Caroline took a step back. "Why do you have her phone?"

"She was killed by werewolves yesterday, and I thought this might tell me who was involved. But all I have is A." He softened his regard and said, "I never meant for that little display to be how you found out. It was a no brainer to me that you already knew."

"I didn't," Caroline said, and she headed to her car.

Klaus followed after her. "Caroline."

"I can't talk to you, Klaus," she said as she unlocked and opened the car. "I can't help you." She climbed in and started the car. "I have to get to Tyler."

Klaus opened the door. "The girl. She relayed Hayley's message for me to meet her."

"I don't know who she is," Caroline said and pulled the door from him.

Klaus watched her drive off. He didn't care about her getting to Tyler. He cared about her getting to Stefan.

Caroline looked in her rearview mirror and saw Klaus get in his car. When she got to the stop sign, she pressed the button that opened the car's bluetooth. "Call Tyler."

"Hey," Tyler answered.

"Hey," she said carefully. "How are you?"

"I'm good. I'm okay."
"Really? You're okay? I just found out Hayley's...dead." There was no sound from the other side.
"Tyler? Why didn't you tell me? Klaus said you found out yesterday."

"Did you just say Klaus?"

"He was just at my house. Tyler. I mean, are you okay?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. What did Klaus say?"

"I'm trying to figure out if you're okay."

"I'm fine; I'm dealing with it."

Caroline didn't believe him. She felt like he was holding back, maybe even planning something stupid for revenge.

"What did Klaus say?" Tyler repeated.

"Ty...he has her cell phone." Again, he was silent. "The good news is that he can't get pass the lock code. Please tell me there's nothing on there about your plan to kill him."

"I sent her a text yesterday telling her to meet me and the other Hybrids."

Caroline grimaced at the bad news. Hopefully Klaus never got passed the lock. "We need to steal the phone or something."

"I gotta go."

"Tyler-are you still coming to school?"

"Yeah, I'll see you there."

"Maybe you shouldn't come. Maybe we should skip-"

"I'm coming; I'll see you there."

He hung up, and Caroline inhaled her frustration and switched gears. "Call Stefan."

"Hey."

"Hey. Okay. We have bad news. Klaus was waiting outside my house, and he told me Hayley's dead, but that's not the important part. I mean, that's not the part that matters to you. He told me that a girl stopped by his house, and from the way he described her I'm thinking it was April."

"Did he say what she wanted?"

"He didn't get to talk to her. But now he's trying to. He said she had important information."

"Damn it."

"Stefan, she's going to get herself killed."

"I know. We need to get through to her."

"Compelling her's not an option. We can't touch that damn bracelet unless she takes it off."

"Then maybe we just need to convince her to be compelled."
"How the heck are we gonna do that?"

"I've got an idea. Hopefully she'll be at the school today."

"You're coming back to school?" she asked, surprised.

"Don't get your hopes. It's just for this. Who's Hayley?"

And just like that, her frustration came back. She breathed in and out and answered, "A whole lot of nothing I want to talk about. She was Tyler's friend, and now she's dead, and he knew that, and he didn't tell me. I had to find out from Klaus."

"He was probably in shock."

"Right," Caroline said, frowning. "I just…" She sighed. "Nevermind. Just, nevermind. I'll see you at school."

Bonnie locked her car and headed inside of the school. She really didn't need her dad's questions. He was right that she was uncomfortable telling him all of her magical business. The invisible seal between them had broken when her mother had died. She had stayed away from home for almost a week, first taking Abby's body to Caroline's and staying there and then going to Abby's place.

Rudy had blown up her phone, but she'd had no energy to fake her way through another conversation with him. After she'd done what she could for Alaric, she had returned to Abby's house and stayed there by herself after the emotional vampire had run away. She'd told Caroline and Elena to tell her father that they knew where she was, but they couldn't tell him how to find her.

When she had finally gone home, Rudy had been standing on the edge and ready to jump down her throat when she'd said, "Mom's a vampire now." She'd been nursing a headache in the back of her skull for nearly a week. She'd couldn't hold up her end of her and her father's superficial relationship anymore.

So no, she did not want to tell him every single thing simply because he was ready to hear it now. And it wasn't even that he'd made the change himself! She'd forced it on him! He'd been perfectly willing to live out the broken down version of their relationship for the rest of her life, it had seemed.

But she also really did not want him to get hurt. Her grandmother and mother had known every detail of the magical world, and they'd had powers, and that hadn't been enough to save them. On the human side, Elena's aunt had known, and Alaric had known, and they were both six feet under now. It was dangerous enough for her father that she knew and actively participated in everything.

Shane knew, and he'd almost lost his life. And Klaus had made an explicit threat on her dad's life. She wasn't going to tell him anything more than what he needed to know.

Inside the school, she saw Jeremy coming out of the cafeteria with a grape jelly-filled biscuit. She shook her head fondly and caught up to him. He was always munching on something.

She tapped his left shoulder and stepped to his right. He didn't fall for the trick.

He smiled at her. "Hey."

"Hi," she answered with a smile of her own. "You're back." The fact that she was no longer interested in having a relationship with him did not erase the fact that he had a very cute face. But Tyler's was more chiseled. Like stone. Sexy stone.
"Yeah. I'm gonna continue the training in the woods now. That way I can do it with Matt, and screw Damon."

Bonnie smiled. "Sounds like a good idea to me." She looked around them and pulled Jeremy to a corner. "I think I need your help with something."

"What is it?"

"This doesn't leave this corner, but….I have this sword. And I need you to touch it to see if anything happens."

Jeremy blinked. "Okay."

Bonnie smiled. "Come to my house after school, and I'll explain a little bit more."

"Is this about….what I think it's about?"

"Yeah."

"Wait." He lowered his voice and continued, "Are you talking about the sword? Klaus' sword?" Because how many swords were there? None of them cared anything about swords, but nowadays everyone was talking about the one that Klaus had.

Bonnie answered with her eyes, and that choice on her part made him wonder how exactly she'd come in possession of it.

"So you'll come over?"

"Yeah," he answered.

She smiled. "Great. See you then."

Caroline saw Tyler walking across the courtyard and heading toward the school after she parked, and she ran to catch up with him. She touched his back when she got close enough.

"Hey," Tyler greeted when he looked over.

"Hey." She grabbed his bicep to stop him. "I really don't think you should be here. We can still go home, go to your house and just hang out."

"I'm fine. I can make it through today."

"Tyler."

"Caroline, I'm not in denial. Okay? I'm okay."

"How can you be?"

"I just need to find out what Klaus knows. Did he say anything else to you?"

"He was asking for someone who I'm pretty sure is April. He didn't have her name, but he wanted to know who she was. She went by his house and asked to talk to him."

Tyler threw that information away. It had nothing to do with Klaus possibly getting closer to his plan.
"Stefan's going to talk to her."

"Okay."

"Ty….I'm worried about you. I feel like….this is not normal. When Chris died-" She cut herself off, because she hadn't meant to bring up that black mark on their relationship. But it was helping her make a point. "After he died, going to class was the last thing on your mind."

"I know. But Hayley wasn't Chris."

"She helped you break your sire bond."

Tyler nodded, his questions about Hayley's motive coming back to him. "Right."

Caroline realized that she wasn't going to get anywhere with him, so she settled for walking beside him, and they headed inside together.

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Tyler didn't get to speak to Bonnie until the first of the day's classes let out. He'd sent her a text asking her where her second class was, and now he rushed to the third floor. His second class was on the third floor, too, but his was on the east side while she was straight down the middle from the double doors that led inside the floor and around a left turn.

He didn't go directly to her class. They met in the middle of the corridor, next to a row of windows.

"Hey. What's up?" Bonnie asked when she came up to him.

"Klaus has Hayley's cell phone."

"What?"

"I completely forgot to grab it, didn't even think to grab it. It's not like I do this type of thing every day, and now we might be screwed because of it." He leaned back against the windows. "I can't steal it," he thought aloud. "He just told me yesterday that Hayley's dead, and he didn't tell me about the cell phone. If it goes missing, he'll suspect me."

"Has he found anything in it?"

"I don't think so. It's locked. But there's a text in there of me telling Hayley to meet me and the others yesterday and a couple of texts talking about meeting so we can work on breaking certain Hybrids' bonds."

Bonnie was relieved that the phone was locked. Every time they took a step away from Klaus, something pushed them a step back.

"We really need to work on that sword," Tyler said. "Is there any way you can start on it soon?"

"Is this afternoon good?" she asked with a small smile. "I'm having Jeremy over to help me with it."

Tyler frowned and straightened from the wall. "Why Jeremy?"

"I want to see if the sword reacts to his touch. I held it this morning, and it did nothing, though it was standing straight up at the foot of my bed when I woke up, and it followed me to the kitchen. And if I hold out my hand, it comes to me."

Tyler was stuck on Jeremy. "Did you tell him?"
"Yeah. It's a Hunter's sword, and he's a Hunter, and I want to see if anything happens when he touches it." Bonnie saw that he was not going for the idea.

"You told him you have the sword. You just told him and didn't tell me."

"I planned on telling you after."

"But not before."

"Did I need permission?"

"Bonnie….I went through a lot to get that sword. I risked a lot, and it wasn't just me."

"I know that," Bonnie said with a frown. "But bringing Jeremy in might help us; it might help me."

"Bringing him into what?"

Bonnie blinked at his tone.

Up the corridor and to the right of the double doors that led straight down the corridor, Caroline watched the argument brew. Her and Bonnie shared second period, and she'd started down the hallway only to see her and Tyler talking. She wasn't listening in, still couldn't bring herself to, but she was watching their body language.

Elena walked up to her and asked, "What are we staring at so intensely?"

"Tyler," she answered without looking at her.

"And Bonnie," Elena added when she saw them. "What's going on?"

"That's what I'd love to know."

"We can always go over there and ask."

When Caroline didn't respond, Elena looked at her. Her arms were crossed, and she looked completely unhappy. "Is something going on?"

Caroline scoffed.

"We can always eavesdrop-"

"No!" Caroline turned suddenly. "No eavesdropping. I can think of that myself, thank you."

Elena reared back at the subtle attitude. "Do you think they're talking about…..?" What would Bonnie and Tyler talk about? "Klaus?" she tried. "Or the cure?"

She looked at Caroline again when she remained silent.

In the middle of the corridor, Bonnie answered Tyler. "Bringing him into my house so he can touch the sword. Letting him know that I have the sword. What's the problem?"

"The problem is that I don't need this getting out to more people. Stefan knows, Damon knows, all the wrong people-"

"Jeremy isn't the wrong people-"

"I know that, but he's an extra person, one who doesn't need to know. Rebekah got too close; Kol's
Here; Klaus is sniffing around—"

"Okay, but that has nothing to do with Jeremy. This isn't just about you—"

"How many people do you think can learn bits and pieces of information before Klaus swoops in and puts it all together?"

Bonnie was at a loss for words. "What do you want me to say? What exactly do you want me to say, Tyler? I feel that I need to talk to Jeremy about this so that I can cross at least one thing off my list, my very long list. You're not the only person relying on me; my mom and Lucy are waiting on me, too, and I'm making detours like cursing Rebekah to—"

"I'm not relying on you."

"You know what—"

"Oh my God," Tyler said, trepidation coloring his voice as he realized that this was turning into another argument and another instance where she was mad at him. He moved to touch her to try and squash it.

"No," Bonnie said, holding her hands up. "I'm going to class. I'm not dealing with this."

"Bonnie—"

"No." She turned and walked away.

Tyler sighed and looked up at the ceiling. This day was officially bullshit.

Caroline met up with Bonnie when it was time to switch to third period. They weren't going to the same class, but she needed to satisfy her curiosity. She observed Bonnie from the back as she walked toward her. She had looked upset during the whole class.

Caroline sped up until she was walking next to her. "Hey."

Bonnie looked over. "Hey," she greeted with a tiny smile.

"How was class for you?"

"Uh, fine. This stuff's easier to pay attention to now that it's the last year," she said with a small chuckle. "But then there's all the other stuff that gets in the way."

"Like what?"

"The super freaky stuff."

Caroline smiled. "Right." She usually has no problem focusing in class, even when the super freaky stuff actually land at her door. Those instances actually make her cling to the normalcy of being in class even more. Though she had had to leave class to have two breakdowns in the bathroom the week after her father had tortured her. She'd called Tyler those two times, and he'd left class to stay with her in the bathroom.

"How was class for you?" Bonnie asked.

"Uh, about the same. I was a little distracted. A lot distracted. Something bad happened yesterday….to Tyler's friend Hayley. She was attacked by werewolves. Did you hear?"
"Uh yeah," Bonnie answered. "I found out last night. It's random."

Caroline nodded. Curiosity satisfied. She had a strong urge to kick Tyler's ass up and down every hallway in this building.

"How's Tyler dealing with it?" Bonnie asked.

Why don't you tell me? "Um, he's dealing. I'm doing my best to help him."

Bonnie smiled and nodded.

"I'm hoping we can hang out later today," she added.

Bonnie looked at her. "Right. That would be good for him."

Caroline smiled.

When they separated, when Bonnie headed to the double doors to rush down to the second floor, Caroline said one thing as she watched her go: "Slut."

And then she felt bad. None of her friends were ever supposed to fit into that category. She'd thought some mean and petty things about Elena back when she'd been human and struggling with her self-esteem, but she was passed that. She didn't want to start having problems with Bonnie now. She was never supposed to have any problems with Bonnie.

But then, none of her friends were ever supposed to be closer to her boyfriend than she was. Sure she'd dated Matt after Elena, but they'd been broken up; she'd been positive that Matt deserved better than Elena at that point in his life and that she was it. But it had seemed at times that Matt still carried a torch for Elena. He'd eventually convinced her that he didn't, but to this he was still loyal to Elena and still cared for her and was still a friend to her despite the fact that they hadn't been together in more than two years.

Yet she couldn't even keep her own boyfriend's loyalty?

After third period was B-Lunch, and she found Tyler just as he entered the cafeteria. She asked to speak to him next to the garbage can that was by the double doors.

She crossed her arms and commenced, "So you told Bonnie yesterday?"

"What?"

"Hayley. You told her about Hayley yesterday. Unless I'm mistaken and Klaus gave her a house call, too. Tell me I'm mistaken and Klaus gave her a house call, too."

Tyler took a deep breath.

"Oh my God, wow. Are you freaking kidding me?"

"It's not a big deal-"

"Not a big deal?" she asked and leaned toward him to make sure she'd heard right. She started to talk with her hands and said, "Tyler, you've been closed off to me all day, and turns out it's because you got it all off your chest with Bonnie yesterday? What is going on?"

"Nothing. There was nothing to get off my chest."
"Now you're lying. You're supposed to come to me with this stuff. Something bad happens, I'm supposed to be your first call. I'm your girlfriend."

"Hayley dying wasn't a bad thing."

Caroline stilled. "What?"

"Her dying...wasn't a bad thing." He didn't want her to know, but he didn't have much of a choice now. "I killed her."

Caroline's face lost all emotion. Her mouth fell open, and she stopped blinking.

"Caroline?"

Everything started back up again, and she reacted. "What? I didn't hear. I didn't hear what you said. Tell me I didn't hear you."

"She was going to sell me out to Klaus."

"What?"

"She was going to meet him."

She was completely bowled over.

"I got there first, and I...I killed her."

It took her a moment more to find her words.

"Caroline."

She closed her eyes and shook her head. "You killed her," she said softly. "She helped you, though. I don't understand."

"Neither do I. But I had no time to ask her twenty questions. I had to move fast."

"Tyler. I'm sorry."

"I'm dealing with it. As much as I can."

"You should've told me. Why didn't you? How could you not? I mean if I'd done something like that-"

"Things tend to get around when I tell you. It doesn't actually stay with you," he added when she stared at him in shock.

"Are you kidding me? Are we back to that?"

"That? Like it wasn't a big deal? Look, I know you trust Stefan; I know he's your friend, but he's not mine. I don't trust him. He doesn't care about me, and he's made that clear, and I don't give a shit that he doesn't, but that also means that I don't want him knowing my business."

"So you're punishing me. This is punishment."

"No, I'm saving you from having to choose."

"Oh wow, Ty, thank you so much. But you can trust Bonnie."
Tyler closed his eyes. "I asked her to help me with Klaus." Another thing he didn't want to tell her.

"Well I'm just very out of the loop, aren't I?"

They stood in silence for a moment, and in that moment Caroline's face turned long with hurt.

"Listen," he began, "The truth is...telling you this stuff feels like a risk."

"You mean a risk for you. That's what you mean, right? But me spending the day with Klaus at the pageant...that wasn't a risk. I could be trusted then. Right? It was one stupid mistake, Tyler. You're letting it ruin our relationship. I've always been there for you, starting with when you became a werewolf. Remember that? Nothing's changed, but you're shutting me out."

Tyler didn't respond. It wasn't just one mistake, but he didn't see the point of getting into it. "I'm gonna get in line."

While he stood in the taco line, he remembered that he hadn't asked her to spend the day with Klaus at the pageant. That had not come from him. She had told him that Klaus had asked for the date in return for him doing her the favor of killing one of his Hybrids, and she had agreed.

Behind the auditorium, April dragged on her cigarette. She could feel herself slipping into a bad place. She was losing steam, didn't feel like reaching out to Rebekah's family anymore. She knew that her father deserved to at least have the one person who loved him unconditionally know the truth about how and why he died, but she'd lost Rebekah, and everyone else was shutting her out.

She heard footsteps approaching and quickly dropped her cigarette and stepped on it.

Stefan rounded the corner and saw her. "April? April Young?"

"Yes?"

He smiled. "I'm Stefan Salvatore. I'm, uh, a friend of Caroline's. She told me where to find you. Listen, April, you're in very big trouble. That man, that vampire whose house you went to last night, he's looking for you."

"Oh really." She kept her voice even.

"Yeah, really, and when he finds you he's not going to care about your father or what you're looking for. He's only going to care about what he's looking for and what he's looking for are answers. Did you know the girl you spoke to yesterday?"

"What girl?"

"The one who gave you the message to give to Klaus."

"No."

"Okay, well I don't know if you're telling the truth or not, but, again, Klaus won't care. He will force it out of you."

"What, compel me?"

"I know you think you're completely safe because you're wearing that bracelet, but it'll only take you so far. He can still kill you. He can still hurt you. And if you can't grasp that, then consider this: Rebekah was absolutely terrified of him. And she was almost the same age as him. Klaus Mikaelson..."
is terror, and right now you have what he wants."

April swallowed nervously. She liked her lips and asked, "And what's that?"

"The girl who spoke to you yesterday," Klaus interrupted.

April spun around.

"He's always been one for dramatics," Klaus said of Stefan. "All I want is exactly what you know, nothing more."

"You followed me," Stefan stated as he moved to stand next to April.

"Caroline is so...reliable. I knew that she would go directly to you with her information and that you, ever the protector," he said with a smile that suggested that they both knew the ironic side to that statement, "Would take me to the correct party. April. Stefan is right: I do not care about your father. I did not know him. But if my sister made you a promise, I can follow through. The girl who spoke to you yesterday: she's been killed. She died before I could meet her, and I want to find out who did it."

April thought a moment. If he wanted to help, "I want you to wake Rebekah."

"I'm afraid that's out of the question. She's asleep, put under by a witch's spell."

"Then get her to reverse it. Don't tell me you can't do that if you're so big and bad," she said with a quick glance at Stefan.

"There are rules to magic, April. This one has a time limit: fourteen days. There are," he did a quick calculation, "eleven days left."

"Then we can talk in eleven days."

Klaus grabbed her by the throat and lifted her until she was eye-level with him, and he slammed her against the concrete wall.

"Klaus," Stefan said. He looked around. "We're in public."

"So? We're secluded. What's another death on school property?"

"Then you won't find the answers you're looking for," Stefan pointed out.

April's head cleared from the impact against the concrete wall, but she struggled to breathe. She was literally hanging by her neck. "I don't....I don't know anything. I don't....know her."

"What did she say to you?"

"Let her go and she'll answer," Stefan stressed.

April fell on her feet when her neck was freed. She started coughing uncontrollably, her throat scratchy. "She said....to ask for you. I swear everything I told that man is all I know. She said it was a matter of life and death. After he closed the door, I....I signaled to her that I didn't know if you'd get the message, and she left. I swear that's all. I'd never seen her before."

"Good. Now while we're here, pray tell," he said as he squatted to be eye level with her, "What did my sister mean to accomplish with her....charade."
April felt her last chance slip away. "She planned to kill Matt, then compel Elena, Caroline, and Stefan into telling her—how far things had progressed since she was out." She swallowed when a storm started to brew on Klaus' face.

"What things?"

"Everything that had gone on since she'd been stabbed. She wanted to know what she'd missed. She planned to compel one of your Hybrids."

"Yes, I know."

"I was supposed to get Matt alone and just...be a spy for her. In return she would help me figure out what happened to my father."

"But you left when you realized things were going south," Stefan guessed.

"She texted me and said something was wrong. I asked her what, and she said she wasn't sure but that she was coming to the school to find out. I waited, but no werewolf came to the library, so I left."

"Curious," Klaus said.

"Why's that?" Stefan asked.

"Tyler Lockwood said that Rebekah tried to compel him, but Bonnie saved him. Now young April tells me that Rebekah only came to the school because something went wrong."

"Rebekah was only supposed to come to the school for the interrogation part, not the compulsion part," April said. Maybe she could get Klaus to see her as valuable.

Stefan threw her a look.

"And my brother Kol?" Klaus asked.

"I didn't know anything about him. I didn't even know his name. She only said she had a brother she could get to help."

Klaus realized that he'd never asked Kol what Rebekah told him. He supposed there was no point now that April had told him Rebekah's motive, but it was very likely that Kol could add something he didn't know. After all, April had just thrown Tyler's version of events into a less than truthful light.

"Thank you, April. My plate is full at the moment, but I promise you that once I have everything worked out, I will help you with your father's case."

"Okay," April said.

"One more thing: Kol wasn't able to find Rebekah's cell phone in her car."

April swallowed. "I have it."

"I want it."

"It's in my house."

Klaus smiled. "I will give you my number. Text me your address."
"Uh, I don't think that's a good idea," Stefan said. "April, never invite a vampire into your house. I'll stop by and pick it up, and I'll bring it to you."

"Or you can stop by with me and watch the hand-off." He already had one problem with a cell phone. He didn't need two.

"Okay," April agreed.

Lunch was almost over, but Stefan snuck inside the cafeteria and found Caroline at her usual table.

"Hey," Caroline greeted. "Have you talked to April yet?"

"Just did. Klaus interrupted."

"What?"

"She's fine. I mean he put her in a chokehold at one point, but she's fine."

"Well, isn't that what she wanted?"

Stefan lifted his eyebrows but didn't comment. "Uh, he's going by her house later to pick up Rebekah's phone. I'm going with him to make sure he doesn't do anything to her."

Caroline finished her milk. If April wanted to get killed, that was her business. She wasn't going to run after her to keep her alive. Especially not with April's attitude.

"Listen," Stefan continued. "I don't know what exactly Tyler told Klaus about that day, but April told him something new. She told him that Rebekah was only coming to the school because something was going wrong with her plan, that she only planned to be there for the interrogation."

"Well, I don't know what exactly Tyler told Klaus either, because I don't get to know what Tyler tells Klaus, because I'm a risk."

Stefan blinked. "What?"

"You'd be better off going to the source. Or Bonnie."

"Caroline, what's going on?"

"Tyler knew since yesterday that Hayley was dead. And he didn't tell me."

"I told you, maybe he was-"

"No, he wasn't. Stop trying to defend him, he doesn't deserve it. He's still mad about me telling you about his plan. I don't know what he thinks is going to happen. It's not like you're going to get in his way."

Stefan said nothing. He and Damon had already talked about it, and Damon was very ready to get in Tyler's way if need be.

"But he doesn't get that," Caroline continued. "Maybe I should arrange a meeting between the two of you. Like, a dinner. Elena did it for you and Bonnie, and it worked. You know, until you killed her mother, but that wouldn't happen here."

"Uh, I don't think that's a good idea."
"Why not? He doesn't trust you, and it makes me feel like I'm being pulled in two directions. I can't support him one hundred percent with his plan until after we get the cure. I wish we didn't have to, for his sake, but we do."

"I don't know what to tell you. Because you're right: he cannot touch Klaus until we either get the cure or don't need him to get it anymore."

Caroline sighed.

The bell had rung and Tyler was on his way to class when Stefan grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him to a corner near the boys' bathroom. He'd chosen to eat lunch outside with Matt and so had missed Stefan's presence in the cafeteria.

"Hey," Stefan said.

Tyler looked at the hand that still rested on his shoulder.

Stefan took it away and smiled. "Are we really doing this?"

"What do you want? Klaus is still alive, so….

"I'm here to warn you. Klaus paid a visit to April Young. He was questioning her about Hayley, but then he asked her about Rebekah. Something she said about the day Rebekah was put down caught his attention. She told him that Rebekah didn't come to the school until something went wrong, which doesn't match you telling him that she tried to compel you."

Tyler really wanted to get to the part where Klaus was dead. Bonnie had the sword. The only reason Stefan and Caroline wanted Klaus alive was because he'd had the sword. But now Stefan's side had it, plus, unbeknownst to them, Bonnie's mom and cousin. They don't need Klaus anymore. The only problem is that killing Klaus would lead to Bonnie having to answer a whole lot of questions, but that might be something that they have to risk.

He realized as he stood there that he would absolutely kill Stefan and Damon if it meant clearing the way for Bonnie to get what she wanted.

"Thanks for the warning," Tyler said.

He started to leave, but Stefan said, "There's one more thing. I know it's none of my business, but Caroline…she's worried about you. She's worried about the two of you. I know you're planning something big, and I know you're going through a lot, but don't let revenge tear you two apart. You've got a great girl-"

"Stefan? You really should've stopped at 'it's none of my business.' It isn't any of your business."

"I'm just saying-"

"Don't. Caroline can talk to you about this, and apparently anything else she wants, all she wants, but that doesn't mean you can bring it to me. Did I ever pretend to give a shit about your relationship?"

Stefan chuckled and shook his head.

"Thanks again for the tip. We have nothing else to talk about."

As he walked away, Stefan said, "You're gonna get your revenge and then you're gonna look around
and realize you're without the one person who's always been there for you."

Tyler was through the door before Stefan finished.

Stefan was about to leave, but he realized that there had been running water during his conversation with Tyler. And it was still there.

He opened the boys bathroom and stopped short. There was water all over the floor and now it was leaking passed the door. He stepped inside and saw that all of the faucets were on, and the basins were overflowing. He tried to turn off the handles, but it was no use. The drainers were all closed, leaving the water nowhere to go but up. He went into one of the stalls and saw the same phenomenon that had taken place in his apartment's bathroom this morning: the water in the toilets was rising and flowing to the floor.

School was over, and Bonnie was walking to her car and calling Abby. Abby had texted her to ask how the curse had gone.

As the phone rang, she frowned up at the fat, dark grey clouds that had gathered during fourth period. She got in the white Prius and started the ignition.

"Hello?"

"Hey."

"Hi. How are you?"

"I'm doing good."

"Really? Did you do the spell last night? You don't sound like a girl who got what she wanted."

"Uh, I did. It's just other stuff. But the spell went well. For the most part."

"What's the other part?" Abby asked.

"I think I had a vision at the end of it. I saw a big field, a house, someone flicking on a lighter, and an explosion. And then a word came to my mind: duodecad."

"What do you think it means?" Abby asked.

"I looked up the word while I was in class. A duodecad is a group of twelve things. The explosion I saw….there was a pastor who died back in September. He was with a group of people. They were 12 in total."

"So it was a vision of the past, not the future?"

"I think so, but why would I be having a vision while casting a curse?"

"Well, it depends on the ritual you did. Sometimes these big rituals can cause us to tap into other mojo, especially if we fall into a trance in the middle of them, because then we're very open to psychic energy."

"Wait, you think….you think that explosion on the farm is part of some mojo?"

"That's what it would have to be, especially since you saw something from the past and not the future. There's nothing you can do about the past. Not unless what's in the past is linked to something
that's going to happen in the future."

"Duodecad," Bonnie said, more to herself than to Abby. "I did what Lucy said. I worked with the number 12. I connected to Jupiter's moon, and I invoked the Goddess Lysithea, and the God Oceanus, and the Spirit Clermeil-"

"Wait a second, wait a second, wait. You invoked a **Spirit**?"

"Lucy told me to be careful with them, and I was."

"How? Bonnie, a lot of those Spirits are tricky. A lot of Them will absolutely not do what you want without getting something out of it first. Sometimes They'll even make things a little worse for you before They make it better. They take offense if you don't worship Them but expect Them to do you favors."

"But the curse worked. I felt it go into effect."

"I'm just saying."

Thunder rolled across the sky, and Bonnie looked up and thought about the sink this morning. "Um," she looked around. "You should know that I have Klaus' sword."

"When did you get that?"

"I didn't. A friend got it for me. I woke up this morning, and it was standing at the food of my bed, just like that, by itself. Then when I went downstairs it followed me."

"Well, that's definitely magical activity."

"Yeah, but nothing happened when I touched it. That's why I've invited a Hunter over so that he can touch it. Well, he's more like a budding Hunter."

"Doesn't matter, if the sword is supposed to react, then it'll react."

"Good," Bonnie sighed.

"Bonnie, I'm worried about you doing all of this **stuff**."

"I'll be fine." At least she had a couple of people helping her this time: her mom and Lucy, plus Tyler. "Back to the duodecad. So you think I tapped into some mojo?"

"It's like accidentally tapping into another phone line. You didn't just have a vision, you also had a psychic hit with that key word, which means there's some serious power behind whatever it is that's going to happen."

Bonnie closed her eyes. "And it's happening in Mystic Falls. So Pastor Young's death wasn't at all an accident. Is there any way whoever's at the other end of the phone line knows that I tapped in?"

"Not unless they were working within the power at that exact moment."

"Okay, well let's hope they weren't." She looked out of her window and saw Tyler running towards her car.

"I feel like Lucy and I should come to Mystic Falls," Abby said.

"Do I need to tell you why that's a bad idea?"
Abby sighed.

"Listen, I gotta go. I might go by the explosion site to see if I can get a better vision."

Abby closed her eyes. "Prioritize, Bonnie. You don't need to be involved in everything."

"Yeah. Gotta go."

She rolled down the window as Tyler got closer.

He bent down and said, "Hey."

"Hey."

"Listen: Stefan came by the school. He came to warn April that Klaus was looking for her, but then Klaus showed up. He questioned her about Rebekah. She told him that Rebekah only came to the school because something went wrong, and he pointed out how that didn't match what I told him about Rebekah trying to compel me and you saving me."

Bonnie leaned her head against the headrest and closed her eyes.

"Bonnie, I'm sorry."

She opened her eyes and looked at him.

"I know I'm asking for a lot."

"I knew what I was taking on. It's no pressure I haven't felt before."

"But I'm sorry about this morning-"

"Tyler, don't-"

"Bonnie-"

"Don't. Listen, I'm starting to think that maybe we should just stick to business until this whole thing blows over. After that we can talk about regular stuff, because apparently you can't go two days without snapping at me."

"I wasn't snapping," he insisted. "What I was saying this morning wasn't coming out right, but I wasn't trying to snap."

"I have to go."

"Bonnie, please." He switched tactics: "Okay, listen. I'm going to make the announcement to the other Hybrids that you're helping us out. I'd really like it if you stopped by and they got to meet you."

"When?"

"Tonight. Um, how about a restaurant in Whitmore?"

That wasn't the location Bonnie was expecting, but she agreed.

"Hey listen," she said. "I wanted to ask you something last night: have you ever met Shane?"

"You mean other than that day?"
"Yeah, like did you ever introduce yourself to him? Does he know your name?"

"Not that I know of. Why?"

"Because when I was leaving his apartment that day, he told me to thank you, and he said your whole name: Tyler Lockwood."

Tyler cocked his head as he thought. "I've never told him my name. But who could've?"

They thought of the same answer: Hayley.

"We need something more concrete than that," Bonnie said.

"I can find it," Tyler offered.

"I think it'd be easier if I found it," Bonnie said.

Tyler nodded.

"I have to go," she said again.

"Right," he said, and he straightened and backed away from the car.

Bonnie forced her eyes away from him and put the car in reverse.

A couple of rows away, Stefan watched Bonnie drive off.

He called Damon when he got in his car. "We might have a problem," he said when his brother answered.

"Other than the damn bathrooms overflowing?"

"What?"

"Nothing. What is it?"

"No Damon, what did you say?"

"I said I've called for a plumber, but none can come 'till tomorrow because a couple of the toilets and sinks in this town decided to lose their shit. Not literally, though."

"My bathroom overflowed this morning, too. I'm at the school, and one of the bathrooms flooded."

"This is all fascinating. What's up?"

"Uh, well I've been at the school all day. I wanted to talk to Bonnie about something, so I've been waiting for her, and I overheard her talking to Tyler. I think she's helping him kill Klaus."

"What? Since when? Since when do those two even know each other?"

"I don't know, but Caroline told me he's pretty much been confiding in Bonnie instead of her."

"Bonnie's not stupid. She's not gonna try to take Klaus out before we get the cure; she knows how important it is. What makes her even think she can take him this time?"

"I don't know," Stefan lied. Caroline had said that Bonnie wanted the White Oak dagger for Kol.
Now he was considering the very real possibility that Bonnie hadn't told Caroline the truth.

"But don't do anything," Stefan said. "I'm going to talk to her first."

"Keep me updated."

April had debated ditching the rest of her classes after her encounter with Klaus and Stefan, but Stefan's reminder to Klaus that there were "people around" had stuck with her. She would be safer at school.

She was proud of herself for not being a paranoid basket case by now. All of these scary, powerful people wanted to talk to her. But none of them cared to talk about what she wanted to talk about.

But after getting choked by Klaus, she was done. She was calling it quits. She'd wait for Rebekah to wake up, and who knew if she'd still be in the mindset of helping her in eleven days.

She arrived at her house from the bus stop and saw a man in a nice three-piece navy suit sitting on the front steps. She just wanted to go inside and think about how much her life sucked.

"Hi," Shane greeted.

"Hi," she answered and hiked her backpack on her shoulder.

Shane stood and walked to her. He extended his hand and said, "You're April."

"And you're in front of my house," she answered without taking his hand.

"I was waiting for you," Shane replied. He put his hand down.

"Well, here I am."

"I heard your prayer yesterday, April. And I'm here to give you an answer."

April stared at him.

He smiled and said, "I'm Silas."

He let her absorb it.

"I gotta go," April said. She went around him and headed to the door.

"I took no offense to you falling asleep in the middle of the prayer," he said after her.

She stopped on the porch.

"As long as you finish it, which you did this morning." Truthfully, he hadn't heard her attempt last night. He'd been casting spell after spell to calm his rage, some of them giving praise to Nature, some to death, and some of them begging for the completion of his goal. He'd only heard her this morning.

April turned and asked, "How do you know that?"

"I told you."

"That you're Silas. Silas is dead. He's a God."

"You're right. Kind of. My body is dead. My spirit is very much alive. This body is a gift that my
worshipers worked centuries to give me."

April chuckled. "So you're just...walking around. Hey, wait a second. I know you. You're the
professor my dad used to work with, the one who gave the presentation at the high school."

"I also judged the Miss Mystic Falls pageant recently. You were the winner," he remembered now.
"I awarded you the scholarship."

April didn't know what to say to a supposed God who'd judged a beauty pageant.

"Your father was my disciple, April, which I know you know." When she kept staring at him, he
walked up to just before the first step and said, "See, that's the thing about faith. People swear they
believe, and they do. They swear that their God speaks to them, that they hear their God, but none of
those same people would believe it if….Jesus Christ, let's say, walked up to them and said, 'Here I
am.' I mean for one thing, most of them can't even get the Guy's looks right. But my point is, they
wouldn't believe it because they all hold tight to this idea of how exactly they're supposed to meet
their God. Your father….he didn't have that problem. I came to him, and he believed. As a matter of
fact, he insisted that I didn't have to show him my power as proof, though I did, of course."

"I'm sorry," April said. "This is….I can't...."

"It's a lot."

"A lot? Wha-You don't know the day I've had. You don't know the week, the months I've had."

"Learning about the supernatural can be taxing."

"How do you know that? How do you know I'm learni-
"Because I can access my followers' thoughts and memories."

"But I'm not a follower. My dad was; he was better than me; he prayed every night; I-
"Only prayed last night. But you had it right: your father praying for you all those years—it's afforded
you a good bit of protection from me. Just because you haven't set up a shrine and prayed to me all
these years doesn't mean you don't believe. Praying isn't believing. It's just something extra, a very
important part, but extra."

"I don't understand how you know what I said last night," April said. She put a hand to her forehead.
Maybe she finally was cracking.

"I can bring your father back."

That got her attention. "How?"

"By raising him from the dead."

"Oh, well gee. Is that all?"

He smiled. "Someone's supposed to visit you in a bit. Two someones, actually."

April held her breath. She really wanted to go inside; she was overwhelmed.

"When they come, don't give them what they want."

"Why not?"
"Because you don't get anything out of it. You don't need them anymore. You have me. You wanted one better. I can give you everything. I can bring your father back, and I can make pay whomever you choose. I've done it before."

"What's the catch?"

"When they come, and when they ask why you won't give….the cell phone," he picked up from her, "Tell them it's because you don't need them anymore. Tell them you have Silas now. Don't tell them I showed up here. Simply tell them that I spoke to you, and I said I'm going to answer your prayers and bring your father back to life. That's all I want. I know you don't believe me right now, April, but if you do what I say, you will see the power of my name. And whatever you do," he said as he took a step back, "Do not cross your threshold. You must stay in your house."

April blinked, and he was gone. She hurried down the steps to the spot where he'd stood, and she looked around. He was gone.

Bonnie pulled up to her house and saw Jeremy's car already parked. She'd been hoping to get a moment alone before they met. Between her mother constantly warning her off of doing too much, and Tyler's increasingly close calls with Klaus, and her feelings for him that were presently getting her nowhere, she was starting to feel weary.

She got out of her car and was moving around to the passenger side to get her bag when Tyler's vintage Buick pulled up and parked behind her car and parallel to her house.

Tyler got out, and Bonnie walked up to him. "You followed me?"

"Yeah. I just wanted to….I wanted to be here."

"To supervise me?"

"I'm not supervising you. Look, I'm not here to fight. I just want to support you in what you're doing. I want to be here. That fight's been on my mind the whole day. I didn't want to just leave it like that."

"Fine. You can come watch."

She went back to her car to get her bag, and Tyler locked his car and followed. She was still pissed which meant he still felt off.

"Hey," Bonnie greeted Jeremy.

"Hey," Jeremy responded. He looked over her head at Tyler. He'd thought it was just going to be the two of them.

Bonnie saved her explanation for when they were inside. She walked in, locked the door behind them, and led them up to her room.

"Okay, you guys can sit on the bed. Unless you sat on the floor at any point today," she quickly added, "in which case you should pull up a chair."

Jeremy and Tyler sat in front of her on the end of the bed.

"Okay so, Tyler knows. Everything," she told Jeremy.

"I'm the one who got her the sword," Tyler said.
His admission made Bonnie pause on what she was going to say next. She looked at him, and he looked at her. She didn't want him sharing anything he didn't want to share. Jeremy didn't need to know how exactly she'd gotten the sword.

For his part, Tyler wanted to show her that she didn't have to hold in all of his information. He wanted to show her that he could relax and trust her to decide what she wanted to share.

"You stole the sword from Klaus?" Jeremy asked Tyler.

Tyler inhaled and tightened his mouth, and Bonnie took over, "That's not the important part. What's important," she said and reached her hand out.

The sword ripped its way out of the cloth and came to her hand. "Is this. And you touching it."

Jeremy immediately noticed the mark on the sword. He stood and walked to it.

Bonnie let the sword go and stepped aside to give him room, but, as soon as she took her hands off of it, it crashed to the floor.

Bonnie jumped back so that it wouldn't land on her feet. "That didn't happen earlier," she said. "It's supposed to stand on its own when I let it go."

"Maybe Jeremy's cancelling it out," Tyler said.

Jeremy picked up the sword. It seemed to weigh nothing in his hand, and as soon as he touched the handle a white-gold light flashed where his hand made contact. He lifted the point of the sword to the ceiling, and they all watched the light spread down the blade to restore it to its original glory. The only mark of the sword's age now was the handle.

"Okay, that's definitely a reaction," Bonnie said.

"How do you feel?" Tyler asked Jeremy.

"Fine," he answered as he examined the sword. He felt a tingle in his hand and Bonnie's room abruptly disappeared. He stood on dirt and was surrounded by tall, skinny trees. It looked nothing like Mystic Falls' woods.

"Bonnie? Tyler?"

"What?" Tyler answered.

"Jeremy?" Bonnie tried.

He didn't hear them. It was windy and cold and thunder crashed overhead. Shivering, he saw a sliver of light in front of him and headed toward it. He heard voices the closer he got, and he slowed down. He could hear chanting. A woman. And a group of men repeating after her. Lightning flashed across the sky, and he was now standing just outside of the group. He felt something weighty in his hand, and he looked down to see that he still held the sword.

In front of him, the group held their own swords toward the sky. Lightning flashed again, and this time it streaked down to the five swords. As soon as it made contact, he was thrust from the forest and saw blood splatter on the blade of one sword, saw one sword get thrust into black sand, a third sword penetrated reddish-brown water, and the fourth lay with a medium-brown man, and the lid of a casket closed over both.
The vision ended, and he was back in Bonnie's room again. He put the end point of the sword down and shivered. He found it hard to swallow, his throat suddenly parched.

"Where did you go?" Bonnie asked.

"I think I had a vision."

"A vision?" Tyler clarified.

"I was in this forest; I don't know where. There was this woman chanting, casting a spell, I think, and she was surrounded by these guys. I think they were the original Five. Then lightning struck and I saw...I saw blood on one sword; I saw someone strike one in this black sand; I saw one fall into water; and I saw another one get buried." He looked at the one he held. "I only saw four."

"What does that mean?" Tyler wondered.

"It means we have one," Bonnie answered thoughtfully. "And there are four more."

April frantically bounced her left leg as she waited for Klaus and Stefan. She didn't have the television on, no radio, no iPod, nothing to distract her. She was so nervous that she'd already gone to the bathroom twice. Either she was going to give Klaus the cell phone and wait for him to help her, or she was going to listen to a man who was probably delusional and incur Klaus' wrath. If she chose the latter, then she would never leave her house again, because Klaus would surely kill her with one blow as soon as she crossed the threshold.

She didn't pray to Silas for guidance. She didn't need that man showing up right now.

Three neat knocks sounded on the door, and her stomach got hot. She closed her eyes and swallowed, and hoped to Go-Silas-that she was doing the right thing.

She stood and walked to the door, gripping the cell phone to her chest. She opened the door, and Klaus stood with his hands clasped behind his back, a smile on his face, and Stefan stood to his right.

"Ah," Klaus said. "A quick hand-off then. And you were worried," he said to Stefan.

"I wanted to get it over with," April said.

"All right, then." He held out his hand.

April hesitated.

"It's all right, April," Stefan said.

Klaus' smile slipped. "Let us have it now."

"I think I've changed my mind."

"You think," Klaus stated.

"I've changed my mind."

"April," Stefan said, "It's okay. Nothing will happen to you. He just wants the phone. I promise I won't let anything happen to you."

"There isn't anything in here that you'd want to see anyway," April said.
"I'll be the judge of that," Klaus said, all emotion gone from his voice.

"Well I don't need you anymore," April said. "So there's no reason for me to give it to you."

"April," Stefan warned. "Think about what you're doing."

"I know what I'm doing. I've found someone who can help me. He's answered my prayers."

"And who would that be, love?"

"The God, Silas."

Klaus narrowed his eyes and looked at Stefan who looked at him.

"He came to me. He's promised to raise my father from the dead, and he's promised to kill everyone who knew the truth and lied to me about it if I ask him too."

"I think you've lost it," Klaus said.

"I haven't. My God is real. And there's power in his name."

Just then, the accursed grey sky let loose with a series of enraged booms of thunder.

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Bonnie clutched her head and screamed. She desperately squeezed her head as every boom that sounded in the sky felt like it was being pulled straight from her brain. Immense pain shaped itself into her skull, and she couldn't see anything, and she backed up and fell to the floor.

Tyler and Jeremy yelled her name and rushed to her side. She rutted on the floor and pulled her hair. White-hot agony held her brain hostage, and she felt like her head was going to split open. "Please," she begged as tears sprang to her tightly shut eyes.

"What the hell is going on?" Jeremy asked.

Tyler sat on the floor and pulled her into his lap, remembering when she'd almost collapsed outside of Shane's apartment. "I don't know," he answered Jeremy. She clung to his shirt, and he asked her, "What's happening?"

Thunder cracked and shook the window, and Tyler turned to look at it when Bonnie screamed in response. Panic seized him, and he forced away the hand still clutching her hair, and he replaced it with his. He had to be capable of doing something.

"You're gonna be okay," he assured her.

Bonnie pulled at his shirt as the assault continued on her brain.

"What the hell is causing that?" Jeremy asked.

Tyler willed anything to happen, anything. He pulled on what had helped him calm Adrian down and willed it in his hand. He pulled Bonnie's upper body closer to him and wrapped his legs around her. "Please. Shit."

Bonnie trembled from the pain and wished she could pass out from it. But then something cool and fresh swept across her brain. It felt like the first drops of rain. And just like that it was gone.

She pressed Tyler's hand harder against her head as thunder continued to assault the skies and her
affliction returned. Tyler pulled on everything in him that wanted to stop whatever was happening. He gripped behind her skull and willed himself to transform. His eyes shifted, and he regained the power that had flitted through him seconds before. He infused her with his healing power and sheltered her brain under his protection.

Shane opened his eyes when he felt a foreign power come between him and Bonnie.

He stood on the grounds where the first twelve had died. He hated having to tap into this source for anything other than his ultimate spell, which was why he was using Bonnie as a buffer so that he wasn't pulling purely from the energy of the sacrifices. He was mostly using her power.

But now something was affecting his reach. He dug deeper into her and connected and sent a strike of lightening to touch down in front of April's house, but then he was pushed back again, stronger this time.

He wanted to dig in again, plow straight into her brain, but he was too agitated. He might permanently damage her, and that wasn't the state in which he wanted her to be. Besides, he'd made his point.

April had cowered more and more into her house as the world sounded like it was coming to an end outside. She'd dropped the phone to cover her ears, and she'd turned and fallen when the lightning strike had temporarily white-washed everything outside of the house.

The heatwave from the strike had thrown Klaus and Stefan against the house. It had also damaged their cornea and retina. They were blinded and weren't healing. Klaus had to call Kol to come retrieve him.

When April saw that they weren't getting up, she ran to the door and shut it on them.

Mystic Falls was quiet now, except for the car alarms.
Forced Sabbatical: Tempting

Chapter Notes

It's intentional that the pronouns for Silas and Jesus are not capitalized when Shane is talking.

Enjoy!

Bonnie passed out as soon as Tyler's shield took a permanent place over her brain. It was as if her conscious seized the opportunity to run and hide, lest the reprieve be short-lived.

Tyler's skin pricked when she slumped against him. An equally scared Jeremy put his hand on her torso and determined that she was still breathing. He suggested that they move her to the bed, but Tyler declined. He was afraid to move her for fear that everything would start back up again. His eyes were still mutated, and he kept her under his protection.

Time went by, and Jeremy kept an avid watch on Bonnie. Finally, Tyler told him that he could go home, that he would look after Bonnie.

Jeremy responded that he wasn't leaving until she woke up.

Twenty long minutes went by, and Tyler said that he didn't think Bonnie was going to wake up for the rest of the day. He didn't know that for sure, of course; he just wanted Jeremy to leave.

"Someone needs to explain this to her dad," Jeremy said.

"I can do that," Tyler returned.

Jeremy stared at him, and Tyler glared at him. Jeremy did not want to leave, but he was picking up that Tyler somehow felt like his was the voice that mattered where Bonnie's well-being was concerned. He had no idea where it was coming from or when it had started or if Bonnie knew, and he wondered just how much time they'd been spending together.

"Still. I'll be here," he said.

"You won't," Tyler returned, his voice hard. "If anything happens, I'll call you."

Jeremy saw the challenge in his eyes and coolly matched it. What the hell was Tyler planning to do if he didn't leave? He separated his lips and said, "Get her off the floor first."

Tyler flexed his cheeks, but he indulged him. He carefully removed himself from behind Bonnie. Jeremy had to pry her hand off his shirt, and she frowned in her sleep when she felt the loss of the cover on her brain.

"It's okay," Tyler soothed. He picked her up and carried her to the bed. He took off his shoes and jacket and climbed in with her and wrapped himself around her, and Jeremy saw that he was looking at a guy that cared for Bonnie as a whole lot more than a friend.

"Tell her to call me," Jeremy said.
Tyler looked at him and nodded. He kissed Bonnie's temple and rested his forehead against it.

Mouth stiff, Jeremy swallowed thickly and gathered his stuff and left.

"What the hell happened?" Kol asked when he had Klaus in the car.

Klaus was holding his hands against his eyes. They burned like hell. "I don't know," he growled.

Kol looked in the rearview mirror and saw that Stefan wasn't faring any better in the backseat.

"You did something," Kol said. "How come everyone back at the house is fine and you're not? Any ideas Stefan?"

Stefan groaned. He felt like his eyeballs had melted.

"Lovely," Kol commented.

Tyler's phone buzzed and when he fished it out with one hand, he saw a text from Kim.

What the hell is goin on?!

I don't know, but it affected Bonnie. U all okay?

Yeah, just sounded like the damn town was about 2 go under. Kol left. Dunno y or where.

Okay. Keep me posted.

Is the meeting still on?

I don't think so.

He only left Bonnie when night came and he heard her father come home. He hid the sword back under the bed before he went downstairs.

"You all forgot to lock the door," Rudy said disapprovingly.

"Sorry," Tyler answered. "Uh, are you okay? I mean, you made it home okay?"

"Yeah, I was at work. All that commotion didn't reach Whitmore. Where's Bonnie? I texted her, and she didn't respond."

"Uh, she's upstairs. The commotion...I think there was something magical about it. She started screaming when it happened, and she didn't stop until...until I helped her."

"Where is she?" Rudy asked.

"Upstairs," Tyler said.

Rudy was already going up.

He got to her room and saw her ignorant to the world. He walked around and sat next to her. "What happened?"

"I have no idea," Tyler answered. "She's been asleep for four hours now." He decided not to tell Rudy about Bonnie having trouble with her head the day before yesterday. That was for her to tell
him if she wanted.

"Bonnie," Rudy chastised and shook his head. He stroke her face and sighed. He knew that she would barely tell him what happened. So he asked Tyler.

"What have you two been doing?"

Tyler hesitated. "I don't think it's my place to tell you. Sir."

"I'm saying it is."

Tyler looked at Bonnie.

"I'm sure she'll tell you everything when she wakes up."

Rudy stood. "If I believed that, I wouldn't be asking you. You're telling me that my daugher is passed out from the lighting and thunder show that took place here earlier, but you won't tell me why. What spell was she casting?"

"That's the thing: she wasn't. I don't think this came from her."

"Then who?"

Tyler hesitated again.

"Okay, then. Thank you for staying with her, but I can take over from here."

"With all due respect, Sir, I prefer to stay. I'm the one who managed to calm her down, and when she wakes up the first thing she's gonna do is call me, and I'm gonna come right over. I'm worried about her, and I need...I need to make sure she's okay. Please."

Rudy relented. There was no need to take his issues with Bonnie out on this boy who was suddenly a fixture at his house.

Tyler sighed in relief when Rudy left him alone with Bonnie. He left the door open and climbed back on the bed and resumed covering her brain.

Bonnie slowly became aware that she was cocooned into someone's body. She opened her eyes, and they felt flat. A headache banged against her brain, and she flinched and moaned.

"You're okay."

She was held tighter. "Tyler?"

"Yeah. I'm here." Tyler looked down and waited for her to look up.

Bonnie blinked up at him and realized that it was okay to keep her eyes open. Nothing was going to happen. And aside from the little headache, there was a nice feeling in her head: cool and soothing. "What's happening?"

"I'm just holding you in case it happens again," he said with a small smile.

Bonnie put her face back against his chest. "Thank you," she murmured.

She fell asleep again. Rudy came around at 10 O'clock.
"Are you planning on staying here?"

Tyler looked at Bonnie. He was sure that he was making a great impression on Rudy, wrapped around his daughter and all. "If that's okay," he answered.

"Not in that position you aren't."


"I'll sleep on the couch," he said.

The next morning, Bonnie woke up alone. She opened her eyes and lifted her head and did a sweep across her room. The only signs of Tyler were his jacket, backpack, and keys. The sword was standing at the foot of her bed.

She sat up and removed the covers and saw that she'd slept in her clothes, though someone had taken her shoes off at one point. She searched for her phone, and when she found it she saw that she had two calls from her dad, dated yesterday, and four from her mom, dated this morning.

She called her back and Abby's response to her hello was, "Where have you been?! I've been trying to reach you!"

"There was a thunderstorm here yesterday," she responded groggily. "I kind of passed out."

"What? Bonnie, twelve witches died yesterday."

"What?"

"A coven of 12 witches, which….12 witches in a coven is completely unusual. But it looks like they sacrificed themselves."

"Where did this happen?"

"Right here in Eden. Bonnie….we're calling this off. The hunt for the cure, the sword, all of it. It's done."

"Why? Abby, why?" she asked again when the line stayed quiet.

"Lucy finally got something from the ouija board. We got a location for the cure."

"That's good," Bonnie said, suddenly very alert.

"And then she had a vision."

"About what? *Mom.*"

"She saw you dead. And not just dead," Abby said, closing her eyes. "You were bloody, and your eyes were opened. We're not doing this. There is something bigger going on. Lucy and I are going to put our energy into figuring out what it is and stopping it. *You* will just stay put. I don't need that cure-*"

"No-"

*Bonnie. Listen* to what I'm saying. I don't need the cure. I don't need you to take that risk. I had my time as a witch, and I had my time as a human. Bad things happen every day, and people learn to
deal with them. I can deal with this. Especially if it means keeping you alive. This is over."

"Where's the location?"

"Why did you pass out yesterday?"

"No reason. Mom-" She felt herself tear up.

"Don't tell me. It's fine. But listen to what I said. You can't force this cure on me, and I don't want you looking for it for Elena either. Let them find it. You do whatever you have to to convince them you can't find it. Or I will come into town with Lucy."

Bonnie hung up and dropped the phone on the bed. She pulled her knees up and buried her face.

The door opened and closed gently. When Bonnie looked up, Tyler was standing in her bedroom. "You were listening," she said, her eyes wet with tears.

"I heard you wake up."

She wiped her eyes. "I can't stop."

"Bonnie-"

"I won't, Tyler. She needs this."

"You need to slow down," he said and sat on the bed.

"I'm fine."

"I'm calling off the Klaus thing, too."

"If I give my mom that cure, she'll have no reason not to take it. And if I give you a way to weaken Klaus, there's no way you're not gonna use it, so," she shrugged and got off the bed.

"Bonnie, something serious happened to you yesterday," he said sternly.

"We'll figure it out."

"No," he protested and stood. "This isn't something you can just add to your list. This is something that you need to slow down and figure out."

"And after I do? Can I get back to business as usual?"

"Your mom said there's some serious mojo brewing. I don't think it's something you'll figure out in a day and then move past. Your life is in danger. Or it will be if you don't do what your mom said."

"Tyler, my instinct is telling me to go for this."　'

"Your instinct? Or your stubbornness. You haven't even processed what she said. Did you hear her say your cousin saw you dead?"

Bonnie rolled her eyes and then cradled her head because her headache got a little bit stronger.

"We're calling everything off," Tyler continued. "The pack and I will handle Klaus without you. Just….please. Listen to your mom."

Bonnie covered her face and dissolved into tears. She was sick of them telling her to slow down, but
that's only because she *had* become very aware of how full her plate was with their constant reminders, and now some *thing* or other had tried to stretch her head until it popped yesterday, and now she felt raw, out of the loop, and impotent.

"I don't wanna stop," she cried against Tyler's chest when he came to hold her.

"You have to," he said softly. "For your sake, for mine, for your dad, for your mom, and for your cousin. And for Jeremy. We don't want anything to happen to you."

He looked over at the sword. He wished he could get away with taking it with him.

He kissed her head and then her forehead. She asked to be left alone to shower, and he obliged. In the shower, she tried to manipulate the water. It was too cold, so she tried to make it hotter. Nothing happened. Curious, she tried to manipulate it into steam, and when that didn't work she tried to increase the pressure to force more water to come out. Nothing. She used her telekinesis to turn the handles that were in the bathroom, and that worked. She tried manipulating the water again. Nothing.

When she was done showering, she took out Emily's Grimoire and attempted a spell. Absolutely nothing. She tried another and got no result.

She thought back to yesterday and the moments during and after her pain. At one point she'd felt the power reach for her, but it didn't come through. Maybe someone had felt her tap into the phone line after all.

When she went downstairs, she bypassed Tyler in the living room and went to the kitchen. She smiled when Rudy turned from the stove, and she walked straight into his arms.

"What happened?" he asked as he swayed with her.

"I don't know. But there's something wrong with my powers. This pain just came out of nowhere. It felt like someone was reaching into my brain, and now I can't cast a spell, and some of my powers aren't working."

"Who did this?"

"I don't know. I swear."

"Do you think it'll happen again?"

She teared up at the thought, but kept the emotion out of her voice. "I really hope not."

Rudy told her to go have a seat, and she joined Tyler in the living room.

"You're not going to school today?" she asked after she took a seat at the opposite end of the couch.

Tyler gave her an unimpressed look, and she smiled.

"Well, you should at least go home. I'm sure your mom's wondering where you are."

"I called her last night and told her where I was, that I couldn't come home."

She moved closer to him, and he wrapped his arm around her and pulled her flush against his body. Bonnie's heart skipped, and her whole body warmed. She wrapped her arms around him and leaned her body on his. She looked up at him and quietly asked, "What was that thing you did yesterday?"

Tyler was looking down at her, and she was showered and fresh-faced and she looked rested as
opposed to the screaming crisis she'd been yesterday, as opposed to the worried mess he currently was, and he didn't want to talk about what he'd done. He angled his body toward her and leaned down and kissed her. He hugged her close with his arm and caressed her face, and he wished he could show her in detail just how glad he was that she was okay. In spite of everything that was happening, his body yearned for her.

And in spite of everything she'd just suffered, her body revved up in response to him. She didn't care that he tasted like yesterday, because this was another thing that had her feeling weary. Her attraction to him wasn't going away; she was in fact liking him more and more with every conversation, but her need for him still wasn't being met completely, and he still wasn't hers. She hadn't fully formulated in what capacity she wanted him to be hers, but she knew that that capacity hadn't been reached.

Tyler paused the kiss and said, "You scared the hell out of me."

"Sorry," Bonnie said, and she slowly licked up his lips. She opened her eyes and did it again. He was looking at her, and she did it again, and again, and he licked his lips on purpose the fifth time, and her tongue swiped against his, and he captured her lips.

Bonnie moaned, and it sounded extremely loud to their ears, so they sprang apart, Bonnie scooting all the way to the end of the couch, and they looked back at the kitchen. Rudy didn't come out to ask what the heck was going on.

Bonnie looked at him and pursed her lips and smiled, and Tyler shook his head and felt his penis lift. He looked over at her and her very exposed, very brown legs. Bonnie bit her bottom lip and crossed her legs for his benefit. Tyler trailed his eyes up to hers, and she smiled. He looked down her legs, and she kicked one sandal off and crossed her left leg over her right. Her manicure was old, done for the reopening of school, but she hoped he didn't care about that. She moved her foot, up, down, to the left, to the right, and Tyler pictured both of her feet enclosing his dick, and he wiped his face and shook his head. He looked up at her and smirked, and she smirked right back.

Rudy called them to breakfast, and on their way to the kitchen Tyler grabbed her by the waist and said quietly in her ear, "You're tempting."

Bonnie closed her eyes to keep her breathing steady. He continued past her to the kitchen and didn't look back, and he had some nerve, because they were going to sit down to eat what smelled like eggs, turkey sausage, and grits, and all she wanted to do was make her dad disappear, call Tyler back to the living room, pull down her shorts and underwear, bend over the arm of the couch and tell him to do whatever he wanted.

"It's nothing but witchcraft," Kol said.

Stefan had called Damon to come pick him up from Klaus' house. His eyes still weren't working and neither were Klaus'.

"Thunder don't come in succession like that and neither does lightning. And it was nonstop. And all over the town?" Kol pondered.

"What kind of witchcraft?" Damon asked.

"Powerful witchcraft," Kol answered.

Damon made an impatient noise. "What exactly happened at April's house?"

"Nothing," Klaus seethed.
"Okay," Damon said lightly. "I'll just take my brother on home where he won't tell me the truth."

By 12, Bonnie and Rudy had teamed up to insist that Tyler go home. He'd relented, and Bonnie had walked him out, her legs freezing, where he'd caressed her cheek and told her to promise him that she was going to leave the sword alone and at least take a week off. She'd updated him on her wonky powers and quickly made the promise when he looked like he was about to lecture her.

She did tell him that she needed to find the source of last night's trouble, and he'd offered his assistance. And before he left, he told her to call Jeremy.

Once she was done with that phone call, she received one from Damon.

"Did your witchy bat signal pick up on any juju yesterday?" was how he greeted her after she said hello.

Bonnie knew what he was referring to, but she still said, "What?"

Just because.

"Don't tell me you didn't notice the sky going crazy yesterday."

"I did, Damon." She weighed her options on what to say next.

"Well so did Stefan and Klaus, so much so that they're now blind."

"I'm sorry, what?"

"Their eyeballs are all burned. Now Stefan said that Klaus went to visit April Young to get Rebekah's cell phone. He was doing his whole bleeding heart thing and went to supervise to make sure nothing bad happened to little April. That's when she shared the little info that Silas was helping her now; he'd answered her prayers, she said, and he's going to bring her father back from the dead. And suddenly the skies went crazy."

Bonnie tried to process all that she was getting.

"Now it took me a long time to remember where the hell I'd heard that name before, but you remember Silas, don't you? The one from professor Shady Pants' presentation months ago?"

"Uh….Yeah."

"So I'm thinkin' about paying him a little visit."

"To ask about Silas? Damon….what are you gonna say to him, that Silas caused a thunderstorm?" She was playing it off, but she saw some merit in what he was saying. She just wanted him to stay away from it so that she could have room to handle the situation as she pleased. She decided against telling him what happened to her.

"My brother is sitting here with charred corneas, Bonnie. Even worse, Klaus, the indestructible, unhurttable Original Hybrid can't heal. I consider that something to look into. And that's why I called. I need to know if you can get over here and do some kind of healing juju."

"Uh Damon, I can't. The storm's got my powers on the fritz."

"What?"
"I was fine when it was happening yesterday, but I woke up this morning, and I can't cast a single spell." She needed to call Jeremy again and tell him to keep the part where she'd passed out a secret from Elena. Elena was still living in Damon's house, so she hoped that she and Jeremy hadn't spoken yet for today.

"Still don't think a visit to professor Shady is a good idea?"

"I do….And I want to come with you." Tyler and her father weren't going to be happy that she was doing something other than staying home and resting. But it was just a recon trip.

Tyler had gotten home, showered, told his mother enough about Bonnie's condition to satisfy her, and gone to the abandoned barn, where he was finally holding his meeting.

The Hybrids, amid a lot of laughter and relief, all filled him in on Klaus' current condition.

"So basically," Kim concluded, "We've been bought who knows how many days with that cell phone. Klaus will definitely be putting all of his energy into A: trying to get his sight back, and B: finding out why he lost it in the first place."

"That's good," Tyler said.

"So why don't you look as happy as the rest of us?" she asked.

"Listen, if you ask me this is the perfect time to strike. He can't see," opined Alex, a twenty-eight-year-old who looked much older than his age and was perpetually hairless on his chest for the sake of his deep v-neck shirts. He was the oldest of the Hybrids, with Adrian being the second oldest at twenty-four.

"That would leave us with Kol, who would probably be the craziest Original if Klaus wasn't alive. The point was to kill Klaus and have none of his family members know until much later," Tyler said.

"Well, the point also was for Hayley to help us, and that didn't work out too well, did it?" Alex asked.

"No, it didn't," Tyler said with a sigh. "Which is one reason why I've been trying to call this meeting. We haven't gotten a chance to talk as a group since that happened. Kim thought quickly, and she and Adrian saved all of our asses. This is why we didn't kill Klaus the night of Festival. I changed my mind because I thought we needed to wait, because something started to feel wrong about Hayley."

"You could've told us that part," Adrian said.

"I could've. I should've, but I didn't want to bring you an opinion. I didn't want to believe what I was feeling, and trusting it wasn't an option. Not until someone put things into perspective for me."

"So, what was her deal?" Alex asked.

"I'm not sure yet. And I don't know if selling us out was her plan all along or if she got scared or what. Her whole thing about knowing a witch was a lie, one she held on to till the very end. I still don't think it's a good idea to steal that phone, but I do have what could be a lead. There's a man named Shane. He's a professor at Whitmore College. He's been to Mystic Falls a couple of times, but the first time I ever saw him was at the Miss Mystic Falls pageant a couple of months ago. I saw Hayley talking to him, and when I asked her if she knew him, she said no. Cue a couple of days ago, and I run into the guy again, and he knows my first and last name. And he didn't get them from me. It's flimsy, but it's the only link to Hayley. I checked out the room she was using in my house, and
there is absolutely nothing there aside from her clothes and duffel."

"So when are we paying him a visit?" Adrian asked.

The short ringtone reserved for Tyler's text messages played just then, and he fished out his phone. "Hold on, this might be important."

*Going 2 C Shane with Damon. Don't worry! Just 4 info about the storm.*

A second text appeared.

*Meeting at a Starbucks, so not his house with the weird smells :).*

Tyler worked his mouth. Was the smiley face supposed to mask the fact that she was doing the opposite of taking it easy? She was on a mission to run him as ragged as she was running herself. "We're going to Shane's apartment now. Adrian and Kim?"

"Yeah," Kim said eagerly. "Klaus is too out of it to have assigned us anything, so."

"Good," he said. He texted Bonnie back.

*Okay.*

Bonnie entered the coffee shop behind Damon. She'd switched out of her shorts for dark burgundy skinny jeans and after a discussion with her dad, she'd set out. He'd been lecturing her still when she'd slowly closed the front door, grimacing because she felt like she was being disrespectful.

She'd driven her Prius, having opted to meet Damon at the location rather than ride with him. She felt a little weak now that she was out of her house and moving about, and she hoped it didn't get any worse.

The shop was very very small, with limited parking. Bonnie figured that that's probably why it also had a drive-thru. But she wasn't surprised that Shane would choose a place like this. A tiny Starbucks fit him.

The man in question was sitting in the right corner of the shop, next to the counter. Bonnie sat across from him and Damon pulled a chair from another table.

"Would you guys like anything to drink or eat?"

"No thanks," Damon answered.

"I'm good," Bonnie responded. "You come to Starbucks and only get plain black coffee?"

"It's Starbucks plain black coffee, though," he answered with a smile. "I come here because it's quiet. I need all the quiet I can get to grasp just how much my students don't bother to pay attention during my lectures. Tell me your year will be better."

"Uh, if they're anything like me, they might be too busy to even come to class," she chuckled.

He laughed. Closing his laptop, he asked, "So what can I do for you both?"

"Well," Damon began. "I was going about my day when I suddenly remembered your riveting presentation on the witch Silas, and I thought I'd come learn some more about him."
Whenever Shane spoke, he made sure to make frequent eye contact with Bonnie so that she would feel that she is the one he is comfortable with, not Damon. "Uh well, what else would you like to know?"

"Why don't we start with a recap of what you said last time? Powerful witch….

"Silas was a powerful witch who lived in the first century. The most notable thing about him is his tombstone, believed to be the world's first modern tombstone."

"Yeah, I'm not interested in the academia. Tell us about the hocus pocus."

"Well, he's believed to be the only immortal witch who didn't get to live out their immortality. Silas came up with a spell for immortality, but he didn't have enough power or, some would say, skill to pull it off by himself. So he asked his equally powerful witch friend Qetsiyah to help him with it. And she did. Because she loved him. And then Silas asked her to cast the spell on the woman he loved. Qetsiyah was furious, and for that reason she buried him alive and stripped him of his powers."

"See, that's the part I'm interested in," Damon said. "His powers. Any ideas what they were?"

"Well, the basic witch powers today consist of control of one of the four, two of the four, three of the four, or four of the four classical elements: air, water, fire, and earth. It was the same back then. The difference is that magic was a lot more raw. A lot more bloody, the spells….scarier."

"What do you mean by bloody?" Bonnie asked.

"Human sacrifices. Societal rules were a lot more different in many parts of the world back then. It was the norm to use humans to power spells. They worked a lot better than animals. There's no doubt in my mind that one of the things involved in Silas' immortality spell was the taking of a life."

"What else can you tell us about Silas?" Damon asked.

"Why don't you tell me exactly what you're after, Damon?"

"Well, powerful witch, first century, people were a lot more superstitious back then. Witches hide today; did they have much reason to in the first century?"

"Um, yes and no. Depends on where they were. Remember, Silas lived in the first century. That's the same time as Jesus Christ, who was a real person. So here's this man walking around performing miracles, healing people, preaching, gaining followers. Then he's crucified and raises from the dead three days later. Witches are human, too. They fall prey to the same vices. There is no doubt in my mind that some of them either copied Jesus or said they were the second coming of Jesus."

"Well if that were true, then we'd have a lot more Jesuses today, wouldn't we? Instead we have one Jesus, and the rest are Moses, Mohammds and on," Damon pointed out.

"That's true. Unless other witches banned together to take care of the problem, which I don't discount."

Bonnie remembered Lucy's account of the Spirits putting an end to certain witch lines.

"Do you discount the possibility that Silas could've tried to walk in Jesus' shoes? I mean the Guy was arrogant enough to want to grant Himself immortality."

"I don't know much about him aside from that story, and much can be supposed from those details.
It's a goal of mine to visit his burial site, but I haven't been able to get the right things together."

"Where is His burial site?" Bonnie asked.

"Kapharnakos, how Silas would've said it in Greek. Qetsiyah would say Kfar Nahum." He butchered both pronunciations for Bonnie's sake. He's been dulling her psychic powers with the spirit incense, which he can't even be sure she's still inhaling. He had hoped to gain direct access to her thoughts and memories through hypnosis, but she had kept her distance from him after the first trial.

"He's buried in Capernaum," he said. "In Israel."

"What's a Greek Guy doing in Israel?"

"I don't think he was Greek, I think he just spoke it. He grew up in Rome, and Rome was all over Israel during that time, though Capernaum was never occupied. My guess is because of witches like Qetsiyah and Silas."

"So you're telling me this Guy lived in the same country as Jesus."

"Better. Jesus taught in Capernaum at one point, though he eventually cursed the town because its residents didn't fall to their knees for him."

"So there was nothing stopping this Guy from declaring Himself a God."

"Wait, you're here because you think Silas is a god? What does that have to do with Hunters and vampires?"

"Shane," Bonnie said. "Did people worship Silas? Do they still do so today?"

"Um, yes to the second, which most likely means yes to the first. Witches, werewolves, and even some vampires worship Silas."

"Where?" Bonnie asked. "Any around here?"

"They're scattered and aren't that numerous. The sect I spoke to lives in New Orleans."

Bonnie sighed internally. She couldn't just drive to New Orleans.

"What are the chances they woke this Guy up, and He's just walking around somewhere?" Damon asked.

Shane smiled to show his disbelief. "I don't think Qetsiyah would've made it that easy. That kind of thing would probably take an immense amount of power. And probably some human sacrifices."

Bonnie needed to speak to him alone.

"Well last night a freaky thunderstorm took place in Mystic Falls, and it's left two vampires, one of them a very special Original vampire, blind. And if I'm to believe this aggrieved teenage girl, your boy Silas did it as an answer to her prayers."

"Silas is buried six feet under without his powers. I have no idea how he could've done that."

Bonnie's phone rang out a text. She took it out of her small shoulder bag and checked the message.

*Checking out Shane's apartment. Keep him busy! :)*
Her eyes widened just a little bit. She'd known his "okay" was weird. She'd expected him to protest or disagree or sigh or something. This was why he hadn't. And he had the nerve to include a smiley face. He was blatantly mimicking her. Now she had to speak to Shane.

She texted back K and put the phone on silent.

Damon stood and said, "No biggie." He replaced the chair and said, "You were very helpful, professor. I learned that Silas is indeed a God, because people pray to Him, and witches are part of that group, which has opened up a whole world of possibilities." He looked at Bonnie expectantly.

"Uh, I'm gonna stick around for a little bit."

"Have fun."

Bonnie watched him leave. She turned to Shane and took a deep breath and smiled.

"Abrasive guy," Shane said.

"Yeah, his manners could use a ton of work. How are you doing?"

"I'm doing good. Doing okay. I want to thank you again for getting me home that day. I hope things are okay now that that guy has his sister back."

"Yeah, he's stayed off our backs. It's just been a lot of mayhem lately. There was the storm yesterday, and its weird effect on the vampires, and before that….."

"What?"

"Well, you remember the guy I was with? The one who came with me to help you?"

"Yeah, I remember."

"Well….his friend was killed a couple of days ago. A very close friend."

"That's terrible to hear. I hope he's dealing okay."

"He's kind of not. It took him by surprise. One of the vampires who was blinded, Klaus, Tyler kind of thinks he did it. He'd met Hayley once, and they didn't exactly hit it off."

Shane nodded slowly. "I'm really sorry to hear that. I hope Tyler will be okay."

Tyler congratulated himself on getting them to Shane's apartment complex without getting lost for too long. He'd driven them to Whitmore first and gone to the apartment from there since that was the only way he knew.

He'd parked down the street, and they were now arriving on foot at the complex. He took them to the correct building, and they climbed the stairs to the second floor.

"There's a locked room in there. I want to get inside it. But we're looking for everything: pictures, names, notes, anything." They arrived at the door. "And also: it smells very strong in there."

He hit the door with his shoulder and broke inside. Kim and Adrian quickly shuffled in behind him, and Adrian closed the door.

Kim's hand flew to her nose. "Holy shit."
"What the hell is that?" Adrian asked.

Tyler smiled. "Herbs and…other shit. Alright, let's go." He checked his phone. "Bonnie got my text. And if you happen to find a rock-looking thing, don't touch it but let me know. It's a tombstone."

"Is that something else we need to steal?" Adrian asked.

"Not today."

"Whatever happened to that sword?"

Tyler started searching the cabinets in the kitchen. "It's being worked on."

"By the witch who's gonna help us," Adrian said.

"Well, there's kind of a glitch with that. We might be on our own."

"Wait, that witch was going to be Bonnie, right?" Kim guessed. "Sucks there's a glitch, 'cause she's good. She came in real handy with Rebekah," she said to Adrian.

"She helped with Rebekah," Tyler corrected. "She's not handy. Don't talk about her like that."

She shared a look with Adrian. "Is she why you smell different?"

Tyler turned from the cabinets. "What?"

"I'm just saying. There's a smell component with this pack Alpha thing. You know, your pheromones? You give off a smell to us, and between when you became an Alpha to now, it's changed. Would Bonnie smell the same way?"

"Uh, I have no idea what you're talking about," Tyler said.

"Well, I for one hadn't noticed," Adrian said. "But since we're on the subject," he took a whiff, "You do smell different."

"How can you smell me through all this crap?"

"You're pack leader, dude. If I concentrate, your smell trumps all."

"I thought you were dating that blonde vampire," Kim said curiously.

"You mean the one you kidnapped? You should at least remember her name: Caroline. And we're done talking about this, because we're actually here to do something."

"Well this pack thing can't be all work and breaking into people's houses. We're supposed to be a little family," Kim said. The Colombian accent that she'd picked up from her parents always peeked through to mix with her southern Virginia accent whenever she was joking or angry.

"So you're playing two girls?" Adrian asked. "I wouldn't have pegged you."

"You didn't know me before I became a Hybrid. And no I'm not. Can you please lift a cushion and look for something?" He turned back to the cabinets. He was finding a lot of teas he'd never heard of. Not that he was a tea drinker. Out of curiosity, he opened one of the boxes and took out a packet, just in case Shane was using the boxes as a cover.
"I have a lot of questions to ask you," Bonnie said. "I just don't know where to start."

"Well, I can ask you something while you decide," he said with a smile. "Are you okay? You look a little tired."

"Uh, yeah. I'm just not really feeling well. Do you think one of the reasons Qetsiyah buried Silas alive is because the immortality spell was the final straw? Maybe she got fed up with carrying him."

Shane blinked. He stretched his mouth into a smile. "I'm not sure what you mean."

"Well, if it was skill that he lacked, that spell probably wasn't the first time his eyes were bigger than his stomach, so to speak. There were probably lots of spells before that one that Qetsiyah had to help him with. She probably finally got tired of doing all his work and getting absolutely no benefit."

He chuckled. "Uh. I doubt that. People tend to overlook Silas because Qetsiyah got the final say, but he was nothing to sneeze at. Legend does say he promised to wreak havoc on the world if he ever woke up."

"That's another possibility: maybe he was going around dreaming of havoc out loud after he became immortal. Maybe the story's been distorted over the years and that's the real reason Qetsiyah buried him. She saved the world."

Shane took a sip of his warm coffee. "You really like Qetsiyah."

"Well, you really like Silas."

"I can't help it. Most witches I've met are female. You don't hear of too many male witches."

"Well, it is a craft dominated by women. So, does Whitmore keep the Silas artifact on display?"

"Uh yes, in the museum."

That would make it a little hard for her to touch it. "Do you know who donated it?"

"I did."

She raised her brows. "You did. Wow, why did you do that?"

"Because it doesn't belong to me. It belongs to the world as a piece of history."

"So wait, how did you get Silas' tombstone if you've never been to his burial site?"

"I was married to a woman whose father was a very enthusiastic art collector. He'd acquired the tombstone, and he knew the history, and he knew how much I loved Silas, and so he gave it to me as a wedding present."

"Wow. Very nice."

It was actually the truth.

"So do you think it's a coincidence that the world's first modern tombstone came from the grave of a witch?"

He smiled. "Sometimes I wonder if the tombstone was involved in the stripping of his powers. That would mean I have something that Qetsiyah touched."
Bonnie didn't think that was anything to smile about. She now thought that that was very very possible. "That'd be pretty cool," she responded.

"Okay," Kim said as she came out of the master bedroom. "There's nothing in there. And his closet is weird."

"Why?" Tyler asked.

"There's nothing in there that sticks out. You know you have clothes in your closet that are clearly a mistake, or they're worn out, or they were obviously an impulse buy? Nothing in his closet sticks out. It's like he carefully picked out everything."

"I got dirty shoes in the bathroom" Adrian said. "Nothing else."

Tyler paused. "What are the chances that these very strong smells are masking something? When I was here with Bonnie, she was fine while in here, but she almost passed out as soon as we stepped outside. It was like the thing didn't kick into her system until she got out into the clean air."

"What could knock out a witch?" Kim asked.

"I don't know, but maybe there's some underlying smell, one that wasn't good for Bonnie."

"Maybe this room will tell us," Adrian said. He tried the lock and wasn't surprised to find it activated. He twisted the handle to break it. Nothing. So he rammed the door.

"Be careful," Tyler cautioned. "Remember what happened to me at the unit."

"Yeah," Adrian said and ran for the door again. And again. And again.

"It's not working," Kim said, his constant tries beginning to get on her nerves.

Tyler gave it one shot. "Nothing," he said.

"This is some freaking….fortified door," Adrian observed.

Tyler touched it. "How many doors in the world can withstand supernatural strength without so much as a dent?"

"None," Kim answered.

"Unless it is fortified," Tyler murmured. "Like with magic?"

"You're thinking he's a witch?" Adrian asked. "That makes whatever he had going on with Hailey, if he even had anything going on with Hayley, even more confusing. Unless he's the witch who was supposed to help us. She did say it was a he. Maybe she was telling the truth."

"About that part, maybe. But what, he told her to tell Klaus as part of his plan to help us?" Tyler questioned dubiously. "If he'd meant to help us, he wouldn't have acted like he didn't know me only to say my name in front of Bonnie. But if this guy is some kind of witch, then he needs to be kept away from Bonnie. Let's go."

Bonnie's phone alerted her to a text.

"Did you hear about those twelve people who died in Eden last night?" she asked Shane after she
read Tyler's text about leaving the apartment.

"Uh, yeah. One of my students sent it to me this morning. He titled it Spontaneous Combustion."

Bonnie shook her head and forced a smile. "It's really gruesome, though. Twelve people died in Mystic Falls a couple of months ago, too."

"I'd heard about that one. Pastor Young, one of the victims, was a colleague."

"Oh. I'm sorry."

"He'd come to me for guidance. His wife died two years ago, and he had weeks where it just….he couldn't bear it."

"You think it was a suicide? The report said a gas leak."

"No. I'm just commenting on the fact that he was a depressed man, and now he's…."

Bonnie nodded. She let the silence grow, during which time she felt progressively weaker. Then she said, "I think I should start on the road home."

"Yeah, sure." He got up as she did.

"Thank you for talking to us."

"Absolutely, no problem. With all of your questions, I look forward to having you in my class."

Bonnie smiled, and she raised her hand in a small wave goodbye, and she walked out of the cafe. The outside air felt crisp on her face, and the sun shined too bright. She sluggishly made her way to the car and set off.

She didn't get too far from the coffee shop before she was looking for somewhere to park. She made her way to a gas station and called Tyler.

"Hey," he answered.

"Hi. Have you left Whitmore yet?"

"No."

"Can you come pick me up? You can drive behind me, or we can leave my car. I just….I don't feel so good anymore, and I don't think I can make it by myself."

"Yeah. I'm with Kim and Adrian, so they can drive my car back. Where are you?"

They stayed on the phone until he pulled up two parking spaces away from her.

She got out of the car to meet him, and he cupped her face as soon as he reached her. "What's wrong? You're hot," he said.

"Yeah. I turned the A/C on, and it's barely helped. I feel weak and tired."

Adrian and Kim came up behind him, and he moved next to her and put his hand on the small of her back. "Uh, you guys were never formally introduced. You know Kim. This is Adrian."

Adrian nodded curtly.
"Oh, Adrian. The one who helped with the sword?"

Adrian nodded again.

"Thanks for that," Bonnie said with a small smile.

He smiled awkwardly.

"Alright, so you guys will follow us back to her place in my car," Tyler told them, and he handed Adrian the keys.

They nodded. When Tyler began to walk away with Bonnie, Kim smiled and called out, "Hey, Bonnie. You smell very nice." She turned her sweet smile onto Tyler.

"Thanks," Bonnie replied.

"Oh wow, yeah, you really do," Adrian added.

"Thanks," Bonnie said again, this time with a small frown. She folded her lips and turned to continue forward, but Tyler wasn't moving. He turned his attention to her at the same time that she looked up at him. He walked with her, but shot back, "Don't let Kim drive."

Kim laughed her way to the car, and Adrian grinned. When they got in, he said, "Did she look like she didn't like me just a little bit? It looked like she forced that smile."

"Well, you did kidnap her friend."

"I?"

"We."

"I feel like I should've said something else. Like when she asked if I was the one who helped get the sword, I should've said something like: hope it's coming in handy."

Kim stared at him with thin disgust. "I'm sure you did just fine, Adrian." She shook her head. "But geez, they smell strong."

"Werewolf bond," Adrian said playfully, and he started the car.

In Bonnie's car, Tyler pushed the driver's seat back to make his legs comfortable, and he adjusted the rearview mirror as well as the side mirrors. He didn't know what the hell Kim and Adrian smelled on him. Bonnie smelled great, but he hadn't realized that he gave off a smell, too. He knew werewolves gave off and picked up more pheromones than a regular person, thanks to Jules. So he knew that underneath Bonnie's light and nice-smelling body sprays, what he smelled more and more every time he inhaled her were her pheromones. He was positive that that was part of why her getting upset with him at the school had lingered in his mind. Her smell had slightly altered, and he'd picked up on it even though he hadn't been trying to smell her.

The phenomenon excited him because though he'd learned about it, he hadn't gotten to experience it with anyone other than his mother. She'd given off happy chemicals when he'd visited her at the hospital after he'd come back from Miami during sophomore year. After that, he'd died, and he hadn't smelled anything until the day he'd transitioned in front of her. Her alarm had shot through the roof. And that had been it. The rest of the time, he was with a vampire, who didn't produce biological chemicals (and that's how werewolves identified them), and Hybrids, who apparently fell under the same rule….except he'd picked up on Kim's panic at the school, and Kim said the others could smell
him, so maybe being in a pack changed that.

An
yways. He knew that smelling more of Bonnie without even trying only meant his attraction to her was growing. He liked her a lot.

"What was that about?" Bonnie asked after she fastened her seatbelt.

"I don't know," he answered, and he backed out of the lot.

Bonnie gave him a look that said that she didn't completely buy that, and she turned on the A/C.

"So, what did you find out that was worth this trip?" he asked when they got on the road. He checked the rearview mirror and saw his Buick behind them.

She recapped Damon's portion of the visit and mentioned Silas' tombstone.

"Okay, that's a lot. You think it's a coincidence that Shane owned the tombstone?" he asked.

"I'm not sure. Something feels off about him owning it. And I really think there's something to his idea that the tombstone played a part in Qetsiyah's spell. And that wasn't the only thing: I told him about Hayley dying."

"What'd he say?"

"Shane's a very curious guy. Especially when he's talking to me. He either has a lot of questions for me, or he's basically letting me know everything he knows about the supernatural world, especially witches. And he always offers to help. None of that was there when I told him about Hayley. He just accepted it, no questions, no wondering. Didn't even ask what she was, actually. But I've set up something. I put it out there that Klaus killed her. If something happens to Klaus, we'll have our answer."

"Wait….okay, so are we now thinking this guy's magical? Because that actually fits with what I found in his apartment."

"What'd you find?"

"That locked door? I couldn't get in it. Adrian rammed it and rammed it; I tried. Nothing, not even a dent. I'm thinking magic."

"Shane: a witch." She tried to picture it. He was just so curious; it was hard. He gave off complete outsider vibes.

"Hey, when you get home, I wanna smell that spirit incense thing that you have. You still have some, right?"

"Uh yeah, I did some a couple of days ago."

"You what?"

"It's something that you smell, and it gives you a little high, and I was feeling a little stressed, so I inhaled," she said with a little guilty smile.

"Bonnie, have you considered that that might've had something to do with you falling that day?"

"No. I've done it plenty of times before, and I've never fallen."
He conceded her point. "Are you buying this whole Silas is a God thing?"

"Maybe. Shane's right that the Guy is buried and has no power. But Damon might be right that some witch followers are trying to channel Him or something. I mean what could get 12 witches to kill themselves? That sounds like a sacrifice to me, like they're trying to accomplish something. And where the hell did that storm come from?"

"And why did it target Stefan and Klaus?" Tyler asked.

"I want to visit the site of the explosion tomorrow. Pastor Young's. Visiting Eden might not be a bad idea either, but I don't want to run into my mom and Lucy."

"I hope you're joking."

"Uh, no?"

"Was I making things up, or did you say you feel weak and tired?"

"Well now. But I wanna go tomorrow," she said with a smile.

"You think this is funny."

"Well, last I heard I was tempting, so a nice personality must fit in there somewhere."

"Bonnie," he chided.

"Ty, what? Hello, I'd like to introduce you to me. I'm Bonnie Bennett, the only witch in Mystic Falls."

"That sounds like an excuse. You should be resting."

"Whatever caused that storm lowered my powers. I think that's worth investigating."

"Yes, but..." he stumbled. He put both hands on the wheel and squeezed it.

"What?"

"I feel like you're not taking this seriously at all. You're supposed to be resting, but you drove to Whitmore, and now you wanna visit a used to be crime scene. And yeah, it's important, but what isn't? Seriously, can you tell me one thing that isn't?"

"They're all important," Bonnie said.

"Right," Tyler nodded. "Which means you have no idea when to rest."

"I wish you'd stop worrying about me resting," Bonnie said and put her elbow on the window sill.

"Worrying? Bonn-Resting isn't even half of it. Again, I feel like I was listening to the wrong phone call. I mean, is this just the denial period before you accept what your mom said?"

Bonnie dropped the arm on the window sill onto her thigh. "What, that I'm gonna die?"

"You say that like you don't believe it."

She made a face, and he caught it in his peripheral. "Are you kidding? Are witch visions not reliable or something?"
"Tyler, I'm going to be fine. Stop worrying."

The moment the word left her mouth, deva ju hit her. Jeremy. How many times had he worried sick about her? And now Tyler was saying the same thing, wanting her to slow down, worried about what might happen to her and what she was doing.

"Aren't you worried?" he asked.

She smiled, because he sounded so confused. He didn't understand how she couldn't be. It was her life on the line.

She looked ahead and said, "Look…I haven't worried about dying since," she took a deep breath as she thought back, "my grams died. I was worried about not making it without her. And the first time I bled, which happens when a witch pushes themselves past their limits, I thought: oh my God. This is it. This is how I walk in my grams' shoes. I was scared. But then I got all that power, and then I went up against Klaus, and he was ready for me, and he was ready to kill me, and I got scared again. But I wanted to keep going.

And as I cast that spell to slow my heart down so that I was all but dead, I thought to myself: who does this? Who keeps going? Who casts such a scary, hurtful spell on themselves? Why was this spell in Emily's Grimoire, and why did I remember it so clearly?

That was how my life flashed before my eyes: just a whole bunch of questions. And I haven't worried since. Ever since that night I slowed down my heart, I've only worried about other people's lives. They're the ones who die. Jeremy died right away," she said with a chuckle. "Elena keeps losing people. Caroline's father died. Caroline lost you. People die around me, or they almost die around me, and….and what I do is either save them or try to save them. I'm always involved.

When my mom died,"

She absent-mindedly tightened her hands together ground them against each other.

Tyler glanced at her when she didn't continue. "Bonnie."

She shook her head, tears blurring her vision. "I can't die, Tyler. Not when I have to worry about everyone else, and try to keep everyone else together. I can't die when I have to be alive to feel…..pain. So please stop worrying."

They rode to Mystic Falls in silence. Tyler was disturbed, and his worry skyrocketed. He'd seen sadness in her before, at the festival, but he had no idea that the same girl who'd pitied him for being okay with spending an unknown number of years possessed in concrete had such a bleak regard for her own life. She was supposed to be the one with hope in her future.

Bonnie sunk down, down, down into a funk. She felt lame and defunct. Tyler had expressed the same worry as Jeremy, pretty much parroted him. She didn't blame Tyler. She was the problem. It was how she lived, and she didn't know another way to do it, didn't want another way to do it. She couldn't just sit down, not with all of the powers she possessed, and everything did feel important.

So why was she wasting her time with Tyler? Flirting with him, cuddling with him, thinking about him, kissing him, teasing him? She had very important things to do. She could control her libido. Whatever problems he and Caroline had could be fixed. She didn't need to worm her way to him in the meantime as if…..as if she was built to do this.

She silently wiped her eyes for most of the trip back.
They pulled up to her house, and she got out as soon as he turned the car off.

He came around to her side and handed her the keys.

She took the keys and held her hands close to her body. "Thanks."

"No problem."

"Sorry that that turned into a navel-gazing soliloquy."

Tyler wished he didn't have to tell her that it was okay, but, "It's okay."

She nodded and was about to head for the house when he stopped her. "What time should I pick you up for the site visit tomorrow?"

She shook her head. "I-I-"

"Don't tell me not to come. And don't tell me you can do it alone. Fifty-fifty, remember? What time?"

She kept her face still and lifted her shoulders in a small shrug. "I'm not sure. I'll call you tomorrow."

Tyler caressed her cheek. "Get some rest."

Bonnie watched him walk to his car. She watched Adrian vacate the driver's seat so that he could take over, and she watched him drive off. She didn't need to argue with him. All she had to do was keep being herself: dive into every problem head first. And he will eventually get sick of it and leave.

Indulging her self-destructive mood, she went inside the house and straight to her room. She pulled the sword out and held it up with both hands. She closed her eyes and said, "Bring me the four swords. I command you."

She opened her eyes and hoped it worked.

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Things were quiet in Tyler's car for most of the drive back to his house. Kim and Adrian had watched the semi face-off between Tyler and Bonnie, and his face as he'd gotten in the car had told them that things had taken a turn on the ride back with. But neither Beta planned to ask.

"So what's up with this smell thing?" Tyler asked. "I know we give off pheromones, and I know we can pick them up, but what's up with my smell changing and matching Bonnie?"

"Sometimes it's a two-way street, especially if you're connected on an emotional level. This kind of connection is more potent when it's werewolf-werewolf instead of werewolf-human, but werewolf-witch might be a powerful mix, too," Kim answered.

"It'll get worse," Adrian added. "Or not, depending on what happens between you guys."

"By worse, he means stronger," Kim clarified with a look directed at Adrian in the rearview mirror.

Adrian smiled at her from the backseat. "Right. And it's only binding if you guys make it so. If the commitment is strong, then the bond is strong. If one person strays, then the bond is weak. If you choose to become a creepy stalker, then your bond to her will be strong, but it won't have the same perks as a mutual commitment."

"When you say bond, do you mean like what we had with Klaus, or is it like what can happen between two vampires?"
"Definitely not like the vampire one," Adrian answered, "Although with you being half vampire, it might be. That's something you'd have to see."

"This whole thing is new territory," Kim cut in. "If you'd told me two years ago that a werewolf could be a vampire, I would've laughed in your face and called you crazy. But not only is it possible, but you're an Alpha. And I'm in a pack again. Well, one that's not my family. And it feels like I'm more werewolf than vampire now, and... it kind of feels good. I've kind of missed it. You're definitely more werewolf than vampire. Your werewolf side had to be more dominant for you to become an Alpha in the first place."

"I did actually spend more time trying to be a werewolf for most of the past year, even though I wasn't trying to be a werewolf," Tyler realized. "I hate Klaus with everything I'm worth, and I guess that's a rejection of my vampire side, not just my bond to him. More than anything, though, I think it was me turning so often. Can't help but connect to the wolf when something like that's happening. And I'm picking up on things, and they're coming in stronger than they did when I was a regular wolf. Like, I can read Bonnie's emotions from what her body's giving off."

"You guys keep it up, and your body will copy hers," Adrian said. "That's why it's more like our sire bond with Klaus, and I guess that whole thing is influenced by his werewolf side-"

"Holy shit, you know what I just realized? Sorry, Adrian," Kim apologized. "But okay, the term sire bond got on my last nerve, because this whole time I've been thinking that we're werewolves. We're werewolves who were turned. Klaus is our leader, AKA, Alpha, and werewolves are not sired. We're bonded. Vampires are sired. But the way we're sired to Klaus is a mix of bonding and siring, though the asshole naturally uses the sire part more. We're bonded because we look out for his interest and care about what he wants even when he doesn't tell us to. But we're also sired because when he does tell us what he wants, we literally care about that above all else and we're driven to make what he wants happen, even without compulsion."

Tyler smiled at her realization. "I never realized that."

"Me neither," Adrian said.

Kim sat back, impressed with herself.

"I don't want a sire bond with Bonnie," Tyler said.

"You can't have one; you haven't turned her," Adrian said. "Then again, she's a witch, and that throws off everything I know. But if you have a werewolf bond with her, then whatever she's feeling will stay with you long after you've left her. What she's feeling will reach you long before you reach her, and both of those are Alpha perks, but they're perks you only enjoy if she returns your connection. If she feels it strong enough that her skin's emitting strong signals, then your skin will pick it up. In the strongest cases, like where two Alphas get together, you can influence her anatomy and biology, like how her body functions."

"Are you serious?" Tyler asked, heavily intrigued.

"Oh yeah. They're called primer pheromones, and they're all about physiology. I mean, you can't like make her have to go to the bathroom, or make her need to go to the bathroom go away, but you can do stuff like make her palms get sweaty, make her skin dry, increase arousal...."

"One of my super great grandmothers back in Columbia was an Alpha, and she controlled how heavy or light her period flowed. True story."
"Thanks, Kim," Adrian said.

"Grow up."

"There was an Alpha in my family line like a thousand years ago. He was Native American. And he got so pissed off at the White people who had settled nearby that he made three of the young dudes in the village sterile," Tyler shared.

Kim and Adrian stared at him in shock.

"It's literally written on a wall, so it's true. I didn't believe it at first," Tyler commiserated, "But with what you guys are saying...."

"That's insane," Kim said.

"That's fucking....mean," Adrian said.

Tyler laughed. "But serious question: can I stop being an Alpha?"

"No," Kim answered. "Alpha status is forever. You don't even need a pack to be an Alpha. We're not literal animals: people move, and they do what they want. Lone werewolves can be Alphas, too."

"So you want to be bonded with Bonnie?" Adrian fished. Kim looked at Tyler and waited for the answer.

Tyler smiled. "It doesn't sound like a bad idea."
Forced Sabbatical: Birthday Wish Come Early

Bonnie texted Tyler the next morning to tell him that her dad was leaving after 12. She pretended that she was more sick than she felt and opted out of going to church with him to help set up for the guest choir groups they were hosting on Sunday morning. She called Tyler as soon as he left.

She looked up online news articles that covered the explosion and texted herself the address of the farmhouse. They followed her phone's GPS to the location.

"Know what you're looking for?" Tyler asked as he drove across the expanse of green grass.

"Anything," Bonnie answered.

"Are you going to talk to April to see if what she said about Silas holds any water?"

"I thought about it, but I think I have to wait and see if anything else happens. Because right now there isn't anything I can say to her."

"This place is in the middle of nowhere. If you wanted to die and not have anyone find you…"

"This is the perfect place," Bonnie murmured. "The official cause of the accident is just that: it was an accident caused by a gas leak. April thinks he was murdered. But no one's said anything about him choosing to die."

"I can talk to Sheriff Forbes," he volunteered.

"That'd be good. She'll probably lie to you, especially if it's Council business, but it's worth a try."

"I'd sneak in there and take a look at the file, but I have no clue where they keep it."

They finally pulled up to what was left of the house. They got out of the car and observed the damaged structure.

"It's extra quiet out here," Tyler observed. "Pastor Young prayed for me at my 12th birthday," he shared when they started toward the house.

"Really?"

"Yeah. I thought it was weird. There's nothing special about turning 12. He also christened me when I was a baby."

"That's cute. I went to his church like twice with Elena and her family. I liked it because it ended early. I didn't like it because it started early. And it's not as alive as my church."

Tyler smiled. He's been to her church maybe four times. It was part of his father's image as a community man. He had never sat with her, though he'd looked at her with a pained expression plenty of times which made her smile at times and at other times roll her eyes.

Bonnie walked up to the porch and used her telekinesis to take off the three logs of wood that crisscrossed in front of the door. She turned the handle, and they stepped inside. The front room looked fine, the living room not so much.

She heard a lock slide into place and stopped. She looked back at Tyler, who prompted her with his eyes. It didn't look like he had heard anything. She kept quiet and moved forward. And then she
heard whispering. They didn't sound like the ones at the witches' house. These whispers questioned; they questioned everything.

"Bonnie, is something happening?" Tyler asked.

"Seriously, Pastor, what's going on here?"

She followed the voice and headed to the kitchen. When she pushed the door open, she was shoved out, and she flew back into Tyler.

"Get out!" a distorted voice boomed throughout the house.

"Holy shit," Tyler exclaimed when he saw the chalk-white ghost with a face that swirled into itself. "What the hell is that?" He got out from under Bonnie and ran to the kitchen.

"It's Pastor Young. Tyler, wait!" She got up and ran after him.

Tyler entered the sooty kitchen and saw nothing. Bonnie ran in and stopped in front of the stove when she heard a lighter flick open. She gasped and covered herself on Tyler's chest when the kitchen exploded, and the fire rushed to engulf her.

Tyler cradled her and asked, "What's wrong?" He held her at arm's length and asked, "What's happening?"

"There's a lot of energy here," she said, her voice high from shock. "The people who died: they didn't know they were going to die; they didn't know what was happening."

The stove suddenly detached from the wall and propelled forward. Tyler quickly grabbed Bonnie with one hand and spun her out of the way. He immediately picked her up and sped them out of the house. He stopped a couple of feet from the house and crouched to the ground with her in his arms. They both looked back at the house.

"I think he just tried to kill you," Tyler said.

Bonnie put a hand to her nose, and then she swatted her nose.

"What is it?"

"I'm smelling gasoline," she panicked.

Without a word, he picked her up and ran her further away from the house. He set her down on the grass and waited for her to say something.

"It's gone," she said.

"Think Pastor Young knew he was gonna die?" he asked, already knowing the answer.

Bonnie started to stand, and he helped her the rest of the way. "I think there's something in the house that he doesn't want us to see or know. Something about what happened."

She headed for the house and stopped when she reached Tyler's car. She turned to him and asked, "Are you okay?"

"Yeah. Are you?"

"Fine."
"I didn't know I could see ghosts."

She smiled. "I didn't know you could either. Must be the wolf, maybe even the Hybrid. But Pastor Young doesn't look like any ghost I've ever seen. His face is a blob." She turned to the house and said, "Okay. So this was not an accident. I'd go back in, but I don't want to test my luck with that stove. But why is Pastor Young still here?"

"What do you mean?"

"When people die, their spirit moves on. They go to the OtherSide, which is like limbo, and from there they either find peace, or….well, I'm not sure what happens if they don't find peace. But they don't haunt houses." She adjusted her bra strap. "The witches in the house stay, but that's their choice. They can leave when they want. But it's also this thing about how they died that keeps them coming back. There was so much pain."

"Like the confusion here?" Tyler asked. "Do you think the others are here, or is it just him?"

"I don't know. I can't sense them, just how they felt right before they died. They trusted him," she said as she looked at the house.

"So Pastor Young knew what was going on. He can't be confused; he planned the whole thing. So why is he still here?"

Bonnie thought on it. "Either he's waiting on something, or something went wrong and now he's stuck. Or maybe this is punishment for him taking those other lives. Maybe he didn't want to die alone. There are a lot of options."

"We can narrow them down by going to Eden, but considering what happened here, I don't know if visiting the site where 12 witches died is a good idea."

Bonnie turned to him. "I think we can go now."

He nodded. "I didn't get a chance to smell that incense yesterday. Can I do it when we get back to your house?"

She crossed her arms. "What are you looking for?"

"I want to see if it's similar to anything from Shane's apartment."

"Okay."

When they got ready to leave, he opened the car door for her. He'd done it at the house, too. Bonnie casted the gesture out of her memory.

They drove back with the radio playing, Tyler's choice. He asked her if she wanted to choose something, and she said no. She kept her arms crossed the whole ride back.

When they got to her house, she took him straight to her room. She pulled out the last two sticks of incense as well as the red candle lighter she used.

"We should talk about yesterday," Tyler said.

"Uh, you're here to smell this incense."

"Before I do that, I want to talk about yesterday."
Bonnie pushed the button on the lighter and tried to get a flame to stay.

Tyler took them items out of her hands and put them on the bed.

"Tyler," she protested tiredly.

"I realize that if I don't bring it up, you won't."

"That's because there's nothing to bring up."

"The stuff you said yesterday-"

"Are none of your concern. It's not your business."

"Aren't we friends? Are we not friends? Tell me, and before you do I want you to really think about what you'd be saying."

Bonnie bit the inside of her cheek. She couldn't bring herself to say it. She couldn't bring herself to be that callous.

"That stuff you said yesterday: it was deep. And it's kind of weird to think it came from the same person who was telling me I should live my life."

"Yeah well," Bonnie said, staring at the red wood floor, "There's you, and then there's me. And you don't need to worry about me. You need to go back to what your life was, and I'm not talking about the supernatural stuff. You have a girlfriend who's waiting for you to show back up. Go back to Caroline, Tyler, and stop worrying about what's going to happen to me."

"Bonnie-"

"Tyler, you were ready to have Klaus possess your body and bury yourself in concrete! The last thing you need anywhere in your life is someone like me."

"So, what, I'm the hopeful case, and you're the lost cause?"

"I still haven't voted for the prom theme."

"...What?"

"I still....haven't....voted....for the prom theme."

"So? Neither have I."

"But I summoned the other four swords to me yesterday."

Tyler felt like someone just tripped him. "You're really not gonna take a break, are you?"

"I'm slowing down as much as I can, considering I don't have my full powers."

"Okay great," he said and put his hands in his jean pockets. "So, where are they?"

"They're not here yet, and I don't even know if they'll come, but I figure since that one keeps following me, I might as well just....call the other ones. And once I have them, if I get them, I can move forward with trying to find the cure."

Tyler nodded, and she smiled. "This is what I do, Tyler. This is what....I'm good at. Every time. I
mean, my God, that senior assembly happened how long ago? It feels like two months. And I still haven't voted. But I've easily found time to drive two hours to Whitmore to go question a professor one day after all the pain in the world exploded inside my head; I've summoned four dead Hunters' swords, and I even visited an explosion site today where a ghost tried to kill me with a stove. I wouldn't be surprised if they've already selected a theme and I just haven't heard."

"They haven't."

"Because no matter how many times I feel like being normal and paying attention to the high school stuff I always assumed I'd be paying attention to in my senior year, a million magical problems always show up. And it's always so much easier to take care of them than it is to hold on to the normal stuff. And we can't do this, Tyler. We can't both not vote for our prom theme. Caroline...she's good at this stuff. She manages it just fine. She's normal. She does it so easy. And that's what you need, from a friend and whatever else. Stop hanging out with me and coming with me to places and asking questions.

We're working together, but that doesn't mean you need to go with me everywhere. We deserve normal. And you've got someone who excels at normal. Don't you have enough shit in your life? Because no matter how many times I wish for things to slow down, and no matter how often I picture normal in my head, I turn my back from it the first chance I get. Because I can't balance it! I can't prioritize! To me, prioritizing means: which magical problem can I fix first, and I never really do first, second, third, I do a little of each, all at the same time. I can't talk to you or do any of the stupid things we've been doing. And that's me, and it's a freaking lost cause, but I promise you there's more to come, because this is not the first time I've had this conversation, and it's not the first time I've gotten that look!"

"What look?" Tyler asked.

"The one you gave me yesterday in the car, the one where you were clearly wondering why I couldn't understand the danger and felt sorry for me."

"I did feel for sorry for you, but that's not a bad thing. Let me ask you a question, Bonnie. Those lives that you save or don't save, after you save or don't save them….what happens?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean….do you go to the funerals? Do you go to the celebrations? Do you talk to the people left behind?"

She thought back. "I went to the Klaus is desiccated celebration. And I went to John and Jenna's funerals. I went to Alaric's vigil. I put together this potion from my mom's Grimoire to try and keep the darkness out of him, but Esther had too strong a hold on him."

"How did all of those feel?"

She frowned and shook her head. "I have no idea what you're asking."

"I'm asking exactly what it sounds like I'm asking. Were you happy at the celebration? Were you relieved that Klaus was desiccated? Cause I was fucking relieved. Bastard's immobile? Starving forever? I was ready to toast all night."

"Toast to what, my mother was dead-" she snapped, but she cut herself off.

"And Jenna's funeral?"
"I was sad for Jeremy. I kept thinking about where Klaus was and everything that I should've done better, that I should've listened to my instincts and gone through with my plan, and….a lot was going on. Those moments….they're never mine, Tyler. Ever. I'm always just….there. Not even my mother's death could be mine."

She wearily walked to her bed and sat down. "The world didn't stop for that. A million things were still happening."

Tyler moved the incense and lighter up the bed and sat down next to her. "What was it like? When your mom died."

"It was the worst week….of my life. I just….I disappeared. At some point I just had to disappear, because I just couldn't handle….those million things. I was shocked; I….I just stopped existing. I felt like I was….nothing." She closed her eyes when she teared up. "I trusted these people. Not with anything important, like….but it was something basic. We're supposed to look out for each other. I thought it was implied." She wiped her eyes.

Tyler pulled her to him, but she resisted. "Please stop."

"Bonnie-"

"No, Tyler."

"Why not?"

"Because why? Doormat, remember?"

"Please stop going back to that," he begged. Long tears rolled down her face, and he felt his own tears spill just above his eyelashes.

"Why? Can you think of a better way to describe it? It's perfect. Because that's exactly what I was. Only I would be wrong about something like the safety of my life. Only I would think safety's implied when I can't even think of a single reason right now why I thought that."

"Because you looked out for them. They always came to you. Of course it made sense for you to think it was mutual. The only reason you were wrong is because….they're fucking abominations."

Bonnie wiped her eyes, and she fixed her voice to say, "Stefan looked me in my face, and I saw that he'd thought about killing me. And you know what I did after that? I went back. I went back. I even invited him into my house, and all he did was ask. I'm not who you think I am, Tyler."

"And who's that?"

"Someone with sense? Someone who cares about their own life, someone who knows how to. I was….I was taken apart that week, and it got worse the next one when Klaus kidnapped me, and then…..and then everyone found something happy to be about. Klaus was desiccated. And I stood there and I toasted, too, while on the inside….on the inside I was still looking at my mom's body on that floor, and I was still waiting for her to wake up, and I was still trying to figure out how I almost lost my life. You see me casting these spells, and you see me helping you, and you just assume that I'm…..but truthfully…."

I'm not afraid of dying because that night, more than any other night...." she shook her head, not knowing how to finish it.

Tyler wiped his eyes. "I think you're brave. I'm serious," he said when she rolled her eyes. "I think
you're smart. I think you're hurt, because you haven't dealt with your mom's death and because the Salvatore's, including Elena, are assholes."

"I've dealt with my mom's death. What I still don't get is….the reaction to it. You asked me what I felt when those people died. I felt like I was in the background. I tried hard to save them, but in the end I was in the backround of their death. When my mom died, I still felt like I was in the backround. Which makes no sense, because it's everyone else who should've felt like they were in the background, right? But no, when I got around them, they kept on living. They made toasts."

Tyler remembered that after Caroline had come back from spending the weekend with Bonnie and her mom, she'd said that Bonnie was doing as well as she could, and that was the last she'd brought it up.

"I think you've been around too many deaths, Bonnie. I think….I think that when they die, you don't get the condolence you deserve, and when they live, you don't get the congratulations you deserve. I think you do all the work and don't share in any of the rewards, good or bad."

Bonnie nodded and broke out in fresh tears. That was a feeling she hadn't been able to articulate. She didn't resist this time when he pulled her to his chest. She laid her head against his neck and said, "You have got to stop doing that."

"What?" he asked as he wrapped his other arm around her.

"Hugging me."

"Doesn't it feel good?"

She smiled and closed her eyes and wrapped her arms around his torso.

Tyler sniffed. "I'm not like you, Bonnie. People don't flock to me. I don't have a whole lot of people that I care about, and I don't have a group that relies on me for answers. When I care about someone, I'm all in. I care about what happens to them; I care about what they want; I care about how they're feeling. I care about you. And I need that to matter to you. I need you to let that in and not get impatient with me or your mom or Lucy just because you don't think there's any reason for us to worry, and we disagree. Remember when you said you didn't want me buried alive because then you'd miss me? Well," he continued after she nodded. "If you can't connect to anything, connect to that. I feel the same way about you. At least you'd get to see me in a couple of years. At least I'd still be alive. If you die, I won't be able to see you anymore, and I really like seeing you."

Bonnie sniffed and straightened herself.

"I want you to look forward to something," Tyler continued. "Just like you asked me to. Look forward to anything. What do you want?"

"I want….to graduate and go to college," she said with a half-hearted shrug.

"That sounds really generic."

She sniffed. "I want….to cure my mom. I want to give her her life back. I want...to fix the past so that it stops sticking to me. I want her to be alive and a witch again so that what I felt that week and a half can just be a very bad experience and not something that changed my life forever. I want to get away with fixing something that happened to me."

Tyler took her close and stroked the bone behind the bottom of her ear. "I want that for you, too."
She stayed in her position until her eyes dried behind closed lids and he'd started laying soft kisses on her head. "They do feel good," she admitted. "Your hugs."

Tyler smiled on her head. "Good. Cause I like giving them to you. You know my girlfriend who's so good at being normal? Sometimes it's overwhelming. It's gotten more and more overwhelming, actually. Sometimes I do want to forget to vote for prom theme or shop for that dance, or...."

Bonnie straightened to look at him.

"In the beginning, I liked it because her happiness gave me hope. It was a reminder of something good in my life. But then the worse things got, the more I just did it for her, because she expected nothing different, not because I got anything out of it. Sometimes it was really hard to go be happy and surrounded by all those people. Like the bonfire party at the beginning of school? God, I just wanted to be home. I was still out of it from being possessed by Klaus. And the day I got shot at Pastor Young's memorial, she texted me to tell me that Stefan was putting together a vigil for everyone that we'd lost and she'd mention my uncle and my dad for me. I'm glad now that I was still laid up at the hospital, 'cause I'm pretty sure none of you actually gave a shit."

"Jeremy called me. I went," Bonnie shared glumly.

Tyler smiled. "I know what I want, Bonnie. And it's not to stop by the voting tables to choose a theme while you're off summoning 900-year-old swords. Although, we should go vote."

"We should," Bonnie agreed. "And we should go shopping for our 80s outfits."

"And I had no idea you could ramble like that," he said and swiped his thumb across her cheek.

Bonnie smiled. "I'm not saying I'm terrified of dying now, but....I promise to try what you said. I'm not used to a bunch of people telling me they're worried, and I think it got overwhelming. But I promise to be a little more sensitive to what you guys want."

"And I promise to give you your magical space," Tyler said. "I know you think you can do it, Bonnie. What I worry about is that you're not looking out for the instances when you can't. And that'll just lead to you getting hurt."

"I don't look out for those instances. I haven't for a long time. You don't know how pressing these things can get, how insistent Damon and Stefan can be."

"Well, I promise to keep my mouth shut when you're doing something I don't like right off the bat." When she looked lost, he elaborated, "At school, like two mornings ago? The Jeremy-sword thing?"

"Oh. Yeah. Think you can keep that promise?"

He smiled. "I think I can. I do trust you, Bonnie. And I do know you have a stake in this, too. I just hate anyone outside of us having even an idea of what's going on, and it scares me every time someone else gets too close. But that's no reason to take it out on you."

"It isn't." She smiled.

"You know, when Caroline called me that morning to tell me Hayley was dead, I didn't for a second think you were the one who told her. I mean she said it was Klaus who told her, but in that quick second before she did: I didn't think at all that it was you. I trust you."

Bonnie smiled. "She talked to me about it that morning after class. She asked me if I'd heard, told me she was helping you deal with it."
"Uh, hold on. That morning?"

"Yeah."

Tyler shook his head, finally understanding. "No wonder she got in my face at lunch. She was pissed at me for telling you before I told her."

Bonnie cringed. "Oh."

"She only told you because she was fishing, wanted to know why I wasn't going to her first."

"Oh." She put her hands between her thighs and adjusted her position on the bed. Relationship drama. "Why aren't you going to her first? I'm sorry, but this feels bigger than her telling Stefan about your plan to kill Klaus. I know that was dangerous, but it just feels like…you've been mad at her a little too long."

"I'm not even mad at her anymore. Well, not unless it gets brought up. Because I feel like she still doesn't get the big deal. Do you know how Jeremy became a Hunter?"

"He killed a Hybrid."

"That's right. Someone that I knew. Someone that I was trying to save. And it's because Caroline brought Stefan to me because he needed help, and I….I gave him Chris. Chris got him what he needed. And once he had that….he served him up to Klaus, sold him out for doing the very thing that helped him get to Elena in the first place. It happened in my house. Chris was free, about to run." He twisted his lips at the memory.

"Klaus came and acted like he was going to let him go. As soon as he opened the door….Stefan stuck a stake in him. And Jeremy came in and beheaded him."

Bonnie stared at him, mouth agape.

"The next morning? Caroline showed up, and the first thing out of her mouth was: we didn't have a choice. Not, sorry. Not, are you doing okay? We didn't have a choice. Because we were trying to save Elena, when, from where I was sitting, there hasn't been a we since sophomore year. I told her Chris was my friend. And she was actually going to say that Chris wasn't a friend. It was almost out of her mouth; she would've said it if I hadn't interrupted her. That's what scares the hell out of me about her knowing. You're right, it's bigger than her telling Stefan about my plan. The last time she involved Stefan, one of my friends died. Chris didn't even want to help at first. I convinced him." He closed his eyes.

Bonnie wrapped her arms around his arm and leaned into him. "I'm sorry. I called Jeremy after, and he told me he killed one of Klaus' Hybrids. He didn't mention where or that you were there."

"Why would he? Like I said, there hasn't been a we in a long time. And even if he had told you I was there, it wouldn't have meant anything to you, not back then. I don't think he even knew what Chris meant to me. But Caroline and I are a we. We're supposed to be. And I don't trust her anymore. Everything about her reaction to Chris said….that she didn't get it. And she still doesn't get it, because she still thinks it's feasible for me to just wait to kill Klaus. After all the time she's spent with me dealing with this stuff….she doesn't get it. I convinced the others to go after Klaus. If we wait, and they lose their lives, it's on me. It'll be because of my idiot plan."

"It's not an idiot plan," Bonnie said, and she raised the back of her knuckles to stroke his cheek. It was weird to think about how right he was, that just a couple of months ago she could've been told that Tyler's friend had died and she would've said the appropriate words and moved on, not even talk
to him about it. Now she hurt for him.

"I wanted to pummel Jeremy for what he'd done," Tyler confessed. "But then I realized that it wasn't
him. It was Klaus, and Stefan, and Caroline. Klaus was…himself. Stefan used Chris. And Caroline
didn't get that she was supposed to give a shit. Klaus agreed to Chris' death for a cheap date with her.
She wants to be trusted now, but I can't do that when she won't get the problem. She keeps bringing
up the fact that she told Stefan, which just tells me she's long forgotten about Chris. I haven't."

Bonnie opened her arms and pulled him into a hug. He put his forehead on her shoulder and relaxed.

"Okay, so we're gonna make a surprise," Tyler declared after they made their way down to the
kitchen. He hung his jacket on the back of one of the chairs that was around the breakfast table and
headed for the fridge. "And we're calling it a surprise because we have no idea what we're gonna
make."

Bonnie sat down at the table and propped her chin on her hand. He'd asked her if she was hungry,
and she'd told him that she was starving. He was, too.

"You know how to cook?" she asked.

"Not a five-course meal, though I could probably do that with instructions. But my mom and I cook
sometimes."

"Your mom knows how to cook?" she asked with a touch of disbelief.

"Yeah, but always late at night. I asked her why once, and she said it's because that's when she feels
the most together. I'm talking late, like one in the morning. Can you cook?"

"Yeah. My dad taught me. He didn't want me to only eat frozen stuff while he was gone."

He smiled. "Okay, so I wanted to do that thing where you throw together whatever's left in your
fridge, but yours is fully stocked."

"My dad's gonna go out of town. He wants to make sure I survive."

He smiled. "So you're gonna be home alone?" he asked from inside the safety of the fridge.

"Yeah. He's actually reluctant to go, because he knows I've been hiding a lot from him lately. It's
actually nice to hear."

He popped up from the fridge. "I should promise him I'll look after you. He wanted to know what
happened the day before yesterday, and I wouldn't tell him. He didn't like that one bit."

She smiled. "And also you've been here a whole lot. He's noticed. I should go to your house
sometime, even though I know that's impossible because Klaus might show up. Or Caroline. But
you're always at mine."

"You coming over sounds really nice," he said as he opened the lightweight carton of eggs to see
how many were left. He looked up and found her smiling. She lowered her eyes.

"We still have the cave," she said.

"Oh, that's right," he said slowly, making it clear that he was only pretending to have forgotten. "So
is that a yes, finally?"
Bonnie lifted her shoulders in a slow shrug.

Tyler shook his head and put the egg carton back. "Okay so, let's do….a fruity….pasta surprise."

"That sounds weird."

"We'll find out." He took out the container of diced pineapples and began to gather the ingredients on the small kitchen bar that connected to the living room.

Bonnie made no move to help. She didn't feel like he needed her to. She sat back and enjoyed the view of him working in her kitchen, his slender hands moving, the movement of the muscles in his neck as he concentrated, his ass every time he walked to the stove, his beautiful pelvis every time he walked to the bar, his lips when he licked it, his back every time he walked to the stove, his gorgeous dark brown eyes whenever he looked up at her and saw her watching him. She relaxed completely.

And the fruity pasta surprise was surprisingly delicious, though she had to add more salt to hers.

After lunch, they went back up to her room, and she lit the incense for him.

Bonnie put it under her nose and inhaled deeply. "It's very mild," she said. "Like, it never fills the room. You have to inhale it." She handed him the stick.

Tyler copied her and brought it his nose and inhaled. He quickly took it away and put his hand to his nose. He sniffed it again and reacted the same way.

"What is it?"

"It doesn't smell right."

Suddenly, he went blind, and his vampire fangs descended. He balked at the unexpected reaction. He tried to retract his fangs and found that he couldn't.

"What's wrong?" Bonnie asked when she saw him struggling.

"I can't change back." He continued to try and continued to fail.

Bonnie took the incense from him. "Is it an allergic reaction?"

"Allergic reaction? I'm a Hybrid."

"But it's magic," Bonnie said and then realized what she'd said. She knew that the incense was composed of a mélange of calmative herbs, but calling it magic now somehow felt….right. She looked at Tyler and registered his alarm. "What is it?"

"I don't think I'm a werewolf anymore."

"What?"

"It's something that I feel, and I can't feel it anymore." He tried to produce his canines and couldn't.

"My eyes, what color are they?"

"Uh, they're red and bloodshot."

"They're supposed to be bloodshot red, gold, and black."
"Okay, don't panic. It's probably temporary, like my lost powers. It's probably subdued; I mean that's what this incense is supposed to do: calm you down and act like a sedative, so it's probably subdued your werewolf half because....That's the part of you that's alive."

Tyler considered the possibility. He absolutely did not want to be a full vampire. He's been feeling very very good since he became an Alpha. And while his lycanthropy had been a pain in the ass back when it was the only thing he was, he didn't want it completely erased from his make up for the same reason that he didn't want to take the cure. But he hadn't considered that there was a part of him that was alive. His heart hasn't beat normally since he died. But it made sense that he was somehow more alive now; he was more werewolf, like Adrian and Kim had deduced, and werewolves were the moon's children, like Hayley had once said. He needed to be more alive than undead to function at all as an Alpha.

He calmed himself down, and he and Bonnie sat on her bed and waited for this to prove itself temporary. He couldn't close his mouth completely because of his fangs, and his eyes were a veiny mess when he touched them.

"This is great," he complained. "This is such a good look."

Bonnie folded her lips to reign in her smile. "You're a pouting vampire. It's pretty adorable."

"You know I can't see when I'm like this? Vampires can't see when we're like this. It's just smell and sound; the smell of panic and fear coming off a warm body and the sound of a beating heart and the blood rushing. Our senses are at their strongest when we're vamped out. It's why we have the face out every time we fight. The blindness freaks me out, which is why I always bring both sets of teeth out."

"Caroline told me that once," Bonnie said.

"If this takes away my wolf, what does it do to you? It can't just calm you down; you're more alive than I am."

"I want to say that you're just having a reaction because it wasn't meant for you, but....that doesn't sound right. This isn't supposed to be magic, not unless it was made by a witch. And Shane did say he got the recipe from a witch, but....I don't know. My powers have been fine."

"I don't think you should take it anymore. Something really doesn't feel right to me about Shane's setup."

Bonnie nodded. She got up and put the incense on a green ceramic plate she'd been keeping for when she burned them, and she placed it on the toilet in the bathroom. What she wanted more than anything where Shane was concerned was to get her hands on that tombstone.

When she came out, Tyler was sitting with his hands between his thighs and looked like a kicked puppy. Or in this case: a kicked monster. She smiled sympathetically and reclaimed her seat next to him.

"I've never been this close to a vamped out face before. Can I touch it?" she asked when he looked at her.

He nodded, somehow nervous about her scrutinizing him.

Bonnie started with his eyes, her touch soft. The veins felt just like they looked: strong and just a little mushy because of the liquid underneath. She ran her fingers between every small groove. She trailed her fingers down his left cheek and made her way to his fangs. They were a nice white and
sturdy. Tyler opened his mouth, and she touched one tip, and it wasn't extremely sharp like she expected.

Tyler kept his eyes on her riveted face, and for the first time he wondered if she would like being bitten. For the first time, he thought about biting her. As a Hybrid, he didn't have an *urge* for blood, though nurture made him think of food whenever he saw it. But generally, he didn't *crave* blood. He simply got hungry. But with Bonnie sitting this close to his exposed fans, he very much had a physical reaction to the thought of piercing her skin and drinking her blood. The sounds she would make.

"Can you smell me right now?" Bonnie asked quietly.

"Yes."

"How do I smell?"

"Really good," he answered and leaned his nose toward her to get more. "You smell warm and alive, and your heartbeat is strong. It just skipped. And it skipped again," he said with a smile.

Bonnie smiled back. She liked his vampire face. "Can you feel me smiling?"

"I can hear it in your voice. My sense of smell is miles better as a Hybrid. I pick up a whole lot more. This is just about survival and finding food."

His body warmed just then, and his fangs retracted, and his vision came back. And she was a lot closer to his face than she'd sounded.

"See? All clear," she said.

Tyler still made sure that everything was in working order. He protruded his canines. Then his fangs. Then his canines again, and he growled. He called his fangs while his canines were still out, and he growled louder.

The savage sound made Bonnie's heart jump. She squeezed her thighs together.

Tyler retracted everything.

"How do you see when you only have your canines out?"

"In red. It was grey before I became an Alpha. It's all about sight, heat, smells, and sounds."

Bonnie nodded. "It's nice. I like it. A lot."

Tyler licked his lips, pleased with the result of her scrutiny.

Bonnie stood and walked to the right to stand in front of her full body mirror. She cradled her neck in both hands and examined her face. She looked to the right in the mirror and saw him lower his eyes. He'd been looking at her.

She smiled and looked at herself again. He was in her bedroom, and it had been an emotional two days, and she'd just seen him cry because she was crying, and he'd cooked her lunch. And the afternoon stretched out in front of them still. It had been three o'clock when they'd left the kitchen, and her father was not supposed to come back until around five. She didn't feel like letting Tyler walk out.

"What would you do if I took all my clothes off right now?" she asked, her eyes still trained on her
Tyler took a moment and then looked at her. "Whatever you want me to do."

She turned and locked eyes with him. She walked to stand in front of him. "Do you still want to have sex with me, Tyler?"

"Yes," he said, injecting a little too much force into the syllable.

Bonnie smiled and took off her boots and socks. She reached for the hem of her long-sleeved tunic and brought it over her head. Her pants went next, and her eyes stayed on Tyler for the trance-like attention he paid to every part of her she revealed. He’d probably forgotten she even had a face.

She put down the straps of her bra one at a time and slowly pulled down the cups, and she watched one of his legs twitch. She turned the bra around and undid the clasp and dropped it on her left. She bit the inside of the bottom of her lip as she got to the moment of truth. All of her frustration and fantasies and vaginal protests. She was ready to satiate them all.

She hooked her thumbs into the waistband of her panties and slipped them down. She leaned forward to delicately take them off one foot at a time.

"Tyler?" she called him.

He licked his lips and stole his gaze from her hair-spackled mound to look at her eyes.

"Okay."

Tyler reached her in three steps. He grabbed her pussy lips with one hand, and she gasped, and he cradled her head with the other and took her mouth.

Bonnie hooked her arms around his neck and pressed breasts against him. When he reached for her tongue, she gave it to him right away. He stroked her hair and tugged on her pussy lips. He stretched them out as far as they could go, and she had a lot to give. Her skinny build didn't go down to her labia. They were puffy and just a little wet. He rubbed them against each other, and Bonnie could've danced for finally having his hand right where she'd been aching for it for two months.

Tyler ended the kiss and walked to the bed, gently pulling her close behind him by her labia.

Forget whatever she wanted, Bonnie was officially ready to give him whatever he wanted, any way he wanted, and for however long he wanted it, because that was the hottest thing that had ever happened to her. She stared at him ravenously when he turned and sat on the bed. He let her pussy go. He looked up at her, and he looked so serious, and she grinned, so very ready for what his eyes promised her. He pulled her forward by her thighs, and she lifted her right leg onto the bed, and Tyler really liked that she didn't hesitate. He took a hearty whiff of her pussy, and the intoxicating scent was committed to his memory. She had a strong smell, one that made his skin alert and set everything in him ablaze.

He licked her pussy, ate her out, dined on her cunt, and she was generous with her appreciation, sighing and uttering short, broken sounds, something he didn't expect. He held her ass tight when she started to hump his face, wanting her to keep going but not wanting her to throw off his connection to her pussy. Bonnie held his head and bounced on her one leg. She shook her thigh and bent her knee and did every maneuver on that one leg to help her withstand the growing pleasure. His tongue was wet and insistent on her pussy, and she held his head with both hands now, first playing in his hair, but pushing his head into her cunt by the time she came.
"Shit, oh my God," she whined as she orgasmed. She gasped and bent over his head when another wave hit her particularly hard.

After she shook for the last time, she put her hands on his shoulders and pushed away. She backed up and doubled over smiling. "Oh my God." It came out like a moan, and she put a hand between her legs and squeezed her labia together in the manner that he'd done before. "Wow."

Tyler smiled and licked her off his lips. Intoxicating. He sank to his knees and crawled on his hands to get to her. He kissed his way up from her left knee, and he kissed the V of her pelvis. He kissed her belly button, and then he lifted her left leg onto his shoulder.

Bonnie held fast to his head so that she didn't go falling back. She heard him breathe in, and she looked down in time to see him close his mouth around her cunt. She lifted her head and closed her eyes. She eventually had to stand on her toes, lest her thigh falls asleep on his shoulder.

She was a lot more vocal as he licked a second orgasm out of her clit, yeses and oos and aaahs tumbling out of her mouth. She humped his mouth and curled her body toward him again when she came.

He kissed and licked her mound while she caught her breath. Bonnie swung her thigh off his shoulder, and he removed a stray pubic hair that had stolen its way into his mouth. He wiped his mouth and picked her up when he stood, and Bonnie smiled, excited. He deposited her on the bed and stripped. She gave him the same attention he'd given her. Her excitement gained traction when he took off his briefs and his meaty dick was freed. She slid to the edge of the bed and grabbed it by the shaft. Her hold was firm, like she handled his dick on the regular, and the confidence in her grip appealed to Tyler's ego as well as his territorial nature. He wanted her to be confident with him; he wanted her to touch him, hold him, grab him like he was hers. He wanted to be the one she thought of and turned to when she wanted to be satisfied.

Bonnie turned her touch soft and ran her fingers up and down his dick. She grabbed him again and decided that she loved the way he fit in her hand, loved the way his hardness felt. She liked it, so she put it in her mouth. She fixed herself so that both of her feet were on the floor, and she never took his dick out. Tyler subconsciously puffed out his chest and watched her polish his dome. She sucked him in bit by bit until she was comfortably bobbing up and down. She kept one hand on his dick and the other held his thigh for balance.

Her mouth was hot, her lips firm against his skin, her tongue pressed flat against him at times and at times it gave him small licks. He placed one hand on her head and the other on her arm, because he needed to touch her. He tucked her hair behind her ear and watched. He loved getting head, better if it was good head. There was just something about watching a girl dedicate a portion of her time on one, just one, part of him. And it was no different with Bonnie. He knew now how dedicated she was to the things she gave her time to, helping him, helping Shane, helping her mother, kissing, helping Kim, helping the others. She wore dedication like a second skin, and now that second skin was wetting his dick, and he started to moan from the deliciously constant stimulation.

Bonnie was licking her way up his tool when she heard a car door slam shut. Her heart froze in her chest.

"What?" Tyler asked with a frown.

"I heard something." She quickly got up and went to the window. She put a knee on the white wicker chair she kept in front of it and moved the sheer tan curtains an inch apart so that she could see the front of her house. She sighed in relief. "False alarm."
Tyler let out his laughter.

"What?" she asked as she got off the chair.

"Your face. Your tongue was out and your eyes got wide, and it was just…it was funny."

Bonnie narrowed her eyes and rejoined him. He lifted her and laid her in the bed again. He covered her with his body and kissed her until they both forgot the false alarm.

His stiff dick pressed against her thigh, and when he started to rutt against her, she planted her foot on the bed and flipped them so that she was on top. "I believe I was working on something," she said breathlessly.

"Please continue," he said as she backed up until her mouth was level with his dick. He fixed one of her pillows under his head, put one arm under his head, and settled in comfortably. She was more playful with his dick this time, kissing it, licking it, and sucking it. And then she broadened her horizon and began trying to fit him down her throat. She knew what she was doing, moving slow and forcing him in until she gagged. The feeling of his dick suddenly being pushed into the narrow space deep in her throat shook his composure. He was acutely aware of the tightness of her throat, and the way she took to trying to get herself to stop gagging, claiming his dick back into her mouth almost as soon as she'd taken it out, the sound of her gagging, and the way she hunched over him every time her throat protested, all of it had him moaning needily and ready to come. His arm was gone from under his head, and both of his hands were suspended by his chest as he watched her slowly make it work.

He dropped his head on the pillow before lifting it to look when she took his head again. The squeeze felt amazing on the head of his penis. He was bowled over by the determination and enthusiasm she showed. He'd pictured her gradually building up to this; she would be excited but a little reserved. He definitely hadn't expected a blowjob, and he definitely hadn't expected deepthroating.

His needy moans and the unsteady hand that tightened on her head every time she took him in encouraged Bonnie. She was determined to conquer her gag reflex as deepthroating was a skill that she has secretly always dreamed of possessing in her sexual arsenal. And conquer it she did. She took him in fast and moved her head from side to side, swishing him in her throat as much as she could. She slurped when she released him and gave him a big, crooked smile. She'd done it.

"Holy shit," Tyler exclaimed, and he reached for her and pulled her up for a kiss. "I want you on top. Get on top." He was very tempted to let her finish him off with her mouth, but who knew how long it would be before they had enough privacy to be like this again? He wanted to have been inside her before he left this house.

Bonnie's stomach fluttered, and she took his dick that was drenched with her saliva. She looked at him and rubbed her vulva with it. He licked his lips in anticipation, and she mimicked him, her mouth extra watery after having him in it. She couldn't wait until she could swallow him up again. But her vagina needed this.

She lined him up and began to sit down. She was so loose from her arousal, turned on from how he'd been reacting to her sucking his dick that she was able to slide a little more than half of him in with no problem. But she had to stop at that point, simply because of his girth, and it has been a year and two months since she took anything in her vagina. She hissed and sat back up. She licked her lips and tried again and stopped at the same place.

Tyler closed his eyes, his hands suspended as he waited. It felt fucking amazing.
"It's not going in," she said. She wanted to completely sit on his dick.

"Come here." He put one of his hands between them and inserted a finger into her cunt, then two. Bonnie moaned and her pussy flexed around his fingers. Tyler widened his fingers to stretch her out, and he did it over and over. Looking into her eyes, he put a third finger. She moaned and licked her lips as he slowly, slowly got them in, and he continued the blessed task of stretching her.

The fact that she was looking at his face and was on her hands and knees in the middle of the afternoon while he casually stretched her pussy made her chuckle. It was almost clinical, except for the part where both were turned on by the process.

"What?" he asked, though he smiled.

"You have no idea how long I've been waiting for this."

"Oh, I think I know."

"Well, you don't know how much I've wanted it." She bit her lip when he started to pump his wide fingers in her.

"I think I have an idea about that, too. Do you know why I was on the track that morning?"

"Why?"

"Because of you. Because you've been driving me freaking crazy."

"Do you know how much I've masturbated because of you?"

He grinned wide. "Now there's something I'd like to see."

"I bet you would."

He stretched her, and when he took his fingers out, she felt a string of her lube follow them. She was so turned on. Tyler looked at the thick consistency on his fingers and the small bubbles that had formed. He laid his head down on the pillow. Closing his eyes, he stuck two fingers in his mouth. Afterwards, he sucked the third one clean. Bonnie watched, her mouth open, a moan ready to escape her. Tyler opened his eyes and licked between his fingers, and he looked at her.

"I'm so ready," she promised. She kept eye contact with him as she reached for his dick. He grabbed her hips, and she lined him up. She got the head pass her opening, and she sank down, down, and it was easier to go past the half mile point. She sensation she felt as she was filling herself up with him was indescribable. Tyler licked his watering mouth as he watched her. She got to the hilt and no sooner had she sat on his pelvis than she had to get up. Her vagina was spasming as it adjusted to his girth, and it felt so good and so like too much that she had to take some of him out. Every time she sank down, the same feeling roused in her, so she ended up humping him up and down, sitting and lifting, unable to help her body's reaction.

It felt amazing on Tyler's suffering dick, and the delicate sound she made each time she sat and had to get up were music to his ears. When she lifted this time, however, he shoved his hips up just to get the reaction that he got.

"Oh shit," Bonnie cried out. He'd shoved into her so hard that she got thrown off balance, so when he immediately dropped his hips down to the bed to take most of his dick out, having lost her anchor on his chest, she fell straight down on his dick. "Oh God!" she cried as she shut her eyes tight, her body twitching in happiness. "Jesus, Tyler." He wore a shit-eating grin, and she planted both hands
on his pecs and began to rock back and forth, her eyes still closed.

They both grimaced in bliss as she fucked him into her mattress, their quick breathing filling her room on the quiet Saturday afternoon.

Tyler held fast to her ass, his fingers digging in. Whenever he was able to form a thought, it was: she's so good at fucking. She took him through the full motion of her hips, back and forth, back and forth, sometimes all around, then back and forth, her stomach tight, core completely engaged.

Bonnie moved her hands from his chest to grip her sheets on either side of his neck. She needed more leverage, because she was getting closer, it was feeling better, and she was starting to ride him him faster. The hard pressure on her ass from his fingers were a delightful incentive for her orgasm, and she wondered if it was asking for too much that imprints of his fingers stayed behind after. Tyler turned his head on the pillow, the veins in his neck protruding. He moaned when he exhaled as if he'd been holding it in, and his eyes shifted. He looked up at her so that she could see.

Bonnie slowed down for less than a second, and then she continued with renewed fervor. She wanted to see what would happen when he came.

He lifted and captured her left breast in his hungry mouth, and the image of those animal eyes heading toward her so fast sent a quick wave of adrenaline through her, and she thrilled at it.

"Please, fuck me," he commanded against the globe of her breast, and it was a command, and she stepped up her game, because clearly she wasn't doing enough, and she wanted to give him what he wanted, and she wanted to give herself what she'd been waiting for.

He let go of her breast and pushed his head back against the pillow. This was the first time he was having sex as an Alpha, and he was completely unprepared for how hard he came. Bonnie watched him fall apart and greedily drank in his yells. He lifted toward her as his body contracted. And then his eyes opened wide. "Bonnie-oh shit, Bonnie-I'm done."

She wasn't. She ignored him, not feeling any urgency from what he was saying. She'd just now seen her peak. She was going to reach the top and jump off it. So she fucked him, and he begged her, because his dick was not softening, and it was fucking sensitive, and he's never been this sensitive before, and it was just a little bit, a little bit amazingly painful. He didn't want her to stop. Her dominance called forth his, and his face shifted completely, both of his teeth descending as the skin around his eyes sunk in.

"I'm coming ag-!" he shouted. His voice died when he orgasmed, his mouth opened wide, his toes curled severely.

"Shit!" he cursed when his body relaxed."Bonnie. Please!" He slapped her ass and threw his head back and growled up at the ceiling as she used her cunt to take all that she wanted from him.

Bonnie delighted in how much he couldn't handle her, delighted in the contrast between the strong display of his Alpha wolf and how weak and vulnerable he sounded when he spoke, in how beautifully he begged, and she thought about his wrung out dick, and he lifted his head toward her and growled up at her as his hands drove her ass faster, and she came, grinding her clit on his pelvis. She shut her eyes tight, "Shit! Shit! Yes!"

Her voice was pitched high, and the words came out like a melody, and she tightened onto herself, and her whole body shook, her breasts, her thighs, her abdomen, her arms. It felt so good that she wanted to cry at the end of it.
Tyler let her hump until she was finished, and he barely made it, but he rolled them over when she was done and took his dick out, and then he flopped on his side, his back to her and his knees drawn up to his chest. "Holy fuck. Shit." His breath came out as soft growls every time he exhaled.

Bonnie closed her eyes and felt like she was hyperventilating. "Oh my God. Holy crap. Shit. Shit." Tyler moaned and straightened his legs.

"Finally," Bonnie said.

Tyler laughed. He'd had no idea that she could be so forward. "That was freaking…." He turned to face her. His legs were still trembling. "You're a freaking sadist."

"It didn't sound like you were complaining. I don't think you'll ever look hotter than you did then." She opened her eyes and turned her head to smile at him. His face was striking.

"Oh, you liked that, did you?"

"Very much." She closed her eyes and hummed.

"God," Tyler sighed, and he rolled onto his back.

"You can stop protesting now," Bonnie said, amusement in her voice.

"What?" Tyler asked as he looked at her.

"Not you." She opened her eyes in time to see his eyes shift back to brown and his face clear up.

Tyler pulled her to him, and she snuggled.

Tyler was on his third round of tracing her nipples with his middle finger. The areola of the left one was smooth, while the areola of the right one was bumpy. A light smile played on his lips the whole time.

"Did the surgery scar you had above your knee heal when you became a Hybrid?" Bonnie asked as she lazily traced the hand that was playing with her nipples.

"When I triggered the curse, actually. The first time I transitioned, that scar opened right up. It hurt like hell. Everything hurt like hell. When I came back later that night, well….I noticed the next day that it was healed."

"Mmmm."

"Weirdly, though, the chicken pox marks on my back are still here."

"Well, those aren't scars," she said. "They don't damage your skin, they just….decorate it."

He smiled. "I like these little freckles on your chest," he said.

"My nana, my paternal grandmother, called them beauty marks when I was younger."

And so they cuddled until Tyler had to get dressed and leave before Rudy returned home.
Chapter Notes

15,851 words, not counting the title or these notes! 0_0 No wonder it took me the whole weekend to edit it! I didn't realize that this was the longest chapter of the fic so far.

Anyways, a present for those who went back to school today! And those, like me, who just plain had to go to work, lol.

Btw, KINK WARNING: BLOOD!PLAY for this chapter and the rest of the fic.

On Monday, they voted for the prom theme, not together, but they voted.

On Monday, she wore a mini dress to school, with black stockings that reached just past her knees. She felt sexy; she felt in charge; she felt like a sadistic sex mistress. She liked the label Tyler had given her: sadistic. If being sadistic got her the type of reaction from him that she'd gotten on Saturday, then she would proudly take on the role.

On Monday, Elena questioned her about her lost powers in the hallway.

"Is there anything you can do to get them back?"

"I don't think so. I'm just in wait mode. How's Stefan?" she asked, because it was polite.

"Hanging in there. Waiting, just like you. Caroline's been over there almost every day trying to help. His eyes don't hurt him as much as they have the past couple of days. We all think that means he's on his way to healing."

After Elena left, Tyler came up to her.

"Everything okay?"

"Yeah, she just asked me how I was doing. Wait, were you listening?"

"No, I just saw you guys talking and you looked….restrained."

She smiled. "So you're checking up on me?"

"Yes," he smiled.

"I kind of think, considering my powers have been downgraded for four days now, that she really wanted to know if I was able to help Stefan yet."

Tyler grimaced, and the reaction made her smile. "Hey, so, let's eighty-six you talking to Sheriff Forbes," she said. "I'm pretty sure what happened in that house was more than she could ever give us."

"Okay." Before he left, he leaned toward her and said, "I like the dress."

So she wore another mini dress on Tuesday.
On Tuesday, Tyler wanted her again. He'd wanted her as soon as he had gotten in his car to drive home before her father came back on Saturday, so by Tuesday, after seeing her in the second mini dress, he really wanted her. He thought about going to the track.

On Tuesday, Bonnie went shopping for her 80s outfit. She got her eyebrows waxed after school, and then she drove out of town to Grove Hill for the outfit.

"You're going to a dance?" Abby asked over the phone.

"You sound shocked," Bonnie said as she browsed.

"I am. I'm glad, though. This is exactly what you need to be doing."

"I need to find something sexy."

"For a school dance?" Lucy inserted. "Is there a someone?"

She smiled. "Yes."

"Wait, you found a boy? In the middle of all this?" Abby asked.

"She multitasks. It's part of the Bennett gifts. Who is he?" Lucy asked.

"Uh, just a guy," she said nonchalantly. They didn't need to know that while she was shopping with him in mind, he was going to be at the dance with his girlfriend.

"Does he know the secret?" Lucy asked.

"Yeah, he does. This is the worst decade to try and be sexy. Everyone was interested in wearing baggy clothes and bold colors that clashed."

"Hey," Lucy protested. "Respect what came before you."

She smiled.

"Okay, so how about some inspirations?" Abby asked. "Let's see: there was Denise Huxtable-"

"I feel like every Black girl who goes will dress like either Denise Huxtable or Vanessa Huxtable," Bonnie said.

"If you wanna...show your goods," Abby said, "There's Sandra Clark. She always looked sexy."

"I want to show off my legs," Bonnie said.

"Lisa Turtle!" Lucy contributed. "She was an idol. She was my idol."

"I know who that is, but I've never watched a single episode of Saved by the Bell," Bonnie revealed.

"Wow," Lucy responded.

"Oh, what was that one girl's name from that show? A Different World," Abby said.

"Whitley Gilbert," Bonnie and Lucy answered.

She found a couple of passable pieces and carried herself to the dressing room. The problem was that she wasn't a fan of bold colors. She promised to send a picture of her choice and hung up with her mom and Lucy.
She had only chosen dresses, short ones: one that was a tiger animal print, one a shiny metallic green, and another that was black with colorful flowers and a not-too-cute bow on the side of her waist. After trying them all on, she came away liking the third option best. She took a picture and sent it to her mom and Lucy.

Lucy texted, *Nobody messes with Lethal Lisa! Very Lisa Turtle!*

Bonnie grinned. Abby texted, *I love it! You look beautiful! And I see the legs!*

On Wednesday, she rediscovered how many mini dresses she had and wore them for the rest of the week.

On Wednesday, she saw Tyler and Caroline in the courtyard, sharing what seemed to her a sincere moment of laughter. Still on her Tyler high from Saturday, she didn't feel any two ways about it.

At lunch, Jeremy came to talk to her. He asked how she was doing again, how she was feeling, if there've been any signs of her powers or of another occurrence. They ate lunch together. Unbeknownst to them, Tyler kept looking at Jeremy's profile from his table.

After school that day, Bonnie met Caroline in the classroom where the planning committee met and returned the White Oak stake.

"Did you do what you needed to?" Caroline asked after she stuffed it in her bag.

"I scraped enough White Oak off it in case I need to experiment. It was simple: I just used a kitchen knife. The thing is the stake looks no different, almost like it has an infinite amount of White Oak."

Caroline nodded. Bonnie stood to leave, and Caroline said, "Hey, I heard about your little power thing. I'm sorry."

Bonnie wasn't slow to catch the insult this time. *Little power thing.* She accepted her sympathy with a nod.

"When do you think they'll be back?" Caroline asked.

"I have no idea. I'm hoping soon, though."

"Did it hurt or anything?"

"No." When they both nodded for too long, Bonnie said, "I gotta go. Have fun at the meeting."

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On Thursday after school, April finally saw Silas again.

She threw her backpack in front of her closet like she always did, and when she turned around he was standing in the same suit he wore last time, and he was staring at his shrine.

"Holy shit." She quickly covered her mouth. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't curse."

He looked at her and smiled. "It's all right."

"Where have you been? I've been praying to you. Not that you need to answer that."

So he didn't. He'd been biding his time, letting her sweat for wanting to see him again. That was how he treated the believers who didn't readily believe when he revealed himself to them.
Seeing that he was opting not to answer, April asked, "Did you really cause that storm?"

"I did," he said with a smile.

"They got very hurt, you know."

"Does that upset you?"

She hesitated. "No. None of them have talked to me this whole week."

"That won't stay the case. What I did to them is temporary. I'm not at my full strength, April. They will come for you."

"Wait...why aren't you at your full strength? I mean, what you did last Thursday was amazing."

"I'm not sure you're ready to hear it."

"Try me."

"A very long time ago, I lived. Much like another God you're familiar with, I did walk the earth. And much like him, I was betrayed: tricked and buried alive. Centuries passed and I starved; my stomach bloated; I defacated; I became malnourished; I hallucinated; my throat wore away; my eyesight faded; my teeth rotted. I rotted, April. For centuries that bled into centuries."

"Who...who tricked you?"

"A woman named Qetsiyah. She was a witch. Much like Bonnie."

"How can a witch have any power over you?"

"You'd be surprised by how dedicated they can be, how much the power goes to their heads. But long after I had forgotten who I was, where I was, what I was, long after I had stopped feeling, because my body did fall asleep to the point of developing sores, I was rescued. And it took a very long time for me to even understand that I was no longer buried. I lay on my back for a full year, my spirit unable to process that I could move now."

"You never died," April said, captivated.

"I'm immortal. But my grave was spelled. Qetsiyah was a very powerful witch. But not all witches are lost. The group who rescued me: they were witches. And they worked over generations, mothers teaching daughters, fathers teaching sons, before they were able to at least rescue my soul. But they could do nothing more."

"Wait...is this not your body?"

He smiled. "No. My body is still trapped. This is simply a vessel that my followers procured for me. And it took me a very long time to channel my true self from within it, time that...many people can't even conceive. And I'm nowhere near my potential. And I won't be until I shatter Qetsiyah's spell and get my powers back."

"Where is your body?"

"A very small town in Israel. Do you understand revenge, April?"

"Yes."
"Do you understand anger?"

"Yes."

"Qetsiyah can still pay for what she did. You don't know how many of my followers, like you, like your father, have needed me over the centuries and I've been unable to help them because of what she did."

"Why did she do it?"

"You've seen evil. Your father died, and you have an instinct about what happened to him. How many people do you believe know there's more to the story? Tell me."

April inhaled. "There's the Sheriff, first of all. Elena, Caroline, Matt, Jeremy, even Bonnie. Stefan Salvatore. I feel like that whole group knows, all of them who talk to each other, they know something. At least eight people know, maybe even Rebekah."

"Rebekah promised to help you for a price," he divined. "She promised to help you, but only after she got what she wanted."

She nodded. "I didn't have a choice. I mean, I-she was the first person who acted like I wasn't making things up."

Shane stayed silent and lowered his eyes. If he spoke too much, it would sound like he was trying to convince her of something. If he maintained too much eye contact, it would look like he had second thoughts for her, a hidden agenda. He needed her to feel like this was a conversation, like she could lead as much as he could. He needed her to feel chosen.

The silence got to April, so she asked what was on her mind. "So….you said you could help my dad?"

"I can, absolutely."

"But you need your powers first."

"Your father was so….he was such a believer," he said, admiration padding his tone. "He really believed in everything I can do, in everything that I am. He gave his life for me. He martyred himself. All those people who died with him, they martyred themselves. And I intend to bring them back. There is a ritual I have to do. And I will pull on the energy of their belief, their life, their souls, to break Qetsiyah's spell." He smiled and said, "And then I will use my true powers to give them their lives back. Twelve people sacrificed themselves on Thursday. Twelve more will. And then I'll be ready. Every brave person who has helped me….they will get their lives back."

"What do you want me to do?" April asked with bated breath.

"All of the vampires are looking for a cure. When they find it, I need you to be there. I need you to go with them, and I need you to carry my tombstone. I can't go to my grave. Qetsiyah's spell blocks me."

He let the silence stretch, and he let her stay in her head. Then he said, "April….I think you should go see your father. I think you should….go to the house. Have you ever been?"

"No," she admitted.

"I have an incredible amount of respect for people who….trust their faith to guide them. And where I
am concerned, they will have every reason to keep trusting."

April smiled.

"I want to show you something. And it'll be whenever you want. I don't have enough power to bring back humans, or even most animals. But I can bring back some. We need to keep it small. Like a roach?" he considered with a smile. "Maybe a tiny lizard."

April smiled.

"Kill it yourself. Then call me to bring it back. Good night, April."

He disappeared in front of her eyes. She walked forward and stood in the spot where he’d been standing. For the first time, she felt calm, like she was taking the steps she was supposed to be taking. She had been trying, so hard, and finally she was going to get somewhere.

Cross-legged on the floor of his altar room, Shane opened his eyes. She'd thought nothing of him being the reason for her father's death, and she hadn't balked at the mention of the sacrifices. She was less resistant than he'd thought. He supposed he had Bonnie's friends to thank for that.

She would have more questions for him after she visited the site of her father's death, and he'd be ready. More than anything, though, visiting the place where she'd lost her father would increase her willingness to help him. That was what he was counting on.

He was still mourning Hayley, and he instructed himself to be as calm with April as possible. He coached himself to smile. He couldn't lose patience with her just because she wasn't Hayley. He was so close. It would have been so much easier with Hayley. There had been no risk of her getting scared by what needed to be done. But he had to make do with April.

He needed her to spill Bonnie's blood.

It was Friday afternoon, and Tyler carried seven tinfoil-wrapped cardboards to the gym while Jeremy carried eight. Caroline had commissioned the art club to make something, anything, for the dance. They'd decided on quirky decorations. They'd cut the cardboards into triangles, rectangles, parallelograms, Tyler's personal contribution, all of different sizes.

They passed students taping red balloons on the lockers, and Tyler commented, "It's weird how many people still volunteer to decorate for these dances even though they go to crap faster and faster every year."

"They go to crap for us, but I'm guessing most everyone else has a great time," Jeremy responded.

They entered the gym and found Caroline supervising the mounting of one of the LED marquees. "We've got deliveries," Tyler announced.

"Oh!" she exclaimed when she turned. "Oooh, silver. Perfect. Psychedelic."

"That was the 60s," Jeremy pointed out.

"It's weird," Caroline explained. "Which actually fits. Okay, well thank you, and, um, they just set up one of the refreshment tables, so you guys can set them on the side there."

"Actually, I'm here to help decorate," Tyler revealed.
Caroline widened her eyes dramatically, and he rolled his eyes and smiled. She happily turned to Jeremy and asked, "Are you staying, too?"

"Uh no, I'm meeting Matt in the woods for combat practice. I'm not coming to this thing."

She dramatically dropped her smile. "Well, thanks for doing what you could to participate."

Jeremy smiled, and he and Tyler went to deposit the cardboards.

"So, does this mean you're gonna join art club?" Tyler asked.

"Uh, maybe. I don't know. I did this because I saw the announcement and figured why not. I still like drawing. I still do it, but I don't know if I want to belong to a club anymore."

"I'm in it because it helps me destress. It's good to hear people talk about it. Even if some of them suck at drawing."

Jeremy chuckled. "See, I kind of prefer to do it by myself now. I don't want to have to explain why I'm drawing what I'm drawing, especially since most of my drawings have gotten kind of….angry since I came back from Denver."

Tyler nodded. "Well, you have a whole 'nother year to change your mind."

"Yeah," Jeremy said quietly.

"What?" Tyler asked.

Jeremy swept his eyes over the gym to gather his thoughts. When Tyler saw him focus on something, he looked and saw that he'd found Bonnie. She was standing at two helium tanks and blowing up red balloons in the middle of the gym.

The boys looked at each a while when they resumed their attention, because each saw something in the other's carefully contained expression. Each wanted to fire off questions about the other's intentions toward Bonnie. Neither had ever struggled so hard to not share their opinions.

"I'm gonna go," Jeremy said.

"Hold on," Tyler said when he took the first step. He'd never seen the upside of keeping his questions to himself.

Jeremy stopped. It would've been a miracle if they'd actually left things unsaid.

Tyler glanced at where Caroline was. He crossed his arms and asked, "You still like Bonnie?"

Jeremy smiled. "Like?"

Tyler slowly nodded his head once. So it was more than like. "So, what, you're gonna try to get her back?"

"You say that like it's a ridiculous idea. Besides, she's, uh, she's not really at the right place for that right now."

"That's not what I asked."

"What I don't understand is why you're asking in the first place."
Tyler blinked.

Jeremy scraped his teeth over his bottom lip. "You're into her."

Tyler kept himself still.

Jeremy smiled. "That's real nice. Does Caroline know? You two are still together, aren't you? I mean I saw you look over there just now."

"Whatever it is you've got in mind for Bonnie? Don't do it. Just let it go."

"And I think you should clean up your shit before you try telling me something like that. It's what Bonnie wants that counts. Me and her have our history, and...it's not any of your business. But if you're thinking about trying to make your own with her? Clean your shit up."

Just then, Caroline walked up to them. "You're still here," she said to Jeremy.

Jeremy masked his irritation with Tyler and smiled. "Not because I changed my mind. I'm getting out of here. Your dude's waiting for you to tell him what to do."

With that, he backed away. Tyler flexed his defined cheekbones at the jab.

"Hey," Caroline said. She touched his arms to get his attention.

Tyler pushed his irritation back.

"Are you okay?" she asked with a chuckle. "Your arms are crossed in that way they are when you're upset. Did something happen?"

Tyler uncrossed his arms. "Uh, no, uh-"

He saw Jeremy turn from the exit and head to Bonnie.

He looked at Caroline and said, "We haven't really talked since....since he killed Chris, so my mind kind of went back to that just now."

"That wasn't-"

"Yeah, I know. It wasn't his fault. He was just doing what he had to for his sister."

"Why don't we switch gears? He's gone now. Um...." She consulted her clipboard, and Tyler stole a glance at Jeremy and Bonnie. "You can help the guys set up the lights on the walls."

"Cool, okay."

Bonnie blew up her fifteenth balloon. Seventy-five more to go. She wasn't sure why the planning committee had chosen a random number like ninety, but there it was. She attempted to tie the balloon and not for the first time it flew out of her hand and deflated. She closed her eyes and breathed. Seventy-five more to go.

"Need some help?"

She opened her eyes and smiled at who she saw. Tyler. "I actually do. Grab a balloon. Grab three."

He shrugged off his backpack. "I will as soon as you show me how to use this."
So she showed him how to use the helium machine.

"There are two of these," he said as he took the balloon she handed him. "Where's your partner?"

"Uh, nowhere," Bonnie answered as she picked up the balloon that had flown away. She started to blow it and said, "I'm doing this by myself. Ninety balloons. I'm pretty sure it's a punishment from Caroline."

"Why?" Tyler asked.

"Oh I don't know, for knowing more about her boyfriend than she does?"

Tyler closed his eyes. Of course. "I'm sorry."

"It's okay. I mean considering what I did with you on Saturday, I pretty much deserve it."

"Wait…do you regret it now?"

"No, of course not." She squeezed her eyes shut, mortified by how quickly she'd answered.

Tyler smiled and focused on his balloon.

"I shouldn't have said that. That is not a good thing to say. But it's true," she admitted. "I told you: I've been wanting it."

Tyler shouldn't still be smiling, especially when she was talking about the inappropriateness of what they'd done. But, "I don't regret it either."

He checked her out from the corner of his eyes while she filled her next balloon. "You're wearing a dress again."

She looked at him and smiled. "Yep."

This one was the shortest yet, and she realized now that it kind of looked like her 80s outfit, only prettier. And looser. It had a deep V neck that didn't quite expose her breasts. It was patterned with small dark red and dark blue flowers, unlike the huge many-colored flowers of her 80s dress. And it had long sleeves. Her hair was up in a sleek ponytail.

"I like them," he said as he blew up the next balloon. "A lot. You don't show a lot of leg."

"I didn't know you were monitoring."

"I wasn't. But if you'd made a habit of showing them, I would've definitely noticed."

She rolled her eyes and smiled.

"And this isn't me complaining about the way you dress," he assured her emphatically. "I mean your legs look mighty nice in the jeans, too. I'm just….saying."

"Jeans are easier. It doesn't matter if I shave," she explained with a shrug.

"Tyler," Caroline called as she approached.

"Yep," Tyler answered, and he looked at her over the machine.

"Uh, I thought you said you were going to help with the lights," she reminded him when she came to
a stop in front of the machine.

"I was, but then I noticed Bonnie here."

"Well, I want you at the lights."

"Caroline, there's no one here to help her. And you know what she's going through because of the storm."

"She's de-powered, not crippled," Caroline observed. "And she didn't even lose all of her powers; she can blow up some balloons. Go to the lights, please."

"You know what?" Bonnie cut in, "I've got it. It's okay, Ty."

The shortening of his name made Caroline raise her brows.

Tyler looked at Bonnie, and it was clear to her that he wasn't happy about going. Still, he tied up the balloon he'd filled and then picked up his backpack. He took four steps and then turned back.

"You know what? I can stay here," he said to Caroline. "You want efficiency for this thing, right? One person blowing up and tying ninety balloons isn't efficient. She needs help."

Caroline was taken aback by the fact that he'd come back and was now adamant about staying.

"Fine," she said. "I will get her help. But I need you at the lights. April!"

April almost swallowed her tongue.

"Are you kidding me?" Tyler asked. "You're giving her April, the freak who said her God caused the storm?"

"I'm pretty sure she can handle April," Caroline said. "Besides, the freak showed her face to work here. That doesn't scream mastermind to me."

"Right," Tyler disagreed. He walked off to join the light crew.

After he left, Caroline looked at Bonnie and crossed her arms. "Ty?"

"Tyler," Bonnie responded. "I've called him Ty sometimes."

"Right."

"It's just balloons, Care," she said sympathetically.

"You called me?" April asked when she came up.

"You know, I'm surprised you're here decorating, considering," Caroline said to her.

"Well, you guys don't let all the bad stuff stop you from enjoying school," April responded.

"Hmm. Help Bonnie blow these up."

April grabbed a balloon from the bag on the chair. Bonnie observed her, and April couldn't hold eye contact, which seemed like typical April from what Bonnie had heard about her.

Caroline walked to where Elena was cutting open a bag full of plastic walkmans and haphazardly threw her clipboard on the table.
"Everything okay?" Elena asked.

"Yeah. Nothing I can't handle."

"Good. I'm glad to hear that. Because, you know, I'd hate to hear that your house is crumbling while you've been busy worrying about me and Damon and being a strong shoulder for Stefan."

Elena picked up the bag and went off on her task of attaching the walkmans to the walls around the gym. Caroline stared after her, agog. The little vamp tramp had been eavesdropping! And that's what it was! She was surrounded by tramps! Bonnie with her it's just balloons, Care and now Elena.

She only needed one problem at a time, so she couldn't wait to find the cure and throw it at Elena. Her callous attitude appeared at the most random times, and she was sick of her not caring enough to filter her opinions.

Tyler attached his third light fixture on the wall, and then he watched one of the girls turn them all on. "Perfect," he said.

They were moving to the next spot on the wall when he looked to where Bonnie was and saw her talking to April. He was keeping an eye on them, making sure Bonnie was all right. He pulled on his power and listened in.

"How are you doing?" Bonnie asked.

"I'm fine. Why?"

"Well, the news said that lightning struck your street during the storm."

"Oh, yeah. I'm fine. It happened right in front of my house. It was scary."

Bonnie nodded and tied her balloon. "I heard that you said that you know who caused it?"

"I said that my God answered my prayers, not that He caused the storm."

"Silas."

"Right. I've been lost. I've been so sad, and I just needed guidance."

Bonnie nodded and picked up another balloon. "What did he sound like?"

April paused for the slightest moment and blinked. Then she resumed filling the balloon. "What do you mean?"

"Silas. When He answered your prayers."

"What does your God sound like when you pray to Him?"

"Uh. Well, He doesn't usually talk back. I mean one of my grandmothers, well the only grandmother I have left, she swears she's touched by God, that He talks to her, but she's never said that He literally talks to her. Just in dreams and signs."

"Well, that's what it was for me, too."

"And He promised to bring your father back."
"I feel like I'm getting the third degree," April said as she turned to her. "And it's been really nice not being questioned this whole week. That's why I even came here today. I thought all of that was behind me."

Bonnie pursed her lips. "Sorry." She filled another balloon. But she had to ask one more thing. Why was pastor Young still on earth?

"Do you really believe you're getting your dad back, April?"

April turned to her, her skin prickling, because despite what Silas had said, could it really happen? Could she really get her dad back? "I want you to leave me alone, Bonnie," she said, her voice strained. "Please?"

Bonnie grimaced in sympathy. Her question was pretty callous on the surface, but she couldn't have phrased it any other way. "I'm sorry. Sorry."

April was agitated. She filled two more balloons and said, "I'm gonna ask Caroline to put me somewhere else. Sorry."

Bonnie watched her go. She didn't apologize again. Now that the moment had passed, she was wondering what April's answers meant.

Caroline sent someone else to help her, probably out of fear that Tyler would come back.

A sea of red balloons later, and they were done, all done. And Caroline brought over two bags of silver ones.

"For your guys' blowing pleasure," she said with a smile at the girl. The smile became just a little less genuine when she looked at Bonnie.

Bonnie watched her go until she got beyond her peripheral vision. "I'm going to the bathroom," she told the girl. "I'll be back."

She lifted the two new bags off the chair and grabbed her phone.

The bathroom closest to the gym, the one where they'd daggered Rebekah, was out of service. It had flooded this morning. She went to the double doors that led outside and walked a minute across the way to the auditorium.

She turned her phone over in her hand while she did her business in the stall, and her mind went to Caroline's two new bags. She wasn't a petty person, per say, though she could hold a grudge with the best of them. But she didn't do or say petty things. But thinking back on it now, she smiled proudly at her it's just balloons comment.

Tyler had gotten on his knees and crawled to get to her vulva; thrown her leg on his shoulder and held on to her ass as she'd trembled on his chin. Caroline could give her six more bags if she wanted to. She had ridden him until he had dissolved into a begging mess, and he had liked it, and he had told her to get on top, and he has been pivoting his neck to look at her dresses all week. Creepy professor that.

She finished, wiped and flushed, and stepped out of the stall. At the sink, she pulled up Tyler's name on her phone.

You shouldn't come to the dance tonight, but you should meet me here at 9:45 ;)
She hoped he understood what the wink meant. They haven't talked about sleeping together again, but everyone sign this week said that he was open to it, and she was definitely open to it. She wanted him again. These mini dresses worn to get his attention also fed her imagination. There was the constant image of him lifting her dress up and sliding into her.

In the gym, Tyler fished out his phone when he felt one side of his butt vibrate. He licked his lips and smiled when he read Bonnie's message. He wanted to hold her, especially after Jeremy's dissuading remarks. He didn't give a shit about Jeremy's history with Bonnie, but he didn't like his own intentions toward her being questioned. He wasn't going to ask Bonnie about her situation with Jeremy. He wasn't going to worry about anything unless things between him and Bonnie changed for the worst. And this text was evidence that he wouldn't have to worry any time soon.

He hoped that her wink meant what he thought it meant. He's supposed to be Caroline's date for the dance, but he wasn't going to turn Bonnie down after the crap from both Jeremy and Caroline.

_Absolutely ;) ;)_

Bonnie walked out of the bathroom, and she was so busy re-reading the text that she had sent and excitedly waiting for Tyler's response that she didn't pay attention to one of the auditorium's entrance doors opening and closing until she was slammed against the wall with a hand around her throat.

"Hello, Bonnie."

"Kol," she wheezed.

"Yes," he answered with a smile.

Panic flooded her as she remembered that she had limited means to save herself. She used the power she had to wrench his hand from around her throat, and she threw him into the adjacent wall. She paid no mind to her dropped phone and bolted for the doors.

Kol was in front of her in a heartbeat, and pain exploded on the left side of her cheek when he backhanded her hard enough to send her crashing to the floor. She clutched the left side of her face as tears sprang to her eyes, and she willed herself to think straight. She was full-on scared now. She remembered what he'd done to Shane.

"Not the first time I've been thrown by a witch, love. Plenty of opportunities to work on my recovery time." He crouched next to her and said, "It recently got back to me that you were affected by the storm, too. I want to know why."

"I lost some of my powers," she said and began trying to drag herself away. She yelped when he dragged her to her feet by her ponytail.

"Exactly. My brother and Stefan Salvatore were clearly being punished. You got most of your powers stripped. You and I are going to have a very short talk about Silas, witch."

"Like hell we are. TYLER!"

All of the balloons in the gym exploded at once, and startled screams and curses filled the gym. Everyone was thrown off guard except for Tyler. On the contrary, his senses sharpened to a needle point.

"What the hell was that?!" Caroline demanded no one in particular.

Tyler bolted from the room. Bonnie. He'd heard her in his mind, not his ears, but he was positive that
it was her, and he was positive that she was in deep shit. Once he cleared the gym and the students in
the hallway, who were moving towards the sudden ruckus, he broke into a high-speed run. He didn't
care who he would pass. He wasn't going to slow down. Bonnie's scream kept repeating in his head,
and he surrendered himself to it and let it guide him to where she was.

Kol glued his hand over Bonnie's mouth. She pulled on everything she had and filled his throat and
ears with air, hoping she still had control over the one element that was tied to her telekinesis.

Kol let her go and clawed at his neck.

She knew better than to try for the door again, and she struggled to figure out what to do. Just then,
Tyler burst through one of the doors and rammed Kol against the wall, teeth out and claws bared.
She at first couldn't believe what she was seeing, that it wasn't all on her to get away from Kol
anymore, that she had help, but then Elena ran up to her and shook her to get her attention.

"We need to get you out of here," Elena said.

"No," she said emphatically. She looked to Tyler and saw that Caroline had joined in the fight. She
opened her left hand at her side and concentrated.

Free from Bonnie's power, Kol was fending off both Tyler and Caroline. He suffered bites from her
and deep stinging scratches from him. He sent Tyler crashing into the drama trophy case and lunged
for Caroline. Bonnie stepped away from Elena and reached for Kol. She got a grip on him before he
got to Caroline and flattened him against the wall by where she stood, her other hand still calling.

Tyler ran for Kol and forced his arm against his throat and roared in his face, looking to crush his
trachea.

"Tyler, it's okay," Bonnie said. "I've got him."

Tyler pushed against Kol's throat and let him go. He looked at Bonnie and asked, "Are you okay?"
he asked around his mouth full of teeth. He sounded monstrous.

"I'm fine," she said, still keeping up the hand that was holding Kol. The left side of her face was
beginning to throb. She walked to Kol and seethed. "Okay. Let's talk about Silas."

"Silas, the God?" Elena asked. "Is this what Klaus considers team work? Sending someone to attack
us?"

Something in Tyler ticked severely. Kol hadn't attacked us; he'd attacked Bonnie.

"If you value your lives," Kol frothed, "You will stop looking for the cure."

"What the hell does the cure have to do with Silas?" Caroline asked.

"It's buried with him."

"How do you know this?" Elena asked.

"Witches talk. Especially the ones who worship him in Haiti, Benin, and New Orleans. If you wake
him, you will bring about death and destruction."

"We have no intention of waking him," Caroline said. "We just want the cure."

"Silas is immortal. The cure is buried with him. You cannot get to it without freeing him, too, and
that is why I plan to cut this problem off at the root," he swore as he turned his attention to Bonnie.
Bonnie's other hand finally closed around something solid and heavy. "Thanks for the confirmation, Kol."

He charged for her as soon as she released him, and she grunted from deep in her belly as she lunged her arms forward while bending one knee and ran him through with her sword. Tyler and Elena quickly pulled her back by her dress as flames shot out of the Original vampire. The four seniors huddled against the opposite wall as a crazed Kol tried to wrench the sword from his belly button. It was no use, for the instrument was lodged. He screamed in agony and cursed his damnation as his organs burned. He ran for Bonnie, fully intent on taking her with him.

"Move!" Tyler yelled, and he dragged Bonnie to the right with him as Elena ran to the left and Caroline split with them on the right. Bonnie held on tight to his hand and made sure Caroline was still with them as he pulled open the door that led to the main room of the auditorium. She looked back and saw flames burst out of Kol's eyes. Her own eyes widened in horror.

"The stage!" Tyler yelled as they ran down the dark aisles. Elena was running down the aisle to their left.

Tyler slowed so that Bonnie was running faster than him and dragging him behind her a little bit, and it gave him enough room to run forward and scoop her up. Bonnie yelped and shut her eyes and hid her face against his right pectoral when she felt them speed up. When he was within distance, Tyler used his right foot to propel them off the floor, and he jumped on the stage. He sped them upstage, and they were joined by Caroline and Elena.

Kol could no longer run. His ability to process thought and put it into action was burnt away. The last things that went through his mind were confusion at how he was dying, frustration that he hadn't been able to kill Bonnie, and skeptical hope that Niklaus would open his eyes to the threat that Silas posed and succeed where he had failed.

The fourth Mikaelson exploded into nothing, and Bonnie, Tyler, Caroline, and Elena gasped and turned away from it. Tyler stepped behind Bonnie and shielded her with his body.

An empty silence filled the auditorium, and they turned to the empty seats. Kol's flaming body had provided the only light in the auditorium and now it stood in darkness again. The only thing that remained where Kol had exploded was the sword.

The four made their way downstage, and Tyler grabbed Bonnie's hand. Bonnie squeezed him, comforted by the contact.

"He's gone," Elena commented numbly.

"Holy shit," Caroline said as she stared at the empty space. "Holy shit. Holy shit!"

"Caroline, it's okay," Bonnie said.

"Okay? We just killed Klaus' brother. You just killed Klaus' brother! That's the end of everything ever being okay!"

"It was self-defense," Elena insisted.

"Oh right, of course, yeah, mmm-hmm. We'll just tell Klaus that; you know he's always the first to be rational. He's not gonna care!"

Bonnie let go of Tyler's hand and stepped forward a little to be able to see her on Tyler's other side. "Okay, you need to keep your voice down and calm down."
"We're so dead," Caroline said and grabbed her head.

"He was coming after Bonnie," Tyler reminded her.

Bonnie jumped down from the stage and went to the sword. It was standing on its own, having pierced the carpet to plant itself in the floor. She walked around it and looked up at Tyler. She hoped he saw what she did.

"What is that thing?" Elena asked. "Where'd you get it? Is that Klaus' sword?"

Caroline's eyes bulged when Bonnie said nothing. "You stole Klaus' sword?"

"Okay, no? I mean yes, but this isn't it. This is a different sword."

"Why would you steal Klaus' sword?"

"We stole it," Tyler said. He looked at Bonnie and paused. Her cold disapproval of his admission didn't disturb him. Rather, it was the way her face looked. He couldn't see clearly in the dark, but something about her face was off.

"Have you two lost your freaking minds?" Caroline demanded.

"I needed it to work on finding the cure," Bonnie said.

"Bonnie, we're already working with Klaus; you should've just asked him for the sword," Elena said.

"Why would you steal?!" Caroline demanded.

"Okay, how about we work on what the hell we're gonna tell Klaus," Bonnie suggested.

"We could hide him," Elena suggested.

"That is so not gonna work," Tyler declared, and he began to pace behind Caroline and Elena.

"Rebekah went missing for, what, a day two weeks ago? Kol can't go missing now. Klaus'll come directly to us, directly to Bonnie." He was scared as shit about Kol being dead, but the excitement that began with Bonnie calling for him was overpowering his fear. Adrenaline was making him restless. He didn't want this conversation, but he wanted to touch Bonnie, have her close, make sure she was okay. And the more he looked at her, the more he was sure that something was wrong, and the more agitated his pacing became.

"So we're dead," Caroline summarised. "I can't believe you stole from him."

"Well, it's gonna come in handy now; we're gonna need these swords to destroy Silas." Bonnie looked at Tyler, and her brows knitted slightly at how fast he was pacing and how often he looked at her.

"What are you talking about?" Caroline asked. "Please don't tell me you believe that crap."

"Of course I believe it. Okay. Listen." She took a deep breath. There was no use in keeping this part a secret anymore, not now that they knew about the sword. "The day the storm happened, the moment the storm happened, I was attacked."

Tyler stopped pacing. Bonnie looked at him and then gave her attention to Elena and Caroline. The hairs on the back of Tyler's neck stood on end. He didn't want the girls to know this information, because Elena and Caroline knowing meant Damon and Stefan were going to find out, and he didn't trust any of them to react the right way. They didn't need to know.
"I would appreciate it if this information never left this room," Bonnie said, "But as soon as the storm happened, I was in pain. This incredible pain that I have never felt before, and it was all coming from my head, and I felt like it was going to explode. Tyler saved me. And since then, I've been missing most of my powers. After what Kol just said, after what he just did, I think that Silas…was….channeling me. That's the only reason why my powers would be depleted. Someone was using it. And I think it was him."

The door close to the first row of seats opened, and the drama teacher walked in to make sure the auditorium was empty. "Hey, excuse me. Y'all-

Caroline jumped down the stage, sped up to her, and grabbed her by her blouse. She dilated her pupils and commanded, "Leave. We're dealing with something very serious right now. Go do whatever you were going to do next."

The brunette, heavy-set, West Virginia transplant turned and left, her eyes glassy.

Caroline huffed and plopped down in the nearest seat.

"Klaus told Stefan that the Five's mission was to destroy Silas," Elena said slowly.

"Exactly," Bonnie said. "Jeremy was there that day, too. I invited him over to touch the sword to see if it would react. He had a vision and saw the other four. This is one of them. We need the rest."

"How did you even know the sword would kill Kol?" Caroline asked.

"I didn't. I just wanted it to. My life was in danger, you guys. He wasn't going to stop, and this thing, the other one, follows me, so I figured it would be able to reach me out here and actually help me."

"How was Silas able to reach you?" Elena asked.

"That's what I'm gonna try to figure out now."

"Well, you might not need to after Klaus finds out about Kol," Caroline said.

"Caroline, can you give it a rest?" Tyler asked.

Caroline crossed her arms. They were so dead.

Elena's phone buzzed in her pocket, and she pulled it out. "It's Damon. Hello? What?" Her face visibly relaxed, and she smiled. She informed the others, "Stefan can see. Completely."

Bonnie closed her eyes, and Tyler crouched and dropped his head between his arms.

"That means Klaus can see, too," Bonnie pointed out, and Elena's smile disappeared. Caroline turned sideways and laid her forehead on the back of the chair. Dead.

"Fuck, man," Tyler exclaimed between his arms. "Are you fucking kidding me?" he asked Bonnie when he looked up. One step forward, five steps back.

"Give me the phone," Bonnie said to Elena. Now it really was time for damage control.

"Damon," she said succinctly after Elena jumped down from the stage and handed her the phone.

"Hey."

"Kol's dead."
"...I'm sorry?"

"He's dead, poof, gone. He attacked me at school, and I killed him, and we need to figure out what we're going to tell Klaus, because I'm positive he's fully healed, too."

"Where are you?"

"In the auditorium."

"Don't move."

Bonnie hung up. Once again, her day had gone to hell in a handbasket. Now that things were calm, for the most part, she registered that the left side of her face was hurting worse than before. She touched the apple of her cheek, and the skin was tender.

"Is my face swollen?" she asked.

Tyler seized the opportunity to find out why her face looked weird. "Let me see," he said before Caroline or Elena could answer. He jumped down from the stage and went to her. He lifted a gentle hand to her face. "Yes."

Bonnie saw the warning of a storm on his face. "I'm fine. It'll be fine. It hurts, but it'll be fine." She stepped around him for good measure and took a seat in the third row on her left. Caroline and Elena were here: it wasn't time for a show.

By the time Damon came, Tyler was sitting on the stage and was pissed at the entire situation. Caroline remained in her seat, and Elena never sat. Bonnie stood up and went to the sword when Damon entered the auditorium.

"Stefan, what are you doing here?" Caroline asked. "You just healed."

"I've been inside for eight days. Damon told me what happened, and I insisted on coming."

"You didn't tell me you killed Kol with a whole posse," Damon said to Bonnie.

"Stefan, are you okay?" Elena asked.

"Can we table that for later? Does someone wanna tell me what that is?" Damon asked as he pointed to the object in question.

"That looks like Klaus' sword," Stefan said slowly as he walked to the weapon. He picked it up and quickly dropped it with a yelp.

"What happened?" Elena asked.

"It shocked me," he said as he used his other hand to hold the now numb one.

Bonnie picked up the sword and made it stand. "It's not Klaus' sword. None of them are his, but this isn't the one he had. This is different, although I do have Klaus' sword."

"She stole it," Caroline shared.

"I stole it for her," Tyler clarified.

"Wait a minute, one thing at a time. Where is Kol?" Damon asked.
Bonnie recounted the attack from beginning to end.

"You couldn't have just wounded him?" Damon asked.

"Sorry the fight or flight response doesn't come with considerations," Tyler said.

Damon's eyes twitched as he looked at him. "You two, the brain children. Stefan told me about your little partnership, but too much happened for me to confront you about it."

"Stealing the sword had nothing to do with that," Bonnie lied. "I did it to find the cure. For Elena."

"Why didn't we know about it?" Damon asked.

"Elena's been my best friend since I can remember. I don't need to wait for your direction on when to help her."

"Well, what a mess striking out on your own's turning out to be."

"Okay, so she made a mess. Shoe's on the other foot. Help her clean it up," Tyler snapped.

"I'm sorry, where are we on believing this Silas thing?" Stefan interrupted.

"One hundred percent," Bonnie reported.

"Are you serious?" Damon asked.

"You're doubting after what just happened to your brother?" Tyler asked. He didn't understand how Bonnie managed to deal with Damon on a regular basis.

"It's a story. Even if there's merit to some of it, it can't all be true. The guy's buried six feet under. How is he using his powers? I'm not up to speed on how immortality works in the witch community, but, unlike us, you're still human, which means you still need sleep, food, water, all those lovely accommodations. I considered it when the storm first happened, but common sense came back after that long, quiet drive back from Whitmore. It's why I took so long to even tell Klaus about it. Now, Silas has been buried for how long?"

"Almost two thousand years, according to Shane's presentation," Bonnie said.

"Right," Damon said. "And as if that wasn't enough, we now know exactly where the cure is, so now that Stefan's fine, and Klaus is fine, we can start buying plane tickets to Israel."

"I think Silas channeled me," Bonnie said. "I think that's why I can't access most of my powers."

"Why would he channel you?" Damon asked obnoxiously. "Why would he even know about you? Pushing up daisies and can't process a thought, remember?"

"I don't know," Bonnie said to his first question. "But I visited the explosion site, the one where Pastor Young died?"

"We visited," Tyler corrected.

Bonnie shifted on her feet, annoyed.

"When did you two decide you'd struck gold by partnering up?" Damon asked as he gestured between them.
Elena saw Caroline roll her eyes to the ceiling.

"He's still there," Bonnie responded curtly. "His spirit is there, and he tried to kill me. Spirits don't stay on earth unless there's something holding them back."

"So April was telling the truth," Stefan said slowly. "Silas promised her her father back."

"Too bad we can't go talk to her about it, lest we want our eyeballs melted," Damon said.

"So you do believe in Silas," Tyler said as he glared at Damon.

Damon narrowed his eyes at him.

"We're here to talk about how we're going to sell this to Klaus," Bonnie said to Damon impatiently.

"Klaus!" Damon exclaimed. "A perfect example. Remember how scared we all were of him, the big, bad Original vampire? Now we're dealing with him on a regular basis."

"Are you delusional?" Tyler raised his voice. "Dealing with him on a regular basis? He's still big, bad Klaus to some of us, Damon."

"Tyler, calm down," Elena said.

"Hey, Alpha-" Damon began at the same time.

Tyler hopped off the stage and stalked toward Damon, and Damon balled his fists with a smirk on his face.

Caroline shot out of her seat. "Tyler!" She intercepted him and put both hands on his chest.

Bonnie kept her focus on Damon in case he rushed at Tyler, but she also stayed alert for Tyler's movements. Tyler beating Damon down would improve the day by ten shades.

"Didn't he almost drain Elena of all her blood? He's killed werewolves-"

"Stop it!" Caroline insisted. She tried to get him to see, "You're not helping."

Bonnie abruptly left the sword and went to Tyler. She wasn't going to let Caroline chastise him in front of everyone for standing up to Damon. She put her hand between Caroline's on his chest. She was so focused on being the one who spoke to him that she didn't notice that she forced Caroline to move aside, lest she be pushed aside.

"Tyler," she called while looking up at him. She moved her hand up and placed it behind his neck. "Tyler."

The solid contact between her skin and his pulled his attention, and he slowly lowered his eyes from Damon's face to look at her. He softened when he saw the state of the left side of her face. Bonnie rubbed his neck with her pinky, and the subtle caress stole Tyler's breath. He spun away from her so that he wouldn't react how he really wanted to. He put his hands on the stage and closed his eyes to calm himself.

Caroline walked over to him and stroke his arm.

"My point is," Damon resumed.

Bonnie cut him off. "We're going to Klaus' house, and we're gonna tell him Kol attacked me. We're
gonna tell him he was a threat to the cure; we're gonna tell him where the cure is; and we're gonna promise him that Silas will bring his brother back."

"What?" Elena asked.

Tyler turned from the stage, surprise all over his face.

"That's what's going to keep him from killing us, the promise of getting his brother back. It doesn't matter if it actually happens. Klaus just needs to hold on to it long enough….until we get the cure."

Tyler understood what she really meant: until the pack kills him.

"Guys," Elena cut in. "I don't think we should keep looking for the cure if there's an immortal witch who wants to destroy the world on the other side of it. I can deal with being a vampire if that's the option."

"You heard Bonnie," Damon said as he looked at the girl in question, "This isn't just about turning you human anymore. It's about saving all our butts. Let's go. That shiner on your face should help sell the Kol threat story." He gave Tyler a hard stare.

Bonnie grabbed the sword and left with the Salvatores without a backward glance. She picked up her phone from the floor on the way out of the building.

Caroline sighed when they left and put an arm around Tyler's waist. "There's no use arguing with Damon. He's just….an ass. He doesn't care."

Elena straightened her back.

"I know," Tyler said. "But that's not gonna stop me from doing it."

On the ride to Klaus' mansion, Bonnie fielded questions from Stefan and Damon.

"How's your face?" Stefan asked quietly.

Bonnie looked at him in the rearview mirror. "It hurts." She held herself still in the backseat.

"Could heal that with a little blood after we see Klaus," Damon taunted.

"No, thanks."

"How many swords do you have, Bonnie?" Stefan asked.

"Two. The other three haven't come in yet."

"Are you really gonna help Tyler Lockwood with his ridiculous mission?" Damon asked.

"It's not ridiculous--"

"I get it; Klaus has been a humongous dick to him--"

"The only thing I need from you, Damon, is a promise that you're not gonna mention Tyler's name in anything you say. At all. This is dangerous for him."

Stefan turned from the passenger seat to look at her.

"What?"
"Nothing," Stefan answered. "Just...you're agitated from the attack."

That was the most minute cause of her agitation. Still, she said, "I don't like feeling powerless."

"We're just a little confused on when you and Tyler became friends, that's all," Damon said. He looked at her in the rearview mirror and stretched his lips into a smile.

Stefan frowned and faced forward.

Kim answered the door when they arrived. She blinked when she saw Bonnie and turned her attention to Stefan and Damon.

"We're here to talk to Klaus," Damon informed her.

Kim made them wait in the foyer while she went to get Klaus. She didn't rejoin them. The Hybrids weren't supposed to be in attendance when Klaus had guests. But they had permission to be in the next room, the sitting room, when Klaus was visited by people he considered to be enemies or potential enemies. Just in case. The doorbell had alerted every Hybrid in the house. She was joined by Alex, and Lily and Dai, the two Hybrids who remained loyal to Klaus.

When Klaus entered the foyer, completely healed as Bonnie had guessed and dressed in black, he noticed the sword immediately.

"What's this then?" He asked, clearly prepared to go off.

"Nice to see you in tip-top shape and back to your tricks, Klaus," Damon began the ruse. "I think I missed the part in our agreement where we said it was okay to send your psychotic brother after our witch."

"Kol," Klaus guessed, closing his eyes. "He was ranting and raving about-it doesn't matter. Where is he?"

"Dead," Bonnie delivered flatly.

Klaus barely moved his mouth when he asked, "Excuse me?"

"I guess I should've specified when I said 'came after our witch' that he tried to kill her," Damon said.

"I will have your heads for this."

"What did you want me to do?" Bonnie asked. "Get killed? He attacked me at school. He jumped me."

"You didn't control your brother, Klaus," Stefan said.

"You killed an Original vampire," Klaus said skeptically as he took a step toward Bonnie. "Damon recently told me you'd been downsized."

"It wasn't just me. Elena and Caroline helped."

"Two newborns and a downsized witch," he snapped.

"And this," Bonnie added calmly. She reached her hand forward and hit the sword on the floor, where it remained standing.

"Where did you get that?" Klaus asked, his lips twisting with the need to shed the rage that was
making his body stiffer and stiffer.

"I stole it. I needed it to look for the cure."

Bonnie gasped and reflexively closed her eyes when the room suddenly stretched into a blur, and her back hit the front door. When she opened her eyes, Klaus had his hand around her throat, and his words were hot on her face. "Something has been stinking lately."

Stefan and Damon were on him in an instant, trying and failing to get him off of Bonnie. Kim moved in before Lily and Dai had a chance. She grabbed Stefan and threw him across the room. Dai followed suit with Damon. Bonnie's annoyance finally boiled into explosive anger, and she yelled through gritted teeth and unclenched Klaus' hand from around her neck, and she swiftly threw him to the middle of the room. She ran up and flung him into the room containing the eavesdropping Hybrids. Lily's appearance surprised Bonnie, and she was pushed across the foyer and into the kitchen. She landed hard on the tile floor, and Alex tried hard not to intervene on her behalf. Tyler hadn't made the introductions, but based on Kim and Adrian's descriptions, he knew that this was the witch who was supposed to help them.

"First Rebekah is daggered and poisoned and put to sleep for twelve days, and now Kol is dead," Klaus said as he grabbed the sword and stalked to Bonnie. "Both times you're involved. I don't believe in coincidences."

"An Original trying to kill us?" Bonnie fumed from the floor. "That's not a coincidence; it's the fucking norm." She threw her hand forward and both Klaus and Lily were knocked back by a clear wave of energy, something different from Bonnie's telekinesis. There was a physicality to this one. Klaus and Lily were hit hard on the chest before they went flying back, knocking into Kim and Stefan.

Bonnie got up and rubbed her left hip and arm as she walked into the foyer. "So much for downsized," she commented to Klaus. She felt the deluge of energy. She was at full power again.

"Enough!" Klaus shouted to Kim and Dai. Lily's eyes reflected murder as she stared at Bonnie. "You do realize you just killed an entire line of vampires."

"The sword doesn't contain White Oak. Kol's line might be just fine. He caught on fire and exploded, not exactly your typical vampire death."

"And you stole this sword from two 17th century vampires."

"17th century vampires aren't Original vampires. A nice, healthy fire and water spell took care of them. After the aneurysms, of course. I divined for the sword, Klaus. I saw your guards."

Klaus thought about the trap he'd set inside the storage unit, but he said nothing. He needed to go to the site and see for himself. "What reason did Kol state for attacking you?"

"He thinks I'm connected to Silas, because I was affected by the storm, too."

"Was he right?"

"I have no idea. He didn't intend to give me the chance to see for myself."

"You will pay for this."

"I'm the only witch you got."
"You overestimate your value, Bonnie. You'd be surprised what witches are willing to do if you pay them enough."

"I don't know many who would risk waking an immortal witch," Damon pointed out. "That's the word on the street about Silas."

"Fiction and old wives' tales," Klaus said.

"The cure is buried with Silas in Israel," Bonnie said. "Did Kol tell you that?" she asked when Klaus' clear surprise shone through. "Those were going to be his last words to me before he killed me."

"So you better hope Silas is more than fiction," Stefan said. "Remember what April Young told us? He can bring your brother back," Stefan said.

"Where in Israel is the cure?" Klaus asked.

"Yes, you just tried to kill me and told me I can be replaced, so why not give you the one thing you need me for?" Bonnie asked.

"Keep it to yourself, then," Klaus said. "Even more reason to throw Kol at you when he wakes."

"Even more reason for me to kill him dead again."

"Dagger Kol when he comes back," Stefan advised. "Let him cool off for 900 years."

"I don't want to spend the rest of my life looking over my shoulder," Bonnie said.

"You see, that sounds like a fine way for you to end your days from where I'm standing," Klaus said. "I'll decide what to do with Kol after he wakes, and you better pray he wakes, because if he doesn't it won't matter how much protection your father has: I'll be coming directly for you. And this," he said as he picked up the sword from where it had fallen from his hold, "Will be your end. Over and over and over."

He quickly switched the sword to his other hand. He looked at his palm. It had finally burned deep enough for him to notice. "What is this?" he asked as he showed Bonnie.

"I have no idea. I didn't create it."

Klaus looked down at his slowly healing palm. "But I have a feeling it didn't happen to you."

"The cure is in Israel, Klaus. I'm ready for the next phase of this," Bonnie said.

"As am I," he promised her. "I can procure a private jet," he told Stefan and Damon.

"We might need visas," Stefan said.

"We don't. We're U.S. travelers."

"Great," Damon said with a tight smile. "Call us. Bonnie, after you."

Bonnie backed out, she and Klaus looking at each other the entire time. She reached behind her to open the front door, and she stepped out.

She answered in the affirmative when Damon asked her if she was alright once they were in the car.
When they arrived at the school, she had him drive her to the parking lot by the track field. From there, she meant to go to the gym to get her bag while he and Stefan headed to the auditorium. She didn't feel like being part of the group recap. The left side of her face was sensitive, and she'd been thrown, smacked, and choked enough times today to last her the rest of the month. She texted Tyler as soon as she was out of the Salvatores' sights.

*Where are you?*

*First floor stairs. The ones next to the front office. Elena and Caroline are in the gym, told them i wanted to be alone.*

Bonnie detoured and headed inside the main building. By the time she made it to the front office, she was running. Tyler heard her footsteps and rushed down the stairs. Bonnie yanked open one of the double doors, and she threw herself in his arms. Tyler lifted her off the floor and held her tight.

Bonnie closed her eyes and tried to calm down. She was right where she wanted to be; there was no need to start hyperventilating now.

"What were you thinking?" she asked. "What were you thinking?"

"Shh. There are still stragglers in here." He set her down and grabbed her hand and led her up to the second floor. He turned left and took her to the boys' bathroom. Once inside, she leaned back on the door while he checked under the stalls. When he was sure they were alone, he walked to her and framed her face, careful of the injured side. "Did he hurt you?"

Bonnie nodded. "He choked me, threatened me, and then someone from your pack threw me into the kitchen where I landed on my side."

Tyler frowned. "What did they look like?"

"Uh, black hair down to the top of her shoulders, thick bangs, chubby cheeks, thick eyebrows. She's White and like the same height as me."

"That's Lily. No one in my pack would hurt you. Two of the Hybrids are still loyal to Klaus. There was no point in breaking their bond."

"Kim was there. She didn't touch me. " After dealing with Kol and Klaus' murderous hatred up close to her face, it was nice to have Tyler's caring voice and worried look. "Tyler, what were you thinking? You shouldn't have told them you were with me."

"What are you talking about?"

"You told them you stole the sword. You told them you went to the site with me. You told them that you're in some way involved in this."

"I wasn't gonna let you take that fall by yourself."

"I could've handled it."

"Fifty-fifty, remember?"

"You're responsible for other people. You have a whole pack."

"I'm responsible for you, too."

Frustrated, Bonnie walked around him. She turned and said, "You're putting their lives in danger by
trying to look out for me. If you go down, they do too. That would destroy you."

"This isn't some thing where you take all the risks. There is no hierarchy. I care about you as much as I do them. Looking out for you, wanting to protect you, isn't abandoning them, and I'm going to do it every time. I've made that clear to you from the start."

Bonnie walked to the second of the four sinks. She lifted her eyebrows when she saw the anxious, bruised, and tired face looking back at her. She's been getting tired a lot quicker lately. "I don't want you to get hurt, Tyler," she said softly. "Not you and not your pack. I know how important they are to you."

"I don't want you to get hurt, either," Tyler replied as he walked up to her.

She couldn't help but smile. She shook her head as if to clear it, and she turned to face him. "We need to think about what we're gonna do next-"

"No. No, can we just-" he framed her face again. "We can talk about that after. One minute, five minutes," he said, and he said the last word on her lips.

Bonnie pulled on the sleeve of his shirt. When Tyler flicked his tongue on her upper lip, she opened up to him and flinched.

"Mmm-mmm," she said and ended the kiss. "It hurts when I open my mouth too wide."

"Sorry," he breathed.

She smiled, but she was still chagrined. She flattened her palm on his chest. "Tyler," she said, just because she liked saying his name. "We need to work on this. Klaus needs to die and soon. I have a way, and we need to get started."

Tyler closed his eyes and nodded.

"I'm not coming to the dance tonight," she said quietly. "I bought the dress. This ugly dress. And I can't go. I need the time to….do what I do best," she said with a resigned smile.

She turned and looked at herself in the mirror. "Did you get my text?"

"What text?" Tyler asked quietly.

"The one that said to meet me tonight." She said it like that was the most ridiculous thing to text someone.

"I did. I texted back."

"I didn't get to see it. Must've been when Kol attacked. Did those two things really happen today?" she asked as tears sprang to her eyes.

Tyler rubbed her shoulders. "I was scared, Bonnie." He rested his mouth on her right shoulder.

"Me, too. I didn't think you would hear me. I don't know if I expected you to in that moment. I needed help, and….you were the person I called."

"I heard you. I heard your voice in my head, and I followed it to where you were. It was like your voice was pulling me." He kissed her hair, and she closed her eyes.

"I still want to find the cure," she said. "It feels like one big fuck you from the universe. Do you
think Silas would be a God and the cure buried with him if I'd been looking for it for Elena all along? Cause it really feels like this is happening because I want it."

Tyler placed kisses down the left side of her neck and hugged her closer. Bonnie took in a deep breath and relaxed against him when she exhaled. She tilted her head to the right to give him more access, and her eyes drifted closed. He palmed her breasts and fondled them in slow, circular motions, and Bonnie held his hands and followed the movement, her breath coming out of her nose slow and even.

Tyler rubbed his lips on the outer shell of her ear and kissed his way down her neck again. He put his nose to her shoulder and inhaled her.

"Are you okay?" Bonnie asked as the thought came to her.

Tyler lifted his face and looked at her in the mirror. "I'm fine."

Bonnie opened her eyes. She turned around and cupped the left side of his face, "You were angry earlier."

"I was. I was already irritated that April was standing so close to you, and then I was pissed off that you were attacked, and you were hurt, and Damon wasn't helping. But I'm fine now. Well, I'm better," he amended with a small smile.

Bonnie returned it. "Damon never helps."

"So I've heard."

"But we kept your name out of it. Klaus doesn't know you were here."

"Bonnie, that is the least of my concern."

She smiled. "I know." She stroke his cheek with the back of her hand. They gazed at each other a moment, and then Bonnie pulled his face down to hers, and they closed their eyes when their foreheads touched.

"I've been waiting for you," Tyler shared. "Worried and waiting. I just wanted to....."

"Be alone?" Bonnie asked.

"Yes," he said, voicing it a relief in itself.

She smiled. "Me too. The more that happened and the more people freaked out, the more I just wanted a break and just....." She remembered him wanting to fight Damon earlier, wanting to keep pounding on Kol, the promise of a storm on his face when he'd seen the state of hers. He cared about her, and she knew it beyond the shadow of a doubt now. All of those reactions had been about her and her alone, and she dared think it went deeper than the worry of a good friend.

She understood why she felt tired quicker lately. Her father, her mother, Lucy, and now Tyler, she had people who worried about her on a regular basis now, and they were very vocal about it. It forced her to take stock of just how much she was dealing with. It forced her to address things that she'd abandoned a very long time ago: that it wasn't natural or okay for her to be under so much pressure, that she deserved better, that she deserved downtime like everyone else. Abandoning those ideas had lowered her standards for herself and helped her keep up with a full plate of magical responsibilities. It had helped her function hurt after hurt until she broke down, only to keep on trucking afterward.
She'd just admitted that she'd been scared and that she'd had enough of everyone's opinions and emotions earlier, instead of bottling it up and letting it build to a breakdown. And it felt good.

She kissed Tyler flat on the mouth and lowered her hand from the back of his head to the front of his pants to stroke the curve of his dick. She couldn't attend the dance tonight, but they could still have sex in a bathroom like she'd had in mind when she'd sent the text.

"Are you sure you can do this?" Tyler asked, referring to her face.

"I'm very sure."

He kissed her, and then he unzipped his pants and pulled his dick out for her. Bonnie fell to her knees immediately, and he backed up to give her room. She ran her tongue along the side of his extremity. She put him in her mouth and quickly found out that the more she took on, the more her face hurt, so she settled for intermittently licking the skin while she pumped him with two hands. She went slow but firm; her strokes were complete; she let him feel the full circumference of her hands. His dick elongated as it hardened, and it was a sight. Tyler watched her handle him, his fingers twitching at his sides, his hips thrust toward her. He liked the way her hands felt, strong and purposeful. He liked the way he fit in her hands, liked the way the skin of his dick stretched and loosened under her care as she moved up and down.

Bonnie narrowed her focus to the head of his cock. She may have remained a virgin longer than her friends, but she, Caroline, and Elena used to make a habit of sneaking Cosmopolitan magazines in 8th and 9th grade, and while some of the publication's advices had been confusing, redundant, and at times downright unnecessary to all three, Bonnie had eagerly memorized a lot of the good ones. She'd finally gotten herself a subscription the year prior and told her dad it wasn't a big deal when he saw the first charge on the credit card bill.

She twisted her fist around the head of his cock like she was turning the bulbous handle of a faucet. The head became more and more sensitive to her touch, and he cursed under his breath. He widened his stance and leaned forward to place his hands on the sink, and he chuckled when he looked down at her and found her looking up at him.

"It feels really good," he said.

"Good. I want it to feel good."

"Oh my God," he whispered when she did it faster and squeezed him harder. He closed his eyes and licked his lips, his mouth salivating.

Bonnie lamented the fact that she couldn't fit him in her mouth. She was making do very well. She was taking him apart just as beautifully, but she wanted the feel of him in her mouth. She wet the tip of his penis generously with her saliva, and then she rubbed it in circles with her palm. Tyler gasped and felt his legs tingle all the way down to the bottom of his feet.

No longer than seven minutes passed, and Bonnie had him calling on Jesus. A full grin on her face, she gave him a break on the direct stimulation and resumed pumping him up and down.

The bathroom door suddenly opened, and she startled, taking her hands off of Tyler. Although Tyler's blood rushed in surprise, he acted immediately.

"Oh damn-"

"Go to another bathroom," Tyler cut him off. "This one's out of order."
The sophomore turned to leave, and Tyler saw the loophole in what he'd said. He grabbed the boy's arm and turned him around. "You peeked inside and didn't see anyone, just a wet floor."

The boy nodded, his short, thin, blonde-tipped dreads swaying back and forth.

Crisis averted, Tyler asked, "Why do people stay so late at this school?"

He turned to Bonnie, and she folded her lips in amusement at the sight of his dick sticking straight up out of his pants while he was busy being indignant.

Tyler looked down at himself. "Come on," he invited, smiling, "We'll have more privacy in the stalls." The bathroom doors did not lock.

Bonnie stood when he got near her, and he put a hand at the small of her back and followed her to the stall of her choice. There were only two.

"Wait, wait," she said after she pushed open the second door. She stepped inside and turned. Biting her bottom lip, she grabbed his cock and gently pulled him in, remembering how hot she'd found it when he'd led her by the labia.

"Oh," Tyler said. He chuckled as he shuffled in, enjoying the small tug. "Is this payback?"

"Mmm-hmm. Is it sweet payback?"

"Mmm-hmm." He reached behind him to lock the stall, and then switched their positions so that her back was to it. He took her hand off of him and sank to his knees. He pushed her dress up, something he's been wanting to do since Tuesday, and she held it out of the way. He pulled her underwear down to her upper thighs and found a very bald, soft brown pussy. He grinned. He hadn't minded the hair one bit, but this was new on her, so he looked forward to acquainting himself.

Bonnie smiled when she saw his delight. He attached his mouth to her mound and suckled. The suction was loud and wet, and he did it until her mound glistened with his saliva. He lowered to her slit and delicately flicked his tongue over her folds on a downward trajectory. Then he did it again, this time making his tongue firm enough to penetrate her flabby folds. She had never cared for how her lips hung down so noticeably on her pussy, as if it was in a permanent state of having lost a huge amount of weight and was dealing with the loose skin. She had never cared for them until Tyler had used them to pull her on Saturday, until she'd watched him suck on them, until she watched them cover the side of his lips as he lavished her clit with strokes of his tongue at this very moment.

She felt compelled to watch Tyler. With Jeremy, the few times things had calmed down enough for him to go down on her, she hadn't had a preference. But with Tyler, it added to her arousal to see how exactly he was making her feel so incredible. It added her arousal to see what he was doing to enjoy her pussy.

She gave it to him, her hips far away from the door as he licked her toward completion, the feeling of her underwear halfway down her thighs, restraining her movements, also adding to her arousal. She was already worked up from pleasuring him. Now she wanted him to do whatever he wanted to her.

Tyler pulled her underwear down the rest of the way. He removed his mouth from her sweet pussy and helped her take them off. He stood and let the garment slide down his left wrist.

"Take me," she said, and there was pleading in her tone, more asking than demanding, and Tyler's pupils dilated with keen interest when he registered how she was looking at him: waiting on him for what to do next, waiting for him to decide, her mouth open, her face soft, her eyes completely vulnerable.
"Turn around."

Bonnie turned quickly, eager, ready; she leaned the right side of her face against the door, and his cock jumped. He didn't touch her right then. Instead, he took in how fast she lifted the back of her dress and spread her legs and pushed her ass back to him. He made her wait, let her burn with the anticipation. He made himself wait, even though he could already feel his cock entering her.

Bonnie closed her eyes and waited. She wasn't going to question. She knew he would come. She would wait. And the more she waited, the shorter her breaths came, the more her nipples pushed against her bra. She wanted it so bad. Her day had sucked, and she wanted his touch, wanted to be surrounded by him, wanted everything he could give.

Tyler grabbed his cock and began stuffing her, and she gasped. She folded her lips and grunted as he fed her more. Tyler didn't touch her. He wanted their genitals to be their only point of contact. He leaned his right hand on the door as he got closer to bottoming out in her slick vagina. He sighed when he was all the way in. He didn't give them time to adjust; he began humping her immediately, his stance wider than hers, his hips building a carnal rhythm.

He wrapped his arms around her and kept her breasts squeezed in his palms. Bonnie held on to the hook on the door, and they breathed together, this sexual act like mana to a day that had turned into worry, fear, uncertainty, frustration, and hurt.

There was only certainty here: he wanted her, and she wanted him. There was no worry: Bonnie was sure that she would orgasm from him, and he was sure that would come with enough time spent inside her. Here, waiting was sweet, not frustrating. Here, there was only pleasure and consideration.

She loved how close he held her, how hard his slow thrusts pushed her against the door. Tyler buried his face against hers and breathed her in. The smell and feel of her mixed together to cloud his mind. The more he fucked her, the better it felt, the more cloying, and the more like he would never have enough no matter how frequently he had her.

He held her tighter, tried to bleed into her, and Bonnie moaned her approval. "Please take me," she begged.

He snapped his hips into her. "I wanna bite you, Bonnie," he grunted, and his face mutated. "I want it. I want you."

"Yes. Please. Tyler."

He put enough space between their bodies to cock her head to the right and expose the left side of her neck.

"Please," Bonnie paled, and Tyler punctured her skin with his four teeth. Her eyes flew open as the blood was sucked out of her body. "Yes, yes, oh God."

Talking made her blood rush out faster, and Tyler emitted an animalistic growl and shook her body as he feasted and fucked and took more. Her blood went straight to his head. His taste buds were in heaven. She was succulent with something extra, something Bonnie, something magic, something reflecting his feelings for her, like nothing he had ever tasted before, and he imbibed more.

The pain was sharp at first, then dull when he started to suck the blood, then insistent the more he took. It was marvelous. She had no control over it. She was at his mercy. Her body was his, and it was relief. She wanted to find out just how much blood he would take before he decided that he'd had enough. Her body weakened deliciously so that she slumped in his arms a little, and still he took
"Ty," she said hoarsely.

Tyler detached his teeth from her and bit the fleshy part of his right arm. "Feed."

Bonnie latched on to his arm without a second thought. She bit his arm and sucked, and the blood flowed into her mouth. Tyler stopped humping her and watched, attracted by the sight.

Bonnie took to his arm like she took to her favorite dessert. It didn't completely taste like blood. There was the smell and taste of iron, but they didn't overpower. His blood was thick and filling, just a little sweet and completely Tyler. What made her want more when the wound healed was the revelation in her mind that if there existed a way for her to taste magic, he was what it would taste like. She was about to lick his arm when Tyler took it from her and bit himself anew.

She rushed to drink, moaning her satisfaction. She pushed back and humped him.

Tyler lifted his arm in a way that gave her warning so that he didn't disturb her. She held his arm to her mouth, and he turned it so that she turned her head and exposed the right side of her neck again. He resumed thrusting, faster but his strokes still complete.

Bonnie grunted with every thrust. Growling low in his throat, he bit her again, and she orgasmed on contact. Her body shook from the supreme overstimulation, and she convulsed in his sturdy hold, holding tight to his arms, and the green of her eyes changed to the yellow of a pure werewolf.

Tyler removed his teeth, because biting her while she was shaking so hard was dangerous. Humping her, however, posed no threat, and it felt so good that he stood on his toes to keep going.

"God, yes!" Bonnie strained when she finished. She closed her legs and flattened her palms on the door as the charge on her pussy continued.

Her closed legs gave Tyler's dick less room to move. The sensation was incredible and caused his body to give in, and he shouted through his orgasm until he was spent.

He remembered to feed her again to replenish her strength and heal the wound, and they held each other there against the door, tired, shaking, still connected.

Bonnie felt something liquid roll down her chin. She lifted her head from the door and caught it with her index and middle fingers. She looked at what it was. Blood. She couldn't take her eyes off of it. She gently pushed at Tyler's thigh until he pulled out. She unlocked and opened the door and numbly made her way to a mirror.

Her mouth and chin were a foreign sight. She slowly brought up her right hand and touched. The blood was still fresh; the blood from a vampire's body took longer to coagulate. The pads of her fingers easily slid in it, and touching the blood made her realize just how far she'd gone.

She turned to Tyler, who had followed her, and saw the blood on his face. Surprised, she said, "I drank your blood. I..." She turned to the mirror and looked at the state of her mouth. "I drank blood." She gasped.

Tyler's stomach dropped. He'd asked to bite her, because he'd wanted to bite her. She'd agreed. He hadn't thought she'd done it because she'd felt like she had to. "You hated it."

"I never...it was just spur of the moment." She chuckled when she exhaled. His ejaculate was crowding the exit of her vagina, but she paid no mind. "It was one hell of a...heat of the moment."
I've never wanted blood. I've never...." She faced him again and touched her neck where he'd bitten her. She then touched the left side of her face. They were both healed.

"I never expected to do that," she said. "I just....wanted to....give myself to you. To give you everything. I...." Her eyes widened when she realized just how much she wanted to give him her burdens. "I liked it," she said as she teared up. "I liked it a lot."

"But you're crying," he remarked. He framed her face and searched her eyes. "I can handle it, Bonnie. I can handle you giving me everything. I handled it just now, and I can handle it when we're not naked. Or half naked, or all covered up. Tell me-"

"I wanted it. I needed it. I liked it." She smiled. "It's just shocking."

He relaxed and returned her smile. "I've never done anything like that either. Ever."

"Vampires don't go around biting each other?"

"They might, but me and Caroline-we didn't. And it's not something I'm into or anything; it's just-I wanted to drink your blood."

He was sincere, but his choice of words reminded both of Dracula, and they burst into laughter.

"The closest thing to crazy vamp sex I've had is, um, with Caroline?" When she lifted her chin in acknowledgment, he judged it safe to go on. "It was our first time, at Elena's birthday party two summers ago. She vamped out of nowhere, and it scared the crap out of me. I mean it didn't show on my face, but it scared me. I was still a werewolf then, and my heart sped up like crazy. I thought she was gonna bite me. I stopped everything to make sure. She told me she wasn't, that she was just.....excited. So, uh, we continued and she did it again. And she kept doing it, and every single time it scared me."

"Because vampires and werewolves hate each other?" she asked.

"Maybe? But it happened even after I became a Hybrid. We worked out this thing where she only did it sometimes, and she had to warn me before she did it, but every time....it just made me want to panic."

"Because of Klaus."

He swallowed. "I just don't like it," he said with a strained smile. "But I did it sometimes, because she likes it."

"You never told her how it made you feel."

"I know her. She'd feel bad. She'd take it personally, and I just....I didn't want to make her feel uncomfortable about liking it."

"Hmm. So you chose to be uncomfortable instead," she teased, recalling what he'd said to her so long ago at the Festival.

Tyler smiled, remembering his words. "Yeah, I guess I did. You're smiling with blood all over your face."

"I know," she said, mortified. "But so are you," she pointed out with a perfectly arched brow. She went to wipe her mouth but remembered that she didn't want that mess on her sleeve.
"Wait," Tyler said before she turned to the sink. He used three fingers to wipe the blood from her mouth and chin. "You're a clean eater. Some people are so over the top with it, on their cheeks and everything. Just nasty. Rebekah took me to a feed house a couple of times when I first turned," he explained.

Bonnie smiled. However, the smile disappeared when Tyler took the bloody fingers to her clit and started rubbing. He held her butt with the hand still decorated with her underwear and backed her into the sink. Bonnie held on to his biceps, and they smiled at each other. What he was doing was wild, inspired, and it set her stomach aflutter. She bit her lip, taken in by how tenderly he was studying her face. He could handle her everything. He wanted to. Those were dangerous things to say to her.

Her hold on his biceps tightened, and he took it as his cue to rub faster. She was close. He squeezed her ass cheek, and she wanted him to squeeze harder. She grabbed the front of his shirt and said, "Please make me come."

Tyler shook his head in admiration. She was sexy. What she'd just asked was sexy, the sounds she made while having sex were sexy, the way she came was sexy, and that was a departure from the hot he always used to describe very attractive girls.

"Please," she whispered, because she liked asking him.

After a short time, Tyler stopped doing the circles and pushed against her clit and rubbed it side to side, fast. Bonnie closed her eyes and opened her mouth and came, pushing his come out of her vagina. He kept rubbing, and a stronger orgasm knocked her over. She grabbed the sink behind her and lifted onto her toes and threw her head back as she twitched. Her voice came out like she was lifting something heavy. She was half sitting on the sink and blindly reached for the hand treating her clit and missed as her lower body went stiff. She threw the arm around Tyler's neck and turned her body into him, and he wrapped his arm around her waist to control her movement.

Bonnie attempted to close her legs, and he ordered her not to. She clutched his hair and put her head next to his and tried to bear it out. He kept rubbing, and her clit reached new sensitivity, and she felt her urethra breathe out, a warning sign she'd only experienced twice before. Her upper body joined her lower body in going stiff, and she gushed. She heard wet splashing as he rubbed the liquid out of her.

"I'm fucking-" Her hips bucked hard, and her legs gave out, and Tyler tightened his arm around her waist and guided her to the floor. Her hips were out of control, and she wanted to be embarrassed about how hard she was coming, but she couldn't take her focus on how severely her hips were jerking. "Tyler, I ca-can't. Mm! Mm! Mm!"

Tyler dropped his butt on the floor and kept going, wanting everything she had, wanting to leave her empty. She was on her side and trying to climb into him, pulling at his shirt, her face buried in his neck.

Bonnie yelled sharply and snapped her legs closed tight and held his wrist. "Please stop, please, please," she hiccupsed.

"I will," he said with a big smile. He held her against his chest as she twitched hard from the aftershocks.
"That was….completely embarrassing," she said on his chest. Her heart rate was back to normal, and his hand was still trapped between her legs.

"Looked like it felt really good to me."

"Oh, it did," she confirmed, closing her eyes. "It really did. But it was embarrassing. I sounded like…." She laughed. "I sounded like I had a speech problem. And I couldn't control my body. It was amazing," she sighed.

"You were amazing."

"You were amazing." Tyler tightened his embrace.

"Oh my God, how long have we been in here?"

"Don't know, don't care."

"Well, you should." She sat up straight and turned to look at him as she got up, and she noticed his boner. "Uh…"

"Uh, we'll save that," he said, and he stood.

They went into separate stalls to clean themselves up.

"I don't think we should let another week go by before we do this again," Tyler said.

Bonnie smiled in her stall and hummed.

When they met at the sinks, Tyler held out her underwear. "Hold on," he said when she made to grab it. He held it to his nose and smelled the crotch. The wolf flashed in his eyes.

"Tyler!" Bonnie chastised and grabbed his forearms. "I've been wearing that all day."

"I'm an animal, Bonnie," he said, and the smile he gave her was characteristic of just that.

"Oh my God." She shut her eyes tight.

"It smells-"

"Don't say good. Don't lie."

"It does smell good. It doesn't smell like something you'd bottle up and put in the perfume aisle, but that doesn't mean it doesn't smell good. It's….heavy. Intense. Raw. It smells like your vagina. But, you know, over the day."

"Okay, that's-okay. Your eyes changed."

"I told you."

"You're a freak." She stepped closer and quietly asked, "Do you want to keep it?"
He grinned. "I'll take the next one."

She smiled, her heart thudding. She took the undergarment from him and put it on. They then washed the lower half of their faces and swished water in their mouths. They scrubbed their teeth with their index finger to get rid of any leftover blood. Bonnie washed her neck where she'd been bitten and then stuck her tongue out. Nothing she could do about that part.

Tyler scrubbed his arm where he'd bitten himself and then he scrubbed underneath his fingernails.

As he washed his hands, he ruminated on a startling truth: he'd wanted to Mark her in the stall. And he still wanted to. He wanted all of her, all of the time, and he wanted everyone to know. He, Adrian, and Kim had talked about Marking during the rest of the drive last week. He'd learned a little about the process from a section of the cave drawings, but the Betas had further enlightened him.

He started to blink excessively when he remembered that biting was one way to Mark a mate. But he'd been biting Bonnie to feed. But he had also wanted to claim her in that heated moment, and he'd spoken it, and she had said yes in so many words, a very key aspect of Marking.

He sent up a silent prayer that his status as a Hybrid didn't exempt him from the lycan rules for Marking. While a bond couldn't be chosen because it was cosmically emotional and, at base, tied to power, a Mark could be helped, and he felt that it was something that Bonnie needed to know and willingly submit to before he did it.

If he had accidentally done it, however….he wouldn't exactly lament it. He was positive that Bonnie liked him as more than a friend.

"Uh, got any on your clothes?" he asked as he turned off the faucet.

Bonnie's answer was stolen by the loud groaning of the pipes running behind the toilets. One stall, then all three. The fixture creaked and then the first burst, and the toilet bowl with water.

"Crap." Bonnie turned off the faucet and grabbed her phone, and they ran out just as the second toilet malfunctioned.

"What is up with that?" Tyler asked when they got to the stairway.

"I have a good idea, but I can't worry about that right now. Klaus is priority number one. I need to fill you in on what happened at his house, and then we need to go over the steps to kill him."

"Okay. You said you'd work on it over the weekend."

"I did. That's what we need to talk about. I had to give him the sword, Tyler."

He swallowed. That meant that Klaus knew that the sword had been stolen. "We should meet at my house. You said we should spend some time there," he reminded her with a small smile.

Bonnie smiled. "I have my powers back. The clock's ticking. Klaus is way too close. He needs to die this weekend."

He nodded, and they descended the stairs and broke out into the late afternoon. Bonnie didn't stop running. It felt good to run. The air felt fresh, cleaner somehow. Her sense of smell was sharper. She was smiling, and then she was laughing. She was happy. She was bright-eyed and energetic, and she ran faster.

Tyler ran after her, a little confused as to why she was laughing, but he was happy to see her looking
so carefree.

They slowed to a walk when they got to the building housing the gym and stepped inside. "Should we go in together?" Tyler asked.

"I don't know. I have no idea how long we've been gone. It feels like an hour." Bonnie took off at a jog, and Tyler followed alongside her.

If they'd been gone for an unreasonable amount of time, there might be questions. It would look a little odd that he'd asked for space and Bonnie had gone off with Stefan and Damon, only for the two of them to come back together. He wasn't prepared to lie. Or rather, he didn't care to lie.

They entered the gym, and Bonnie looked for her messenger bag. It had been removed from its place by the chair that held the bags of balloons. Tyler tapped her arm and pointed to where Caroline had moved it: next to where laid her own bag as well as his backpack.

"There you are," Caroline said as she walked up beside them.

"Yeah," Bonnie answered as they walked to her bag. "Where are all of the balloons?"

"Popped," Caroline answered. "All of them. At the same time. I've sent some people on an emergency run, because we don't have any backup red ones."

Tyler wanted to tell Bonnie that the balloons had popped when she'd screamed for him.

"Well, I can't stay to blow them up. I need to go home." She picked up her bag. Boldly touching Tyler's chest, she said, "I'm showering, and then I'm coming over."

"Uh, coming over for what?" Caroline asked them.

Bonnie took her hand off his chest and looked at her. Tyler answered, "To talk about the Klaus situation."

"Oh perfect, I'll be there, too."

Bonnie and Tyler stared at her. Tyler forced himself to speak, "Uh...we've kind of talked about this."

"That me knowing is a risk? There's not telling me things, and then there's actively shutting me out when I'm telling you that I want to know and want to be there for you. I didn't even know you'd gone to the explosion site, Tyler. I didn't know you'd stolen from Klaus. I found out all of this with everyone else. I'm telling you right now that there is no risk. I want to be a part of this. Every conversation." She turned a challenging look on Bonnie, who calmly turned her attention to Tyler.

"Uh...yeah. Sure," Tyler answered. He was blinking a lot slower than he needed to.

"Perfect, then," Bonnie answered. "I'll see you guys in like an hour and half, maybe two. Where's Elena?"

"Damon called her, so she left," Caroline said. "He said you...went in another direction." She looked at Tyler and what she'd been considering in the time it had taken him and Bonnie to return to the gym solidified in her mind. They had met up.

"Okay," Bonnie said. "See you guys later." She turned and headed for the door. She hadn't had time to think of doing anything with Tyler at the meeting later, besides going over the spells to weaken Klaus for the kill, but Caroline's inclusion made her roll her eyes as she walked. At the door, she
turned and scanned the room for April. She was gone.

"So, are you staying here, or are you heading home?" Tyler asked Caroline.

"I was thinking of staying a little bit. We can hang out here until Bonnie's ready. I don't think I'm going to the dance tonight."

"Why not?"

"You still want to go?"

"Not really, but I know how important this stuff is to you. Me not going is no reason for you to stay home."

"Well, I wasn't thinking of staying home. I was thinking of sleeping over tonight," she said as she stepped closer and played with the lapels of his jacket. "After what happened today, I just...I'm not in the mood to party."

He nodded. He hoped she didn't smell any leftover scent of the blood. "I can't hang out here. I'm gonna head home and shower, too," he said as he bent down to pick up his backpack.

Caroline did a half nod and blinked. That was a nice coincidence, that Bonnie needed a shower and now he did, too. She wanted to ask him what he needed to wash off. Instead, she said, "I'll delegate here, then, and go home to grab my stuff."

Tyler blinked and nodded. "I'll see you there, then."

"Tyler, wait. What took you so long to come back?"

"We were talking. About Klaus, about how the Kol story had gone. I didn't realize so much time had passed."

"It's been at least ten minutes since Elena left," she said with a shrug of her shoulder.

Tyler nodded. "I'll see you later."

Caroline stood very still as she watched him leave. For the first time, she considered the very strong possibility that Bonnie and Tyler were actually sleeping together, that it wasn't simply a question of Bonnie being into him or him being into her anymore, that they weren't simply talking and stealing and going places to do God knows what in their secret partnership. She knew what. She was pretty sure she did.

She turned from the exit after Tyler crossed it, and something about Bonnie came to the forefront of her conscious.

The bruise on her face was healed.
Bonnie locked her car and headed inside the house. Her father's car was parked, but she didn't see or hear him on the first floor. She headed to his room upstairs and knocked on his open door. Nothing.

She listened for any noise in his bathroom but didn't hear anything there either. She headed for her room and decided to call his phone after her shower.

And there, she found him sitting at the foot of her bed. With the sword standing in front of him.

"Dad," she chastised. She dropped her bag and rushed to the sword. "What are you doing?"

"You've got a pretty interesting way of staying out of it," commented a female voice from the closet across the door.

"Lucy?" She blinked and suddenly there was a person standing next to Lucy. "Mom. Wha-"

"You wanna tell me more about this spell you're working on?" Rudy asked calmly as he gestured at the sword.

"I already told you-" Bonnie stopped and took a good look at the sword. It was old, ancient. Not the sword that Jeremy had touched.

"A nice surprise I found waiting for me when I went to the bathroom," Lucy said.

"You got one," Bonnie murmured to herself.

"I touched it and got a vision of you holding it and summoning more. Only it happened in the past."

"I wasn't holding it. I was holding another one. This came to you. That's three."

"The Five's swords," Abby said. "Why did you call them, Bonnie? We said you'd stay out of this. You're supposed to be going to a school dance tonight. Was that a lie?"

"No. But I'm not going to the dance anymore," she said as she took the sword and rounded her bed to hide it with the other. "I got attacked at school: an Original. Kol Mikaelson. He's dead now. Killed him with one of these."

"Excuse me?" Abby asked. "Do you want to start at the beginning?"

Bonnie stood. "He attacked me, because….listen, you wanted to stop this. I didn't say anything."

"There was nothing for you to say. Lucy saw the future," Abby reminded her.

Bonnie looked at her father, and she understood. "You told him?"

"Everything," Abby confirmed.

"Why?"

"Because you need to be stopped," Rudy replied. "Bonnie, she said you're gonna die. Now I don't know why she thought going after this cure was something to support you in in the first place, but it stops now. You're dropping it."
"I'm not. I'm not," she insisted when they kept looking at her. "I know where the cure is. Capernaum?" she asked Abby. The location was confirmed by the look on her and Lucy's faces.

"How did you find out?" Abby asked.

Bonnie sighed. "The vampire who tried to kill me? He told me. It's why he wanted-to-the cure is buried with a witch. An old one. His name is Silas, ever heard of Him?" When Lucy shook her head, she continued, "He's attached to this witch named Qetsiyah."

She told them the story that she had heard from Shane's presentation months ago. "The cure is with Him," she repeated at the end. "Look, He's bad news, but an immortal witch...that's still human, right? They need to eat and drink and sleep? He can't be in great shape so grabbing the cure is still possible."

"What are you thinking about?" Lucy asked. When Bonnie blinked, she elaborated. "You're thinking about something right now; there's something else. I can't read it, but it's there. Something about the storm you told us happened. Does it have something to do with Silas?"

"Bonnie," Abby warned when the young witch avoided eye contact.

"I was hurt during the storm," she confessed. "It was in my brain, and it was excruciating. It felt like something was trying to tear it apart. Tyler-my friend-he helped. It stopped as soon as the storm stopped. I have my powers back now, though. I got them back today."

"And?" Abby asked, feeling there was more.

"And I think someone was channeling me. I think...it was Silas. There's this girl: April Young. She said that her God Silas promised to resurrect her father. As soon as she said it, the storm started. I think I was attacked."

Rudy scrubbed his face.

"How can it be Silas? You just said He was buried," Lucy reminded her.

"I don't know," Bonnie said. "Look, I didn't tell you all of that-I just want you to know what we might be up against."

"Bonnie, are you losing your mind?" Rudy asked. "If this Guy is buried with the cure, if He did attack you, that means He's probably the One who kills you."

"I've considered that. And I want the cure anyway."

"Bonnie," Abby said. "You just said that releasing this...Man...means chaos for the rest of the world. The search for the cure is off!"

"It's not. We can handle him, or we can try. He wakes up, anything happens, it's three against one."

"Two against one, Bonnie, you'll be dead. You won't be here," Lucy reminded her.

"But you don't know it's Him for sure."

"So now it's a coincidence that He attacked you?" Lucy asked.

Bonnie inhaled. "I want...to find...the cure. It's important."

"No, it's not," Abby replied. "It's not more important than your life. It's not more important than
everyone else's life. Bonnie...I'm okay with being a vampire. I told you this before; I told you this at the very beginning. This doesn't need to be fixed."

"It does."

"It doesn't."

Bonnie clutched her head in frustration.

"You're talking about putting thousands of people in danger, if not more," Rudy said. "For some reason you're not thinking about your life, so can you at least think about them?"

"I'm not stopping," she swore. "And you can't stop me. I don't need you there to get the cure. You guys have no idea what this means."

"You're obsessing," Abby declared.

"Obsess--What do you know about me? What do you know about me?" she asked Lucy in turn. "We've spent a lot of time talking about the cure, trying to figure out where it is, how we're gonna get it, but what do you know about me? What do you know about what this means to me? Telling me I look beautiful in a Lisa Turtle dress doesn't mean you know me. So we stop, so we don't do this. What happens to me? The world is safe, everyone is safe, and you're still a vampire. Do you have any idea what happens to me? What do I do?"

"You go on with your life," Abby said softly.

Bonnie smiled bitterly. "My life. And do you know what my life is? More of this. More of can't have that, because it's bad for everybody else. That's my life. That's it every time. Every time, deal with it, because it's good for everybody else. You have no idea what you turning did to me. These people...I trusted them, and they killed you. That was my life. That...was my life turned upside down. That was...I'm not over it. I can't get over it, and I tried. I tried to move on, but I was...I was frozen. Inside. I was all ice. And then this cure comes along....

I am obsessing. Because do you have any idea how many times I try to do something like this? How many times I try to fix something just for me? Any time I want to fix something for someone else, the universe just opens up. Just lets it happen. Any time it's just...just me...it shuts. I don't get to have this. I can't save you, because people would die. I couldn't save Grams because I didn't know how. So her death was just meant to be. I wasn't supposed to save my boyfriend, and the Spirits made sure that I remembered that. I'm just not supposed to. But everyone else?

Two against one. So let it be two against one. Don't tell me I have to be there, don't tell me you can't do what I do. Don't tell me I can't rest. Don't tell me this all crumbles with two when I've been holding it up by myself. Because what happens if we get the cure and Silas isn't a threat, and you become a witch again? You go back to Eden? You go back to...I don't even know where you live outside of staying with Abby, Lucy. You go, and I'm....."

"I want to spend time with you," Abby said softly as she walked up to her, her eyes teary to match Bonnie's. She stroke her left temple. "I want to get to know you. That can't happen if you're dead. I can't let you do this. You can't risk waking Silas. We can figure something else out."

Bonnie judged it to be a lie. There was only one chance. There was no figuring something else out. "I have to go. I have somewhere to be," she said solemnly and she headed for the bathroom.

"Bonnie," Rudy warned as he stood up. "I don't think that's a good idea. I don't think you should go anywhere, just...stay home, do any homework you have, and just...be here."
"I have to go see Tyler."

"I don't think that's a good idea," Rudy said.

"I promised him something," she said testily. "I promise you: no one will die. He's one of those. The universe is open."

She went in the bathroom and closed the door behind her. She locked it and slid to the floor, her eyes golden yellow as she wiped the unshed tears away.

"I'm not the only one who saw her eyes turn, right?" Rudy asked as they descended the stairs. "I've never seen that before."

"I saw it," Abby confirmed. "I don't think she realized it was happening. It looked like…."

"A werewolf?" Lucy completed for her. Since Bonnie couldn't possibly have become a werewolf without knowing, Lucy reverted back to the more pressing topic. "What are we gonna do about the cure?"

"You can bind her powers: get a blood sample from her and recite the spell, or spill your own blood and do it," Abby answered. "But that wouldn't go over well. And she can't be without her powers in this town. But I'm not letting her die. Not for me, not for anyone."

Rudy tried to figure out how he was going to handle Bonnie, whichever side the coin landed. Everything she'd said was news to him. He'd been able to tell plenty of times that she walked with a burden, but he'd thought that simply trying to talk to her about her magical responsibilities was enough. When she'd told him about Abby's death, she'd talked about it like she was recapping something she'd seen in the news, a tragedy that had happened to someone else, not her. Since then, he's told himself that not having grown up with Abby had made her turning a little easier for Bonnie to handle. After all, Abby was still conscious. He'd assumed that Abby was the only one having a rough time with the change. Now he knew that he'd assumed wrong.

April sat on her calves in front of Silas' altar with her eyes closed and her hands clasped in supplication. Now that she could summon a God, she had no idea how to pray to Him to make it happen. Did she start off with Dear Silas? Would it take days for Him to appear again, like last time?

"You said that-I'm trying to figure out how to talk to You. It's me, April. I pray to You, Silas. I didn't go to the explosion site today. I know You said to, but….and I wanted to, but….I just couldn't. I don't have a car. My dad's car is here, but….I don't know how to drive yet. He was supposed to teach me on my sixteenth birthday. In April."

"April, born in April."

She opened her eyes and found Him standing on her left. "It was kind of last minute. It was Bella for the longest time, and then my mom decided on April right there in the hospital. Hi."

"It suits you. Hi. I'm sorry you couldn't go. I didn't think transportation would be a problem."

"It's too much to do on foot. It's not like I can ask anyone for a ride. Well, I can ask a neighbor, but I don't really want to have to explain."

"I'm sorry."
"You're not wearing Your suit," she commented as she stood. "You're in plain people clothes."

"Ah, I'm teaching a class in forty-five minutes." He was. But He mostly wanted to appear more relatable at this stage.

"I won't keep You. I have the bug. Well, it's more like an ant."

He smiled. She stood and led Him to the kitchen where she'd flattened an ant on the freezer door. "I hope it's not too crushed."

"It doesn't matter." He raised His right hand to the ant and glanced at her. She wasn't looking at His every move in anticipation like He'd expected. Her eyes were on the ant, but she was far away. "Is everything okay?"

"Yeah," she answered, her eyes still on the ant.

He lowered His hand. "April."

She looked at Him. "I'm sorry. I'm just...thinking." She sighed when He waited for her. "I talked to Bonnie today. She asked me about You, wanted to know what You sounded like. She wanted to know....if I really thought You could bring my dad back."

"And now you're doubting."

"I don't mean to. But people don't come back to life."

"They used to. They still do from time to time. And when I wake up, a whole lot will. Everyone who played a part in this by sacrificing their lives will be brought back." Everyone who knowingly sacrificed, anyway.

"Do you think she's on to You? Does she know about You?"

"In a manner. What else did she say?"

"Nothing. She was just...questioning me. Trying to see if I really believed in You, I guess. It made me doubt, but it also made me kind of angry. I feel like I'm so close, and she was trying to...." She closed her eyes and breathed.

"Look," he said softly. She opened her eyes, and He raised His hand to the ant. His projection could not recite spells. Use physical magic, yes, but not recite spells to make magic happen. He had never perfected that. So His image closed its eyes in front of April, and, from His altar room, He wove the spell.

"έιμαι ζω. Θα πέθανει. έιμαι γι', καί ολά αφ' που περικλείαι τ'ν Φύσι. Μέσα από τ'ς φυσικ'ς δυναμεις, καλοθ'ηις καί κακοθ'ηις, αισθάνομαι ο'ρι' συντονιστ'ς τ'ς ζω'ς. ένα απλ'ο, μικρό, τ'ς ζω'ς, ενας νεκρός. Απ' τ'ς τ'ς τους, το πος τ'ς ειδος καί το πον'ρο από τ'ς Φύσι, ειναι το ειδος, καί από τ'ν κακοθ'ηις φυσικ' με καλοθ'ηις καί κακοθ'ηις, εγ' ω Σιλας, ο άνεσος για να παρεσει πάνω από τ'ς, αφ' τ'ς ζω'ς για να παραλα'ει."

His image opened its eyes and blew softly at the ant, and wisps of beautiful thin black smoke came out of its mouth.

"άφησι. άφησι," He chanted in the altar room.

"άφησι!" His voice boomed in every room of the house and April jumped before putting a calming
hand over her mouth. One of His hands was resting by the ant, and it was streaked with black lines. Black wisps floated in his eyes. The crushed parts of the ant pulled together to form a whole. And then the whole moved, slow at first, then as if it had never died. April covered her mouth with her second hand, and the anxiety in her eyes turned to wonder as she watched the small creature continue its way up the freezer door as if it had never been stopped.

Shane looked at her and waited for her reaction.

"It's alive," she marveled quietly. "It's...." The ant went over the fridge and out of sight. She looked at Him and said, "You did it."

"I can do more."

"I'll help you. I will help you."

"I'm glad. Your dad has his whole life ahead of him, April. By the Fall, you will be driving to your first day of junior year."

She smiled. She was relieved. It could happen. It was going to happen. "So, what now?"

"I want you to tell me what you know about Bonnie. Bonnie....is Qetsiyah's descendant."

Her mouth fell open, and her brain filled with thoughts of the ways the descendant of the woman who had imprisoned Silas in the first place could possibly stop this from happening. "Um. She's a witch. Rebekah told me. She's this powerful witch. Is she powerful like Qetsiyah?"

"What else do you know?" It's been months since He last hypnotized Bonnie. No doubt, some changes had happened in her life.

"Uh. Something happened today. I'm not sure what. After she questioned me, she went to the bathroom. She never came back. I don't know what happened, but we were blowing up these balloons, and all of a sudden, while she was gone, all of them popped. At the same time. Tyler ran out of the room right then, like....he sprinted."

"Lockwood."

"Yes. And then Elena Gilbert and Caroline Forbes ran, too. It took them a while to come back, like almost an hour. I tried to follow, but I wasn't sure which direction they went, and I didn't want to risk running into them on their way back. But Elena and Caroline eventually came back. Bonnie and Tyler didn't, and I had to leave because the activity bus was leaving."

"Bonnie and Tyler," He thought out loud. "Something's going on with them. Bonnie's distracted. She's taking too long. She should be-"

He closed his eyes. Why the hell hadn't He guessed it before now?

"I don't think they're dating," April tried. "Caroline's his girlfriend."

"No, she's helping him. He found a real witch." He's been so focused on ensnaring April since Hayley died that He'd forgotten about what Tyler was trying to do.

April waited for Him to say more, and she was rewarded.

"Bonnie is the key to my release. She's Qetsiyah's descendant, that makes her the only supernatural entity able to get near my grave. She's blood."
"How are we going to get her to help?"

"We are going to give her a reason to want me alive. We're going to merge her distraction with our interest."

Tyler opened the front door, and he looked the freshest that Bonnie had ever seen him. He looked brand new, like he'd been bathed by the Gods. He looked brighter than everything else surrounding him. He was wearing a gorgeous beige Henley with dark navy pants and black shoes. Her mood lifted a smidge at the sight of him. She almost wished she'd put more thought into what she was wearing. She'd meant to on the drive home from school. Then she'd spoken to her family.

"Hi," Tyler greeted beautifully.

She smiled. "Hi."

He stared at her a moment and then remembered himself. "Come in. Caroline's already here," he said as she crossed the threshold.

Bonnie almost fell sideways as she lifted her foot to take the next step. She lifted her eyes to the ceiling. She'd forgotten what the circumstances of this meeting had morphed into. She turned to Tyler and readjusted the small brown and light pink backpack slung on her left shoulder, "Where are we meeting?"

"Uh, the game room." He felt like he was going to run out of the little breath he had now that he was in her presence. His powers have been out of whack since he got home. His claws kept coming out, his body temperature was a lot higher than what was normal for a werewolf, whiskers appeared and disappeared on his face at a moment's notice, and when he'd been telling his mother about the two guests coming over, his face had shifted. He'd been seeing through the eyes of a Hybrid until ten minutes before Caroline's arrival. He couldn't control any of it, and he was sure that it was a side effect of drinking Bonnie's magical blood.

Carol Lockwood walked into the foyer in search of Tyler. "Tyler?"

"Yes, mom?" he answered from behind Bonnie.

"Uh, would you like brain food for the girls?"

"Uh, no. Unless you want something, Bonnie?" he amended as he came to stand beside her.

"I actually am hungry," Bonnie said. "I'll take a snack or something. Can I have some water, too?"

"Sure. Can I talk to you for a minute?"

Bonnie and Tyler looked at each other when they realized that Carol was talking to Bonnie. "Sure," Bonnie answered. She followed the mayor to the kitchen.

Tyler remained in the foyer and wondered what the heck his mother could possibly have to say to Bonnie.

In the kitchen, Carol took out a sleek silver serving tray. "How do sandwiches sound?"

"Good."

"Nothing fancy, just black forest ham and cheese. Maybe some lettuce and mayo. Tyler likes his mayo. You look….very beautiful, Bonnie."
"Um, thank you."

"I mean it. You're glowing. You pop," she said, gesturing at her own face.

Bonnie smiled. "Thank you."

Carol's smile was a little tight, her eyes waiting to say something. She took a deep breath and sharply released it. "I know why you're here. I know that….Tyler is planning to….make an attempt on Klaus' life. I don't know how I feel about it. I'm back and forth and up and down. I think about it right before I fall asleep, and I am so proud of him for even attempting. I think about it in the middle of the day at work, and I just want him to leave well enough alone. Klaus is….a burden. But there is no risk to Tyler if he's alive. I know it's not the best situation for him, but it is the situation. If he attempts this, he could die. He thinks you can help him."

"I can," Bonnie confirmed sympathetically. She was also positive that Tyler had never told his mother just how much of a monster Klaus was.

"I don't want to come out on the other side of this thinking that he should've left it alone. Klaus is a thousand years old," she whispered. "And Tyler's about to graduate….He was talking about burying himself alive on Christmas Eve," she whispered.

"Mrs. Lockwood, I promise you that this will work. Tyler will be free, and he'll be able to move however he wants, do whatever he wants."

"I don't want to just throw you at his problems," Carol said.

Bonnie smiled. It didn't reach her eyes. She wanted to add the but for Carol. I don't want to just throw you at his problems, but….if you're his way out….She swallowed. She couldn't throw herself at her own problems because people might get hurt, but she was free to throw herself at someone else's. The universe was grand.

"I promise you he will come out of this."

Carol nodded, though worry still played on her face. "I'll bring the sandwiches and your water," she said, and she got to work.

Bonnie nodded and went back to the foyer.

"What happened?" Tyler asked when she got close enough.

"She wanted to make sure that I can save you," she reported. "Where's the game room?"

"Uh, it's this way." Tyler looked in the direction of the kitchen and then glanced at her before he lead her to the game room. He hoped that his mother hadn't made any demands or warned Bonnie about keeping him safe or anything annoying like that. Bonnie looked different: not the girl who'd been smiling at him at the door.

Tyler considered the game room more his room than his bedroom. His parents had gifted it to him on his fifteenth birthday, and he'd taken an immediate interest in decorating it. The room was always neat, the carpet a plush dark brown; there were posters of his favorite version of the Halo, NBA, Madden, Call of Duty, and Assassin's Creed games as well as posters of his three favorite movies: Blade, The Matrix, and 300.

He'd planned on expanding the room when he turned seventeen, but by the time that birthday had come around, he'd been dealing with being sired to an asshole. His eighteenth birthday was at the
end of March. He hadn't seriously thought about expanding the room in a long time, but as he'd been preparing it for the girls' arrival today, he'd promised himself that if he managed to kill Klaus, he would create a game room in his future apartment.

The game room was where he did most of his drawings. It was where he and Matt used to get high when his parents weren't home. And now he unnecessarily thought about formally giving Bonnie a place in the room by making her orgasm in it the exact same way he'd done in the bathroom earlier.

He cleared his throat to change the course of his thoughts.

"Hey," Bonnie said in greeting to Caroline, who was already seated around a coffee table in the back right corner of the room.

"Hi. Oh."

"What?" Bonnie asked.

"Nothing," she shook her head. "You just look very pretty."

"Oh. Thanks," she said with a small smile.

Caroline watched them approach and realized how the seats were arranged. She got up, hoped it looked casual, and sat in one of the two chairs facing the seat she'd been in, leaving Bonnie to take the seat against the wall and face her and Tyler.

Bonnie took the seat and opened her backpack to retrieve her notebook. She took a pen out of a smaller pocket.

"My mom's gonna bring us sandwiches," Tyler informed Caroline.

"Oh, cool."

A knocked sounded at the door and Carol walked in carrying the silver tray. It was topped with three tall glasses of water. She passed the glasses around, starting with Bonnie.

"You're very good at that," Caroline commented as she watched the way she balanced the tray on one hand.

"I was a waitress a long, long time ago," she said with a smile. "I'll be back with the food."

"Thanks, mom," Tyler said.

"Thank you," Bonnie and Caroline said in unison.

"Okay," Bonnie said officially. "So about this afternoon. Remember when you asked how long we can run around Klaus before he suspected something? Well, I've got the answer for you. He had his hand around my throat and literally said that something stinks. I told him about Kol's attack, and he of course saw that as no reason for me to have killed him. He said he's going to think about whether or not he's going to sic Kol on me after Silas brings him back, so he's at least going for the whole Silas angle."

Tyler frowned. She was speaking like a bored DMV employee.

"There was a fight," she sighed. "I was choked, like I said; I was thrown; I got my powers back, and he promised to skewer me with the sword if Silas doesn't come through and wake Kol. He asked to keep the sword, because he didn't want to be a complete loser in the situation."
Caroline surreptitiously looked at Tyler, and he returned her look. That last comment was way too flippant for Bonnie.

"I told him that I divined for the sword and killed his two vampire guards, and that's why I have it."

"Hold on a second, did he ask any questions?" Tyler inquired, wanting to know if Klaus had asked about the trap he'd set in the storage unit.

"No. He was just a little…skeptical about me being able to take out two 17th century vampires, which I don't even know if that means they were turned in the 17th century or if they just lived in the- well I guess it's the same thing. It could mean they've been alive for seventeen centuries, but whatever. My point is this is barely holding up anymore, which is why he needs to die by Monday. Now here's what we're interested in: the sword affected him. It wasn't instantaneous like with Stefan, but it burned his hand. Not bad enough to hurt, 'cause he's Klaus, but it hurt him enough to where he needed to heal. So, getting to my idea: we need to make Klaus hurtable," Bonnie said.

"How?" Caroline asked.

"By isolating the one thing holding him together: the doppelganger blood."

"Um," Caroline drawled.

"You need Elena's blood," Tyler clarified.

"I need Klaus' blood." At the look on Tyler's face, she explained, "Using Elena's blood makes it something completely different. I need blood that has doppelganger, werewolf, and vampire. That's Klaus."

"That's me," Tyler disagreed. "Can't you just use me?"

"I could, but there's the risk of it not working. The best way to come as close to it working one hundred percent as possible is to do it directly on Klaus' blood."

"And what about the one hundred percent possibility that it'll affect Tyler and his Hybrids?" Caroline asked. "Klaus is their sire. Killing Finn killed his line-" Her eyes widened. "Oh my God. Is Kol's line dying right now? You killed him."

"That sword had no trace of white oak," Bonnie said. "As far as I know. I don't think his line was affected, especially considering the way he died. I didn't even aim for the heart."

"But you can't know for sure."

"Should I have laid down and let him kill me, Caroline?"

"That's not what I meant. I'm just….never mind. Back to Tyler. How are you gonna make sure this doesn't affect him?"

Tyler gave Caroline a sidelong look. Bonnie wasn't contracted to offer her services.

"By doing it," Bonnie said slowly, "On Klaus' blood. His name is in the spell. It's, in effect, a curse," she said to Tyler. "Like the one I did on Rebekah. I want to isolate the doppelganger blood, get rid of it. And do you remember what happened to the Hybrids who didn't have Elena's blood?" she asked with a self-satisfied smirk.

Tyler smiled. "They were poisoned. The werewolf blood mixed badly with the vampire blood."
"You're going to poison him with his own blood," Caroline said softly. She'd thought it was going to be some quick ordeal. She's been thinking about Klaus dying since Bonnie, Stefan, and Damon went to see him earlier. She'd wondered how great it would be if they came back and said that Bonnie had run him through with the sword the way she'd done Kol. Danger to their lives averted, and no one pays for Kol's death.

Now she was listening to how exactly it was going to be done, and while she still supported Tyler and still thought Klaus was absolutely horrible to him and to most people, she didn't feel the same fear-driven hope from earlier. Something was happening between Tyler and Bonnie, and she didn't know how it was all going to settle. She hoped to at least have one last conversation with Klaus before it all went down. She could just imagine how he would look at her if she happened to be there when it happened: that same hurt and betrayed look he usually gave her when he realized that she was tricking him, and while she always not-so-secretly relished one-upping him in those moments, this one would be final.

She remembered the conversation with Stefan, wherein she'd learned that she wasn't the only one who saw a different side to Klaus. Did he deserve to die thinking no one saw anything worthwhile in him? His father tried to kill him, and that was after he conspired with his mother to kill him a first time; and then his mother came back to do it a final time. His sister hated him; she doubted Kol cared, and she wasn't sure how much of a difference Elijah made. Stefan hated him; his Hybrids are trying to get away from him, and absolutely no one that he knows wants him to stay in Mystic Falls. He existed in a world where he didn't have a single friend.

And while she sometimes hated him, too, and saw all of the reasons for everyone else to hate him, that was just it: she only sometimes hated him. Klaus had gone from being a nobody in her world, even after he'd had her kidnapped as a decoy for the sacrifice, to the terror who had killed Tyler and forced him to poison her, to the weird complication who had saved her life, wished her happy birthday, and sent her a complete outfit for the ball his mother was throwing, to the….kind of….intriguing and hot and rich and worldly and cute and powerful complication who couldn't stop trying to talk to her and selling his merits to her and thinking about her future and what was best for her and what she'd like and what she wanted.

He was even starting to apologize to her for the things he did to others. And she could hurt him. Not physically, but she has actually hurt his feelings before and disappointed him, and that influence over the person whom so many feared was one of the things that had been threatening to seduce her. His words and promises and attention were great, flattering, and she always replayed them over in her head, but her ability to wipe a smile off his face….it felt great to throw him off kilter, especially considering how often he did or threatened to do the same to her. She wasn't interested in trying to one-up him physically. That had never been her forte, even before she'd become a vampire.

Klaus could die. The world would be better off. She'd celebrated his demise once before when he'd gotten desiccated. She could do it again. But a part of her wanted just a little more time to swallow what was coming, because this one felt final.

Tyler brought her back to the conversation at hand when he said, "It's perfect."

"The thing is that I don't know if Klaus will react the same way. He does have the whole Original vampire thing going on, which was what helped Rebekah survive your poison. His blood could constantly heal him so that the poison never affects him. Which is what step two deflects: I need something personal of his so that I can curse his blood to make the poison work. Which is where your blood comes in, Ty."

Tyler wiped his face. This was so complicated. First he needed to steal Klaus' blood somehow and
now he needed to steal a personal item, too.

"Hey, I still have that drawing he gave me, the portrait," Caroline said, and this was news to Tyler. "Can we use that for a personal item? I mean, it came from him."

"You still have that?" Bonnie asked.

Carol knocked on the door, and Tyler told her to enter. "Here you go," she announced as she deposited the small plates in front of them.

"Thank you," Bonnie said.

"Thanks," Tyler and Caroline echoed.

"You're welcome," Carol returned.

"I still have the bracelet, too," Caroline added after Carol shut the door. "Either works."

"Maybe. Um, these need to be clean. How long have you had them for now?"

"Uh, probably a year now, maybe a little less, maybe a little more."

Bonnie closed her eyes. "They won't work."

"Why not?" Caroline asked.

"Psychic energy. If you….attach….any emotions to those things, then they're yours, not his."

Taken off guard, Caroline looked at Tyler, who kept his focus on Bonnie but was biting the inside of his mouth. Clearly, he understood the implication of Bonnie's statement and that annoyed Caroline. "Who says I attach any emotions to them?" she asked Bonnie.

"Not me," Bonnie answered. "That's what I'm asking. You said you still have them."

"Yeah, in my closet."

"Did you like them?" Bonnie questioned.

"Excuse you?"

"It doesn't matter," Bonnie decided. "The point is that those things have been in your room for over a year. Think of all the emotions you bring to your room: happiness, exhaustion, excitement, anger, emotions about Tyler, about your mom, about everyone in your life-"

"So it won't work," Tyler cut her off, an edge to his voice. He hadn't thought about that ugly drawing since maybe a week after he saw it. Why would Caroline still have it? And the bracelet? Did she still have the dress, too? He was completely annoyed, and he hadn't known that Caroline had told the other girls about Klaus' gifts.

"It won't," Bonnie confirmed. "That's psychic energy. It touches everything that belongs to you, or….that has been with you long enough. That's why casting a spell on someone's belongings works."

Caroline straightened her spine.

"What about the other painting he did?" Tyler asked. "The one he donated at the Christmas Eve
"Festival. What if it hasn't gone out yet?"

"Miss Mystic Falls would know that," Caroline shared.

"Who's-April," Tyler remembered.

"She's in charge of most of the charity drives now," Caroline said.

"If we can isolate April, I can get in her mind and retrieve the information without us having to ask her, and she won't remember what I took from her. Remember what we did to Luka?" Bonnie asked Caroline.

Caroline racked her brain trying to remember the name.

"Bonnie, can I talk to you for a second?" Tyler asked. He stood and waited for her.

"Sure," Bonnie answered. "We'll be back," she said to Caroline when it looked like Tyler was going to leave the room without excusing them.

Caroline sat alone, wondering what the hell just happened. They were about to have a two-people powwow in the middle of a three-people meeting?

Bonnie followed Tyler to the foyer and joined him on the first step of the staircase. "What's up?"

"This information retrieval thing: is it a spell?"

"It's more of a ritual. I don't chant. I just need to concentrate, and it calls for me to rely on fire and water."

"You just got your powers back. Are you sure you can do this?"

"I'm pretty sure. I'll be fine, Tyler," she said with a reassuring smile.

"And the rest?"

"Separating the blood is going to be hardest part, but I'll be fine."

"Maybe we shouldn't try to do all of this over the weekend. You just got your powers back," he repeated when she opened her mouth to protest. "Are they even at full capacity yet? Wouldn't they be a little weaker from Silas tapping into them?"

"Tyler, I don't fail at these things. I just don't."

"That's not an answer to the question I asked. I need you to be straight with me," he said. "You said witches burn out when they use too much, and you've used your powers a lot lately. You did a big curse on Rebekah, and then Silas attacked you. I don't want you taking unnecessary risks."

"Nothing is unnecessary right now. Klaus has that sword, and your pack is living with him. If he figures anything out, they're in immediate danger. I know what you're worried about, but we don't have a choice," she pled. She shook her head and tucked her hair behind her right ear.

"What's wrong?" Tyler asked.

"Nothing," she answered miserably without meeting his eyes. When she looked up, he was searching her face. She lowered her voice even more and said, "It's nothing I can talk about right now." She touched her ear and pointed in the direction of the game room.
Tyler cupped her left cheek. "Are you okay?" If Caroline was listening, there would be no mistaking the investment in his voice.

Bonnie shook her head in the negative. "But it's fine," she said as she removed his hand from her face. "Let's just get through this."

Tyler frowned when her eyes changed color. "Bonnie. Do you feel that?" he asked quietly. He rubbed the outer corner of her left eye with his thumb.

"What?" Bonnie asked.

"Your eyes: they're like a werewolf's."

Just like that, the color disappeared.

Bonnie smiled. "I know. I saw it earlier. I think it's…" she lifted her eyebrows and let him fill in the blank.

"Do you see differently when it happens?"

"No. I see like I always see."

Tyler mouthed later. He wiped the corner of her eye again, and then he traced his thumb over her bottom lip. No gloss, just chapstick.

Bonnie nodded.

Caroline remained quiet when they returned.

"Sorry," Tyler said as he sat down.

Caroline folded her lips. "How exactly are we going to get Klaus to bleed?" she asked Bonnie with more than a little attitude.

Bonnie reached into the big pocket of her backpack and pulled out a folded item. She unveiled a five-inch steak knife in the middle of the table. "With this." She reached into the same pocket from which she'd pulled out the pen and pulled out another item, this one heavily wrapped with paper towels. She revealed a small box that once held a new pair of earrings. She uncovered it and showed them the white oak that she had scraped off the stake. "And this. I just need to marry them." She flipped the notebook to the correct spell. She needed to transfer these new spells to her personal Grimoire. She could do that tonight.

"You came up with all of this over the weekend?" Tyler asked.

"I wrote this spell over the weekend. Isolating Klaus' blood and poisoning him, I thought up on Monday and wrote the spells Tuesday through yesterday. I think up this stuff to put myself to sleep, Ty. It's my lullaby." She smiled.

"Prodigy," Tyler said with a smile of his own.

"You need better lullabies," Caroline commented. "Not that your current choice doesn't save our butts on a daily basis."

Bonnie blinked at her, her smile freezing a little. "I don't disagree. But I don't have the luxury of having better lullabies."
Caroline stretched the corners of her mouth in opposite directions.

Tyler acted like he didn't notice what was going on. "Before I use the knife, we need to take care of everything else first. Because once I stab Klaus, that's it; everything's out in the open. We need to make sure that painting's still around, and we need to get our hands on it. If it's gone, then I need to talk to the others about stealing something from Klaus' bedroom. I have to talk to them anyways to tell them that this is happening soon."

"Does Klaus even own personal things?" Caroline wondered.

"I think you're talking about his family," Tyler said. "Biggest pieces of property he owns. After that would be, what, the coffins he holds them in?" he guessed.

"God," Caroline sighed.

"We're gonna need something a little smaller than coffins if that painting doesn't come through," Bonnie said, though she knew that Tyler wasn't serious about taking the coffins. "Does he have any others lying around?"

"He doesn't paint just because," Tyler answered. "But those brushes, though," he murmured.

"Those would be important to him," Caroline said with certainty.

"Okay, so we're going to talk to April. That is, if you're up for it," she said to Caroline.

"I am."

"So I'm spelling the knife so you have it on hand. As soon as we get an answer out of April, and if it's a green light, we'll text you."

Tyler nodded. He needed to ask Bonnie for a favor. The timing was horrible, considering his worry about her use of magic right now, but the request was imperative.

Bonnie moved her plate to the carpet. "Clear the table. I'm making it special for you, Ty," she informed him after they did what she asked. "So that the white oak won't hurt you. If someone from the pack uses it, then..."

"It'll be me," Tyler assured her.

Bonnie nodded. "Hold your hand out on the table and open your palm."

Tyler could tell by the care she took in placing the knife on his palm that the spell had already started.

Bonnie held the knife at both ends while it rested in his hand. She closed her eyes and chanted evenly, "Phasmatos salvis. Phasmatos salvis. Phasmatos salvis." She moved on of her hands to hold Tyler's wrist and resumed chanting. "Phasmatos salvis. Phasmatos salvis. Phasmatos salvis."

She opened her eyes and slowly lifted the box of ash. She loosely sprinkled most of it on the blade. Tyler hissed as soon as the ash touched his palm. The substance started to burn through his skin. He closed his eyes and flexed the muscles in his arm to endure the pain and waited on Bonnie.

When Bonnie first started teaching herself the spells in Emily's Grimoire, she had imagined the spirits whom she frequently called on to be just like Emily: dead witches. Now she knew that she was speaking to entities far greater: pure magic.

She felt the same rush of adrenaline from this afternoon and opened eyes the beautiful bright yellow
of legrandite and chanted faster, ignoring the deteriorating state of Tyler's palm where the ash touched it. "Creatio, et contritio, quercus alba cinis. Creatio, et contritio, homo factus est enim, ut perveniat ad hibrida cutem. Phasmatos tribum, duo simul hasce nova creatura. Quo modo ad secundum manu telum formatur."

She closed his palm tight over the sword, and Tyler's pain increased as lacerations appeared on his palm and he bled out. He gritted his teeth and grunted through it, and Caroline placed her hands on his bicep and shoulder.


Tyler's pain soon ceased.

Bonnie's arms tingled, and the sensation spread to her entire body. She stood abruptly and paced away. She wiped her hands on her face and inhaled.

"What's wrong?" Caroline asked. "Is this part of the spell?"

"No, I'm just...I just need to move." She shook her hands at her side. "I'm just feeling restless, like I need to use my powers." She paced to the couch.

Tyler opened his hand and looked at the knife. The blade was the same color as the dagger Bonnie and Matt had plunged into Rebekah, only this one had spots of rustic red burned into it: his blood. The lacerations in his palm were gradually fading.

Bonnie opened her palms and created fire. She brought her hands together and formed a ball and made it grow.

"Is this some kind of adverse effect?" Caroline asked as she cautiously stood up.

Tyler stood and watched.

"I just need to get it out."

Caroline thought that she sounded a little like a drug addict, but she kept the thought to herself.

Bonnie had seen her eyes change color when she'd stepped out of the shower and stared forlornly at her herself in the mirror. It had brought a smile to her face, because she'd known immediately that it was the effect of Tyler's blood in her system. She'd realized that the blood was why she'd felt so amazing after leaving the bathroom at school. She had tried to bring the color back after it had faded, but she'd been unlucky.

"Bonnie?" Tyler asked.

"I'm fine," she said while looking at the now violent ball of fire. She closed her eyes and enjoyed it, a smile playing on her lips. She felt even more amazing than she had at school. Her body felt like it did the day she'd desiccated Klaus. Her magic felt clean, like it flowed through her without any barriers.

Tyler thought about going to her, but he worried about what might happen if he touched her, especially considering how he'd been reacting less than an hour ago. Besides, she wasn't in pain. She actually looked like she was enjoying herself and didn't care that he and Caroline were in the room.

Bonnie moved one of her hands above the ball and snapped her hands closed. It extinguished and hot smoke floated in front of her. She stepped back and swatted it. It spread to the room and gradually made it hotter. "I'm fine," she exhaled. "Okay," she said with a clap of her hands, "How
does it feel?" she asked Tyler, her eyes back to normal.

"Um." He looked down at the knife and stopped. This was what he was going to stab Klaus with. He was going to stab Klaus and expose everything he was planning. He was going to have to deal with Klaus knowing that he wanted to kill him.

"What is it?" Caroline asked.

"This is really going to happen," he said. He swallowed and looked at Caroline.

"We're gonna be with you the whole way," she assured him.

He inhaled deeply and let it go. "So this all goes down on site, right?" he asked Bonnie. "I stab him, and then you do the spells?"

"I've been trying to figure that part out, and I think I just did. I need to be there when you do it. I need to isolate him, seal him in, and then I'll be able to do the spells."

"Another spell," Tyler pointed out.

"It's all necessary, Tyler," Bonnie reminded him. "So it starts tomorrow. Do you know where April lives, because I don't," she said to Caroline.

"We can find that out in Founders Hall. She might even be there. The offices are closed on the weekends, but the east wing is sometimes open on Saturdays. She might be there, planning volunteer activities for spring and summer."

"I can't do that spell in a room where anyone could walk in, so we need to lure her. So I'll pick you up?"

"Of course," Caroline answered with a pageant smile.

"Great, then I guess I should go. Do you have any questions?" she asked Tyler.

"Not yet."

"Call me with anything you think of." She walked to the table and packed up the box that once held the ash, and she put away the notebook and pen. Lastly, she picked her plate off the floor. "I'm gonna ask your mom to pack this."

"Thank you, Bonnie," Tyler said.

She turned and looked at him. Smiling, she replied, "You're welcome."

He swallowed and examined the knife again. "Would it be bad if I put it under my pillow?"

"I don't think so?" Bonnie answered. "But then again, I wouldn't sleep with a weapon under my pillow."

"Nah, just under your bed." His smile disappeared when what he'd just said quickly played back in his ears. He looked at Caroline and then looked at the knife.

The silence seemed to stretch for far too long, but maybe that was just him and Bonnie. Bonnie congratulated herself for not looking at Caroline, who did look at her, but maybe she should've resumed packing her stuff instead of lowering her eyes.
"Sounds like fun," Caroline commented with a dry smile.

Bonnie turned to the table and slung the backpack over her right shoulder and grabbed the plate.

"I'm gonna go put this up, and then I'll walk you outside," Tyler said and turned to leave.

"Oh no, I can do that," Caroline said as she swatted his offer down. "You put that up, and, uh, if I'm not back yet you can pick out a couple of movies for us to watch before we go to bed?"

Tyler half turned and stared at her, careful to keep his mouth closed.

Now this bout of silence definitely stretched a few seconds too long. Caroline kept her eyes on Tyler, and he kept his on her, because he did not want to know how Bonnie was looking.

Bonnie was the most surprised person in the room. She wasn't mad, not after everything Tyler had said and done with her earlier. She just….might have some questions. And might be a little jealous. She didn't think that she wanted anything from Tyler, certainly not a relationship, but he'd said more than a couple of things to her, and he'd acted in certain ways, and if he was going to have Caroline sleeping over or…..doing anything else, then questions were going to creep up in her mind.

"Okay, then," she stated evenly.

"Sure," Tyler said. He walked out of the room, aware of every step he took.

Bonnie found Carol and got her sandwich wrapped and then met Caroline at the front door.

The taller girl opened the door for her, and she stepped out. Caroline walked her all the way to the car. Bonnie took out her key and unlocked the door. She threw her backpack to the passenger seat.

She then turned to Caroline, who had her arms crossed, and asked, "I'll pick you up tomorrow at like 10?"

"Sure. I'll be right here," Caroline emphasized.

"Right. Good night."

"Night."

When Caroline stepped inside, Tyler was coming down the stairs. He walked to the middle of the foyer and put his hands in his pockets.

"Ready for the movies?" she asked.

"Yeah. I just need you to know that I'm gonna go to Bonnie's house at some point."

"Tonight?"

"Yeah."

"She was just here."

"I need to talk to her about something, something….private."

"Private? And you need to be in her house to do this? You could've just stepped aside to tell her while she was here, like, oh I don't know, when you took her out of the room earlier?"
"It's something private about Bonnie," he clarified as he leaned into her, "Not me."

"Right."

"She wouldn't have talked about it here," he explained, and he was ready to end this line of conversation.

"Because you know her so well now. What else do you know about Bonnie's privates, Tyler?"

"Excuse me?"

"I'm sorry. I meant private affairs."

Tyler stared at her a moment and then he turned to head back upstairs.

"You lied to me," she said succinctly.

Tyler turned around.

"You told me earlier that you took an eternity to come back to the gym because you and Bonnie were talking about how the visit with Klaus had gone. But she comes over tonight and recaps the whole thing like you'd never heard a word of it."

Tyler calmly looked at her.

"Say something!" she snapped. "You were with her. You were….you were sleeping with her. Weren't you?"

Tyler's confirmation came in the form of a swallow.

"This is amazing. This is….this is great. I could barely get you to look at me after Rebekah attacked, but you ask for 'space' and then have sex with Bonnie after Kol attacks? At school? Are you serious?!!"

"Can we not talk about this out here?" Tyler asked calmly

"Why, you don't want your mom to know her little boy's a lying, cheating creep?"

Tyler left her and walked into the game room. She followed and when she shut the door behind her, he said, "We're not working, Caroline."

"Did you realize this before or after Bonnie showed you her vagina?"

"No, I realized it after my friend died, and you didn't give a shit," he spat. "This has nothing to do with Bonnie. It's us. It's me; it's you."

"Are you serious? That was….Tyler, I'm sorry I mis-reacted, but I feel like….I've known Elena my whole life; I'm sorry I didn't immediately think of….of him-"

"Chris. His name was Chris."

"I met him once!" she protested.

"He was important to me! Have you never wondered why you didn't know what me and Hayley were planning until after the fact? Why I didn't let you in from the very beginning? Because I have. We haven't been working for a while, maybe even before Chris."
"So let me get this straight, Bonnie cares about Chris? You do realize you're her charity case."

"Oh, am I?"

"This is what she does! What do you and Jeremy have in common? You're both weak little boys that she has to protect."

"That's the second time you've called me a little boy. And I'm a charity case now, too?"

"You know what I mean. She has to save you. I guess she's like Elena that way. She's the answer. Regardless of what happened between me, you, and Chris, notice that nothing happened between you two until she became the solution to your problem. Do you really think that's gonna last?"

"This has nothing to do with me and Bonnie. Whether or not."

"Oh my God," Caroline said. She gasped and covered her mouth with her hands. "The Festival. This has been going on since the Festival, hasn't it?"

"No." The lie was automatic. He's wanted Bonnie since the Festival, since after the fight really, but his mind denied her question for the simple reason that nothing had happened for a long time after that night. But this was no time to take it back. He's known since he'd watched over Bonnie after Silas' attack that if his interest in her ever came to light, if Caroline ever questioned anything, he'd have no interest in justifying it and especially not in the context of his relationship with Caroline. His issues with Caroline were separate.

"I can't believe you're doing this. I can't believe that after everything I've been through with you, after everything we've been through, after everything I've done for you, this is how you treat me? This is what you think I deserve? Look me in the face and tell me this is the treatment you think I deserve."

"This is not what you deserve."

"But you were gonna string me along anyway."

"This wasn't about stringing you along. I just-I honestly."

He chose not to say it. Nothing good would come from him saying that he had more important things to worry about, and he would have spoken to her after everything settled.

"You're ruining us," she said.

"I'm not who I was when we first started."

"That's an understatement."

He wanted to tell her that she wasn't the same person either, but the words stuck in his throat.

"I can't believe this. I can't believe you're doing this. For Bonnie? What are you gonna do when she moves on? She's my best friend, Tyler. You couldn't have chosen literally anyone else?"

"We would have fallen apart whether Bonnie had come into the picture or not," he said quietly. "We were already falling apart." Something was settling heavily in his stomach.

"You're such a jerk," she said softly. "You are such a jerk." She left the room and headed upstairs.
Tyler inhaled. And didn't quite release it.
Do You Want to Die, Bonnie?

Tyler went to his room and grabbed the car keys as well as a different jacket from the one he'd worn to school. He and Caroline didn't exchange a word. She could have his bed. He was going to sleep in the game room tonight.

When he descended the stairs, Carol peeked out of the living room and caught him. "Is everything okay?" she asked quietly. "I heard yelling."

"Yeah, everything's great," Tyler answered as he slipped on the jacket. "I'm going to Bonnie's house. I'll be back."

Carol didn't get to respond, because he was on his way out the door. Bonnie was just here. Why was he going to her house?

Bonnie walked into her house and headed directly to the stairs without saying hi or making eye contact with any of the three people sitting in the living room and kitchen. She hoped that Abby and Lucy would be gone by tomorrow night, and she hoped that her dad would just drop the cure subject. They'd completely shut her down. She didn't want to talk to them.

When she'd left school earlier, she'd been thinking about going home, replaying the amazing time that she and Tyler had had in the bathroom while she showered, and, in the reality where Caroline hadn't invited herself, doing a little quicky after they were done working out all the business stuff at his house.

But no, it hadn't worked out that way. She'd come home to three dream-killers. Her life really sucked. It wasn't yet nine o'clock, but she was going to get in her pajamas and lie in bed and wait to fall asleep.

Unfortunately, someone knocked on her door.

"I don't wanna talk," she announced.

"That's too bad," replied her father's voice. "Open the door, Bonnie."

She exhaled laboriously and walked around her bed to open the door. "What is it?"

"We need to talk about what went on in Tyler Lockwood's house. I don't want to hear that you can't tell me, or that it's a secret, and I don't want half-truths. That's how we ended up with you going after a cure that can get you killed."

"I'm sorry, dad, but I can't tell you anything. Listen," she cut him off when he started to protest, "What I'm doing, I'm doing for Tyler, and we're so close. We've barely been getting away with keeping it a secret. I don't want to ruin it by running my mouth now. If you're lucky, if we're lucky, I'll be able to tell you everything on Monday. Maybe Tuesday. His safety is at risk."

"At least give me something," Rudy said slowly.

Bonnie inhaled deeply and released it steadily. "I'm gonna try to steal a painting tomorrow. After I invade a girl's mind to get the location." She stared at him.

Rudy tried in vain to make sense of what she'd just said. "Fine. Thank you."
"You're welcome." She grabbed the door to shut it.

"Bonnie, I know you're angry, but this is for your own good. Now, you think you have to find this cure for your mom because you'll be sad if you don't. I don't mean to downplay what you've been through. I know I wasn't there, and I cannot imagine you know what, I think I can imagine it. I think I can imagine what it was like for you to essentially have your mother die in front of you. It's exactly how I would feel if I let you go through with this and ended up burying you. Abbie wants to get to know you. So do I, baby. I've missed out on a lot. Clearly, and it's time we put everything on the table. Life doesn't end if your mom stays a vampire. There's a lot of good that can come from it if you just....let it."

"I want to go to bed."

Rudy sighed. "I love you, Bonnie."

"I love you, too, dad. Can I please close the door?"

Rudy nodded.

Bonnie closed it and wished she hadn't heard a single word he'd said.

Tyler locked his car and walked up to Bonnie's house. He knocked on the door and waited. It took a little bit of time, but someone turned on the porch light, and Rudy opened the door after he moved the curtains aside to see who it was.

"Hi," Tyler greeted.

"Tyler. Hi," he replied and crossed his arms.

"I'm here to see Bonnie?"

"Bonnie's not available. She can't come to the door."

"Uh. Her car's parked right there," he said, turning his head slightly in the direction of her white Prius.

"I know, but she can't come to the door. You'll see her Monday at school."

"I need to talk to her about something important."

"She was just at your house. And you have a cell phone."

"I do. She was. But this is-I just need to talk to her. I swear it's important, sir."

Rudy observed him with a stern face. He was positive that this boy knew about Bonnie's dangerous goal. "Come inside. I'll get her."

Tyler slowly walked inside and closed the door behind him. Something was definitely wrong. He looked at the empty living room and waited for Bonnie.

Bonnie had to take off her sleepwear and get back in her regular clothes. She slipped her feet into flip-flops and went down to see Tyler.

Rudy continued past her room to the spare bedroom where Abby and Lucy had run to hide. "You all can't come out yet. He's still downstairs."
"Who is it?" Abby asked.

"Tyler Lockwood."

Abby frowned.

"Richard and Carol Lockwood's son?" Rudy helped her out.

"Oh. Oh, wow." She wondered what he looked like nowadays.

"What does he want?" Lucy asked.

"To talk to Bonnie about something important. Now, he's a Hybrid: a werewolf and a vampire, so stay as quiet as you can."

Lucy looked at Abby. Abby had filled her in on Klaus' status, Klaus whom she'd first learned about from Katherine, but it was still weird to know there was an actual werewolf slash vampire so close.

"Is she dating him?" Abby asked. "She's not dating him, is she?" Bonnie's point about barely knowing her even though they spent quite some time talking about the cure would be further highlighted if she'd had a boyfriend this whole time and she didn't know.

"She better not be," Rudy answered. "He has a girlfriend. I've seen them at the town events."

Lucy slowly turned her head in Abby's direction. She was pretty sure that this was the guy that Bonnie had wanted to show leg for.

"Is she dating him?" Rudy asked Abby now. Maybe she knew, and he didn't.

"I dunno," Abby mumbled with a shake of her head. Now her thoughts aligned with Lucy's. If only Bonnie messing with another girl's boyfriend was their biggest problem.

Bonnie bobbed down the stairs and wondered where her mother and Lucy were. They'd been sitting in the living room when she'd come home.

"Is everything okay?" she asked as she walked up to Tyler.

"That's what I'm here to find out. Your dad wasn't going to let me see you until Monday. What's with the lockdown? Are you in trouble?"

It was hard for him to imagine Bonnie getting in trouble and being grounded. She always aimed to do the right thing, even though she could be overzealous about it. She was such a good person. It was weird to think that her father was upset with her.

"Um. We should talk outside. Let me grab a sweater."

"Use my jacket," he offered as he took it off. He held it open for her.

Bonnie hesitated, and then she turned around. He stepped closer and helped her put it on, and then she led him to the porch.

Tyler let her sit first, and she chose the spot she'd occupied the first time they'd sat on the swing bed. He reclaimed his spot and waited attentively for her to speak.

"My mom and Lucy are here. They told my dad everything."
"At least you don't have to lie to him anymore," he tried.

"Lucy received one of the swords. When she touched it, she had a vision of me summoning them, so she knew that I haven't been sitting on my hands. So she and my mom showed up here this afternoon, and….I told them about Silas. About the attack last Thursday and how I believe it was Him. I told them about Kol's attack. I just wanted them to be prepared for what we might face in Israel."

"And?"

She sighed and looked out at the street. "They don't want me to do it. They've completely backed out. They're convinced that He's the one who kills me, even though Lucy didn't see anyone in her vision. And of course my dad backs them one hundred percent. They want me to let it go. Because it's so easy. It's just a cure, no big deal. My mom can just stay a vampire, and I'll move on with my life. She said she doesn't need it, that she'd rather me be alive."

Tyler moved closer to her and put his arm behind her on the seat. "I'd rather you be alive, too."

Bonnie shook her head.

"I know it's hard-

"You have no idea. None of them have any idea."

He looked at her sad profile and decided to dive in. "I can help you get it. Bonnie, you've done a lot for me, and this is important to you. I can help you get it. I'll go with you to Israel, and we'll get it, and the rest….we'll figure out how to save you. We have to, Bon, you can't-you can't just die for this."

"Did you know that I tried to save Elena from becoming a vampire? I had just saved Klaus that night. I wanted nothing more than to bury him and Elijah and that entire family. I hated every last one of them for what their freaking survival meant for my mother, and this guy, this….monster who came into our lives and disrupted everything….I had to save him. My mother died so that he could live, and I had to save him. I had to think….of a way….to save….the guy who when my mother was killed was able to go home and sleep with both eyes closed because he'd won that night."

His spirit hadn't even settled in your body yet when I got the call from Stefan: I need to tell you something that's….going to be a little hard for you to believe, but I need you to believe it. Elena's dead. Matt was driving her out of town when they got into a car accident and went off Wickery Bridge. She didn't make it, but she had Damon's blood in her system.

He let me digest it. I had to be the one to ask if she was in transition. She was."

She smiled and then dissolved into a chuckle."Elena. My mom just died….so that she could live. I just saved Klaus. So that my mom could live, so that Caroline could live, so that you all could live. But somehow….there she was in a morgue….becoming a vampire. I didn't understand. I didn't understand why, in the grand scheme of things, this couldn't have happened first. Why couldn't she have died with blood in her system first? That way no one would think to touch my mom or me."

She stayed silent for a long stretch of time as she thought back to that night. It had been hard to imagine the sun ever coming up again. And when she'd woken up the next day and seen it, she'd wished it had stayed away.

"He asked me if there was anything, anything at all I could do to….save her somehow. My answer was yes. My answer's always yes, because the answer is always yes. I had no idea how I was going
to do it. I didn't even know if it was possible, but I said yes, and that was enough for him. I don't remember how I got home that night. I woke up in the same clothes. I didn't think. I was trying to figure it out how to save her, but I wasn't thinking. I wasn't feeling. Which you've already pinned about me." She smiled, but she still didn't look at him.

"I figured out what I was going to do, and I called Jeremy. I was going to need an anchor. And someone to channel. I was going to kill myself." She let that sit for a couple of seconds. "I was going to stop my heart. I was going to die for a little bit-"

"For Elena?" Tyler asked incredulously.

Bonnie looked at him. He was keeping himself way too still. She saw it right there in his eyes: he cared about her way too much.

"For Elena?" he repeated.

"Yes," she answered.

Tyler swallowed.

"Jeremy went crazy," she chuckled as she faced forward again. "He always went crazy," she murmured. "He hated me doing stuff like that, and this time was no exception. He said there was another way. I don't coddle myself into thinking things will be easy, Tyler. There's nothing delicate about magic, not in those situations. So looking for other ways is just….delaying the inevitable. I was going to channel the earth directly, just like I did the night I killed Dylan. I had this theory, and that's just what it was: a theory. It wasn't even a full plan. The plan would come after I saw what I hoped to see. I was going to go to the other side to see if I could find Elena's human spirit. After that? I still don't know.

I wasn't thinking, Tyler. I don't know if you've had those moments when there's just no thought in your head. Your brain is just quiet. Or paralyzed."

"Yeah," he answered. "Yes."

"I had the spell. It was in my mom's Grimoire, of all places. I grabbed Jeremy's hands. I was ready to do the spell. He said, *you don't have to do this*. I closed my eyes and channeled him. I started the spell and channeled the earth. I felt grounded in this amazing way. I was saying the words, and it was hard. It suddenly got hard, and suddenly being grounded felt like being weighed down. I was bleeding. I was dying.

My heart hurt. It was beating hard, and it was like….it was like it took way too much out of it to pull off one beat. I just had one more word to go. One more, and I would be….And suddenly my brain woke up. Why did a spell like this exist? Why did my mom create it? Why was I doing this? Would it work? What if it worked? What if it worked?

What if it worked? Who would know? It *hurt* to breathe. But if it worked….who would know? Who would ask? Jeremy would know, but….we get so busy. Our lives….he's my friend, but we get separated. Elena would say thank you when I saw her, and I would be the one who goes to see her; I always am. She would say thank you. And I would hug her. And no one besides Jeremy would know I died."

"I reversed the spell," she murmured as tears rolled down her cheeks. "The spell wasn't complete, but I had said enough to warrant a reversal. I was stuck with a heart….that couldn't beat properly. So I reversed it. I let go of the earth. And I just wish it would've at least knocked me unconscious. Jeremy
held me. I didn't cry. I couldn't. I still haven't. Though, I guess I cried the day that we ended up, uh.....

"I told Stefan that I couldn't do it, that there was no answer. I apologized." Her nose tickled. "I apologized. I made a daylight ring for Elena. I gave it to Stefan. I saw her....two weeks later. I was going to Whitmore, and, um, she wanted to come to practice being a vampire in public or something. I asked her how she was doing. She thanked me for the ring. We didn't hug. I couldn't bring myself to do it."

She wiped her cheeks and covered her mouth as more tears flowed. She wiped them and said, "My parents don't know that. Lucy doesn't know that. They don't know what living my life means. I want the cure. I want to fix something. I apologized to Stefan, because I didn't die."

Tyler forced himself to speak. "Do you want to die? Are you helping me, and then after-you just wanna die? Is that-is that your perfect ending?"

He sounded like she was betraying him. He cared about her way too much. He was crying.

"Bonnie-"

"Tyler...."

"You wanna die. You want to die. You-"

"I want everything," she cried. "I don't want an ultimatum. I don't want either or. My mom wants to get to know me, and my dad wants things to be better between us. I want those things, too. But I don't want a trade. I want the cure, and I want my mom to be a witch again. I want to fix that night. I was so shocked that I couldn't even fight to save my mom. I want to fix that. And then I want to graduate, and then I want to get to know my mom and rebuild my relationship with my dad. I want to keep something. And I want this to be it.

But this can't be it, because my choice is to either die or live without what I want. Those are my choices. Those are my choices. It doesn't matter whether or not I want to die, Ty, I've been trying to tell you that. It's there. Wanting something else doesn't make a difference," she said harshly.

Tyler reached across to touch her left arm with his other hand. He rested his forehead against her temple and closed his eyes. "We'll figure something out."

Bonnie closed her eyes and her tears rolled down. She leaned against him, and he pulled her closer. She tucked her head under his chin. "Just let it go, Ty. Leave it alone. I'm tired. We don't need to figure anything out."

"I'm gonna talk to your mom," he promised as he rubbed her arm. He sniffed. "I'm gonna talk to all of them."

"We're gonna focus on Klaus," she countered.

He chose not to argue with her.
Bonnie stayed in his embrace until she got her mind back to the place where none of it mattered. She squashed down her disappointment because it wasn't going to get her anywhere.

"You need to go," she said quietly. She lifted herself off his chest. "You have a big day tomorrow."

Tyler rubbed her back as she straightened. He took her hand, and she brought herself closer and wrapped her other hand around his bicep, and she walked him to his car. When they got around to the driver's side, Tyler pulled her into a hug.

Bonnie smiled and closed her eyes. When he ended the hug, she slid her arms around his torso and laid her head on his chest. She wanted him to stay. She wanted to walk in the house with him, take him to her bedroom, and fall asleep as the little spoon to his big spoon.

And that's when she remembered that he was going to do that with Caroline tonight. Caroline was going to be his little spoon.

She opened her eyes and ended the hug.

"There's something you should know about April," he began. "When you're getting the information out of her tomorrow, maybe you can ask her something about Silas, too. I was listening in the gym earlier when you were talking to her. She got nervous when you asked her if she really believed Silas could bring her dad back. I think she might be having regular contact with this Guy."

"He used her father; maybe He's trying to use her, too," she reasoned.

"You think He's gonna kill her?"

"I don't know. But I think April might be part of whatever He started with her father. I think He was in contact with pastor Young, too. Maybe He promised April he'd bring him back to life because that's the same thing He promised pastor Young. The question is: what is April supposed to do for Him in return?"

"Kill twelve people?" Tyler guessed.

Bonnie gave him a look. It was hard to imagine April being charismatic enough to gather twelve people for a slaughter.

"I'll ask when she's under tomorrow," she said.

Tyler nodded. "There's something else." He stuffed his hands in his pockets. He wished he didn't have to ask this now. "I know we've got this Klaus thing in the bag. But I need to prepare for any push back, especially with Rebekah waking up on Monday and his brother Elijah. I need to protect my mom. I was wondering if you could do for her what your family's done for your dad, or maybe hide her in your house or something."

"Hide her until we kill Elijah?" she asked, amused. "I think a protection spell would be best."

"You have a lot more to do, and you just got your powers back."

"I can ask Lucy to help me," she said with a small smile.

He nodded.
"I'll be fine. It'll all be fine."

Tyler sighed and pulled her close again. Bonnie couldn't help closing her eyes.

"Good night," he bid.

"Good night."

He opened the car door and got in.

"Oh, you're forgetting your jacket," she said, and she started to take it off.

"Keep it. I want you to keep it."

She smiled and pulled it closed in front of her.

He turned on the car and told her to go inside. Bonnie walked to the door and looked back. She smiled and then turned around and entered the house. When she heard him drive away, she leaned against the door and sighed in contentment.

Tyler knew something was wrong as soon as he pulled up in front of his house. There was an extra car and closer inspection had him running to the front door.

He jammed his key in, but it was already unlocked.

"Klaus!" he yelled as he walked inside. "Klaus!"

"We're in here, Tyler," Klaus called out.

Tyler cautioned himself not to rush, not to run. Klaus could be here for any number of reasons.

The thought died a swift death when he walked into the sitting room and saw his mother and Caroline sitting in two separate straight-backed chairs from the dinning room, with Klaus standing behind them.

"Your mother and I were debating whether or not I should call you," he said conversationally.

"You need to leave now, Tyler; he has a sword," Carol said.

"Oh, don't worry. I planned to show him," Klaus said as he lifted the Hunter's sword.

Tyler's palms prickled with nervous energy. "What is this about, Klaus?"

"Where were you on the day Bonnie stole this sword from my unit?"

"Nowhere near it."

"That's funny. I went to it today a little after Bonnie left my house, and I racked my brain. I then remembered that you are the only person in the group who knows of its existence. Stefan doesn't even know. And Bonnie didn't say anything about the trap I set in there. Do you care to comment?"

"I wasn't there, Klaus. I didn't know your sword was missing. In case you haven't been paying attention, I don't talk to that group. Outside of Caroline."

"Perfect. That's a perfect word choice: group. That's the main reason I'm here. Because you have been speaking to a group, haven't you?"
"Get to it, Klaus."

"I received a very interesting phone call from our dearly departed Hayley's contact."

That was all he said before he forced the sword through the back of the chair and through Carol's spinal column.

"No!" Tyler rushed him amid Caroline's exclamation.

Klaus left the sword in Carol and grabbed Tyler by the throat and threw him on the ground. "Please tell me more about the insurrection you've been planning against me," he hissed.

Tyler shifted, and Klaus' face went blank when the younger Hybrid's neck expanded under his palm. Tyler's growl sounded different in the Original's ears yet familiar at the same time. He then saw the detail in Tyler's eyes.

"You're an Alpha," he murmured. "How?!"

Tyler ripped Klaus' wrist off of his neck and grabbed his throat. He propelled himself off the floor and flipped Klaus onto his back, and he proceeded to pummel him into unconsciousness, his furious blows smashing through bones.

Caroline frantically pulled the sword out of Carol and bit her wrist. "Drink! Drink it, drink it!"

Klaus unsheathed his claws and ripped his way down Tyler's upper arms and threw him off. He shed his coat and let Tyler take a good look at his eyes.

Tyler was staring at another Alpha.

"I'm going to slaughter everyone you've ever met," Klaus promised. "Starting with the one who made you."

He sped over and shoved Caroline out of the way, but he was flung into the adjoining living room before he could do anything to Carol.

"Caroline, come on!" Bonnie urged.

"I can't! She's not healed yet!" Caroline bit her wrist again and fed Carol.

Lucy rushed to Carol's side, and Bonnie said, "We need to seal him in!" She turned around and ran out of the room.

Tyler suffered under Klaus' fury. Klaus was going to beat him to death. He was Klaus' first, his success, the symbol that he was going to build something bigger and better than his father could've ever imagined. Tyler had been his first second-in-command, before he'd broken his bond. He'd been his second chance at carving out the family that he wanted, the family who would always be there for him and put him first. And now this same family was trying to wipe him off the earth. He was going to make sure that no one remembered Tyler Lockwood.

"I should've killed you the moment you broke your bond!" he screamed.

"Fuck you." Tyler spat blood on his face and then streaked it with his claws. When Klaus slapped his hand away, Tyler lifted up and bit his neck, forced his canines and fangs closed over the skin and attempted to rip it off.

Klaus' growl was so loud that the two Hybrids who remained sired to him were alerted.
Tyler flipped their position and let go. Klaus was more than human. Ripping his skin out wasn't going to be easy. He stood and smashed his foot down on his face.

"Tyler, the knife!" Bonnie yelled as she stopped in the entrance of the room from the sitting room.

Tyler sped over, grabbed it from her hand, sped back, and jammed the knife in Klaus' stomach, right above his belly button. Klaus screamed and grabbed Tyler's wrist. Tyler twisted the knife for good measure. He pulled it out and jammed in again.

Lucy ran up next to Bonnie. "Are we ready?"

"We need to seal him in here," Bonnie repeated.

"I know," Lucy said,

Klaus knocked the knife out of Tyler's hand and regained the upper hand.

"We need an element," Bonnie said hurriedly. She made for the kitchen, but Lucy grabbed her.

"We have it. Plasma, the fifth element." She held up the knife that she'd grabbed from the kitchen and cut the fleshy part of her palm. She smeared it on the door frame next to her.

"I've never done it like this," Bonnie said as her body grew hot with dread over what Klaus was doing to Tyler. Klaus threw him over one of the couches, and he smashed into one of the family's sculptures.

"Mention the blood," Lucy said. "It's just like any other element. I call on Bennett blood or by the power of this blood-"

Bonnie didn't need to hear anything more. Her synapses fired off, and she chanted. "Ego vero in potentia ad signa sanguine Bennett Klaus Mikaelson in quattuor angulis cella, suus 'a nunc usque modo! Phasmatos salvis! Tyler, get out!"

Tyler pushed Klaus off of him and dove for the knife. He threw himself out of the room and into the foyer and fell on the floor. Klaus ran for him and smacked into the barrier, his face still as bloody as Tyler's arms.

Bonnie and Lucy ran around to the foyer and Bonnie dropped to her knees. She lifted Tyler's head onto her thighs. "It's okay. You're safe now."

"My mom," he said deliriously, his eyes swollen half shut. "Where is she?"

"She's healing slowly," Lucy responded, and she ran back to the sitting room.

"You're going to heal," Bonnie said, her arms shaking. "You're going to be fine. She's going to be fine. Everything's gonna be fine. You're gonna be okay."

She spoke over the threats that Klaus was screaming at Tyler as he tried to smash his way out of the sitting room's two exits.

Tyler turned and buried his swollen face into Bonnie's crotch and grabbed at her back. Bonnie lifted his head to her chest and held him close.

"It's okay," she soothed, wanting to calm herself down as much as she wanted to reassure him. "It's okay. It's over. We got it. I'm sorry," she apologized, warm tears swelling in her eyes. "I tried to get here as soon as I could. I'm sorry."
"You're here," Tyler mumbled.

She moved his head back so that she could look at his face. "You're not healing. Why aren't you healing?"

"It's," Tyler tried.

"Klaus is half werewolf," Lucy said as she walked back to the foyer. "As much aggression, anger, and violence as I see here, he might be an Alpha. If he is, anywhere he scratched him will take a while to heal."

"Tyler's an Alpha, too," Bonnie informed her.

"Then let's hope he got Klaus, too. From the look of his face, I think he did," she said as she looked at Klaus. "Being an Alpha doesn't speed up the healing process when it's another Alpha hurting you, unfortunately."

Bonnie touched her forehead to Tyler's and shook.

Lucy went back to the sitting room to supervise Carol's healing. When Carol was strong enough to stand, Lucy grabbed the sword and followed behind her and Caroline to join Bonnie and Tyler in the foyer.

"Tyler!" Carol called out when she saw him lying on Bonnie. She stumbled to him and fell to the floor.

"Be careful," Caroline cautioned. Klaus had pierced a vital part of her body.

"Tyler," she cried.

"Mom."

Carol gently took his head from Bonnie and held him.

"It's okay. I'll be okay," he mumbled.

"I'm gonna make a care package or something," Caroline said, desperately needing to move around. "They're not gonna sleep here, right?"

"No way," Carol answered.

"I'll pack some clothes," she said. She left them and avoided looking at Klaus on her way to the stairs.

"I'll help," Bonnie said as she wiped her eyes with the back of her hands.

Tyler's car had a bigger back seat, so Caroline and Lucy took it so that Carol could lie on her side. Bonnie and Tyler got in Carol's Mercedes, with Bonnie at the wheel.

The Lockwoods were going to stay in Caroline's house. Tyler had mumbled that Klaus has an invitation there. Caroline had double checked with Bonnie that the seal would hold, and the matter had been settled.

Bonnie wanted them in her house, but it was already filled to capacity with Lucy and Abby, so she
"I really wish you were coming with me," she said as she followed behind Caroline with both hands on the wheel.

"I still can, but... I don't wanna leave my mom alone. She'd never sleep. I can be there tomorrow." It was a little easier for him to speak now.

"The seal is only up until this time tomorrow night, so you should be able to sleep in your own bed soon."

She looked over at his arms. It was dark inside of the car, but she knew that they were still messed up. His face was getting better. She had dabbed some of the blood off with the hem of her pajama top.

"You should drink from me," she said. "Speed up the healing process."

"I can't do that."

"You need to be at full capacity to face him tomorrow."

"I'll have my pack, and I'll transition completely. This isn't what I want us to be."

"You healed me earlier-"

"You need your strength for tomorrow, too, remember? I don't wanna risk feeding you my blood right now, not after Klaus' claws got into my body. Besides, it might not work. She said nothing could heal a wound caused by an Alpha."

Frustrated, Bonnie remained quiet.

"I know you wanna help-"

"Help? I promised you that I would protect you, your pack, and that included your mom, too."

Tyler tried to lift his hand to touch her and grunted in pain.

"Stop," she said.

"How did you know to come?" he panted.

"I felt it. I was trying to sleep, and I suddenly had this... sense that something was wrong. It was like a psychic hit, but... less internal. It was a pull, and I knew that something was wrong with you. I ran out of bed and grabbed my keys. My mom stopped me, and I was about to all-out panic, because I didn't know what was waiting for me. Lucy said she had a faster way than driving."

She was wearing his jacket over her sleepwear, because she'd planned to sleep in it.

"The pull was me. You felt me," he said, tearing up because she'd received his need for her the same way he had received hers for him earlier at the school. Except he hadn't said her name, hadn't even thought her name. He'd called for her with emotion instead of words, and he hadn't realized he'd done it until she'd shown up.

The relief in his voice made Bonnie reach for his hand.

Caroline called her mother on the way, so Liz was waiting for them when they arrived. Caroline told
her about the bags in the cars, so Liz took the car keys from the girls and went to retrieve them.

Caroline and Lucy helped Carol inside while Bonnie walked beside Tyler, one hand on his stomach, the other wrapped around his waist. Caroline and Lucy took Carol directly to Liz's bed while Bonnie veered off to Caroline's bedroom.

"Bring me the two phones," Tyler said after he sat down. He'd directed Bonnie to call for Klaus' phone. He'd forgotten to take Hayley's phone after he'd killed her. He wasn't going to make the same mistake twice. He'd also asked her to call for Hayley's phone, believing it to be in Klaus' pocket.

"Okay, but let's get you comfortable first. You need a shower, and you're probably going to need help. Uh." How was she going to take his shirt off without lifting his arms? If only she had the strength to tear it. But there would be another problem with getting his shirt on.

Caroline walked into the room with the two bags she'd packed for Tyler. She'd overpacked, but packing had helped her focus. Bonnie had packed one bag for Carol.

"Everything okay?" she asked.

"I need to get his shirt off," Bonnie said.

Caroline noticed now that Bonnie was wearing the jacket that Tyler had left with earlier. She walked up to Tyler and said apologetically, "I kind of have to rip it."

Tyler slumped. This was one of his more expensive shirts. "How about we just wash my face for now?"

Caroline rolled her eyes and smiled. She put her hand on his right shoulder and said, "Come on."

"I've got it," Bonnie declared succinctly as she put her hand behind Tyler's neck. She had all but lost her mind when she'd seen him trying to hold his own against Klaus' murderous rage. She wasn't going to forget about his mashed face until it completely healed. He'd stumbled out of that room completely weak and grasping onto her. She was not going to step aside and wait while Caroline took care of him.

Caroline raised her brows at Bonnie's challenge. Bonnie raised hers right back.

Tyler felt his powers undulate, and his eyes shifted, a response to Bonnie's declaration. He blinked, but his eyes didn't turn back. With her words and the possessive grip that she had on his neck, Bonnie had spoken directly to the half of his dual nature that wanted to make her his.

Keeping his head down, he wrapped an arm around her waist and heaved himself to his feet, effectively blocking the girls from being able to see each other. "Let's go," he said to Bonnie.

Bonnie stood him at the sink and used Caroline's face wash to gently clean him up. He hissed, but he survived.

"I could do a better job, but-"

"It hurts," he confirmed.

She helped him sit on the toilet. "What's with your eyes, and why are you grinning?"

"Nothing. Just…what you said in there." He knew Caroline had left the room, but he didn't know whether or not she was eavesdropping.
"What? You liked that?"

"I kind of did," he shared. He tightened his lips so that he wouldn't grin so wide. His face hurt enough. He was thrilled that she had, in effect, laid claim to him. "It was very...territorial."

Bonnie's heart dipped unexpectedly. "You wanna be my territory, Tyler?"

"I do."

They tried to wrap their minds around the implication of his admission, and then they shifted with sudden shyness.

Lowering his voice, Tyler said, "We broke up, you know."

Bonnie was truly surprised. She matched the volume of her voice to his and asked, "When?"

"After you left earlier. It was this big thing. She knows about us. She knows we've been together. And I mean together. She asked me what took me so long to come back to the gym."

"We shouldn't have taken that extra time," Bonnie said.

"I got carried away."

She smiled. "Are you okay?"

"I'm fine."

She found that hard to believe.

"I'm not in love with her anymore, Bonnie. We've run our course."

Bonnie chose not to pursue the matter.

She walked him back to the bedroom and went outside to get the phones.

"Any idea how this happened?" she asked after she handed them to him.

"He said he got a phone call from Hayley's friend. He told him what I was planning."

It was at that moment that Bonnie had an epiphany. "Silas."

"What?"

"In the bathroom earlier. You said you were responsible for twelve lives, and I know you were talking about me, but your pack plus you makes twelve. Twelve."

"What about twelve?" Lucy asked as she walked into the room.

"I think someone tried to get Tyler and his pack to be the third duodecad."

"Klaus said he was going to slaughter everyone I've ever met. Holy shit." He pulled out his phone and called Kim.

She answered after a couple of rings. She was whispering. "Hey."

"Hey, are you guys okay?"
"We're fine, but I can't talk right now. Dai and Lily are going crazy because they think something's wrong with Klaus. They're trying to call him, but they can't reach him."

Just then, Klaus' phone vibrated on the bed.

"Klaus is stuck in my house. He attacked me."

"Oh my God, are you okay?"

"Barely. It's a long story, but I have what I need for Bonnie to make him vulnerable enough for us to kill. We have to meet tomorrow."

"Okay. What are we gonna do about Dai and Lily?"

"I'm coming over early tomorrow morning, and we'll take care of them. For now, let them worry. Klaus won't be coming home tonight."

Relief washed over Kim. "Good. Okay. We'll see you then."

"You think Silas called Klaus?" Lucy asked after Tyler hung up.

"You think Hayley was working with Silas?" Tyler said a little skeptically.

"Or a Silas worshiper," Bonnie answered. "The same worshiper who gave me the spirit incense, which is the only thing I've been doing differently before Silas channeled me."

"Shane," Tyler breathed.

"I'm going to kill him," Bonnie swore.

"Who's Shane?" Lucy asked.

"Remember the occult professor I told you about, the one who helped Jeremy control his Hunter urges?"

Bonnie was looking at Lucy, but something in her eyes made Tyler say, "Nothing's gonna get done tonight. Do you hear me?" He shook the hem of the jacket to get her attention. "Nothing's getting done tonight. You're going home, and you're going to sleep."

"Remember when I said I told him about Hayley and was waiting for him to do something? He's a Silas fanatic." She walked out of the room.

Tyler did his best to hurry off the bed and followed.

"I'm going to kill him," Bonnie repeated as scenarios detailing how she was going to do it played in her mind.

"Can you please make sure she doesn't go anywhere tonight?" he asked Lucy.

"He used me! He-" She hadn't let Shane help her, despite the many times he'd offered, but he'd still found a way to get to her. "I'm going to kill him. I'm going to kill him!"

"We need to think about this calmly," Lucy said.

"I'm killing him as soon as Klaus closes his eyes tomorrow." She pressed her hands against her face. Tyler could've died tonight because of Shane. She was going to hurt him, and then she was going to
kill him.

She mentally checked out for the rest of the time spent at the Forbes house. She didn't look at Tyler, didn't speak to Tyler, didn't speak to anyone. When Lucy was ready to go, she went outside to get the knife from Carol's car. She said goodbye to no one. Tyler said he would talk to her tomorrow. She didn't respond. She was ready to kill.

Lucy teleported them back to the house, and Bonnie closed her eyes and stood still until the contents of her stomach settled from the rush.

Lucy said something about figuring it out and focusing on Klaus, but it was like Bonnie had water in her ears. Her mind was chasing thoughts, and all of them were running toward Shane. And when she headed to her room and tried to slow her thoughts down, (because how could he really do something like this?), Tyler's swollen face barged its way to the front of her mind.

Shane had a secret room; Shane wanted to help her; Shane's apartment smelled so strongly of herbs; Shane gave her that incense; Shane had no questions about Hayley's death; Tyler saw Shane and Hayley speaking together; Shane supported Silas unquestioningly and had no words for Qetsiyah; Shane wanted to help her.

All of that made him guilty. But most of all….Shane was the one who'd established contact with her. He'd found her on Twitter and offered to give her the few of her grandmother's belongings that were still at Whitmore. Their meeting wasn't a coincidence. He had sought her out.

And she wanted to stop thinking now; she wanted her thoughts to slow down. The day was so long; was it midnight yet? Was the decade dance really happening right now, people dancing without a care in the world? How was she going to sleep? How was she going to kill Shane? How was she going to have the mental energy?

After her mother was killed, she'd had this recurring nightmare for a week straight where she would use her powers in the middle of a threatening situation, only for it to give out on her in the middle of the fight. She imagined things playing out that way with Shane, now.

There was so much in her head, so much in her heart, and she wanted them out, either through her powers or through tears, something. She couldn't sleep like this; she couldn't make it through the night like this; she couldn't kill Klaus like this.

She balled her hands on her knees and yelled, not at the top of her lungs, but she yelled. She needed to let it out. She needed her brain to slow down. So she yelled, and she yelled, and her stomach contracted with it, her back arched with it, and she yelled until it became a break that her body was taking from crying. The door flew open, and she was jostled as Rudy took her in his arms. She didn't stop yelling, didn't stop crying. She couldn't hear Abby calling her name, couldn't feel Lucy's hands on hers.

How was it so easy for people to do this? What about her inspired so many people to shut off their conscious and exploit her? From Jonas to Luka to Shane, it didn't matter if she welcomed them or kept them at arms length. There was something about her. It didn't matter if she called them friend or ally. There was something about her, something that told these people that it was okay to use her, something that kept them from being able to feel bad about it. There was something.

She yelled for not being able to kill Shane on this very night, and she cried.
Distraction Tactic

She eventually fell into a deep sleep. Abby asked Lucy to channel the inconsolable witch, and she instructed her in a cleansing chant that she used to do on Bonnie to lull her to sleep when she was younger. Rudy hadn't thought about the chant in years. And Abby had never missed her powers more than when she'd watched Lucy do for Bonnie what she couldn't do in her present state.

Bonnie's phone woke her up the next day. She sprang onto her elbow and answered groggily on the fourth ring. "Hello?" She willed her brain to catch up with the rest of her body and wake up. Her vision was blurry.

"Hey."

"Tyler. Where is it? I mean, what time is it?"

"It's...8:58."

He sounded completely awake.

"I'm going to meet the others at Klaus' house," he said.

"Oh my God. I need to wake up. I need to shower. I need to-is Caroline still coming?"

"She told me she still is. We just got back from picking up her car at my house, but I don't know, Bon. I was thinking it'd be better if Kim went with you to Founders Hall, or maybe you can go with your cousin. To make it less awkward."

"She was there for you last night, Ty. Oh my God, I need to wake up. She's a...she's a Founder's kid."

"Bonnie, are you okay?" he asked with a hint of amusement. "You sound completely out of it."

She stood up and walked to the bathroom, hoping the movement would force her brain to work. "Caroline can get us inside Founders Hall with no problem. She knows where everything is. I kind of had a panic attack last night. My dad and Lucy and my mom held me. And then I knocked out. I think they cast a spell on me to calm me down."

She looked at herself in the mirror. It was a frightening sight.

"That's good," Tyler said. "Breakdowns are good. You were kind of stoic when you left yesterday."

"Yeah," she answered softly. "Another day in the life of me."

"So, how are you feeling now?"

"Calmer. Better. I don't feel like the world is getting smaller and smaller. But the problem's still there."

"We'll get Shane," he promised.

"There'll be another one. There's always another Shane."

"So we'll kill all of them."
She was surprised by her smile. The face in the mirror didn't look so frightening anymore.

"I'm glad you were able to sleep. I couldn't. I kept thinking about you, and Klaus, and today."

"How are you today? How's your mom?"

"Mom's healed, but she's walking a little hunched. Caroline's feeding her regularly, and she can't stand the taste of blood."

Bonnie smiled. "And you?"

"Hold on."

A few seconds later, her phone chimed with the sound of a text.

"Open it," he said.

She chuckled when she saw the selfie. She gazed adoringly at his perfectly healed face.

"Do you see it?" he asked.

"Hold on," she said. "What do you think?"

Tyler looked fondly at the picture. He could tell she'd tried, but the smile was barely there. "Sad. You look beautiful. We really need that weekend."

"Would that be before or after we go to the cave?"

"During."

She smiled. "You're cute, Tyler. I'm happy you're healed. What about your arms?"

"There are scabs where the wounds are mostly fresh and scarring where they're mostly healed. I'm getting there. We're gonna get through today," he promised.

"I should be telling you that."

"I think I've come the closest to dying at Klaus' hand that I ever will. I'll have people with me today. I've been stressing about this blowing up in my face, and it did, but it came at the right time. We're ready."

"Then let's do it."

After she hung up with Tyler, she noticed that she had a text from Caroline, sent at 8:15am.

*How about I meet you there instead?*

She hoped this wouldn't be painful. Maybe going with Kim was a better idea.

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Bonnie was battle-ready in her black leather bomber jacket and the three inch black combat booties her father had bought her for Christmas. The block heels sounded authoritatively down the stairs, and she made her way to the kitchen where her father was at the stove, and her mother and cousin were seated at the breakfast table.

"Good morning," she greeted.
"Good morning," the three answered in unison. Rudy left what he was doing and asked, "How are you feeling?"

"Better." She smiled when he hugged her.

"What was that spell?" she asked Abby as she set her messenger bag on the third seat at the table.

"Something I used to do for you when you were a baby. I would channel you and do this simple Nature chant. You loved it. It always calmed you down. It was your first introduction to magic."

And she'd remembered it this whole time. Bonnie was touched. "Thanks."

Abby nodded. "Are you sure you're feeling better? Lucy filled us in about Shane. I think we all, the three of us, need to sit down and lay everything out on the table, everything we know, everything that's going on."

It sounded like a good idea to Bonnie, but it also meant that Lucy and her mom weren't leaving any time soon. She didn't want anyone to find out they were here, not to mention how fatal Mystic Falls had proven to be for Bennetts. But she simply replied, "Okay."

"I'm trying to get out of going away for work," Rudy said from his position at the stove.

"Dad, please. You can still go."

"I'm not going to leave only to find out something's happened to you. I still have this quarter's vacation leave."

"We're supposed to use that during the summer."

Rudy turned from the stove. "I think this is more important. Things aren't right here, Bonnie."

Bonnie sighed. "I'm grabbing an apple, and I'm heading out-"

"No, you're not, not after last night," Abby disagreed. "You're going to sit and have a good breakfast."

"If I do that, I'll run late," she said as she retrieved a small red apple from the fridge and then walked to the sink. "I have to be at Founders Hall by 10."

Abby shook her head in disappointment, although she wasn't surprised that Bonnie didn't put much stock in taking care of her body when she was on a mission. She had easily guessed that about her.

"Lucy, can you do me a favor?" Bonnie asked as she rinsed her apple.

"Yeah."

She set the apple on the table and opened her bag. She pulled out her Grimoire. She needed to transfer the spell that she had used on the knife to her book.

Abby straightened when she saw the book of spells. It was almost as big as hers, definitely as thick, but where hers was hard cover, Bonnie's was soft like a journal, and it was bound with a leather tie. It was a beautiful green-brown with the word Serendipity handwritten in cursive on a piece of paper that was burnt around the edges. The outline of a feather had been carved into the book.

"Earth, fire, and air," Abby said of the color of the book, the burnt paper, and the feather.
Bonnie's eyes lit with her smile. She was surprised that Abby had guessed correctly. "Yeah. I'm missing water, though. I haven't figure out how to represent it. Dad's seen it already."

"It's beautiful," Abby complimented. It was too big for a witch in her third year, but she reminded herself that this was Bonnie. The book would be filled in no time.

"You draw?" Lucy asked as she eyed the feather.

"Of course not. I did that with a spell." She untied the book and opened it. She'd copied Emily, her grandmother, and her mother and written Bonnie Bennett in the middle of the first page. On the bottom right edge, following the women who'd done it before her, she'd written Grimoire.

Abby smiled at the replication.

"Do you have one?" Bonnie asked Lucy.

"I have two. They're both smaller than that one. I don't transfer every spell I come up with. Most I throw away, or I keep them in the draft book. I only put the ones I'm super duper proud of in my Grimoire."

Bonnie nodded and flipped to Klaus' spell. She turned the book around and handed it to Lucy. "Can you check this out and make sure everything's okay, and tell me if they could be better?"

Lucy read the title. "Life Splitting?"

"I'm splitting Klaus' blood to isolate the doppelganger magic that keeps him invulnerable, and then I'm going to poison him with his own werewolf blood. That's the Life Poison."

"This is entirely blood magic. Bonnie these are very ambitious spells," Abby commented as she read the words.

"Well, I'll tell you the first thing," Lucy said. "If you're working with blood and the body, you should channel the earth."

"Like you did with the desiccation spell," Abby reminded Bonnie.

"I had planned that," Bonnie said as she nodded.

"And you need to be outside," Lucy said.

"I had planned to be in the witches' house."

"Outside is better," Lucy said. "You need to be in an open space."

"And you need to be with a partner," Abby said. "The spells are perfect. I wouldn't change anything," she said and prompted Lucy.

"Me neither," Lucy agreed.

Bonnie lifted her chin proudly.

"I'll do it with you," Lucy said. "We can channel each other."

Again, Bonnie liked the idea, but…."That means you stepping outside of this house. I don't want anyone knowing you're in town. I don't want you getting caught in some freak supernatural crossfire and getting hurt."
Lucy looked at Abby. To her, Bonnie's scenario was extreme. "Bonnie, that's not going to happen. It'll be fine. Just come get me when it's time."

Unlike Bonnie, Tyler dressed simple for the day's main activity. He was going to take most of it off before he transitioned anyway. He pulled up to Klaus' mansion and stepped out of the car in a black, short-sleeved, casual button-down shirt. He had been relieved when he'd pulled it out of the duffle. The button-down was less hell on his scars than pulling a t-shirt or henley over his head. Ivory white cotton chinos and black Prada high-tops completed his look. The high-tops have been his favorite shoes since he bought them last year. When he'd come out wearing them, Caroline had said that she'd packed them in hopes of lifting his spirits. He'd smiled and thanked her. Only she would think of something like that in the middle of a crisis. He was grateful for the gesture.

He rang the doorbell and looked up and down the street while he waited, Klaus' phone in his hand. He always felt like Klaus was the only person who lived in the neighborhood. It was the least populated neighborhood in Mystic Falls, which of course worked to Klaus' advantage. Can't have a neighbor overhearing his weekly rants and ravings.

It was Lily who opened the door, and her disappointment was amusing.

"I thought you were Klaus," she said, as if it was his fault that he wasn't.

"Sorry." He walked inside without an invitation.

"Any idea where he is?" she asked as she crossed her arms.

"Yeah. Where's Dai?" Every member of his pack was downstairs: in the kitchen, in the living room, and Kim, Adrian, and Alex had come to the foyer.

"He's upstairs," Lily said, an excited rush in her words. Tyler had vital information about Klaus. "I'll get him," she said, brushing her thick bangs to the side out of habit as she went.

Lily getting Dai consisted of her going to the bottom of the stairs and screaming up for him to come down because Tyler knew where Klaus was.

In the meantime, the pack gathered behind Tyler, with Kim flanking his right and Adrian on his left.

Lily didn't notice the formation when she walked back to the foyer. "Well, is he okay?" she asked, her palms opened by her side. "He left last night without a word, and no one except Dai thought it was a good idea to go look for him. I've tried his cell and nothing."

Tyler threw her Klaus' phone, and she caught it as Dai walked into the room. He was a head taller than Lily and a year older than Tyler. His light brown eyes captivated, effortlessly bringing to mind thoughts of the supernatural, thoughts that his father had fled from when he'd moved the family out of Nagoya and out of the whole country before Dai had learned to speak.

"Where is he?" he asked Tyler now.

"Why do you have his phone?" Lily asked.

"Listen," Tyler began, "Things are about to change. Big time. Klaus didn't come home last night, because he's never coming home again. Everything's set for him to die. Everything's set for all of us to walk away from this, for us to gain our freedom."

"What the hell did you do?" Lily asked.
"Listen to what I'm saying," he said as he took a step forward. "This guy has been terrorizing us for one hellish year. It's been *that* long since all of you saw your families, your friends. Do you ever plan to see them again? Do you think Klaus would let you? Because he hasn't so far. As far as he's concerned, he's all the family you need. It's not like that anymore. You can go. You don't even have to run. You're free. You can walk away from this."

"Tyler," Dai spoke. "What did you do? Cut the bullshit," he said as he walked up to the Alpha and stopped too close to his face.

"Look at his arms," Lily said.

"Did Klaus do that?" Dai asked. "We felt something last night, like a disturbance. We've never felt that before."

"That's weird," Kim said. "I didn't feel anything."

Lily frowned. "You said you did."

"I lied."

"We all lied," Adrian said nonchalantly.

"They didn't have to feel what Klaus felt, and they don't have to want what he wants. Not anymore," Tyler said. "Their sire bond is broken."

Dai gritted his teeth. "I told him you were a threat."

"Did you? See, that's the problem, Dai. That's why I didn't try to help you or Lily. You guys actually like him."

"We don't," Lily said. "But what he's doing is important. What he's doing is amazing."

"Killing werewolves and terrorizing people?"

"An Original vampire and the first Hybrid ever chose *us* to be by his side," Lily insisted.

"He didn't do that because he thought we were special," Tyler argued. "He didn't choose us to be by his side: he chose us to do his bidding. He *killed* Chris. He's killed us *and* gotten us killed."

"Chris got himself killed when he stepped out of line," Lily said.

Tyler shook his head in disbelief. "You're both replaceable to him."

"That's what stops us from liking him," Dai said like it was the most obvious thing in the world. "Grow up, Tyler. People in the normal world fight for power all the time. People in the normal world *terrorize* all the time. You thought it'd be different in the supernatural world? Someone's always gunning for power. Someone's always trying to be special. We're an entirely new *species,*" he said, eyes gleaming with excitement. "Tell me that's not fucking cool."

"Klaus is dying," Tyler said instead. "And I'm giving you guys the chance to walk away."

"You're not gonna kill him," Lily said, as if just saying it would make it true. She knew Tyler was Klaus' first successful Hybrid. He used to be the one that Klaus spoke to the most. She used to wonder about everything that Tyler must know about Klaus. She had judged them to be very close. Then Tyler had decided to be stupid, and she'd watched him grow to be a source of stress for Klaus. What she saw in Tyler now was someone that Klaus could easily crush, someone who was always
being shown their place by Klaus. How could he kill the Original Hybrid?

"Walk away," Tyler instructed. "Leave town now. You can even take the car." Klaus was so controlling that he'd only given them one car to share, one expensive car, but still one car.

"If you're thinking about doing something stupid," Alex said, "Remember that there are twelve of us and two of you."

"We don't want to kill you guys," Kim said.

"We were all in this shit together," Tyler said. "And we can walk away together, even if we go in different directions."

"How about we stay here until you actually do this?" Dai asked.

"Dai," Lily protested.

"That's not an option," Tyler said. "You leave now."

"I'm not leaving only for you to fail in killing him, and he comes looking for us," Dai said.

"You seriously want to leave?" Lily asked, betrayal in her voice.

"Of course not, but we can't take them. But we're not leaving Mystic Falls before Klaus is dead."

Tyler inhaled through his nose. He could feel the others waiting for his decision. Taking advantage of Dai's proximity, he turned him around and snapped his neck. Lily rushed at him, and Kim intercepted and punched her. While Lily was disoriented, Kim went around behind her and snapped her neck.

"Now what?" asked Alex.

"Now we string 'em up in Klaus' handy dandy torture room," Adrian said, referring to the room where Klaus had once held the Hunter Connor captive.

"How about we give them a hand in getting out of town instead?" Tyler said. "The spell keeping Klaus hostage won't come down until tonight, so we have the whole day."

"This is really gonna happen," Alex said reverently. He looked at Tyler for confirmation.

Tyler smiled. "Yeah, it's really gonna happen. And I'll tell you guys how when I get back. Alex and Adrian, you guys come with me. Kim, stay behind and make sure no one comes poking around here."

"We still need the handcuffs," Adrian said, and he left the room to retrieve them.

Kim left Lily and joined Tyler. "You know, you can't face Klaus with your arms like that. That's just giving him a weakness to exploit."

"I can handle it."

"You don't have to. We're a pack. We can heal you."

Tyler looked around at all of them and nodded. "What do I need to do?"

"Nothing," Kim said with a smile. She stepped forward and grabbed his left wrist with one hand and
his elbow with the other. Alex grabbed his other arm. Lena, the girl that Bonnie had begun to weld on that fateful night, was behind Tyler and held his right shoulder while the third girl in the pack stood behind him and touched his left shoulder. The rest, all boys, including Cohen, the one that had almost become permanently attached to Lena, reached Tyler by touching Kim, Alex, and the two girls. They were all looking at him and thinking two things: he had really gotten them this far. And the state of his arms was a preview of what they were going to get from Klaus tonight.

Tyler had told Bonnie that no one looked to him for any answers. Yet as he returned the attention that his pack fixed on him, he had never felt more like a leader, the core, the one who was holding all of them. And he was going to make sure that they all survived the night.

The Betas closed their eyes and concentrated, and Tyler stiffened when a potent energy ripped through him. Ten wild lupine souls directed their power to him, and he took all of it. He didn't know how not to. He grunted under the siege and balled his hands into fists. His face shifted, his teeth descending. It was unlike anything he had ever felt. They shifted too, and they all filled the house with their growls.

Tyler looked down at his arms. They were completely healed. He lifted his head and raised his voice higher than the rest. He returned their energy, infusing them with his renewed power. He felt Kim, Alex, and the two girls tighten their hold on him in response, and he knew the others were having the same reaction.

And so it went until Adrian came back with the handcuffs.

Kim shook her hands out once they were done, energy whizzing inside her body, her eyes still ethereal. "He's an Alpha, isn't he? This happened last night. You should've healed already."

"He's an Alpha," Tyler confirmed.

But no one was phased by the revelation, not after they'd just reinforced their commitment to Tyler and he to them. They were in sync. They were ready.

The gas needle in Bonnie's car was past the last bar, so she stopped to refill the tank. Needless to say, she was late in getting to Founders Hall. On her way to the Hall, she received a text from Caroline, asking her if she was still coming. Bonnie detected the impatience. She texted her that she had to refuel and was on her way.

When she arrived, Caroline met her at the car.

"Finally."

Bonnie grabbed her bag from the passenger's seat and stepped out. She was giving Caroline one more instance to be impatient and belittling, and then she was going to respond. She slung the bag across her body.

"Is she here?" she asked as she looked at the side of the building. She'd received no greeting from Caroline, so she wasn't going to give her one either.

"Yep, my hunch was correct. She went inside twenty minutes ago."

"So we need a private place to do this. I'm thinking bathroom."

"We'll need an out of order sign. If you just lock it, they'll get someone with a key. The custodial room is on the third floor, west wing. April will be in a cubicle on the second floor."
"How are you gonna isolate her?"

"I'll figure it out. I'll strike up a conversation and eventually lead her to the bathroom. Did you bring the knockout potion you used on Luka? Hopefully she already has a drin-"

"I'm going to make a powder, the same thing I made for Katherine two years ago when she was in the tomb. I just need to steal something personal from her desk."

"Well, hopefully she's the decorating type. I'll distract her, and you'll go to the desk?"

Bonnie nodded.

"Second floor, east wing, and it'll be one of the middle cubicles on the right side of the room."

Bonnie nodded. "Let's get this going."

Founders Hall was one of the more beautiful buildings in Mystic Falls. In addition to housing the town's approved official history, it also served as Town Hall and thus housed the Mayor's office as well as those of the Commissioners. Founders business and the town's historical records were done and kept on the second floor. Parks and recreation, cultural affairs, and town events were also dealt with on the second floor.

The girls entered the long lobby, and their eyes widened. There were a couple of people milling about, but April was heading toward them with her head in a black binder and a key in her hand. Bonnie turned around and scrambled for something to do with herself. She faced forward, took a chance, and crossed Caroline to go the left side of the room. Praying that April kept her head down, she walked close to the wall and headed for the stairs. She reached them and quickly but gently opened the before April had a chance to look up.

"April!" Caroline greeted cheerfully once Bonnie was safely out of sight.

"Caroline. Hi." Her default used to be to smile any time someone in her generation approached her for a conversation. Most times, she would get embarrassed about how needy she must come off, though everyone was always polite towards her. She didn't automatically smile at Caroline now, and it felt good. She and her friends were standing in the way of what she wanted.

"You're actually the person I was hoping to see. I'm here to scout out some volunteer slash charitable activities for the summer, and since you're Miss Mystic, being the resource person for whatever I come up with would look really good on your portfolio."

April was thrown aback. She wasn't sure what she'd been expecting. "Um, well, I don't really have anything planned for summer yet. Actually, I've been working on something for the Spring."

"Perfect, let's hear it."

"Why do you care? You're graduating, and I'd think you'd want to spend the summer getting ready for college."

"It's kind of a last hurrah. I've been queen bee where volunteering is concerned since freshman year, and I'm...actually going to miss it," she admitted sincerely. "I know I can do it in college, join clubs and whatnot, but who knows if it'll be the same. I've made a career out of it here."

April smiled sympathetically. "Well, um, my idea for spring is to do an auction? Of people? Like a win a date thing, or bid on a date. I actually got the inspiration from Mayor Lockwood. She put one together three years ago, only she used guys. Men. I want to use girls, and I want to keep it focused
on the high school. It'll be restricted to the seniors, and they'll get double volunteer hours for participating, both the girls and the people who come to bid, and the funds raised will go to my incoming junior class."

"That's very smart, especially the double volunteer points. Have you thought about running for president of your class for next year? Campaigning starts in the middle of March."

"Uh, I hadn't thought about it, but...I might like to. I mean I'm really enjoying all this Miss Mystic Falls stuff."

"And it'll look great on your college applications."

She smiled. "Okay, so, um, you're signing up?"

"Yep, and I'm volunteering the girls, too."

"Cool. Okay. The forms are upstairs. Let me just lock the doors first. I always forget."

As Caroline watched April lock the front doors, she had one thought: wouldn't it be great if no one bid on Bonnie at the auction?

After letting the door shut behind her, Bonnie climbed the pristine marble white-light yellow stairs. When she opened the door to the second floor, she felt a familiar pang in her uterus.

"Crap. No."

Tyler was going to kill Klaus tonight. The fact that that meant, among other wonderful things, that he would most likely want to have lots and lots of celebratory sex should not be ignored. And here she was about to get her period.

She slowed her steps as she walked the short way to the white wood double doors. A White man in his late 60s, who looked like he was born and bred in the South, walked out of the doors and tilted his head towards Bonnie with a warm smile. Bonnie returned it, though hers was a little tight. She was on a mission.

She walked into the room, and it was a completely different atmosphere than downstairs. She had come up here twice while Caroline had held the title of Miss Mystic Falls, and she had conducted business on the first floor once when her dad had come to complain about their water bill.

The room had a lot more people than the lobby, and, surprisingly since it was the historical room, had a lot more computers. A lot of Mystic High students did their volunteering here, and she recognized a couple of the ones typing away at the computers and flipping through binders.

She walked straight to April's cubicle. It was decorated with many professional photographs of her pageant win. She didn't check to see if anyone was watching her when she sat in the chair, because she did not want to arouse suspicion.

"Alright, April, give me something sentimental."

She found one immediately. Framed on the left side of the desk was a picture of April and her father. But that option was too sentimental. April would notice the picture's absence immediately. But did it matter, since by the time April noticed she would already have the information that she wanted?

Yes, it mattered, because April was weirdly under Silas' protection.
She surveyed every inch of the desk and the wall without touching anything. On the right and behind the computer's monitor, almost completely hidden behind a card-holder in the shape of a pale green and white seashell, were maybe ten black wristbands and beaded bracelets. They looked like April's style.

She looked at the picture of April and her father. It would work so much better. But she did not want Silas to come after her. So she lifted the seashell and swiped the wristbands and bracelets and strategically replaced the shell so that it would've blocked the bracelets from April's view. She surreptitiously looked around to make sure that no one was looking at her, and then she left the desk.

She walked to the door and put her hand on the knob to twist it open when she saw Caroline and April coming down the hallway from one of the elevators that was next to the stairwell. She stepped to the right in a hurry just as April looked up.

She moved closer to the cubicles on the left and then moved two cubicles down to an empty one. She hunched over the desk and moved her hands so that, from the back, it would look like she was doing something. She heard the door open, and she heard April direct Caroline to where her desk was. She moved back up the cubicles at the same pace that they walked to the desk. She chanced a glance their way and, seeing their backs completely turned, she picked up the pace and walked to the door.

When she opened it, someone else was coming in. She didn't bother with the courtesy of letting them in first. She squeezed her body past them while apologizing and left the room.

Caroline relaxed when she heard the door open and close. Surely that meant Bonnie had stepped out. While looking around the room upon entering, she had seen Bonnie standing at the wrong cubicle. She had been specific when she'd told her where to go. Hopefully she had simply caught her on her way out.

When her phone buzzed in her back pocket, she pulled it out and got a confirmation text from Bonnie. She set the phone on April's desk. Now the ball was in her court.

"Here are the forms," April said, as she picked up another black binder that was on the desk and placed it in front of Caroline. "It's just the application and a consent form to use any pictures we take of you. You're eighteen already, right?"

"Yeah. Can I have a pen?"

April handed her a black pen, and then Caroline started to do what she did best: she talked. "My volunteer hours are all squared, though I'm not sure about the other girls."

"Well, they'll have to come in and fill out the forms themselves. You can't do that for them. But you can write their names on the participant list."

"I will do that," she said playfully.

April lifted her shoulders. "So…did you go to the dance last night? I didn't see you."

"Uh, no. I didn't feel like it."

"Didn't feel like it?" she asked with a smile full of disbelief. "You put so much work into it."

Caroline chuckled. "Uh, well, I was gonna go with Tyler, but then he…caught something. He was yacking in the bathroom all night, so I stayed and took care of him."
"Oh. I hope he feels better. You guys are a really cute couple." She idly wondered how vampire-werewolf Hybrids could get sick.

Caroline looked up from what she was writing. If she truly wanted to rope April in, nothing would work better than the truth. Or at least some truth. "We are. We were." She chuckled. "Um, I guess you can be the first to know that…we broke up," she nodded.

"What? Why? I mean, I've seen you at school."

"We broke up last night." She straightened the binder in front of her, just an inch.

"You just said that you were taking care of him."

"I was. And during one time when he was throwing his guts up in the bathroom, his phone rang. I didn't answer, but I picked up the phone so that I could look at the screen and tell him who it was, you know? It wasn't a name or number that I recognized. So, not getting an answer, the floozy sent a text. Turns out someone else has also been taking care of him, if you know what I mean."

"Oh. Wow. Sorry."

"It's okay."

"Were you guys together long?"

"A year and a half? Actually, late this summer would make two."

"Wow. And you're just okay?"

She smiled and closed her eyes. "I'm not okay. I'm hurt. I'm...deeply hurt. I don't know the girl, but it kind of feels like I do? Just because, everyone in school knows that Tyler's my boyfriend. It's just unexpected."

"Did he try to explain himself?"

"Uh. Yes and no? There's just no regret there about what he did, and it went deeper than emotional bonding. It would've been one thing if he was just talking to her, but he took it farther, and...I threw a fit," she said on a chuckle. "I'm good at those. There was a time when...he couldn't even look at anyone else. I was the only person who got him. He relied on me. Not saying that that matters most to me, but I've done a lot for him. And it wasn't easy. It was downright hard sometimes, but I hung in there. And this is how he repays me."

"I'm sorry."

"Anyways, I broke it off."

"Do you think he'll realize his mistake and come back?"

"Honestly? I don't know," she answered quietly.

"Would you consider taking him back if he did? Maybe just for revenge?" she suggested with an encouraging smile when Caroline stayed pensive.

Caroline chuckled. "Maybe then."

The bracelets still in her fist, Bonnie took the stairs to the third floor and turned left. The third floor
was a lot wider than the second, though not as wide as the lobby. She found the janitor's door around the first corner. It had a plaque at the eyesight level of someone who was Caroline's height that said *Custodial*. She turned the knob and only got so far. It was, of course, locked.

She looked in the direction from which she'd come to make sure that she was still alone. She flexed her hand on the knob and quietly said, "*Licet ego ineo.*"

The lock clicked, and she turned the knob. The room was longer than she expected. It was narrow, with a walking space that fit only one person, but it was just wide enough to contain a desk with a computer. She supposed there was a lot to keep track of. She walked to the back of the room, turning sideways so that her bag would not hit the computer chair, and she found a container with sticky white laminated signs that said *Out of Order*. She took one and vacated the room. She closed the door with her elbow and switched the sign to the hand holding the bracelets. She put her free hand on the knob and said, "*Mihi rest est in termino.*"

The lock clicked again. She turned the knob and only got so far. It was locked. She sighed in relief and headed for the stairs again.

She reached the second floor and slowly opened the door and poked her head out. No one was in the hallway. She turned left in search of the girls bathroom. When she found the one marked *Women*, she stepped inside and looked under every stall. No feet.

She deposited her bag on one of the sinks, and then she stepped outside to paste the sign on the door. Afterwards, she walked inside and rifled through her bag for the green ceramic bowl. She produced it and dropped the bracelets in. She set the bowl on the floor and then took out four large white candles. She would need to cleanse her candles of magical residue soon or else buy new ones. That was a tip she'd gotten from Abby's Grimoire.

She placed the candles around the bowl and then took out a candle lighter. She walked around and lit all four candles, and then she sat on her calves with her back to the bathroom's entrance. She closed her eyes and connected to the flames. She connected the flames to the bracelet and thought of April, of subduing her, knocking her unconscious, bringing her closer to these items that she cherished.

The flames intensified and grew in size. She lifted her chin and fell deeper into the spell. And then it was over.

She opened her eyes and looked at the black powder in the bowl, and she smiled.

She blew out the candles and took the bowl out of the middle, and then she lit the candles again.

She just needed to fill the second bowl with water, and she would be ready.

"So what about you, planning to get a boyfriend?" Caroline asked.

April smiled. "No, not really. I mean I liked Matt, but-"

"You realized he was more valuable to you dead?"

April started at her candor. She asked it like it was part of a normal conversation.

"Hey, don't look like that. One aspect of knowing these crazy secrets is that you can talk about something like that…well, just like that."

"Like we're friends? That doesn't sound like a life I want."
Caroline shrugged. "Friends or not, there aren't many people we can talk to so openly. But back to the original topic: you don't want a boyfriend."

"I don't think it's in the cards for me right now."

*Because you're trying to bring your dead father back to life?* Caroline thought. Out loud, she said, "You've got two years left. Plenty of time. Unless you're into girls."

"No," she said, lifting her eyebrows. She fidgeted. "I mean I did kind of have an experience…well two, at boarding school, but I'm not looking for a girl." Why was she sharing this?

"Girls are good," Caroline said lightly as she nodded. "Won't get any judgment from me."

April looked at some of the items on her desk, just because. She really shouldn't have said that.

Caroline's phone chimed with a text, and she picked it up.

*Bathroom's out of order. I'm ready.*

She set the phone down and finished completing both papers, and then she wrote Bonnie and Elena's names on the participant list and put hers last. "I have no idea if Bonnie and Elena have their hours in order. I'm pretty sure Elena doesn't. I can't remember the last time she even said the word volunteer."

April smiled. "So, will you be going to prom by yourself?" she asked, just to make conversation. She always felt like she needed to talk more when a conversation began to lag.

"Ugh, I'm trying not to think about that right now. I already have my prom dress."

"What does it look like?"

"It's a peachy pink? I love all shades of pink, from the lightest pink going all the way to dark magenta, almost purple. The only pink I don't like, weirdly enough, is the pink you usually see when people talk about pink? I don't even know what shade that is, but it doesn't do it for me. But yeah, that's all I'm gonna say about the dress. I love it, and I can't wait to wear it."

April's question about going to prom alone made her realize that despite blowing up at Tyler at the Festival for wanting to bury himself in concrete and telling him that he was going to miss prom, she had not been picturing him as her prom date. In the front of her mind she'd expected to go with him, sure, but in the back of her mind, she had expected to go alone. He was out of town so often nowadays, or otherwise incapacitated, which meant he missed a lot at school, so she had assumed that some circumstance would come up that would force him to miss prom, too. It was her little secret that more than once when she'd pictured herself wearing the dress at prom, she had imagined Klaus showing up in that way he always did when she was dressed to the nines, and more than once she'd wondered what his reaction to her latest knockout would be.

"Well, I hope you have fun," April said. "Going to dances alone isn't that bad."

"I have to go to the bathroom," Caroline said. She said it like she was talking to herself, and she shook her legs for effect. "Hey, have you shipped out everything that was donated at the Festival?"

"Um, some of them. Why?"

"I usually keep track of stuff like that. I miss being Miss Mystic. I used to, like, live in this building, and I loved coming here on Saturdays. It's so quiet."
"Yeah, it is. I love it," April said with a smile.

"I know getting those donations to where they need to be can take time. There was this one painting that I loved. It was weird. I mean I'm not really into art, but this one was kind of dark, and I remember thinking that it was an odd choice for a donation at Christmas time. It was a snowflake...."

"Oh yeah, I know that one," she piped. "It's still in the storage room. Actually, it was painted by... Klaus Mikaelson," she finished quietly.

"Oh, ew. Well, there goes me liking it."

"You don't like him?"

"He's a monster." She shook her legs again.

"Hey, uh, you can go to the bathroom. I'll just file these."

"Wanna come with?"

"Uh, sure," she said with a smile.

Caroline smiled and grabbed her phone. "You plan to go to your prom, right?" she asked as they strolled to the door.

"Yeah, I think so?"

"Good. I don't understand it when people say they're not going to their prom."

April smiled. If things were different, she could really like Caroline. Talking to her was enjoyable, although she wondered if she was doing well with her side of the conversation. Caroline made her excited to be Miss Mystic Falls, rather than nervous. Talking to her made her feel like she could excel at all of her responsibilities. And Caroline wasn't patronizing like Rebekah had been.

They saw the sign when they got to the door.

"Out of order?" April voiced.

"Oh God, is that weird explode-y thing happening here, too?"

"Not that I've heard of."

"Let's see the damage," Caroline suggested as she pushed the door open just enough for her to squeeze through. She saw the candles on the floor, so she made sure to stay in front of April's eyesight. Bonnie was standing behind the door.

April opened the door wide and walked in. Caroline moved out of her line of sight.

April saw the candles and bowl of water on the floor, as well as the messenger bag that was on the sink. "What the heck is this?"

"April," Bonnie called.

April turned, and she swallowed. She stood still when she realized that Caroline wasn't as confused as she was. "What is this?" she asked Bonnie. "What are you doing?" she asked Caroline, her voice deep with betrayal.
"It's an interrogation. Sorry," Caroline shrugged.

The sympathy on her face looked completely fake to April. She gasped and took a step back, not knowing what to expected. "Si-"

Bonnie threw the powder on her face and stopped her from finishing. The concoction took on a life of its own and disappeared up April's nose. The rest of April's cry disappeared in a sigh, and her legs gave out as she lost consciousness.

"Woah there," Caroline said as she caught her. She helped her the rest of the way to the floor. "Uh, did you need me to carry her over there?"

"No, I can just move everything down here," Bonnie replied. She looked at the grains of powder that had stuck to the bowl. "Okay," she sighed. "Let's hope that wasn't enough to get the attention of… you know who."

"Oh God, is He Voldermort now?" She did not want to deal with immortal witches who were at the beck and call of randoms like April.

"Worse," Bonnie said as she went to set the bowl down and gather the candles. "He's actually real. And we're gonna find out who He is."

"I took the liberty of asking her where the painting is. It's in the storage room."

"You did what?" Bonnie asked, halfway to setting the third candle down. "Caroline, she's not supposed to know we want that painting."

"I was talking to her for so long that I figured what's the big deal? By the time she realizes it's gone, Klaus'll be dead, and we can return it."

"The big deal is that we don't want her running back to-whomever she's talking to and telling them. Are you freaking kidding me? She's not gonna remember seeing me, anything involved with the powder is automatically erased, but you asked her before she came in here."

"Klaus'll be dead," Caroline argued.

"But I won't be. The whole point of not asking her directly is to keep her from knowing what I'm doing! Are you fucking kidding me? Why would you do that?"

"Because I didn't see the big deal!"

"Right. My life and my safety are just no big deal. She's gonna run straight to Him and tell Him you asked about that painting, and who in the world would want something that belongs to Klaus? Maybe someone planning ritual?"

"I didn't think your life would be involved in it! I just thought it was about keeping it a secret from her!"

"Why did you even bother to bring her here if you already took care of it?"

She shrugged, and her shoulders got stuck by her neck. "I just figured you could double check. I'm sorry."

"Right. Whatever." She roughly jutted the last candle down in front of April's head. One was at her feet, the other two by at each elbow. "I'm sure sorry will keep Silas away," she said as she
straightened to retrieve the bowl of water.

"Whatever happened to you know who?" Caroline asked with just a little bit of fear. She didn't want the Man to pop up in the bathroom and wipe them out.

Bonnie stopped walking as irritation flooded her body. She closed her eyes, and then she grabbed the bowl. Her face tight, she sat on her calves in front of the candle at April's head.

She closed her eyes and centered herself. Caroline stood and watched. She doubted that Bonnie would get in trouble. April might tell Silas, and He might retaliate, but she didn't believe that Bonnie would die from it. It was hard for her to imagine anyone killing Bonnie. And other people went off script regarding plans all the time. She wasn't going to let Bonnie bite her head off for doing it this once.

Bonnie opened her eyes and ceremoniously dipped her fingers in the bowl of water. She splayed her fingers as much as she could and wiggled them. She lifted her hands and brought them on each side of April's temples, her thoughts focused on clarity. She closed her eyes. Clarity, clarity, she desired clarity and truth.

Caroline thought she saw the air around Bonnie's hands ripple as something flowed from the ex-cheerleader's fingers to April's head. It happened again, and she stopped doubting what she saw.

Bonnie opened her eyes and looked down, though she kept her head straight, her defined cheekbones somewhat obscuring her vision."April? April, I'm talking to you. Answer me. Is Klaus' painting in the storage room?"

April slowly separated her lips and mumbled. "Yeah."

She looked at Caroline and sarcastically said, "Gee. Thank God for that."

Caroline matched her look defiantly.

Bonnie returned her attention to April. "When was the last time you spoke to Silas?"

"What are you doing?" Caroline asked.

"Taking care of something," Bonnie answered. "When did you last see Silas, April?"

"Yesterday."

Bonnie swallowed. "What did you speak about?"

"My birthday's in April. I couldn't go to the explosion site. I doubted his power. Bonnie. Tyler."

Bonnie's heart dropped, and she looked at Caroline, who was equally alarmed. Caroline stepped closer and bent toward the prone body.

"What did you say about Bonnie?" Bonnie asked.

"What I saw in the gym."

"And what did Silas say?"

"Bonnie's the key to his release. Bonnie is Qetsiyah's descendant. Bonnie's distracted. Something's going on with her and Tyler. We're going to make her interest align with ours."
Bonnie couldn't feel her fingers anymore. She felt like she was standing on a ledge at the top of the solar system. Looking down was making her unsteady, and she was going to fall down, straight to earth, but it wasn't going to be the entrance into the atmosphere that killed her.

"What-" Her voice was hoarse. She swallowed. "What did he say about Tyler?" she asked numbly.

"There's something going on with him and Bonnie. He's being helped by Bonnie."

Bonnie let the silence stretch, and then she asked her final question. "How...How am I the key to his release, April?"

No response.

Bonnie closed her eyes. "She doesn't know."

She removed her fingers, and the waves left April's head and entered her hands.

"We can get rid of her," Caroline suggested. "Somehow. You can make it so that she never wakes up, take away Silas' little information bot until we can take care of Him."

"Then He'll definitely know something's up. Let April reap what she's sowing."

"What do you think He means by merging your interests?"

"He talked about me helping Tyler. That's been my interest for months. He and April spoke yesterday, and then Klaus attacked Tyler, fully intent on killing him."

"Wait, you think Silas called Klaus? From where, the grave? Tyler said you think Shane's behind it."

"I do. I think Silas has more than one puppet carrying out His work. I think He told Shane what to do." The day wasn't going to end without her blowing Shane's door off its hinges and making sure he never woke up.

"But what's the point of killing Tyler?"

Instead of telling her about the duodecads, Bonnie realized the real reason that Silas had gone after Tyler and his pack. "The sell. Silas promised April He'd bring her father back; who knows what He's promised Shane, and who knows what He promised Hayley. But I bet He'd promise me that He'll bring Tyler back. All I'd have to do is free Him. Our interests would be aligned."

"We're going to get the cure anyways, so His fate is sealed," Caroline said.

Bonnie could always count on them to stay the course no matter what. Her mother, Lucy, her father, and Tyler had all wanted her to forget the cure as soon as they'd learned that getting it would pose a threat to her life. Caroline felt no such worry, and she was sure that if she were to tell the Salvatores and Elena, their reactions would ultimately be the same. Heck, Damon had already made his stance known after she'd told him that Silas had attacked her during the storm. It was no wonder that her family and Tyler's worry had stressed her out. The egregious oversight shown by Caroline, despite the now common knowledge that Silas had already attacked her once, was what she was used to.

"Everything's gonna be fine," Caroline assured her. "It sounds like He wants you to perform a spell."

Yeah, one that was probably going to kill her. She had a lot to think about. She had a lot to tell Tyler. Her family was going to lose their collective shit. She wasn't going to be able to so much as say the word Israel, let alone go anywhere near the country.
As if on cue, her phone buzzed. She pulled it out of her pocket and opened the text sent by Tyler.

I'm out of Mystic Falls. Things didn't work out with Dai and Lily so dropping them unconscious as far away as possible. Will be back in time for the kill. Of course :) 

She smiled fondly at the text.

Okay :). Things went well here. Got a lot to tell you.

She sent the reply and took a deep breath. She looked at Caroline, who was looking at her. Not bothering with an explanation, she picked up the candle in front of April's head and blew it out.

"Was that Tyler?" Caroline asked tightly.

"It was," Bonnie said as she stood and went to the next candle. "He's heading out of town to dump two uncooperative Hybrids."

"Sure that's all he said?"

"I'm positive," Bonnie said as she blew out the last candle. She carried them to her bag.

"And you really have been caring for Tyler's interests for months now, haven't you?" Caroline asked as she smoothed down her pants.

"I have no idea what you're talking about," Bonnie said just for the sake of it as she picked up the green bowl of leftover powder and then walked to pick up the water.

"Don't play dumb," Caroline commanded as she stood up.

"You're seriously trying to do this right now?" Bonnie said, bothering to look at her for the first time since she'd started to collect the candles.

"Oh no, you're right. I should wait until the time is right, because we both know how often that is, especially for you. Yes, I'm doing it right now. You're a tramp."

"Excuse you."

"And we broke up because of you. But something tells me you already know that."

"I do know you broke up, but are you positive it was because of me?"

"I'm positive you've been sleeping with him."

"Tell yourself what you need to to feel better, Caroline," she said, and she walked to the nearest sink to throw out the water.

"Are you denying that you've slept with him?" she asked with an incredulous smile on her face.

"I'm not," Bonnie replied as she deposited the bowls in the sink and turned in her direction. "But I think you're dodging. I'm not the cause of your breakup."

"How could you do this to me? Out of all the guys, out of-you went through this. Jeremy cheated on you. And so you turn around and do it to me?"

"What I've been doing has had nothing to do with you. At all. At any point."
"Yeah that's kind of the problem, don't you think?"

"Your relationship was going to end whether I was involved or not."

"Did you get that from Anna's Big Book of Slut Responses?"

"I'm not a slut," Bonnie shrugged.

"No, you're just a piece of ass."

"Oh, please tell me."

"You guys are so temporary. You're end of the world ass, Bonnie: my life sucks, and I'm staring into the abyss, ass. You're ass to soothe the broken soul, and you just gave it to him. Jeremy left you as soon as he could for the girl he really wanted. You have too many problems, Bonnie, and Tyler's gonna realize that as soon as Klaus is dead, and guess what? He's going to leave you for someone who's just a little bit easier to handle."

"And that would be you," Bonnie bit off, her mouth twisting in anger.

"It'll be anyone who's not you. He just spent a year suffering under Klaus. You think he's gonna stick with someone who can't stay out of trouble for the life of her, someone who's all doom and gloom and has to be convinced to do anything fun?" she asked on a pitying chuckle. "This thing will end, but I promise you won't be the one who ends it. Just like last time, you're going to be completely blindsided and left wondering why he lost interest."

"Caroline? Tyler's going to kill Klaus tonight. And after he does, he's going to kiss me. And as soon as he does, everything you just said will be rendered completely useless. Because then as soon as the time is right, no, I'm sorry, as soon as he can, he is going to take the time, just like he did after Kol attacked? And he's going to give me more…thorough…kisses. On places that I'm positive you haven't been kissed in months. And I'll forget this conversation even happened. It sounds like you think I'm looking for a husband, Caroline. If memory serves right, you're the one obsessed with having a white knight to match Elena's."

"You're living in the past."

"And let's hope you don't slide back to the past now that you're single and Klaus is about to die. Wherever will you get the attention?"

Caroline was stunned. "Bitch."

"I'm a piece of ass, but you're the girl with the broken heart. You're the one whose trust has been shattered; you're the one who's going to go over every conversation and wonder what every word meant; what did it mean that time he was distracted? What did it mean that time he couldn't pick up? That's gonna be your life for the next couple of months. Not mine. And it feels damn good. You wanna talk about wondering when he lost interest? You'll have to let me know when you finally figure it out."

"I hate you. And at least my heartbreak will end, Bonnie. When and where are are you gonna find a guy whose life sucks so much that he'd actually be willing to stick with you? Slim pickings in Mystic Falls," she said charitably.

"Slim pickings, but until that guy shows up, spending time with the one who spent weeks thinking about me before I ever gave it to him doesn't sound like a bad setup. Why don't you just go get the painting?"
"Why don't you get it yourself, bitch?" Caroline turned and headed for the door. She flung it open and left, her destination: the car.

Bonnie exhaled through her nose. That wasn't as painful as she'd considered. Caroline could go screw herself. And fall down the two flights of stairs to the lobby, for all she cared.
If Silas chose to retaliate against Bonnie, Caroline hoped that he would make it hurt. It was no less than she deserved.

She turned the key hard enough to almost snap it in half. It was only her good fortune that the car simply turned on. She jabbed her finger at the screen to activate the Bluetooth, and then she gritted, "Call Stefan."

"Hello?" Stefan answered on the second ring.

"Are you alone right now, or are you close to nosy vampire ears?"

"Uh, Damon's been insisting I stay at the house since I lost my eyesight."

"Oh my God, forget it," she said impatiently. She stabbed the screen and hung up.

Caroline couldn't believe that she was doing it, but she called Elena. She never told Elena her problems, not unless Bonnie was there, too. It just wasn't part of their thing, despite the fact that they'd gotten closer since Caroline had become a vampire. She told Bonnie her problems, Tyler, Stefan, and Elena when she was with Bonnie. But never Elena alone. And Elena's bitchy and callous vampire emotions made talking to her about problems, and therefore appearing vulnerable, a risky move. But she was going to try, because she would implode if she didn't talk to someone. She couldn't sulk properly unless she got it out first.

She was backing out of the parking lot when Elena answered.

"Hello?"

"Please tell me you're not at the boarding house."

"I'm not at the boarding house."

"Are you with Damon?"

"No, I'm home. What is this about?"

"Is Jeremy there?"

"No, he's at work. Caroline-"

"Bonnie's a lying, cheating slut, that's what this is about. And Tyler's no better."

"What in the world are you talking about?"

"Tyler's been cheating on me, and he's been doing it with her! And I confronted her about it, and she threw it in my face!"

The line was quiet.

"Elena!"

"What?! I have no idea what to say. I have no idea what you're talking about. Bonnie threw what in your face? I'm lost, and that doesn't sound like Bonnie."
"Well catch up, because our little caterpillar's gone through one ugly transformation."

"Okay," Elena processed as she put a hand on her forehead and paced in her living room. The conversation had just begun, and she was already close to being overwhelmed by all of the emotion that Caroline was throwing her way. "Bonnie's sleeping with Tyler. Why would she do that?"

"Because she's selfish. Because she's desperate. Because she'll drink up any attention a guy gives her."

Elena knew that Bonnie was far from desperate for male attention, but now was not the right time to correct Caroline. "Okay, so why is Tyler doing this?"

"Because he's an asshole, and he's being sucked in by her charity."

"Were you guys having problems?"

"No. Maybe. But it's nothing that required him to cheat," she hurried to clarify.

"Caroline, you can't skimp on the details, especially since we're talking about our friend. You can't make this one-sided."

"And what's the correct amount of details that makes it okay for your best friend to steal your boyfriend?"

Elena didn't respond, because Caroline had her there.

Caroline nonetheless provided some details. "He's been pissed off that I sold Chris out, this Hybrid friend of his, in order to get Jeremy to become a Hunter. Chris was the one who helped Stefan get to you when you were hallucinating."

"Oh." That was all she could say. If the guy was Tyler's friend, then it made perfect sense for him to be mad. And she would apologize to Tyler if she needed to. But everything was sorted, she had been saved from committing suicide, so there was no merit to chastising Caroline over using Tyler's friend. She couldn't exactly tell her that she shouldn't have done it. Caroline making another choice could have meant the end of her life. There was literally nothing for her to say in this situation.

"Do you agree with him?" Caroline questioned in the silence.

"Of course I don't agree with him, not about the cheating. The friend thing is complicated, and that's between you guys. How did you even find out about the cheating?"

She wasn't going to tell Elena when she suspected that it had started. That part was embarrassing. "Kol attacked yesterday, right? Remember when Tyler said he wanted to be alone? Remember when Damon and Stefan called you and said they were outside? Bonnie didn't come back to the gym until like twenty minutes after you left, and, when she came back, she came back with Tyler. And her face was healed! Remember her face had been bruised? He healed her face! He gave her his blood!"

"So, what are you gonna do? Is it over between you guys?"

"I don't know," she lied for her ego. "He wants it to be over. God, I hate the both of them. I hate them!"

Caroline's hysteria was pulling at Elena's base emotions even though she had nothing to be hysterical about at the moment. "Where's Bonnie now?" she asked.
Caroline wanted to spill. She wanted to spill so bad. Instead she said, "Stealing something."

"What? Oh my God, is she stealing from Klaus again?"

Yes. "She did her mumbo jumbo on April to get information about Silas."

"What did she find?"

"Elena, I really don't wanna talk about that right now."

"Right. Sorry. I'm really sorry about this. You and Tyler have been together for a long time. You've been through a lot."

"Tell that to him. Better yet, make that matter to him."

"Do you wanna come over? We can pig out and talk or watch some movies."

"I don't know. I don't know what to do with myself. I kind of want to be alone right now."

"Okay. But call me if you need anything."

"Yeah."

She had no idea where she was heading. She didn't want to go home and just sit on her bed. She didn't want to answer Mrs. Lockwood's questions about how things were going and where they were at with the plan to kill Klaus. So she drove to the church near Founders Hall, parked, cut the car off, and sat with her thoughts.

Bonnie arrived home twenty minutes after Caroline had left. She had found the storage room, correctly named Archives, in the basement of the building. She'd casted a spell to render the painting invisible to all eyes while it was inside the building. It had disappeared from her sight only to become visible as soon as she had magically unlocked the front doors and stepped outside.

She left the painting in the back seat of the car, grabbed her bag, locked the doors, and headed inside.

She didn't give a shit about Caroline's opinion. Some of the stuff she'd said, she and Tyler had already addressed anyways. Namely: him deserving someone who had a stronger sense of normalcy than she did. Tyler had decided that she was who he deserved.

And the bottom line was that she and Tyler have shared too many intimate moments, even before they started sleeping together, for her to question him because of Caroline's stupid jabs. He has poured his heart out to her multiple times and been insistent on how much he cared about her and how much he wanted to be included in her life. So she had two choices: she could either close her eyes and dive headfirst toward Tyler and hope that she broke through water instead of cracking her skull on concrete, or she could chase that self-destructive rabbit down the dark hole of despair where she would worry about her ability to hold on to him amidst all the craziness that tend to drop in her lap.

She was going with the former. She had tried to push him away, and he'd pushed right back, wanting to know more about her, wanting her to rely on him. She wasn't going to resist him just for the sake of it. She wasn't going to bring all of the bad habits that she had displayed in her relationship with Jeremy to her relationship with Tyler.

Not that.....her and Tyler had a relationship or anything. The clock was ticking on her lifespan. For
all she knew, her father was going to attend her funeral at the end of May instead of her graduation. And that was the other monumental reason why she was brushing Caroline's words off her shoulders. Her time on this earth was short, and she liked Tyler a lot, maybe too much, so she was going to enjoy what they had as much as she could.

Caroline could go choke on vervain. Tyler's words were mightier than hers. And she couldn't wait to break him off some victory sex. He was going to tremble for her the same way that he had the first time they'd slept together. And then he was going to take her the same way he had in the bathroom stall.

And Caroline was going to lick her wounds. Alone.

Bonnie set her bag on the couch and followed the sound of water to the laundry room and found her father pouring clorox on their combined whites.

"Hey," he greeted.

"Hi," she responded as she leaned on the door panel.

"How did it go?"

"Very good. Got the painting."

"No hiccups?"

_Not with the spells._ And she decided then and there that she wasn't going to tell her family what she'd learned from April until she spoke to Tyler. Her family had just majorly discouraged her, and she knew that it was going to be more of the same when she delivered the news.

"Dad, can you please consider going to Jersey like you're supposed to?"

"No. And while I thought you were just concerned about my safety this morning, I'm now considering that you might also want to get rid of me so that you can do whatever you want, and that's not gonna happen. I'm not leaving this town until I'm guaranteed that that cure will stay where it belongs."

"Mom and Lucy are here. They can watch over me." She was planning on convincing them to leave.

"Mom and Lucy encouraged you to go after the cure."

"No, I encouraged _them_, and that was before Lucy's premonition. All of this was my idea, so don't blame them."

"It was still irresponsible, just as it was irresponsible of that Lockwood boy to keep it from me, especially after what happened to you last weekend, and don't you dare tell me he didn't know."

"He's been looking out for me."

"Not from where I'm standing."

Speechless, she stuttered, "Okay...okay, I'm done with this conversation. Bye." She made her way to the living room and turned toward the stairs.

Rudy set the clorox down on the dryer and followed after her, raising his voice so that she could hear him as she ascended. "Knowing that you were on a suicide mission and not telling the only adult in your life isn't looking out for you."
"You don't even know him!" she exclaimed as she turned on the stair she was on and took a step down. "You don't know him, so stop talking about him. He's been looking out for me. He's the reason my head didn't explode last weekend-"

"I know," he began. She cut him off before he could say the but.

"And he's told me not to go after the cure, too, but for some reason it sounds so much more encouraging when he says it."

"Bonnie, what could possibly be discouraging about not wanting you to deliver yourself at death's door? I heard what you said last nigh-"

"I'm done, dad. I'm done. This conversation is over." She turned and dug her heels on the stairs as she finished making her way up.

She entered her bedroom and closed the door. Irritated, she sat on the bed. She pulled her phone out of her pocket and texted Tyler.

*Your girlfriend wants to bite my head off. Figuratively speaking.*

She became restless, so she left the room and the phone and turned to her left, toward the bedroom that Lucy and her mother were sharing. The door was open, but she knocked on it, even though the women were looking at her when she appeared.

"Hi," she greeted.

"Hey," they answered.

"How did it go?" Abby asked.

"Perfect. It's all set," she said to Lucy. "The Lockwoods have a big backyard, so that'll be enough open space."

"Nice. Close to the action."

Bonnie turned her attention to Abby. "Can you please convince dad to go out of town?"

"I'll do no such thing."

Bonnie raised her eyeballs to the ceiling in frustration.

"He's your father, Bonnie. I'm not gonna tell him to turn his back on you when we're still not sure how this is gonna play out. You still haven't said you're leaving that cure alone."

"So I'm guessing you heard us on the stairs."

Abby and Lucy's expressions told her yes. Abby had even gone to the door in hopes of hearing better.

Bonnie crossed her arms and glowered at the door handle.

Abby marveled at the fact that the giggly and playful toddler that she'd left behind had grown up to be one bull-headed child. She reminded her of her sister.

"Okay, you guys said we were going to have a meeting? We've got time to kill," Bonnie said.
"Bring the swords," Lucy piped up, finally able to participate in the conversation.

Bonnie stalked to the end of the bed and sat down. She closed her eyes and summoned the swords.

"Uh, wait a second," Abby said, when they showed up in a line. "There are four here. We only had three."

Lucy left her spot at the head of the bed. "We got another one." She bent down to examine the three swords that still looked like ancient artifacts, and she finally spotted the latest arrival. She used her power to make it float at eye level, the handle pointing to the ground.

"They have markings on them," Bonnie informed nonchalantly. She was in a terrible mood, thanks to her father.

"I examined the one Lucy got," Abby said. "I don't recognize the language, and a spell to divine it yielded nothing, which tells me that the spell itself is protected from decoding. And I think it's because the spell is protecting the sword. Decode the spell, and you can reverse the protection on the sword."

"The spell is written into the object it's acting on," Bonnie murmured thoughtfully, the concept nudging her out of her funk for the moment.

"Yeah, that was very common in the ancient days, especially since writing used to be so highly regarded," Lucy informed her. "Okay, my turn: the fact that these things follow us-

"Wait, mom, the sword follows you?"

"No, it follows Lucy."

"And that is because, as far as the magical world is concerned, you're no longer a Bennett. We witches: blood is very important to us. Hell, it's how we're able to have our powers in the first place: blood, genes. Take life away from the blood, and you're….not a witch. Well, I mean you'd be a ghost and have your powers, but your blood is no longer alive, but your soul is trapped in the body-Anyways. That's what I think links these swords to us: blood. Bennett blood. At some point, our blood became linked to the swords, possibly even at their inception."

"Okay, wait a second," Abby said as she closed her eyes. "You think an ancestor….made these swords….and created the Five in the process."

"Yes. You know as well as I do that our telekinesis doesn't work on things we've never seen, and Bonnie called these swords from another continent. Our locator ability doesn't stretch that far."

"Okay, so that means that our bloodline was in Italy at one point, but why? Why give five Hunters supernatural strength and resistance to find the cure?"

"To destroy it?" Lucy posited. "Make sure no one got their hands on it?"

Bonnie closed her eyes. "To kill Silas," she answered quietly.

"What do you know about killing Silas?" Abby inquired.

Bonnie opened her eyes. So she couldn't keep this a complete secret like she'd planned. She couldn't sabotage her mother and Lucy while they were trying to figure things out. "I questioned April, this girl who serves Him, the one I was stealing the painting from?" She licked her lips. "An ancestor created these swords to kill the Man that an older ancestor had buried alive. We're descendants of
Qetsiyah, the woman who lived in Capernaum, the one who buried the cure with Silas.

Bonnie looked between the two women and waited for them to react.

Finally, Lucy said, "This is giving me bad omen vibes. Usually I'd be happy to learn about a new ancestor, but this…"

"What else did you learn from April?" Abby asked.

"I can't go into it."

"Excuse me?"

"I can't go into it, and I won't until I talk to Tyler. And I'd appreciate it if you guys didn't say anything to dad beforehand. He's already got enough to say about Tyler."

"What does Silas want with Tyler?" Abby asked.

"Nothing. It's about me, but I want to tell him first."

"Bonnie," Abby chided.

"Mom, it's not up for discussion. Qetsiyah's our ancestor: that's plenty of information."

"I don't believe this." Abby got off of the bed and paced away. "We're talking about the fact that our ancestor entombed the Guy who's apparently marked a bullseye on her back, and she doesn't want to talk about it, because she has to talk to Tyler first. Do you believe this?!" she asked Lucy.

Lucy felt like a deer in front of a fast approaching car. She helplessly opened the palm of her left hand. "I guess that means we have our answer?"

"What answer?" Bonnie asked.

"We were all three wondering about the….nature….of your relationship….with Tyler," Lucy answered.

"Yeah, and if he's not your boyfriend, then I'm not a damn vampire," Abby said as she paced.

Bonnie was unfazed by Abby's ire. She was going to talk to Tyler first, and that was that. But in the meantime, "He's not my boyfriend."

"Please, child, we know he has a girlfriend," Abby retorted as she limply swatted Bonnie down with her right hand.

For the first time since Bonnie had met Abby, she vividly connected the woman to her grandmother. The tone and gestured of that response was Sheila Bennett down to a T, and she was taken aback by it. She gathered herself enough to say, "He doesn't have a girlfriend anymore, and he's not my boyfriend."

"He doesn't have a girlfriend anymore because of you?" Abby asked, so quickly that the nine words sounded like one.

"Okay, we're getting off topic," Lucy moderated.

"Thank you. Let's not talk about my love life."
"Why not? Talking about Silas is apparently off topic until Tyler approves!"

"Okay, will the two witches in this room calm down," Lucy commanded as she pressed her hands toward the floor.

"And stop calling me a witch," Abby turned on her, "Especially in front of her. This isn't happening anymore. I'm staying a vampire, because you," she thurst her pointer finger at Bonnie, "Aren't going to Israel."

"We're not here to talk about me going to Israel," Bonnie shrugged innocently.

Abby widened her eyes dangerously.

"Bonnie, don't try her," Lucy said sternly. "Okay, do I need to separate you two for a minute? Whatever she learned is going to remain a secret until Tyler The Not Boyfriend finds out. And she's right, knowing that Qetsiyah is an ancestor is huge, because it means we can contact her directly."

"And say what?" Abby asked with exasperation.

"Ask her how to kill Silas? I don't trust those Hunters. Protected swords or not, they're humans going against an immortal witch. They're better suited to fight what their name links to: vampires. I don't know what our ancestor was thinking, and we don't even know where they are. We only have one Hunter."

"Maybe we can summon them like I did the swords," Bonnie suggested. "Silas is buried alive, which means He's weak. Maybe the Hunters are supposed to kill Him in the grave. Maybe Jeremy can summon them, with one of the swords."

Lucy looked unconvinced.

"Lucy, the history of witchcraft isn't like that of something like medicine," Abby said. "Magic opened the imagination. Witches from back then may not have conceptualized things the way that we do now, but that doesn't mean their solutions for problems were always archaic."

"Not always, which means they sometimes were, right?" Lucy asked.

"Of course. That's the case for everything. For the longest time, White witches thought that Black witches killed to get their powers, because we couldn't possibly be that evolved, let alone be more powerful than them a lot of the times. They used to call us Travelers, because we supposedly went from place to place stealing true witches' powers."

"I didn't know that," Lucy said. "I mean, I never thought that it was all kumbaya, but I didn't know we were ever called anything other than witches."

Bonnie was attentive and absorbed all of the information.

"It wasn't just Black witches," Abby sighed. "But that's a story for another time. But once upon a time, there were rumors that our family, and other powerful lineages that weren't the majority in any given place, were made up of generation after generation of thieves."

"Okay, I get your point," Lucy said. "Maybe this ancestor knew what she was doing when she chose five mortals. But do you really want to leave Bonnie's safety up to them? Because, right or not, this ancestor made the Five to kill Silas, not to protect her."

Abby wiped her fingers across her left eyelid.
"Besides. We have one point for a Bennett being lethal with one of these," she said as she looked at the still floating sword, "And zilch for a Hunter."

Abby looked at Bonnie. She had killed that Original. She looked at Lucy and said, "Please tell me you're not suggesting that you two play Huntresses."

"I'm just saying that maybe we shouldn't be too quick to give these away."

"Bonnie killed a vampire, but you don't have any guarantees that it will do anything if wielded by a Bennett against Silas. Magical objects with owners are very particular. You know that. And you also know that the older an ancestor is, the harder it is to contact them, so Qetsiyah might not even show up. I'm not saying let's start a search party for these Hunters; I'm saying that I don't want to waste time concentrating on other things when we need to be convincing Bonnie to keep her foot off of Israeli soil."

"Right," Lucy said quietly, conceding to all of Abby's points.

"So let's move on to the son of a bitch who's been helping hurt her. Lucy told me about Shane," she said to Bonnie. "You think he's the one who set Klaus' sights on Tyler last night."

"I do, and I need to talk to him. And before you say anything," she rushed when Abby opened her mouth with a deep frown, "Think about the fact that Shane called Klaus with the full intention of giving Silas a third duodecad. At any moment, Silas will either be trying to tap into that energy or Shane will expect me to come running to him for help because Tyler's just been killed. Either way, there is no duodecad, and what do you think Shane's gonna do when he realizes that?"

"Wait, are you thinking about faking the twelve deaths?" Lucy asked.

"I wish I could, but Silas will want proof. I'm going to confront Shane. And I'm going to kill him, just like I said last night. But I can't do that until….I talk to Tyler."

Lucy and Abby gave each other a put-upon look.

Bonnie folded her lips against their little judgment. She could absolutely go to Shane's apartment right now. Except that when she got back and told Tyler, he would be completely hurt and disappointed. He's been pushing for them to do this fifty-fifty, and she couldn't be the one to set them back. He'd texted her that he was leaving town for a couple of hours, something that he did not have to do, considering it contained no risk. But he'd done it. And she owed him the same consideration. And while she could send him a text that she was heading to the apartment, she also knew that he would want to be there.

He could very well disagree and tell her not to go, but the point was about her being open with him. He didn't have to like or agree with what she wanted to do; he just had to know. They could very well argue about it, but at least he would know.

She was determined to not be self-destructive where they were concerned. Keeping him in the dark whenever a threat to her person arose, like she'd done with Jeremy, would only hurt his feelings and fracture whatever was between them. He's been giving her one hundred percent from the very beginning. She can give him the same. She wanted to.

"I'm all for cutting Silas' link," Abby resumed. "Killing Shane would do that. What we need to think about is the backlash that will come from that."

"There won't be any if He's cut off from the living world," Lucy said.
"He'd still have April," Bonnie pointed out.

"Who is this girl?" Abby asked.

"A Sophomore. Her father was part of the first duodecad. I guess I should tell you guys that I
visited the site of the first duodecad."

Abby closed her eyes. "Did you do this with Tyler?"

"Yeah," Bonnie harmonized.

Abby gave a curt nod and had herself a seat on a chair that was near the door. "What happened?"
she asked as she put one leg over the other.

Bonnie recounted the visit. At the end, she said, "Tyler thought about us visiting the site in Eden, but
we were afraid of how twelve dead witches would react."

"You were right to be afraid," Lucy said. "I'll go."

"No way. Either I'm going or no one's going. We don't need to let Silas know of another Bennett that
He can target. And if the reason He's targeting me is because He's pissed at what Qetsiyah did, then
that puts you at risk, too, mom, vampire or not. You guys have been surviving your stay in Mystic
Falls. Let's not test it, please."

Lucy inhaled and took a seat next to Bonnie on the end of the bed, and Abby wiped the outer corner
of her left eye.

"Anything else?" Abby asked the room.

"Uh yeah," Bonnie volunteered. "Remember the curse that I put on that Original two weeks ago?
Well, it'll come into effect on Monday, and I think that something bad's coming with it. I think you
were right about Clermeil being pissed or annoyed."

Abby turned a hard pair of eyes on her niece.

"For the tenth time, I'm sorry," Lucy whined. "I really thought she'd go to a Deity for help, and I got
carried away with telling her about our origin, so I forgot to give her the...warning...about the
Spirits," she finished quietly.

Bonnie twisted her mouth to the right to contain her smile. It was funny to see Lucy, who was twelve
years Bonnie's senior, shrink in front of Abby.

Abby blinked at Bonnie and reminded her, "Spirits are embodiments of pure magical energy. They're
temperamental. You do not ask Them for favors, especially if you don't worship Them. You don't
channel Them, and you don't use Their magic. And even if you do worship Them, you don't involve
Them in your mortal mess, and to Them: witches are mortal. They get offended. We're Spirit-
blessed, but as far as I know no one in the family has ever dared ask Her for a favor. What has
Clermeil been doing?"

"The day after I cursed Rebekah, our sink kept turning on by itself and toilets have been flooding at
school. And ever since I figured out that He's behind it, I've been hoping He doesn't do something
like...flood the quarry on Monday."

"Or dry up the falls," Abby added. "Or create a flash flood in town. The good news is that I've never
heard of a Spirit getting angry enough to wipe out a town. Or the witch who summoned Them."
Nothing could happen on Monday. Flooded bathrooms could be as far as He goes. It's possible that He just wanted to get on your nerves, play around with His powers, or any number of things. You're lucky that He didn't direct His powers toward you."

Bonnie twitched her lips. "I definitely have enough problems. So, if something bad does happen on Monday, how do I stop it?"

"You appease Him," Abby answered. "You apologize. Don't look at Him as the enemy or this evil force that you must stop. You went to Him, and He's not here to serve you. He's not a God."

"Great," Bonnie sighed, relieved to have a solution to that particular problem. "Let's just hope He's not too pissed for a simple apology."

"You should do it in a body of water," Lucy suggested. "Speak to Him on His turf. A bathtub should be enough."

"We'll be with you to make sure He doesn't do something like try to drown you," Abby said.

"Great," Bonnie deadpanned.

They fell into an easy silence, and Lucy finally floated the sword down.
Caroline turned the car off and sat back against her seat. The Lockwood mansion stood in front of her, its quiet exterior belying the chaos that had raged inside the night before. And that would rage again tonight.

Bonnie had said that Tyler was out of town.

She closed her eyes and trained her ears on what was happening inside the house. No sound. She opened her eyes and realized that Klaus was probably listening for movement outside of the house. He has surely been waiting for Tyler to come back. He had probably heard the car pull up.

She unclasped her seatbelt and stepped out of the car. She reached inside for her phone and tucked it inside of her right back pocket. She locked the car and set for the house, wondering if Klaus would be able to tell from the footsteps that it wasn't Tyler. Did he know how she walked?

She arrived at the front door and gingerly twisted the knob and pushed it open. She walked past the staircase and entered the area where the blood from Tyler's arms stained the white floor. She craned her neck but didn't see Klaus standing at the threshold of the living room like she had been expecting.

"Klaus?" she called carefully.

The Original Hybrid walked up to the threshold. He looked drunk in the way that he usually did when he was primed to kill someone. His mangled face just added to the effect. Tyler had told her that his wounds persisted because Klaus was an Alpha, so she knew that the state of Klaus' face was Tyler's doing.

The living room looked like a hurricane had gone through it. He'd broken everything that could be broken, torn down everything that was hanging, and some of it had even been thrown onto her side of the seal. The only things still in their rightful place were the chairs and couch.

Caroline swallowed. "Hi."

"Where are the others?"

"It's just me."

"I doubt that." He began to pace. "This is the part where you play decoy, right, where you're thrusted forward to butter me up? Tell Tyler that I'd rather skip the appetizer and get right to the main course."

"There is no trick, Klaus. It's just me. No one else is coming. Tyler's out of town."

"Good. Tell him to stay there. Better yet: tell him to run. It'll make killing him that much more gratifying if I have to chase him down to do it."

"The only person dying today is you."

"So you've come to pay your respects, love?"

"I've come to tell you that it didn't need to be this way," she plead. "It didn't have to get to the point where the only option was for you to die. All you had to do was leave Tyler alone, free him, free all of the Hybrids, and….we wouldn't be having this conversation."
"There is no conversation," he paced.
"I rooted for you."

He stopped pacing.
"I rooted for you….to change, to make it."
"Root for me today."

"I can't do that. I will never root for you over Tyler. I've seen you ruin his life."

"And yet, here you stand. Does he know?"

"We broke up," she said quietly.

"So he doesn't know."

"Did you hear what I said?"

"I've kind of got more important things on my mind, love: my Hybrids have turned against me. You'll have to find someone else to lend you an ear."

"I don't want you to lend an ear, I just….I don't even know why I'm here. I was in the car, and I could've gone anywhere, and….I chose to come here, because I wanted to….say goodbye. You didn't have to be like the rest of your family. You didn't have to succumb to your nature."

"Something tells me that my nature is why you're here," he said slowly. "You look….dejected." And then he remembered. "You and Tyler have been broken up for months. Because of his infidelity with Hayley."

"That was a ruse to hide what they were doing. This is for real. He cheated on me, so I guess the whole ruse was an omen. He cheated on me with Bonnie."

"Bonnie Bennett, the witch?" he frowned.

"Only one in town. Apparently, there are some things she has that I don't."

"I'm sure Bonnie is a nice young lady, but I find it hard to imagine anyone turning you down."

"I don't support him enough."

"Now that is a lie."

She smiled sadly. "Tell me about it. But that's what he feels."

Klaus smiled and leaned against the door frame. "So tell me: now that Tyler is out of the picture, do I stand a chance?"

Caroline scoffed quietly. "You can't be my boyfriend, Klaus. You're too….you."

"I am changing, love. I'm making an effort. You inspire me. And say I kill Tyler today-"

"You won't."

"Would you cry for him?" he asked, changing the question he was going to ask. "Which would be worse, losing the boy who doesn't want you or losing the man who does?"
Caroline's lips parted. "I grew up with Tyler. I love him. He deserves to beat you."

"I'm an avid listener, Caroline, and that didn't sound like an answer to my question."

"It would hurt more to lose him," she answered.

Klaus swallowed. "I see. I understand." He smiled. "I've known for a while now that I have what has long been labeled 'daddy issues.' I mean, how can I not when the man spent centuries hunting me down to kill me. But I never realized until now that I have mommy issues: loving a woman who has no regard for my life."

Caroline was taken aback by the comparison. "You can't….no, you can't do that. That's not fair. It's not like you're this innocent man, and I just want you dead. You did stuff, Klaus! You do stuff! How do you expect me to react? How do you expect Tyler to react? No one loves a monster!"

Her words sucked the air out of the room. She watched as sadness shadowed his face.

"And that's what I am," Klaus said. "It's what I was even before I became a vampire: a monster that my father couldn't love. The one that strained my parents' union."

Caroline closed her eyes. "You're not a monster. Not completely. You're the guy who's saved me. Granted, the first time was your fault, but….when Alaric took me….you're the one who came straight for me. You saved my life. And you did it again when pastor Young took me. You left your own sister, and you saved me. You've bought me jewelry and an expensive dress, and you drew my picture, and….and you say you love me. I know that you're in love with me. I just don't know why. You've had a world of women."

"You'd be surprised," he said.

"Still. You're a thousand years old, rich, powerful. What the heck do you see in me?"

On any day that wasn't this one, she could walk past Klaus with her head held high and know that he was going to follow. But today, she wanted to hear what he saw in her. She wanted the reassurance, especially since he was going to die. Ever since she had realized that his infatuation was here to stay, there had been a part of her that had been afraid that it would go away, that he would just stop liking her, stop finding her interesting, change his mind. She'd had a boyfriend whom she'd loved, but still. She hadn't wanted Klaus' feelings to go away. And today was that day: his feelings were going to be extinguished along with his life, and she wanted to hear them one last time. He has seen so much more than she has, done so much more. Why does she captivate him?

"I told you once before," Klaus said. "You are radiant. You are the girl with the heart of gold that's just a little bit black. And that fascinates me. Because I've met vampires with black hearts; they're a dime a dozen. I've met people with black hearts. But you're a mix, tipping on the side of good, and that intrigues me. On you, those qualities are enticing. An uneven mix; it's how you can want Tyler to kill me and yet still be here with me, telling me that you feel for me, looking sad for me. Because that sadness: it's not all because of your breakup with Tyler, is it, Caroline? Some of it's for me, too."

"Yes," she answered somberly. "Some of it's for you, too."

Klaus swallowed. And he took the leap. "Do you love me, Caroline?"

Caroline crossed her arms and looked away.

"Please. If you truly believe I'm a dying man, then what's the harm in divulging your secrets? It's all going with me to the grave."
"I don't let myself think about it," she said curtly.

"Think about it now. Are you in love with me? Have I miraculously managed to inspire that kind of emotion in someone like you?"

Caroline squeezed her eyes shut tight.

"I won't tell anyone."

"I like you," she blurted, opening her eyes. "Okay? It's not love. It's like. I like you. I like...the way you are with me."

Klaus nodded humbly, and his lips twitched with a smile. "It's a start. One I've never had before."

Silence stretched between them.

Finally, Klaus said, "Come here."

"No."

"Caroline, I won't hurt you."

"No. That's the problem, Klaus. I don't believe that. I don't believe that your love for me is greater than your anger. If it was Tyler in there or anyone else, I would've walked in to have this conversation. Because I only like you when you're not scaring me to death, because you do scare me."

"I promise I won't hurt you." He was almost pleading. "If this is my last day on earth, I would like to....to touch you. To at least touch you."

Caroline believed him. She believed him, and she was conscious of how dangerous that was. She believed him, but that didn't mean that she was right to do so.

"I can't," she apologized, her eyebrows high on her head. "I can't." She started to back away. "I'm sorry."

"Caroline," Klaus called. "Caroline, please. Don't leave! Caroline!"

"I'm sorry!" she called back, and she ran out of the house.

She heard him yelling her name and yelling for her to please come back.

In the Hopkins-Bennett home, Bonnie sat at her desk with her left hand under the left side of her neck and read chapter eight of her American Government textbook. She had been lying on her stomach on her bed and swinging her feet when she'd suddenly remembered that she has homework due on Monday.

There were more than six hours left before the day's main event. She couldn't go see Shane yet, and she was not interested in watching anything on tv. Oddly, however, she could concentrate on homework, and she was having an easy time reading through the chapter. In exchange for not taking the next test, they had to read three chapters and take notes for class discussions that would take place this week, and that would be their grade.

She was summarizing a paragraph on the launch of the new United States of America when her phone rang. She picked it up and saw Tyler's name on the display screen. Worried, she dropped her
pen and answered.

"Hello?"

"Hey," Tyler greeted.

"Is everything okay?"

"Yeah, it's fine. I'm calling because I just read your text. Are you okay?"

She felt her body relax. "I'm fine. Yeah, it was just...she's mad and hurt, and so she came for the jugular. Figuratively speaking. And she has every reason to. But I gave as good as I got, so it's okay."

"What did she say?"

"It's nothing that we need to go over. It's fine. I promise. If I hadn't been so irritated, I wouldn't have even texted you."

"Well, I'm glad you were irritated then, because I want to know, Bonnie. I know Caroline, and while she's not a bully, she can be. We have that in common. If she has reason, and you give her an inch, she will take a mile. I don't want her dumping on you. This is between me and her."

Bonnie smiled. "I'm not gonna let her push me around. But there was one thing: she went rogue and asked April about the painting before I could do the ritual, so us trying to avert Shane finding out is a bust."

"Are you kidding me? Why would she do that?"

"Because she didn't think it was a big deal. But she did apologize."

"That's great."

He still sounded annoyed.

"But Ty, Shane's expecting twelve sacrifices, probably before the weekend's over, so I want to confront him soon."

"You can't go over there by yourself."

"I knew you were gonna say that," she said with a smile. "But I don't think it's a good idea for you to come with me; he did just try to kill you. I just want you to know what I'm planning; I'm going by myself after we take care of Klaus."

"No. Listen, I can stand at the end of the street or around the corner, but you're not going without me. Okay? I'll be fine. It'll be me and you. He won't be able to touch me. And he won't touch you."

She smiled. "Okay."

"Bon, are you sure everything's okay? You sound kind of down."

"I think I kind of am. I'm doing homework right now, but I had a long talk with my mom and cousin earlier, and before that my dad and I kind of got into it over you, and they're all still tense about me possibly dying, and there was Caroline earlier, plus all the shit I learned from April, and I'm positive that Clermeil is going to cause trouble on Monday, and I'm just....I just want one of us to have a major victory. I'm ready to kill Klaus."
"We will. And then we're gonna take care of you. We're gonna take care of Clermeil, and we're gonna take care of all of it. And Bonnie?"

"Yeah?"

"Caroline's not my girlfriend; she's my ex. And as soon as possible, you and I are gonna take some time. It might not be the weekend we want, but we're gonna take some down time, okay?"

She smiled and bit the bottom left corner of her lower lip. "Okay. I want that," she added.

Tyler smiled, loving the way she voiced the desire. He had company, but he still said, "I'm gonna give it to you."

Bonnie inhaled, her spirits suddenly higher than they were mere minutes before. "Are you on your way back?"

"No, we're still driving out."

"Are the others ready for Klaus?"

"Oh yeah. They're ready."

"Then I'll see all of you later. Lucy and I are going to do the spells in your backyard."

He was happy that she was going to be that close. "I'll see you later, then," he said.

Bonnie heard the small smile in his voice. "Be safe."

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*If you truly believe I'm a dying man, then what's the harm in divulging your secrets?*

Caroline broke through to where she could see the Lockwood mansion.

She came back. She'd realized fifty-four minutes ago that she had wanted to come back, and letting those fifty-four minutes pass before making her way back had almost killed her. She was not one for delayed gratification. But she had not wanted to give Klaus the satisfaction of her walking back in the house six minutes after she had left.

She had parked her car on the next block, contemplated her decision, and then waited. Then she'd walked back to the Lockwood mansion. She was proud of herself, because she knew that making someone sweat was exactly the kind of move that Klaus would pull.

She walked across the driveway, and when she pulled the door open this time, it was with a lot more confidence. And this time, Klaus *was* standing at the threshold when she arrived.

"I didn't hear the car," Klaus said. He'd been in such a sad stupor that he hadn't registered that anyone was on the property until he heard the door open.

"I didn't use the car," she stated. She stopped at the spot where she'd stood before, her arms hanging at her side. "Were you telling the truth when you said you haven't had a lot of women?"

"The paucity of women that I've been with is actually quite embarrassing. Not the kind of information you want to share with the woman you're hoping to court."

"Well, this woman wants to hear it."
Klaus lowered his head and began, "My first experience was when I was alive. There was a girl in our village, blonde, most of us were blonde, and Elijah pointed out to me that she liked me. I was perhaps seventeen and infatuated with a girl named Tatia, the genesis of the Petrova doppelgangers, as was my brother Elijah. I at first thought that my brother sought to trick me, to lure my attention away from Tatia, but then I saw the value of the girl's crush on me. I figured that having another girl's attention would make me more appealing to Tatia. So I indulged the girl. We never had a real conversation, but we shared many flirtatious looks. The village was having a birthday party for one of the oldest women in our flock one night, and she led me away. And she…performed on me. And that was that. The second-

"Wait a second. A girl goes down on you, and you just….leave it at that?"

"I wasn't the rambunctious young man you're imagining in your head."

He had orgasmed quickly. He doesn't remember whether the experience was good or bad. He just remembered how ashamed he'd felt immediately afterward. His father's voice had barged into his head and humiliated him for peaking so fast. Here was another activity where he was sure that his father would be more proud of his brothers than of him.

He had tucked his penis in his pants while the girl had been wiping her chin. She had asked him if he liked it. He'd mumbled a, "Yes. Thank you," while fastening his pants, and then he'd left her and never looked at her until the day he'd died. After he had turned and realized how his siblings were reacting to the villagers, he had given the newly pregnant girl and her new husband a warning and gotten them away from the village.

"The second woman I was with was Greta Martin, the witch who broke my curse. We did go….all the way, as you would say. That was my first time. I've been….pleasured….over the centuries, but…it never went further than that. I have pleased….with my mouth….once. And it wasn't Greta."

"Was it Katherine?" she asked with bated breath. The quick look of why would you think that? on his face right before he answered made her want to smile.

"No. Never. We both served as a means to an end for each other, except I think she at one point caught real feelings for me. Much to my brother's chagrin."

Caroline was satisfied with the answer. Klaus was in love with her now, but she didn't want him to have had intimate history with anyone who looked like Elena. It was bad enough that the youngest vampire in Mystic Falls could claim a historical tie to Klaus that she could not. Two historical ties, as a matter of fact. Elena had told her about the Mikaelson brothers' feud over Tatia, and it had made her feel like it was only a matter of time before Klaus switched his attention from her to Elena. But lo and behold.

"How come there are only two women worth mentioning by name after a thousand years?" she asked.

Klaus averted his gaze.

She slowly stepped closer to the barrier that separated them. "I didn't come back to laugh at you or make fun of you. I came back because I care. This could be my last chance to learn something about you," she said, not realizing that she was doing what Klaus had underlined earlier: subconsciously doubting that Tyler could really beat him.

Klaus looked at her and answered after a beat. "It's not just me, you know. Just so you don't think that I'm some…..Rebekah cannot let anyone in unless she fancies herself in love with them. I count
three men over her lifetime. Elijah has only ever been in love with one woman. His sexual appetite is
dulled as mine. Kol talks a big game—Kol talked a big game. But he was shaky on the follow-
through. And Finn, the oldest, only loved one woman and devoted his body to her. Now I'm no
therapist, but you could say….that suffering the ultimate betrayal of our parents murdering us in cold
blood and then selling it to us that it was for our own good….severely crippled our ability to create
true intimacy with another person."

Caroline stared at him, floored by the reveal. This was the side of him that inspired warmth within
her. This was the side of him that made her think that he has potential.

"It takes everything in me to keep trying after you reject me, Caroline."

"I don't reject you," she promised. "It's just….not simple." And she knew that his declaration of
calling upon incredible fortitude to keep trying in the face of her rejections wasn't a complete truth.
Klaus liked to break people's resolve. He wasn't some bleeding heart romantic.

"Well, I hope you're satisfied with my answers," he said, letting his arms flap against his thighs.

He turned from her and walked to the couch, and Caroline knew that he did not believe her
reasoning. He was feeling exposed, naked, an emotion she knew he tried his damndest to avoid on a
daily basis.

"I'm not your mother," she declared.

Klaus turned from the couch and looked at her.

Caroline heaved her chest and stepped inside of the room. She walked and walked until she was
standing in front of him. She wasn't afraid of him hurting her anymore. She was sure that all of the
anger had been drained out of him after the hour he had spent in her absence, plus all that he had
forced himself to reveal. The anger was on the backburner for now. And she needed to move within
that window and remember to watch for any signs of it coming back. Because then she would be in
trouble.

"I'm not like any girl you've ever met," she said, and the declaration made her feel sexy, confident,
his equal, his seductress. He had made his temptation by her clear. Now she was giving him what he
wanted.

She grabbed the hem of her burgundy, long-sleeved, shirt and slipped it over her head. She dropped
it on the floor and watched him swallow in response. She dropped on one knee and took off one
ankle boot and ankle sock, then she switched and took off the others. She stood and took her phone
out of her back pocket and threw it on the couch behind him. Her black jeggings went next, slow,
every inch of pale skin revealed like a long-kept secret.

He grew more and more stoic with every article of clothing that she shed, and the closing of his
expressions only strengthened her resolve. He was holding himself together.

She reached behind her to the clasp of her bra, and he said, "Stop." He sped up to her, and her lips
parted in anticipation. Still with that stoicism, he gingerly slipped two sets of fingers behind the cups
of her bra. His eyes on her, he pulled the cups away from her breasts, tugged them hard in opposite
directions and ripped the bra in half.

Caroline gasped as her breasts spilled down for his consumption. He pushed the bra off of her,
stepping closer to slide them down the back of her arms. When he stepped back to take a nice long
look, Caroline felt more exposed than if she'd taken the bra off herself, and she loved it. He slipped
his hands down her underwear, the back of his hands brushing her muff, and he tore the garments in an uneven half. She jumped and licked her lips, and he slid them down using the tips of his fingers. She felt them slide down to the floor, and he stepped back again to look at her form.

Caroline stepped to the right side of the tattered garments.

Klaus kept staring, simply stared, and she let him look his fill, the fact that she was on display was turning her large, dark pinky-orange nipples into hard buttons. She brought her right hand up to play with one while she rubbed the blonde hairs on her mound with her left hand. Her Type A mentality didn’t extend to how she kept her mound. She had tried the clean shaven existence as well as the ‘just a strip’ existence, and she preferred it covered with hair. Neat. But more than a little hairy. It was the one part of herself where she did not insist on control.

Klaus had expected her to be clean-shaven, but she always surprised him. He walked up to her and picked her up, and she wrapped her long legs around him. He kissed her, and his hold on her thighs turned punishing as desire swelled in his loins.

He turned around and walked to the couch and laid her down. Caroline stopped the kiss a second to move the phone from under her back to the floor, and they resumed kissing, rushed and hungry. The dam had broken, and he could finally have her, and she could finally have him.

Klaus wasn’t gentle. He had sometimes imagined them doing it gently, but they could do gentle next time. He squeezed her left breast and tweaked the nipple hard enough to make her gasp.

He stopped and took off his coat and shirt. "Tell me if you want slower."

"I don’t want slow," Caroline responded. She sat up, and her fingers flew over his pants as she undid it and yanked it down his thighs. Before she could go for his boxers, he pushed her down on the couch by her collarbone and ravaged her mouth again. She was excited to have him stroking and bringing her to completion. Being with him was turning out to be as thrilling as she had never allowed herself to fully fantasize. She lifted her head off the couch, pushing back against him in the kiss.

Klaus moved his hand down to her vulva and stroke her slit with his knuckle. He then moved his middle finger to her entrance. He stopped the kiss and said, "You’re wet for me, Caroline."

Caroline looked up at him. "I am."

"For me," he reiterated, because he wasn't going to let the perfect opportunity to remind her that she was giving in to the man that she so often condemned go by. He personally considered boasting to be one of his virtues.

"For you," she confirmed softly. She opened her mouth wider in anticipation when he pushed the finger inside of her. She licked her lips, and he growled as he took her lips again, and he began to move the finger in and out.

Caroline stroke the short hair on his head while her other hand roamed his back and pulled him to her. Once his finger was slick enough, once she became more wet, Klaus joined his index finger to the middle. His dick elongated another inch when she moaned.

Caroline moved her hand from his back to his ass and pulled him closer when he started to finger her faster. "I like it," she said. She was sleeping with a monster who had a soft spot for her, and she wanted to say it. The fact turned her on.

Klaus didn’t let her orgasm. Before she was even close, he took his fingers out and undressed the rest
of the way. He then positioned his dick at her entrance. Caroline wanted to jump out of her skin in anticipation. She closed her eyes as he edged the tip in, a smile playing on her lips, and then her eyes flew open when he snapped his hips forward and surged in the rest of the way, no ceremony involved.

"Fuck," she exhaled, grabbing on to his arms, her knees closing around his hips. He wasn't particularly thick, but the sudden thrust through her slick walls had ramped up her excitement. She grinned, starved for more, and her starvation was mirrored in his smile.

Klaus didn't let her adjust; he began to stroke immediately. He wasn't going to check with her about his methods again unless she gave a flat no. The expression on her face empowered him to keep going. He stroke rough and fast, and Caroline was ready to get fucked into the couch. She brought her legs up higher on his back to make him go deeper.

"Shit, yes. Klaus," she moaned through gritted teeth, and the way she was looking at him was exactly how Klaus had hoped she would look at him when he would picture himself masturbating while thinking about having sex with her.

He didn't masturbate.

He could count on one hand the number of times he'd done it. He didn't understand the appeal of self-pleasuring when it felt so much better to have someone else do it. If he wanted to pleasure himself, he wielded his power and influence over others. But ironically enough, he could imagine himself doing the act on a regular basis now that he had Caroline. Having sex with her on a regular basis, and he knew that she would fall into the figurative bed with him again after this, no matter what protest she may utter afterward, would mean that he would be aroused a lot more often. So he would need to masturbate when he wasn't physically with her.

But the way she was looking at him now: her eyes plead up at him and her forehead wrinkled in the same fashion. It was the vulnerable image he sometimes liked to see, the one he sometimes put on her face when circumstances called for him to treat her just like he treated the rest of her friends. It reminded him of the night that he had healed her of Tyler's werewolf bite and the day he had taken the duct tape from her mouth on the morning that he had freed her from Alaric.

He reached on his right to grab her elbow, and then he reached on his left and did the same. He pinned her hands together over her head with one of his and didn't miss a stroke.

Caroline had had it in her head to tell him a strong no if he tried to restrain her in any way, but in the heat of the moment, as rough as he was fucking her, having her hands locked actually turned her on. And then he did something that would guarantee him permission to restrain her hands for as long as he wanted. Without warning, he morphed his face. Veins streaked up to his eyelids; his grey eyes turned yellow, red, and black; his whole body turned extremely pale as it used the blood that powered it to uphold his antique vampire state. He was closer to death now than the bit of life that his werewolf side provided him, even though he bared all four teeth.

Unlike Tyler, Klaus was closer to his vampire side than his werewolf side. Because even though he occupied the lupine state in that moment, his body went down in temperature, not up.

She was staring into the face that had tormented countless people; the face that had killed and struck fear; the face that had enslaved and ruined lives. His violent acts have been used against her, that she could not forget, but the face itself, not matter how many times he had gotten angry at her, lashed out at her, he has never turned the face on her. The uneven vertical scars made him look even more vicious.
She wasn't a violent person. Stefan had called her a model vampire when he'd been training her. She'd nailed it in two days. Other than that one almost tragic encounter with Matt, she has maintained perfect control over her base nature. Elena has been a vampire for more than three months, and she was still struggling.

Her violent nature didn't pull her under like Damon's did to him time and time again. And she didn't thirst for blood the way Abby had when she'd been teaching her how to be a vampire for those three days.

But Klaus' violent tendencies, his violent nature, his violent state, they all pulled at her. She didn't want Stefan to be a Ripper because that was scary. She didn't view him as a killer, so she didn't want him to live as one. She wanted Damon to stop being violent because he was an asshole, and she hated him. She didn't want Elena to kill because that was her friend. And she didn't kill senselessly because she still valued what it meant to take someone's life.

But Klaus. She wanted him to change, but she didn't want him to change completely. And she knew that he could never change completely. And that knowledge was partly why she was so vocal about him changing in the first place. Deep down, she knew it was futile, so there was no harm in insisting. It was the scary killer with a soft spot for her that attracted her. She wasn't sure what she would do if he became a nice guy with a soft spot for her. Tyler was a nice guy. Matt was a nice guy. She's had nice guys. She wanted a nice guy for a boyfriend.

But Klaus. Perhaps it was some defect. Maybe something had gone wrong and the part of her that was supposed to crave performing violent acts and total sadism was broken, and now she could only indulge it through someone like Klaus. And maybe that something had gone wrong because she had been killed by a doppelganger.

Even though Katherine's blood hadn't been the blood that turned her.

No matter the reason behind it, she wasn't reasoning things out at the moment. She revelled in Klaus' violent nature. On normal days, it messed with her morality, but in this moment, she tightened her walls around his cock as he fucked her hard enough to make her slide on the cushions, and she revelled in his deadly face. He hissed, that vampire sound, and her clit throbbed in response.

"Yes," she exclaimed.

Power rolled within Klaus, the need to dominate and give her more of what she clearly enjoyed drove him, and it all mixed to form his desire. He tightened his hold on her wrists and used his other hand to grab a chunk of the hair on top of her head and pulled it down toward the couch.

"Fuck, yes," Caroline plead. She grunted savagely and shifted. She only did this on some occasions with Tyler, but she shifted now, and her body got colder, deader, blue veins could be seen under her breasts that were jerking back and forth. She lost some feeling in her body, but she became more sensitive at the same time.

She hissed up at Klaus, and he tugged harder at her hair, and she yelled, "Fuck me hard!" bloodshot eyes wide and demanding.

It was as if speaking broke her body, took away the last of its resistance. She came hard, her eyes rolling to the back of her head, her head digging into the couch, mouth open wide. She planted her outside leg at an angle on the side of the couch and undulated her hips desperately against his pelvis as her pussy emptied a small pool of liquid.

Klaus had never slept with a vampire before. He had no idea how they orgasmed, no idea that it was
this monstrously erotic. Caroline came like the most beautiful artwork he had ever laid eyes on, and the masterpiece made his balls sag with come.

He figured that he had to stop stroking and let her calm down. And he learned something else: vampires can shake. Fear doesn't do it, pain doesn't do it, not even when they’re suffering from the effects of vervain, but this remnant of a biological process: it does it.

He was sitting on one knee, the other on the floor, and he was watching blood flow in the veins under her eyes, watching it streak over her ashen breasts, and then it all disappeared when she unwittingly shifted back to her normal visage.

"I liked that," he complained.

"It's not like you didn't put yours back, too."

He smiled. He looked down at his pelvis and then at the couch between her opened thighs and said, "You made a bit of a mess."

caroline sat up halfway and looked. She could feel the wetness on her vagina, but there was a little bit more on the couch. She grinned and looked up at him. Then she looked at his dick. "For a guy who hasn't come in a while, you sure have lasting power."

"I'm an Original. And a Hybrid." And he didn't walk around being turned on. "I'm sure all of it is supernatural stamina."

"Well, I'm not complaining," she said as her grin simmered down to a smirk. "Are you close?"

"I think. I'm not sure. Now that it's over....um...."

He looked away.

She saw him sliding back to that embarrassed and ashamed guy. It endeared him to her at the same time that it broke her heart. She sat up completely and folded her inner leg in front of her. "I liked it," she said, hoping to make him feel better. "It was really good. The best I've had in a while. I haven't had sex in months."

"Tyler has really fallen down on the job," he said.

The mention of Tyler's name didn't snap guilt into her. As a matter of fact, she said, "Let's not talk about him." She put a strong hold on Klaus' dick and said, "I like how rough you were, how hard. I liked it a lot. It felt really good."

She felt him twitch in her hand.

"You were really good," he said, the compliment sounding awkward on his tongue. He wasn't used to this process. How did people speak after sex? "You were amazing," he said honestly.

He tried to figure out a way to tell her that he liked the way she took what he dished out. So he said, "I like the way you took it."

The way he said it made Caroline fold her lips to hold in her chuckle.

Klaus closed his eyes in mortification. "I'm sorry. I wanted that to sound a lot better."

"It's okay," she said with a big smile. "I think it's adorable. And honest. I prefer that than you trying
to be something you're not. I prefer it so much, as a matter of fact, that I'd like to be the third named woman to...go down on you. Suck your dick," she amended after she quickly wondered if he would be turned on by dirty talk. "I wanna suck your dick, Klaus."

She had her answer when his cock twitched again. The same stoicism from before slid over his face.

Still holding his dick, she got off the couch and kneeled on the floor. Klaus fixed himself so that both of his feet were on the floor. Caroline kept her gaze on him and leaned forward, only averting her gaze when she placed a kiss in the middle of his hairy chest. She created a trail of soft, full kisses, down, down, and down, all the way to his pelvis. And then she licked her way up his tool.

Klaus has watched a couple of women pleasure him orally, but it hasn't been this nerve-wracking since the first time he'd had the experience. He worried about coming too quickly again, even though he hasn't done so since the second time he'd gotten a blowjob. The second time, he hadn't thanked the girl. He had simply deadpanned, "You can go."

But Caroline was doing it now, and he was worried. But she was enveloping his cock in the cool of her mouth, and she looked experienced and at home, and it felt good.

Caroline felt pleasure from sucking his dick. She almost felt like she was sucking royal dick. Even though some people had gotten this close, not many people got this close; she was sure that he'd never had this experience. He was all but a virgin, as far as she was concerned, and she's never been with a virgin before. She would count the first girl because that had been his first sexual experience, but none of the ones after that mattered.

She gave him everything, did her best work, and she even licked down on his balls until he understand what she wanted. He slouched on the couch and pushed his hips forward so that more of his balls were exposed.

Caroline stopped licking and said, "Come here."

She backed up on her knees as he stood, and when he walked to her, she held his thighs and craned her neck to kiss his balls. He widened his stance, so she scooted forward, bent on her thighs and proceeded to try to fit his balls in her mouth.

Klaus was shocked and amazed. His cock thrusted forward, he dipped his balls in her mouth. She alternated between nursing herself on one of his ballsacs and opening her mouth wide to fit him in.

Caroline's cheeks were puffed out, but she did fit him in. She'd never done this with Tyler, had never thought too, but the comparison flitted at the back of her mind that Tyler's balls were larger. She probably couldn't have fit him.

Klaus opened his eyes and drank in the image of the apples of her ass spread over the floor as she lavished her attention on his balls. "You're perfect," he murmured.

Caroline uttered a long moan around his balls in response. She moved her hands from his thighs to the floor and nursed on his sacs. They were peppered with hair, but of course his supernatural status meant that none of them shed into her mouth.

"Oh my God," he sighed, and the utterance surprised him. He couldn't remember the last time he'd spoken God's name. But he was feeling incredible.

And he wanted her mouth on his dick again. So he took wet sacs away, and Caroline licked her lips. Klaus then held his cock out, and she straightened onto her knees and took him in. He threw his head back and groaned.
After a time, he slipped his hand into her hair and used it to pull her head back. "Come on," he said.

His face was transformed again, and Caroline was glad, because her pussy was feeling a little airy and empty. He pulled her up by her hair, and she was ready.

He walked her to the couch, and she said, "I want you to sit."

Klaus stopped and softened his hold on her hair. She turned and stepped back in order to sit him down. "Sit," she said. "And we didn't go over it, but there is one rule: no biting."

"I want to be inside you," he said around his four teeth, his voice spewing the passion that his once again stoic face lacked.

"You will be," she promised as she broke into a wanton grin.

When she had stepped inside of the seal, she had imagined them having a go once and then they'd stop, and she'd put her clothes on, and they would say some last words, and then they'd part, most likely with a promise from him that he would see her again.

But she had orgasmed, and it had felt amazing beyond her most erotic dreams, and he hadn't come, and she couldn't just leave him, and while she could have ignored his direction and kept sucking, she wanted him inside of her again. She wanted to come again. She wanted that face again.

So she put one knee on one side of him and the other on the other side. She grabbed his dick under her, and she sank onto it.

Klaus licked his lips as more of him went inside of her. Once she was settled, he teased, "You're gonna have to fuck me hard, too."

She grinned. "I will."

And she did. She started off at a good pace, not slow, but not fast either. She rocked back and forth, her hands braced beside his shoulders on the back of the couch. He slouched so that he could look down at where their bodies met.

After she increased her pace to where she was outright fucking him, she modified the position by lifting off of him and untucking her legs from under her. She moved her hands from the couch to his shoulders, and then she used her calf and thigh muscles to lift herself up and plop back down, and thus she resumed fucking him and piercing herself with his dick.

This slowed down her orgasm. She was leaning forward a little because of her hands on his shoulders, because of the degree to which he was slouching, so the angle at which his dick hit her inner walls changed and felt amazing.

"Turn," Klaus commanded as she whined from the incredible feelings that she was eliciting from herself.

Caroline turned and immediately felt the difference when his dick slid into her walls this time. She felt it more keenly.

Klaus remembered how she'd reacted when he'd twisted her nipple, and so he took control of the bobbing marbles. He pinched them harder than a human could support, hard enough to cause pain to a vampire.

"Ugh, yes, keep doing that," Caroline encouraged gutturally as she jounced, and Klaus liked the
juxtaposition between her plain, normal voice and her grotesque face. That was how he saw her. That was who she was: girl with the heart of gold that's just a little bit black; the perfectionist pageant queen who was literally dead inside; the caring friend to all who loved her who was at present reaping her greatest pleasure from the Hybrid whom those same friends feared. Grotesque and normal. The combination attracted him, and he wanted to stoke more of the grotesque, more of the girl who could put aside his crimes long enough to take her clothes off for him.

And that was when he figured out how he was going to provoke his orgasm. It would either send her running from him, cursing his name, and ruin what they were sharing now, or it would solidify her link to him and make him fall deeper in love with her. He was going to take a gamble.

Caroline came with his thumbs and index fingers clamped and pulling on her nipples. The sensational attention on her nipples made her wish he could do something to her clit, but she didn't want to take the attention away from her aching nipples. She told him to do it harder, and this time she came with her eyes closed, mouth open, fangs bared as she lost control of her hips, head snapped forward.

They did it a third time.

She was on her back, in the same position as the first time, her arms pinned, her face out, her legs as high on Klaus' back as she could lift them, his dick maniacally plunging into her in Tyler's house.

At this rate Caroline was hoping that he never orgasmed. She wanted to feel this amazing for the rest of the day, this special for the rest of the day because she was positive that this was the most and the best sex that Klaus has ever had, and it was all with her.

But he was being louder than the previous two times; he was cursing, and his grunts and yells mixed with hers. She had a feeling that he would come this time. But she looked forward to that, too, looked forward to him spilling inside of her. Fucked into a frenzy, she wanted to have all of him.

"Damn it," Klaus panted. He removed his free hand from the back of the couch and pulled the last move that she liked. He pinched her nipple between his strong fingers.

The pain sparked a sharper explosion of pleasure in Caroline's brain than she was already feeling, and she coiled under him as she stared up at his vamped face. The delectable pain continued when he squeezed the straining marble anew, and blood rushed through her sensitive body.

"Please, please; yes, yes. Yes! Yes!" she shouted as her body coiled in pleasure. Her orgasm swung closer to her reach. "Please keep going; please fuck me."

"What do you want?" he baited her.

"Please fuck me."

"What?"

"Fuck me."

"What?"

"Fuck me! Fuck me, fuck me; gimme your Hybrid dick, pinch my nipples, make it so I can't move! I want all of it!"

"All of it?"
"All of it! Make me come, Klaus, I know you can. I want you."

"All of me?"

"All of you!"

"All of me?!"

"All of you! I want it! Give it to me; make my pussy come! Yes!" she yelled as his hips continued to snap against hers. It was the best fuck she'd ever had, and she was glad that it had not happened before today. It wouldn't have felt the same when she was human; she wouldn't have wanted it like this when she was human. Today, now, it was perfect.

"How long as it been Caroline? All those months. All of your resistance. How does it feel now?"

"Fucking…..Amazing!" she cried, and she closed her eyes as her body rocked.

It was perfect. Klaus let go of her nipple for one second, and then he pinched it as he hissed. "Open your eyes," he commanded. "Look at me. Look at me." He pinched her nipple again and swooped his veiny face down closer to hers and charged from his throat, "Look at me. I killed Tyler. Held his body shaking with fear and snapped his neck. The blood, Caroline."

"Oh my….God!" she screamed as he pinched her nipple again, and she orgasmed, her eyes fastened on his face that somehow looked more cruelly gruesome now than before he'd spoken those words. Those words called forth images in her mind, images of him standing strong and powerful over the bodies from which he'd stolen life, his mouth bloody, his hands taut with murder, images of him wielding strength unparalleled by anyone else, and her urethra flooded. "Yes, yes, yes!"

"I killed him. The blood, Caroline," and he repeated it, giving her both pictures, and the result of his gamble was that he fell deeper for her.

Caroline moved her head from side to side as her orgasm enveloped her completely. She closed her eyes, and there was a curtain made of blood behind her lids, dead humans, werewolves, witches, Hybrids, and vampires behind it, for he had dipped his hand in everyone and inspired fear in everyone.

The murder, the very thing that had made her hesitant toward him, made her turn her nose up at him, made her storm away from his presence countless times, the murder was what made her come now, and Klaus drank it all up, and he orgasmed, pushing his semen into her with every heavy stroke.

"We can do it again," Klaus voiced from his seated position on the couch.

He had laid on top of her after he had orgasmed until his body had stopped shaking. He had pulled out and lifted off of her to take a seat five minutes ago.

He stroke a hand up one of the smooth legs that lay on his thighs. "Are you ready?"

"We shouldn't," Caroline said as she stared at the ceiling.

"But you want to," he guessed.

She smiled and looked down the length of her body at him. "Of course I want to. That was deliciously intense." His come had settled in her pussy.

"Then there's no reason why we shouldn't."
She thought better of saying his name. "I can't stay."

Klaus perused her face. She looked contemplative, but not of anything in particular. She certainly wasn't engaging in an ethical crisis about what had driven her over the edge and into her third orgasm.

"I should go," Caroline said, and she sat up and headed out of the room.

"So abruptly?" Klaus asked, though he made no move to stand.

She looked over her shoulder and smiled. "I'm just gonna go clean up."

She walked out to where Tyler had been bleeding on the floor the night before, her gaze skipping the sight, and she headed to the bathroom.

Klaus stretched out on the couch, a giant grin on his face. He was very intrigued about how things were going to develop, going forward. Maybe he wouldn't kill Tyler tonight. Maybe he'd simply kill whoever came along with him. That would be the young Hybrid's first lesson. The second would be what had transpired, and would surely transpire again, between him and Caroline today. That mental and emotional torture would be a far more gratifying outcome for Tyler than death. Tyler would surely lose it, try to get Caroline back, and she would surely return to him in a valiant attempt to reject the side of her that he saw more clearly than everyone else in her life.

It could be so very interesting.

As a matter of fact, he wondered if he should say something when he saw Tyler later. Caroline would be cross with him if he did, but it wasn't like he's never suffered her anger before. He could not simply put aside his desire to show Tyler which one of them was truly in charge.

He wasn't afraid of turning Caroline away for good. She always humored him again eventually. And today was the best example yet.

His eyes fell on the phone that she had deposited on the floor. He looked at the archway where she had exited, and then he extended his hearing to listen for her. She threw something away. Then he heard what he realized was rolls being lifted off of a toilet paper. She was going to wipe again.

He stood and walked to the Nokia Lumia. He toyed with an idea as he picked it up.

It didn't require a passcode. It was as if the heavens smiled down on him.

He opened the camera application.

He had so many options. He could take a picture of himself, of the wet spot that had grown on the couch and that was now accompanied by small drops of his semen. He could even sit down and take a picture of his dirty penis. Or his face.

He looked at the placement of his clothes and hers. Then he moved them into two piles next to each other, his and hers, with her torn bra and knickers lying on top of her pile. He stepped back and snapped a clear picture. With a small smile, he tapped share and went into her contacts to look for Tyler's name.

He heard Caroline coming back, so he hurriedly clicked Tyler's name, sent the picture, and closed
the phone's display. He set it back where he'd picked it up, and he used his speed to put their clothes in the exact disarray that they'd been in before, and he reclaimed his seat on the couch.

Caroline walked in and found him with his arms spread out behind the couch and his head thrown back, and she smiled. She figured that he was relieving the experience.

She picked up her pants and slipped them on. The shirt went over her head next, and then she put on her socks and boots. When she stood, Klaus lowered his head to look at her.

"Um," she said as she looked at the state of his semi-erect dick. "Want me to bring you some toilet paper?"

"Please," he smiled.

She smiled and went off to get it. When she returned, he stood and met her halfway.

"Here," she said, holding it up to him.

He stared at her, a smile playing on his lips.

"Seriously?" she asked teasingly.

"I think I deserve it."

"Oh, don't go bragging now."

Still, she lowered the hand holding the paper and wiped his dick for him. Her body begged her to stay for another round.

"I'm going to try something," she said. "And you're not allowed to interrupt."

"Okay."

She got on her knees and set the paper aside. She picked up his cock and threw caution to the wind. Someone could come to the house. In that case, she would have to quickly make her way out by the pool area. Today was her last chance to experience everything that she wanted.

Plus her car wasn't in the driveway, so if she made it out, no one would know that she'd been here.

She slipped him into her thirsty mouth and blew him.

He eventually realized that he could fuck her mouth, and he put the epiphany to use. She had worked her throat to take all of him, so now he held her head and fucked her throat.

He paused to let her settle, and then he resumed, and so it went.

Eyes closed tight, Caroline gagged every time he fit the length of his dick down her throat, drool cascading from the sides of her mouth. She cupped her pussy through her pants as he fucked her, and she thought that this method of him pinning her was even more exciting than him holding her hands. Her supernatural makeup allowed her throat to handle the continuous intrusion.

When he was close to coming, he started to hold his cock down her throat, and Caroline swallowed as best she could to squeeze him, though it threw her into a coughing fit every time.
Finally, she sucked him until he released.

"I told you you could stay," Klaus murmured indulgently as she slowly licked his tip.

"Mmm," she responded, tasting his cool come. "But now I really have to go."

She sucked the tip one last time and swallowed him down, and then she stood and picked up the toilet paper, her bra, and her underwear. She couldn't leave anything behind.

She picked up her phone and put it in her back pocket. She walked to the couch next and used the garments to wipe and pat at their combined ejaculate. There was nothing that she could do about the leftover wetness. Being able to cast a spell would've come in very handy right now.

It wasn't some huge spot, but it was noticeable. And uneven. And there was distance between some of them. She only hoped that they'd be assumed as something else. Maybe some weird expulsion from the previous night's fight.

She turned to Klaus. "Okay, so, um, I should go."

"We disagree on that."

She smiled. "But I really should. Um." A boulder settled in the pit of her stomach as she realized that this was the part where she said goodbye. "So…." she walked sideways to the door, and he pivoted to watch her. "I trust you won't say anything about this. To Tyler. To anyone."

"Why would I?"

"I'm serious, Klaus. Don't make me regret this. This…this was special. And it should stay between us. Don't say anything, don't…gesture….just don't. Okay?"

"I promise you, Caroline. I won't utter a word. This was indeed special, and how else am I going to make sure there's an encore if I go against your wishes?"

She nodded. "So, this is goodbye."

"It isn't," he assured her.

She didn't argue.

"I will kill him."

"That's not what I want."

"Yet it will happen. But I will spare him if I can."

"Goodbye, Klaus. Seriously." She turned and headed for the front door.

Klaus walked to the threshold to watch her.

When she was almost out of sight, she turned to look at him and a pang of sadness hit her heart. "I will miss you," she confessed.

Klaus wanted to say that he would miss her, too, just to play along with her prediction of tonight's outcome, but he simply looked at her.
With a weighty heart, she turned and continued for the door.

She made it to the car and wondered why she hadn't stopped by the bathroom to flush the toilet paper.

Shaking her head, she looked around and surreptitiously dropped it on the street, and then she unlocked the car and climbed in. She would get rid of the undergarments at a gas station or something.

She looked down at her chest and saw her nipples poking through the shirt. She so needed to walk in her house with her arms crossed.

She lowered the visor, slid the cover back to reveal the mirror, and looked at her face. It was exotically pale. She looked like a stunning ghost. She was sure that she could win a couple of beauty pageants with this look. She could definitely score a couple of bidders at the auction.

She lazily wondered when the effect would fade.

But everything was fine. Everything was going to be fine. It would be done tonight. Bonnie never lost, and Tyler had been losing *enough*. It felt like it was finally time for him to score, and it felt like he was going to score big. Plus, Tyler and Bonnie were working *together*. As much as their partnership annoyed her, they had gotten a couple of things done through it. She couldn't deny that.

Klaus was going to die, and as much as she wished that things could've been different, that things had never reached this point, after what she'd done with him today.....it was better if he died. She couldn't have him just walking around, ready to spill any time he chose, and, despite what he'd promised, she was very aware that he would spill if he was moved to do so.

And she wasn't prepared to deal with the consequences of what had transpired between her and Klaus, the things she'd said about him and them, and *especially* what she hadn't said when he'd brought up his murderous activities to get her off.

She wasn't ready to exist as the girl with the golden heart that's just a little bit black, and if Klaus lived past today he would absolutely force her to exist as such.

She did want an encore of what had transpired between them, but she needed the secret to disappear more.

She didn't feel guilty about how she had come the third time, or him bringing up Tyler, or any of it, because she was sure that Klaus was going to die. Bonnie and Tyler were determined. He was going to die, and her secret was going to die with him. Thus, the slate was going to be wiped clean, like it had never happened, like she had never heard him speak those words and came harder than she ever had before. No one was going to know except her.

She relaxed her shoulders and smiled at her satiated reflection.

Everything was fine.
A Losing Battle?

To Bonnie's surprise, Tyler came to her house in the late afternoon.

"I thought you'd want to spend the time before the fight with the pack," she said as she walked down the stairs to greet him. She glanced at her dad as they walked past each other.

"I will. I just wanted to come see you first," he said fondly. His smile froze a little when Rudy sent him a disapproving look over his shoulder.

"We can talk outside," Bonnie said, and she touched his wrist as she continued to the door.

Tyler watched Rudy go to the kitchen, and then he followed Bonnie.

"I think your dad still has beef with me from the other day," he said quietly as he closed the door behind him.

"No," Bonnie sighed as she sat on the edge of her corner of the swing bed. She didn't feel like taking off her sandals. Her feet were already numbing in the cold. "He has beef because you didn't go running to him when you found out how dangerous this cure thing was for me. He pretty much thinks you've been cheering for me to get myself killed. I argued otherwise."

"He's freaking out. I get it," Tyler said as he sat close to her. "He's gonna have even bigger beef after I convince him to let you go for it."

Bonnie looked at him. "I'm not sure how much you're gonna want me to go for it once you hear what I learned from April. Silas told her that I'm the key to His release."

The how of it quickly presented itself in Tyler's mind, and his mouth dried up. "He plans to kill you so He can be free."

In his opinion, Bonnie couldn't simply die like a normal person. Her death needed to impact the world. It was part of why he had decided to support her in finding the cure: it was hard for him to imagine her just...dying, and so he had determined that a way could be found to save her.

But releasing an immortal witch: that would definitely impact the world.

"That's what I'm thinking. He didn't tell April how exactly I'm the key, but it doesn't take a genius to figure it out. He also told her that Qetsiyah is my ancestor, so the whole spilling blood thing makes complete sense."

"And who's supposed to do it while He's in the ground, April?" he asked, his tone wrapped in disdain.

"Or Shane, Silas' biggest fan. I was right, Ty. Silas told April that He was going to make my interest align with His. I think He had Shane call Klaus so that your pack could serve as the third duodecad and that way I would be invested in His rising: He would promise me that He'd bring you back, just like He's promised to resurrect Pastor Young."

"Oh my God. Hayley. She told me that the witch she was working with was a He, but I thought she was bullshitting, that there wasn't a witch period. Hayley was working with Silas," he said numbly. "And she planned to sacrifice me and the pack for Him."
"Well, now we know why she was talking to Shane at the pageant."

Tyler still found it hard to believe. When had it start? Had Hayley been planning his death from the moment that she had met him?

As if she could read his mind, Bonnie asked, "How did you guys meet?"

"She liked to, um, shift and stroll in the Appalachians. She heard me screaming during one of the transformations, and that's how she found me. But who knows, maybe that was the first time she'd ever even visited the mountain. Maybe Silas told her about me."

Bonnie looked at the floor, and Tyler took her hand. "How are you dealing with this?" he asked softly.

"Oh, um," she frowned at the floor. "Well," she sighed, and she looked at the house across the street. "I wanted to find the cure because I wanted it for my mom, and I was told no. Now it's necessary for me to find the cure, because I'm sure Silas has a bunch of threats lined up if I say no, chief of them probably being killing you since he thinks you're distracting me, and everybody's gonna be on board with me finding the cure now so that we can avoid bloodshed, and Silas will get what he wants while me getting what I want will just be… incidental. I'm going to die for Silas' purpose when I could've died for my own. So I'm not okay at all."

When she had started her answer, she had been sarcastic and resentful. Now, at the end of her answer, she was mad.

"We can fight him off while preventing as much bloodshed as possible. He's still in the ground; there's only so much He can do. He's relying on minions."

"We can do that."

"But that doesn't get you what you want," Tyler said.

"What I want doesn't matter, Ty. It never did. It stopped mattering as soon as Kol told us that the cure is buried with Silas. It's just that for once I wasn't the first person to let go of my own interest. But you're right, fighting Silas off is the best option. He promised chaos and destruction a long time ago, and after He's done with me He'll probably go after my mom and Lucy to make them pay for what Qetsiyah did. My mom becoming a witch again might be useless to begin with. I just… I just can't start thinking about spells to fight Silas with yet. But I need to start soon."

"Your mom and cousin are inside, right?"

"Yeah, hiding upstairs."

Tyler got up and headed for the house, and Bonnie quickly got up to stop him. "What are you doing?" she asked.

"I told you last night that I was going to talk to them."

"You have a million things to think about today.-"

"And this is one of them. Look, I'm not putting this off."

He tried to take a step, but she tightened her hold on him. "What are you even going to say? Getting the cure means I die, so how are you going to sell it?"
"By reminding them that they love you."

"Just forget it," Bonnie plead.

Tyler turned to face her fully, and he put a hand on her cheek. "I know that's what you're used to? But no. I'm gonna do this."

He walked inside and Bonnie felt her blood ripple in nervous response to how much of a losing battle this was.

Tyler stopped at the entrance of the kitchen, where Rudy was peering into the blender to examine the peanut butter and banana smoothie that he was working on.

"Mr. Hopkins. Can I talk to you in the living room for a minute? It's important. It's about Bonnie."

Rudy blinked and put the cover back on the blender.

Tyler looked behind him at Bonnie. "Can you get your mom and cousin?"

Bonnie went without a word. This was so bad.

Rudy came out of the kitchen and looked at Bonnie's back as it retreated up the stairs. She had spilled to Tyler about Abby and Lucy being here. He tightened his lips and looked disapprovingly at the Hybrid.

Tyler simply held his hand out toward the couch like he was a doorman.

Bonnie's stomach was tied up in tight knots as she led the two women in her family down the stairs. Abby had of course asked what Tyler wanted to talk about, but Bonnie had held her tongue. Shit was going to blow up anyway. Tyler didn't seem to get how vehemently against the cure her parents were.

Tyler nodded to Lucy and then to Abby, who was looking at him like he was a newly discovered specimen who just might be dangerous. Lucy sat on the couch with Rudy while Abby took one of the chairs by herself, and Bonnie sat on the arm of the plush chair that faced Abby. Her position allowed her to see everyone's face.

Tyler walked to the heart of the living room and stood in front of the tv. "I'm Tyler," he said to Abby and lucy.

Bonnie closed her eyes. She was so nervous that she needed to go to the bathroom.

Abby knew that she was not going to like whatever that was going to come out of Tyler's mouth. She looked at Bonnie, and then gave Tyler her complete attention.

"So, I don't know how much Bonnie has told you about everything. Did you tell them about…..?"

"Just that Qetsiyah's our ancestor," Bonnie said, having opened her eyes. She lowered them when Tyler began. This was so bad.

"Great," Tyler said. "So, I know you all know about...the prediction of Bonnie's death. And I know that you know about Silas." He steeled himself and continued, "Bonnie found out today that she's the key to Silas' release."

Three pairs of eyes looked at Bonnie. "How do you know this?" Rudy asked her.
Bonnie looked at him and answered, "I put April under a sleeping spell. I asked her about their last conversation."

"We think that this is how she's going to die," Tyler took up, stealing everyone's attention. "She says that it makes sense that Silas would want to spill her blood to break the spell, since she shares the same blood as Qetsiyah. Now the obvious choice, the sane choice, the easy choice is for us to pull back, leave Silas in the ground, get rid of His minions, and just do everything we can to make sure that He doesn't get out. I want us to make the opposite choice and go for the cure and give Bonnie what she wants."

"Death?" Abby asked incredulously.

"The cure," Tyler corrected. "For you."

"Yeah, we're done here," Rudy said as he stood. He gave Tyler a hard look and started to leave.

"Mr. Hopkins, when you tell Bonnie goodnight tonight, can you also tell her why it's so easy for you to not be there for her?"

Bonnie's mouth dropped, and Lucy's eyebrows shot way up.

"Excuse me?" Rudy begged as he rounded his steps to head for Tyler.

Abby stood and said to Tyler, "You have no right to be in this conversation."

"I don't mean any disrespect, but this was never going to be a pretty conversation, and I'm ready to say whatever I need to say, however ugly I need to say it, to get you to understand how important it is that you change your mind," Tyler told her.

Rudy stepped closer to him and said, "I think you need to say whatever it is you came to say to Bonnie and leave. Better yet just leave, because by my judgment you don't seem to be doing anything except filling her head with-"

"Hope?"

"Stupidity."

"Oh no, Mr. Hopkins, there's no stupidity in her head. She's completely hopeless. Look at her. Just turn around and look at her."

Lucy was the only one who looked at Bonnie. Bonnie kept her eyes trained on Tyler.

"She's hopeless," Tyler reiterated. "She actually agrees with you now: she shouldn't go after the cure-"

"Then we have nothing left to discuss," Rudy said.

"Except she's still gonna have to find a way to stop Silas, whether that means killing His minions or going all the way to Capernaum to kill Him for good, because that's what she does. That's all she does: fight to protect everybody. Meanwhile, she's completely turned her back on the cure. So everyone's safe from Silas, and she's what? Your lack of support has set her back a thousand steps-"

"Lack of support?" Rudy asked as he took another step inside of Tyler's personal space.

"I get it," Tyler held fast. "I get the fear-"
"You don't get the first thing about this," Abby disagreed hotly.

"I love her," Tyler declared, his eyes on Rudy and his words meant for Abby.

The knots in Bonnie's stomach shimmied, and she became aware of every inch of her skin.

Tyler swallowed and slid his gaze to Bonnie. She smiled through her shock, her eyebrows raising, and his body warmed in response. Looking at her only encouraged him to argue harder.

He returned his attention to Rudy and said, "I'm not a parent-

Bonnie stood and softly said, "Ty, I think we can let it go."

"I'm not done." With Rudy and Abby, he continued, "I'm not her family, but I do love her. She's the most amazing person I've ever gotten to know. I'm not advocating for her death, and that's the problem with how you're looking at this. How can an ex witch, a witch, and a guy who's been around witches for years and years not know how to save someone? How can you have no knowledge at all? Why are you so comfortable letting her think that death is her only option? Why aren't you trying to save her? Telling her no is not saving her. She's gone to hell and back for me, and she's trying to do it for you," he said to Abby.

"And she does it for everyone, easy. But guess how often people do it for her. Guess. Look at her and guess. I want to show her that she can get back exactly what she gives everyone else. I want to show her that she's worth it, that it doesn't just happen for everyone else; things can work out for her, too. You guys have no idea how much it took for her to even take the step to try to get this cure for herself instead of for someone else. And right now everything, including all of you, is telling her that she made a mistake, she hoped too soon, it's not her time to want, she needs to wait a little more. If you don't do this for her, if you keep thinking of her as a dead girl rather than someone you can save, how the heck are you gonna make up for it after? Do you really think you're gonna be able to?"

"You're talking," Rudy began slowly, "Like we have a solution. That is my child-

"You're talking like we can't think of one," Tyler countered. "Just one, I mean can we at least think of one? As a matter of fact, I'll take care of it: she can become a vampire."

Rudy, Abby, and Lucy looked at him like he'd lost his mind.

"Okay, so no one is for that, great, so let's come up with a second idea. My point is that everyone in this room knows that death isn't the end. People come back. Can we please save Bonnie?"

Lucy ran a hand over her face and silence stretched heavily in the wake of Tyler's question. Finally, Abby left and went up the stairs. Rudy, Tyler, and Bonnie watched her leave.

Rudy turned his attention to Tyler, his expression the softest it's been since the conversation had started, and then he made his way back to the kitchen.

Lucy didn't know what to do with herself. She couldn't go upstairs because she and Abby shared a room, and Abby most likely wanted to be alone with her thoughts, and she couldn't stay in the living room, because Bonnie and Tyler probably wanted to talk in private, and going outside was ridiculous.

Thankfully for her, Bonnie made her way to Tyler, her steps slow at first, and she took him outside.

Bonnie closed the door and heard the blender turn on in the kitchen. She walked to the edge of the
"Well, that went about as well as I could've hoped for," Tyler said when he came to stand next to her. "It didn't end with them shutting me down. I think walking away is good. It means they're thinking. So we just need to give them a day to wrap their minds around it, and then they should be getting back to me," he said, nodding and looking back at the house.

"You're crazy. You're nuts," she said, raising her shoulders and smiling in awe. "What if they don't get back to you?"

"Then either I'll talk to them again, or we'll save you by ourselves."

"Whatever happens...that was the most amazing thing I've ever seen. And the sweetest thing anyone's ever done for me."

Tyler's body warmed again, and he felt the sweet familiar feeling of having conquered something for her, even though the conversation had ended at a quasi standstill. He walked closer to her and pulled her to him with one arm. "I would do it again. Hell, I might have to."

Bonnie felt like her stomach was suspended. She tried to speak and found that she couldn't for a moment. "$\text{I think my dad almost hit you. I've never seen him hit anyone, but I feel like that was gonna be it.}" Her ears were hot. Had she spoken or had she only said the words in her mind?

"Oh, he was definitely gonna deck me," he replied as he stared down at her beautiful eyes. He gave in to the pull that she had on him and kissed her. It felt like he was giving her the last breath that he would ever take.

The sensation of floating in midair spread from Bonnie's stomach to her whole body.

When Bonnie entered the house, she couldn't help but lean her back against the door after she locked it. The kiss had been incredible; his arms had felt incredible; his presence was incredible. And he was in love with her. Right? It was completely possible that he only had love for her, as a friend. Still, she felt great, like her feet weren't really touching the ground.

Thankfully, Lucy did not look at her.

She folded her lips and attempted to walk like a normal person whose everything wasn't yearning for more time in Tyler's arms, kissing Tyler's mouth, and breathing Tyler's scent. She paused by the kitchen and considered going in to speak to her father, but she thought better of it and went upstairs. She wanted to go to her room to think about that last minute with Tyler, but she looked down the hall and decided to go check on her mother.

She knocked on the open door when she arrived.

Abby looked at her from her seat at the foot of the bed and then she returned her gaze to the floor.

"You okay?" Bonnie asked.

Abby remained silent.

Bonnie walked into the room and stood close to her. She looked like she was deep in her head. Bonnie crossed her arms and said, "$\text{Mom.}"

Abby blinked and swallowed. "$\text{I can't...I can't do this,}" she said quietly. "$\text{I cannot...tell you...to go. I}
can't just tell you to go."

Bonnie lowered her eyes. "You don't have to. He was trying to make a point, but that doesn't mean....you don't have to do something that makes you uncomfortable."

The corners of Abby's vision became blurry. "He was fighting for you. That's what he was doing. He was fighting for you. And I...cannot do that. That's not my place. Your dad can decide on this. He can make the decision, but I..." She swallowed.

Bonnie lowered onto her knees and said, "I know you care about me."

Abby's smile was strained, and she shook her head, her eyes still on the floor. "I have not done a thing for you, Bonnie. Not a thing. And that was my choice, my....my choice." She looked at the beautiful young woman next to her and said, "This morning, Rudy told me that the only thing I contributed to your life was magic. He's so mad about the cure. So he told me to stay long enough to stop you from doing this magic-related thing, and then he wants me to leave. And he's-right, and he's-

"Whether or not you leave is my decision," Bonnie insisted.

"But he's right about my lack of contribution. And it's not like I didn't know that before. Every time you speak, every time you disagree or talk about an idea, every time you react, I think: I had nothing to do with this. This incredibly....unique girl-

"Well, I wouldn't say nothing," Bonnie disagreed with a tiny smile.

"Yeah, that's great: negative contribution, what every parent aspires to. You lived your life and shaped yourself around the thought that I was dead. That's something, alright. I put you on this earth, and I had nothing to do with who you grew into. I regret that fact every day, Bonnie. I thought about it every day, for years, and still I couldn't move my feet to come back to Mystic Falls. And this is why, here it is, I'm asked to be there for you, to support you, for the first time in fifteen years, and it's for something that could end with you dead. Dead. Welcome home. I've missed this fucking place. Excuse my language."

"Why didn't you take me with you?" Bonnie asked. "Why didn't you come back, just for one second, and take me and dad, or call us to come meet you?"

Abby shook her head. "I was on my way back. I was on autopilot: Mikael was entombed, and I was weak, and I'd just realized that my powers were severely depleted, but I was the ultimate warrior witch. I didn't need to slow down. I'd just sacrificed a teenager for the desiccation spell. I was used to spilling my own blood to bless a potion or a spell, but this....I casted the spell that would take me back home, but it didn't work. I didn't have enough power. And as I stared at my Grimoire, the blood on my nose dropping onto the page, the scariest thought came to me: what if I had been pregnant? That spell was big enough to deplete my power, to hurt my body, what would it have done to a baby? What if I had been pregnant with you right then instead of three years earlier? I've been through some things, Bonnie. I had some...demons."

She stroke her daughter's cheek and smiled. "You were my determination. I wrecked my body being a warrior witch, thrown here, bitten there, stress, the difficult spells. And your dad had some fertility issues of his own, according to what the doctors had told him. It was hard. But we fought for you, and you broke through."

Bonnie smiled, her eyes as shiny as Abby's.
"I can't lose you now," Abby confessed. "Not when I just met you, not when I have so much to make up for. And I just… I'm frozen, because I keep thinking about how much of a... deserved punishment it would be if I lost you for good just when I was ready to be there for you."

Bonnie touched the hand on her cheek, and after she judged that it was okay, Abby gave her a hard kiss on the forehead. She pulled her into the first hug she's given her in fifteen years, and her tears spilled.

Bonnie was back in her room when she heard her father come up the stairs and go to his. She got up and went to see him.

"Hey," she said at the door.

Rudy unplugged his phone from the charger "Hey," he responded.

"I just want to tell you, um….don't tell mom to stay away from me. Be mad at her all you want, I get that. But don't tell her to stay away. For years, you got to decide what I could and couldn't know about her, and your decision was that I could know nothing. Absolutely nothing. You and grams decided that. I get to decide now. And I want to see where this thing between me and her goes."

She left the room without giving him a chance to respond.
After leaving Bonnie's house, Tyler went back to Klaus' mansion where he spent the remaining hours with the pack. They performed a second strengthening ritual, because Adrian had missed out on the first one.

Night came and made itself comfortable, and they packed themselves into Tyler's car and the one that Klaus had given them, and they drove to his house.

Now, Tyler walked into the house while the others went around to the backyard that stretched into the woods.

"Finally returned," Klaus commented when he came into view.

"You're seal's going down in about an hour."

"And then?"

"Exactly what you're thinking. And I can't wait."

"With your pack," he mocked.

"I didn't force it, either. That's why my arms are healed and your face is….not."

"Tyler. You can run. I'll give you a head start. When the seal comes down, be as far away from this town as possible. And I might let you create a new life. You've already cemented a death sentence for your pack when you turned them against me. But as my first Hybrid, I'm considering going easier on you."

"Don't bother. You're dying tonight."

"And what will you be without me? Have you thought of that? Hybrid. Why, there are only…..fifteen of us in the entire world. Without me, the number is down to fourteen, and you won't be able to produce any more without my blood, which means you'll be part of an endangered species. The werewolves are scarce, but they're not endangered. There's enough of them that I could turn so that we would outnumber them. That's my plan-"

"Bullshit," Tyler retorted. "You would never create so many Hybrids that you stopped being special, that any one of them could rise up against you and split the group. You only want as many as you can control."

"Well…present circumstances say I've already created one too many, wouldn't you say, Alpha?" he gritted. "Enlighten me as to how that happened."
"I grew into it," Tyler replied with a small shrug. "You pulled it out of me."

"You killed Hayley."

"She was a traitor. You've killed for less."

"Still. Even if you get rid of me, it seems you've got another problem on your hands: the good samaritan who tipped me off."

"It's under control."

"Mmm," he replied as he stared murder into the other Hybrid. "You haven't answered my question. What will you be without me?"

"**Free.**"

"**Nothing.** The world will remember me: the Original, the first Hybrid, the one who broke his curse, a Mikaelson, first-made vampire. They will remember me by name. Whether you win or lose, they won't even remember you as an experiment. And so nothing that you do tonight….nothing you've been through….none of your fight….will matter. Without me around, it has no meaning. You'll tell the story, and it just won't sound as convincing."

Tyler turned and headed to the backyard. The breath that he's been holding since he'd broken up with Caroline the previous night constricted further in his chest.

When he broke out into the night again, he came up next to Alex. The back porch light had stayed on from the previous night.

"He's right, you know," Alex said. It had been assumed that none of them were going to eavesdrop, but he'd tuned in. "Not about the other crap, but we will be an endangered species without him around to make more. And most of us are planning to finally go home after this. You, Kim, and Adrian are the only ones who live in Virginia. We're gonna be split and rare."

"He's still dying," Tyler answered, his jaw tight.

"I'm just saying."

Tyler turned his attention from Alex when he heard two newcomers round the house.

Bonnie's bag of tools was draped across her body, and Lucy carried the painting.

"Hi," Bonnie greeted with a smile when she was close enough to him.

"Hey," he greeted, a small smile on his face. "Hi," he said to Lucy. He took Bonnie's hand and said, "I think it's time you meet everybody. Well, formally." He called for the group's attention and said, "Everyone, this is Bonnie. She's the one who's been helping us, and I know you all remember her from….that night. Bonnie, this is Alex, Levi, Jay, Mia, Pam, Fisch with a S-C-H, Fish with a S-H, both named Fis(c)her, no relation. That's Cohen, Lena, and you already know Kim and Adrian."

"I do. It's nice to meet the rest of you," Bonnie smiled. She remembered Cohen and Lena as the two Hybrids that she'd almost melted together. Judging from the fact that they were the only two not smiling at her, they remembered, too. "This is my cousin, Lucy. She's gonna be helping me with the spells."

Lucy raised her hand and spread her fingers in greeting. "Nice to meet you all."
"And you're sure you can do this?"

Lena. Bonnie gave her a plastic smile. "I'm positive."

"Because if you so happen to fail, that's our asses."

Tyler did a complete one-eighty from Bonnie to look at Lena. It put Bonnie mostly behind him, mostly hidden from Lena's view. The Beta recognized the move. Apparently, Bonnie wasn't just anybody to Tyler. She was on slippery ground.

"If you have any doubts, you are free to leave," Bonnie said. "You can work that out with Tyler."

"I'm just asking a question," Lena said, attitude still too high.

"And I'm just giving you a piece of advice. We're gonna get started," she said to Tyler, touching his elbow. "An hour from now, you'll be facing a weaker Klaus. Is Caroline coming?"

"I don't know," he said, staring Lena down. Caroline's presence tonight hadn't been a concern of his all day. It would make an odd sort of sense if she managed to miss this. "I didn't go back to her house after we came back," he said as he turned to Bonnie.

Lena rolled her eyes and crossed her arms, and Kim watched her. She looked at Cohen, and saw that he was watching her. And he looked just as pissed as Lena. Tyler felt the tension.

Bonnie nodded. She had sent Caroline a text about where she would be performing the spells. But if she happened to not show up tonight, it would save her from explaining Lucy's presence.

"I want to thank you," Tyler said to her. "Both of you," he acknowledged Lucy, "But especially you," he said to Bonnie. "From all of us."

Still, Kim voiced her own thank you.

Bonnie smiled. "You're welcome," she said to the group, minus the two with the stoic regard. She saved the special you're welcome look in her eyes for Tyler. "You guys are ready for this," she said, her attention on the group again.

She took a step back and turned with Lucy to head deeper into the yard, closer to the woods. Then she thought better of it and retraced her steps. She walked up to Tyler, who had turned to the pack as soon as she'd turned, and grabbed his elbow to make him face her.

Her mind blanked on something to say, so she stretched her body up while pulling his head down, and she kissed him.

Tyler placed his hands on her hips, and he captured her upper lip. Bonnie moved her hand from the back of his head down to his collarbone, and she released his lips.

"Thanks," he said softly as the Hybrids who weren't Kim or Adrian wondered what had happened to his epic love for Caroline. He'd developed a reputation as the lovesick Hybrid, always fighting to be better for his girl. Some of them had found it admirable, romantic even, others had thought that he should just give up on the relationship, because there was no better as Klaus' Hybrid.

"Good luck," Bonnie wished softly. She lifted her hand from his collarbone and stroke his cheek with the back of her knuckles. Now she was ready to walk away. The last time he had faced Klaus, he had suffered horrible tears on his arms. He had a team tonight, but he could still suffer worse. She couldn't have left without touching him.
Tyler watched her walk away, and Klaus' words floated to the background as he realized that he was in love with her. It felt like the moment when the eyes opened after a comfortable sleep, slow, not a moment too soon, not a moment too-late. He'd confessed the feelings earlier when he'd been one second away from getting clocked by her father. His heart had sent the words up before his brain had completely understood. He'd spoken from his heart and now his brain settled in the knowledge. The girl who always quietly but powerfully stood apart from everyone and everything else, he was in love with Bonnie, and he wanted to give her his heart.

Fischer slapped his thigh as a light bulb sparked on. "That's why you smell so weird."

Lena uncrossed her arms and walked away from the group.

"Lena," Tyler called as he turned around.

She stopped and slowly faced him.

"Do you have a problem?"

"Please tell me Fisch is wrong. Tell me she isn't why you smell so strange. You and the vampire was whatever, but that was your business, and you weren't my Alpha then. If you wanted all of that death and decay, fine, but a witch?"

Tyler waited for her to get whatever it was out.

"I know you know about the rivalry between werewolves and vampires, even the normal people know it, but witches aren't that much better. Caroline….she's sweet and harmless, but her?" she asked, jabbing a finger at Bonnie's retreating back, "She's already tried to kill us."

"You attacked her," Tyler said calmly.

"Are you fucking kidding? She killed Dylan-"

"Kim, Adrian, and Dylan attacked her. She was minding her own business. They attacked, she retaliated, and everyone got involved, including me."

"But now you're into her, so what she did is fine."

"Lena, let it go," Kim said. "It was….a bad night. She had no reason not to attack us, same as I had no reason to give a damn about her when I kidnapped her friend. No one cared about anyone, but it's….fine now."

"No, it's not."

"She's a witch," Cohen spoke up. "Always in bed with vampires, always doing something that gives them the upper hand over us. You guys are not gonna get along. There is a rivalry there, and it's about power. No one says it, but witches always think they're above us, more powerful. You saw it that night."

"Sooner or later, you're gonna get tangled in her mess, because witches are always involved in some mess. Except of course when the vampires were going around wiping us out. And as our Alpha-"

"So do you want to follow Dai and Lily out of town?" Tyler cut her off. He'd heard enough. "Bonnie didn't say anything about her spells hinging on the two of you. If you need to go, go. I don't need you. The rest of us don't need you. You are not gonna be what ruins months of preparation."
"I'm not going to ruin anything," Lena said. "I'm just letting you know that I'm not going to fight anyone else's battles, least of all a witch's. She's not gonna be my Alpha."

"Don't lose yourselves too deep in the wolf tonight." He was speaking to Lena and Cohen, and everyone heard the threat for what it was. If, in the seductive abandonment, they ended up attacking Bonnie, he would make sure that they always remembered how badly they failed.

When there was enough distance between the Bennetts and the pack, Lucy commented, "So. That's Tyler."

"Yeah," Bonnie answered casually. She took control of the conversation so that Lucy didn't explore the topic. "I think we can walk a little bit further. That way we can still see what's happening, but we won't be in the line of fire."

"Have you channeled another witch before?" Lucy asked.

"Yeah, once. He lied to me the whole time."

"Oh. Sorry. But I promise it feels good. Especially since we're bonded."

"Is that what that...thing is called? The thing where I can feel you? A bond?"

"Yeah. My mom told me when I was younger that our family cribbed it from the werewolves. It's not something that happens naturally. I mean it happens naturally now because the spell renews itself with every Bennett birth, but it's not natural among witches."

"Why did we crib it?"

"Well, werewolves bond, to their pack, to their mate, and of course to their family. They can sense each other, especially Alphas. Three sibling ancestors from my branch of the family did the spell decades and decades ago. They first created it for the mortals who would come to them for help in locating where their family was. Slavery was happening here, families getting torn apart, auctioned off, sold off, or traded, and people wanted to know where their wife or kids or brother had ended up. Just to know, you know? Their names were Jude, Ellis, and Lavinia, and they used their knowledge of werewolves to cast a spell on these people so that they would instinctually recognize their family when they saw them, no matter how much time had passed. They eventually casted the spell on our family. We got separated, too, and of course it was a protective measure in general."

"Sounds like a huge spell," Bonnie said.

Lucy smiled. "It was. I mean, the werewolves' bond is more emotional than physical. The spell they created is purely physical."

Bonnie thought more about the bond from the werewolf perspective. She wondered if Tyler knew about it. She wondered if, now that he was an Alpha Hybrid, he would be able to use it. Or maybe he had never lost it. She also wondered if the bond was why Tyler had heard her when she'd screamed his name in the auditorium. He'd said that he'd heard her in his head, not his ears. Was that the bond? Was she bonded to Tyler? Was that why she'd felt it when he'd been in trouble last night?

But she wasn't a werewolf.

But did she need to be? She had a manufactured version of the bond, so maybe it had connected to Tyler's natural one.
She wanted to ask Lucy how the bond formed between werewolves, but she did not want to invite her cousin's questions or quiet speculations. Not to mention the fact that Tyler was hearing distance away. She didn't want him to accidentally hear her line of questioning, because why ever would she be interested in werewolf bonds?

She was interested because she liked the concept. It felt good to be able to feel Lucy.

She was interested because the thought of being emotionally bonded to Tyler was one she liked. He was important to her.

"This is far enough, right?" Lucy asked.

Bonnie looked back at the huddled group. "Yeah, it's good."

Lucy set the painting down while Bonnie took off her bag and opened it to get the salt. Lucy had decided that they should cast a protective circle, just in case. Bonnie opened the container and dropped the salt in a circle around them, one that was wide enough to allow them wiggle room.

Lucy conjured lights that would enable them to see what they were reading. "Da nobis, ut opus sit amet Naturam. Da nobis, ut opus sit amet Naturam. Da nobis, ut opus sit amet Naturam."

Shimmering crystals of jagged white light materialized. When Bonnie closed the circle, the lights illuminated the salt grains slowly lifting into the air to create a round curtain of protection.

Bonnie closed the salt container and watched. The last time she'd been in a protective circle, well…it hadn't done a great job of protecting her and her mother. But Lucy had told her that salt was the best way to cast a circle. Maybe Esther Mikaelson hadn't known that.

Lucy opened her eyes and smiled at her handy work. She has never stopped being in awe of her ability to manipulate natural energy. Bonnie returned the salt to the bag and pulled out her Grimoire, along with the knife that was copper-red with Klaus' blood.

Bonnie sat down and crossed her legs. Lucy sat across from her. Bonnie ceremoniously placed the Grimoire in front of her and laid the knife on top of it.

"Ready?" Lucy asked.

Bonnie smiled. She always was. "Ready."

They reached over the Grimoire and held hands. With eyes closed, they ventured outside of themselves and channeled each other. Bonnie's breath deepened when she felt Lucy touch her power. It almost distracted her from doing her part, but she reigned in her focus and dove into Lucy's power, and the older woman's hands tightened on hers before they quickly relaxed, and she heard Lucy chuckle.

The lights and salt started to bob around them.

"Now," Bonnie breathed, and the lights and salt were shocked into immobility when the witches' powers abruptly switched direction and dovetailed into the earth. Lucy tightened her hold on Bonnie as the element crawled up her body. She inhaled and squeezed her lips and tried not to push it back out. To help, she pulled on Bonnie's power.

Bonnie was having an easier time, the element easily sliding up her body. She straightened her back suddenly when she felt Lucy pull just a little too much on her power. "It's okay," she soothed.

"You're fine. It's fine."
"It's hard. I feel like-it's gonna pull me down."

Bonnie didn't know what that felt like, but she reversed the channel and sent her power to Lucy while she pulled solely from the earth. This allowed Lucy to stop channeling her and focus on using her own power to manage the hardest element.

"Don't focus on holding it in," Bonnie counseled, based on what Abby had told her when she'd needed it to stop Jeremy's heart. "It'll consume you, and you'll end up working that much harder, and your powers will be depleted. It's an exchange. It's in you, now send it out, use it on something, make something happen."

Lucy held fast to Bonnie's hands and reached for the sky, wanting to channel her power as far away from the ground as possible. She formed the clouds, fattened them up, and created a lightning show over the Lockwood property. It was enough to take the edge off, and she relaxed her vice grip on Bonnie's hands. Air was her best element. It was why she had such an easy time teleporting from place to place.

The very first time that Bonnie had channeled earth, she had sent the power out by doing the spell on Jeremy. Now she found that she didn't have to do anything. Her body was handling it just fine.

"I'm okay," Lucy said. She never channeled earth without one or more other element involved. She opened her eyes and looked at Bonnie's serene composure. The younger witch even had a little smile on her lips.

"That was the lesson mom learned after she faced Mikael" Bonnie said, eyes still closed. "She held the power in, which made her pull more from her own power. The earth never mixed in with her energy. It pulled from her instead, so her powers were being used twice over. Because of that, she lost her powers for a long time. " She opened her eyes.

"What are you channeling it on?" Lucy asked.

"I'm not. I don't think I need to anymore. I feel fine. Like I have a lot more power than usual, but fine. My body's holding it. I guess all of those nosebleeds helped make me stronger, built up my endurance. Let's start."

They changed their hand-holding so that their palms rested against each other. They looked at the knife and together they floated it up. Lucy looked over at the painting, and it lifted into a standing position.

Her eyes on the knife, Bonnie began, "Sanguine cultri, sanguis erat. Sanguine cultri, sanguis erat." Her eyes on the painting, Lucy joined in, "Sanguine cultri, sanguis erat. Sanguine cultri, sanguis erat."

As lightning played overhead, the Hybrids heard a pained yell ring out of the house. Inside, Klaus' skin split along his face and arms, and the blood that flowed out spilled down the painting outside.

When the painting was striped in blood, the witches halted the spell. "Perfect," Bonnie said. She looked down at the Grimoire, and it flipped open to the Life Splitting spell.

"Are you ready?" Bonnie asked. "When I channel you again, the element is going to flow from me to you. That's going to be double."

"I'm ready," Lucy assured her.

Bonnie looked at the spell. She wasn't going to look up until it worked. Her way of reaching the
Every line that Bonnie said, Lucy repeated it by herself, and then they put their voices together to repeat it three more times. When Lucy had offered to help, Bonnie had distantly set her brain to figure out how she could work that into the spells. It had come to her after she had finished her homework.

Five people had been involved in the ritual that had freed Klaus from his curse: the three sacrifices, the witch, and the doppelganger. She did not count Klaus because this spell was targeting him, too, and not in the amiable way that Greta Martin's spell had.

Her spell acknowledged the breaking of the curse, and so she'd come up with the repetition as a way to further connect their magic to Klaus' blood for the purpose of isolating Elena's blood and the magic that it contained because of Greta's unification spell.

And so Bonnie began each line, and Lucy followed, and their voices united.

"Maledictio autem fracto illo sit etiam transmutare."

"Sanguis converto sit duplex separata!"

"Sit factum fieri infectum sanguine!"

"Si de sanguine Elena Gilbert, duplex de Petrova, vertuntur de Klaus Mikaelson!"

"Sit factum fieri infectum sanguine!"

Half an hour later, the witches were screaming the spell, still taking turns, still uniting on the last three repetitions. Cracks had formed in the coagulated blood that was on the painting.

It was then that Caroline came running around the house. A considerable gust of wind ravaged her hair as the air vibrated with magic. She squinted up at the lightning storm and came to a stop in front of Tyler's group. Some of them were completely naked. Some, like Tyler, were in their undergarments.

"You made it," Tyler said, shocked.

"I wasn't going to miss it."

Despite his indifference earlier, Tyler realized that he was happy that she'd shown up. He didn't need her here, but she had been there when this had all started. She knew the beginning of the struggle, and she knew everything that he has done to free himself of it. Because of how Klaus had used him, she has been hurt by the struggle, too, and even though they have grown apart in the last few months, he was relieved that she still understood enough to value how important this moment was to him.

Caroline turned to the house where Klaus was screaming as something that he couldn't see tore at the core of his genetic makeup. He was hurling profanities at Tyler and the other Hybrids.

She turned to Tyler and said, "There's about half an hour left before the seal disappears."
"I know."

She looked down the yard to where Bonnie and Lucy were illuminated by bright lights. "Think they'll finish in time?"

"I hope so," Tyler said as he looked at them. "Either way, we're gonna face him when he comes out. Or chase him on the off chance he runs."

"Klaus doesn't seem like the type who runs."

"He ran from his father for hundreds of years. If he believes we can kill him, he'll run."

Caroline nodded. She smiled and put her hands on Tyler's face. "You're ready for this. All of you are. I know getting here has been...hard...between the two of us, but...I do support you one hundred percent. You deserve this. And I'm cheering for you."

Tyler smiled with a nod and hugged her. He blinked when a bout of sadness took him by surprise. He was ending a huge part of his life tonight. Klaus was going to die, but he was also done with Caroline. When all of the noise stopped tonight, when Bonnie and Lucy stopped chanting, and the lightning disappeared, and the wind calmed, when all was quiet, he was going to be devoid of the two people who have had the most influence on how he's lived his life since he'd become a Hybrid. Hell, since he'd become a werewolf, really.

*Without me, it has no meaning. You'll tell the story, and it just won't sound as convincing.*

Those were Klaus' words, not Caroline's, but he had a feeling that, now that he wasn't her boyfriend, she wasn't exactly going to spend her time listening to him talk about the most transformative year of his life. And *that* saddened him.

He ended the hug, and the air in his chest further constricted.

Caroline smiled and stroke his cheek. Tyler stepped away before she could think to do anything else. His judgment was astute, because her smile slipped. She *had* been planning to give him a kiss.

"Well, I guess, um, I'm gonna go wait with Bonnie."

Tyler nodded.

She raised her voice to speak to the others. "Good luck."

Forty more minutes went by before Bonnie and Lucy stopped chanting.

Caroline turned her attention from the pack to look at them.

Bonnie finally looked up from the Grimoire. "It's done."

Lucy moved her neck from side to side, and Bonnie followed her lead.

"Klaus is still screaming," Caroline said as she trained her ears inside the house.

Bonnie looked up at her, not having realized that she'd shown up. "Yeah, but the spell is done."

They all looked at the painting. It was covered in cracked blood.

"Tyler," Bonnie said quietly. "Tyler, can you hear me? Ty."
Tyler turned his attention from the house to the women's direction. He had calculated when the seal had gone down. The pain had kept Klaus inside. *Can you hear me?* Bonnie's voice bounced against his eardrums. "I can hear you," he answered before he remembered that super hearing wasn't one of her gifts.

"He can hear you," Caroline told Bonnie.

Bonnie wasn't sure how, but she knew that Tyler was listening to her before Caroline confirmed it. "It's done. Elena's blood is gone."

Just then, Klaus quieted down, and the Hybrids stepped closer to the house. "The spell is done," Tyler announced. "We're ready for this, guys," he said as they watched the house. "Just like Bonnie said. Look out for each other. He focuses on one of us, he gets jumped by the rest of us. We're *all* making it tonight."


Just when Tyler was getting half a mind to storm the house in case Klaus thought to quietly slip out the front, he was tackled to the ground, knocking two of the Hybrids down in the process.

Klaus tried to land a punch across Tyler's face, but Lena sped over and grabbed his arm. The irate sire bared the claws of his other hand and slashed her across the face. Klaus sped a couple of feet away before the others could touch him.

"So what is this?!" he yelled, stopping them in their tracks. "I thought for sure that that...*spell* was what was meant to kill me."

"We're not talking," Tyler declared above the wind, and he mutated just enough to charge Klaus.

They didn't transition at the same time. They went according to Tyler's plan. While he attacked, Adrian and Kim waited in the wings while Levi, Pam, and Fisch transitioned, but since Lena was hurt, she took Fisch's place. Transitioning into a full werewolf, plus the boost from Tyler's power, would help her heal enough to continue fighting.

They soldiered through the pain of broken bones and torn ligaments until they walked on all fours. Adrian and Kim took over for Tyler, and Alex, Cohen, and Fish transitioned.

As Klaus fought Kim and Adrian, he went through his own transition little by little. None of the gashes that they tore into his flesh phased him. They just made him angrier. He snapped Kim's neck and laid her out, and then he bit Adrian. Mia came up the back and bit him.

When Adrian was freed, Tyler yelled at him to go off script and transitioned, so he did it at the same time as Jay and Fisch.

Tyler picked Kim up and sped her away from the fight so that Klaus couldn't easily get to her.

Klaus smacked Mia aside, and faced Fisch and Levi. As an Alpha, his werewolf form was bigger than the others so he was successfully fending them off and sustaining the wounds scratched into him. He ran around them and dealt his blows. He pinned Alex to the ground and opened his jowls to clamp down on his throat and tear it out, but he was talked by another werewolf, one that was his size.

Aggressive lupine growls reached Bonnie, Lucy, and Caroline as Tyler went at Klaus.

"Oh my God," Lucy murmured. She couldn't see clearly, but the growls were terrifying and for the
first time she considered the possibility of the pack not making it.

The growls were murder, and Bonnie got on her feet inside of the circle. They had been confident before, but it was happening now, and the way the werewolves sounded, one or two people were going to end up dead.

Caroline backed up and bumped against the shield. Bonnie and Lucy turned away and shut their eyes when the circle flared bright white. Red and black dots swam in their vision when they opened their eyes. The werewolves were so loud and thirsty for flesh and bone that it was hard for Caroline to believe that twelve of them were actually working together. It sounded like one big melee where everyone wanted to kill each other.

"I have to get out of here," she said as one more werewolf, Mia, transitioned.

"I think one of them's down," Lucy said above the howling wind as she stood and made out a body on the ground.

"Caroline, go and make sure they're okay," Bonnie said.

"No way," Caroline objected as she turned to Bonnie. "Tyler set them there, I saw. I'm not going any closer than here, and I think I should leave."

"What, why?"

"Do you hear them?!" she panicked. "Hybrid or not, they are werewolves right now and once they're done with Klaus, where do you think they're going to turn their attention? On my nice undead vampire flesh." She turned to look at the savage fight.

"Bonnie, we have more work to do," Lucy said.

Bonnie sat back down. "Please be okay, Ty."

She and Lucy focused on the floating knife and began the second spell.

Ten minutes went by and Kim's brain fired on enough that it could send signals to her spinal cord and heal the broken neck. When she regained consciousness, she transitioned and joined the fight.

She was a ball of energetic fury, one that her side needed, because, except for the ones that came from Tyler, Klaus' double heritage was allowing him to heal from every wound, even though strength-wise he matched Tyler as an Alpha.

The fight stretched another ten minutes, unheard of for such a big pack, but Klaus wasn't going down, and Tyler's side was sustaining too many wounds. Cunning, Klaus timed it perfectly, and he grew in size to further demoralize them. Tyler was the only one who could match his growth. He and Klaus got big enough to fight on their hind legs, veritable wolfmen, and Tyler communicated to the others that they needed to tap out. If Klaus managed to corner one of them, he would kill them.

Tyler lit into Klaus, his goal to anger him enough that he lost focus on the others. It worked.

As the most healthy, Kim rounded the three most wounded and shepherded them to the edge of the yard. Whining worriedly, she walked around and pawed and nosed at them to help them heal. The others joined her, and she took care of them, too. She was only going to be able to tend to them for as long as it didn't hurt her. Healing them completely wasn't possible. They'd been wounded by an Alpha.
Caroline wanted to leave, but she felt that she had to see. Despite Bonnie and Lucy's intentions, it looked like things were going to end at a draw between Tyler and Klaus. It didn't look like either of them were ever going to stop.

The second spell kicked in after another ten minutes. Neither Alpha could tell. It was subtle, and it didn't show outwardly for yet another fifteen minutes. Tyler was getting tired, his body wounded, and it gave Klaus the upper hand. Tyler was stuck on defense while Klaus attacked.

And then Klaus started to feel sick, horribly, terribly sick. It was then that he remembered that there were others here, powerful beings. Not werewolves like him, but something else. They were working against him, helping the Alpha he sought to defeat, and he needed to stop them.

He left Tyler and charged toward the source of foreign power.

"Oh shit," Caroline exclaimed when she saw one of the werewolves approaching fast. She ran the hell out of the backyard and stopped around the house. She peeked into the yard. She couldn't tell the Alphas apart, but the one that was currently hell-bent toward Bonnie and Lucy couldn't be Tyler.

Klaus was getting smaller as he ran, shrinking down to four legs. Tyler sprinted after him, and when Klaus jumped to make his way into the circle, Tyler grabbed him by the tail and threw him back where he'd come from.

Bonnie and Lucy continued to chant, undisturbed, forcing Klaus' werewolf half to poison his vampire half.

Klaus righted himself and realized that he was close to the others. He attacked and tangled with Kim.

Tyler ran back and dragged Klaus away by his tail. He pinned him down with a hand around his throat and clawed into his weakened flesh.

Caroline took a stunned step back when the first of Klaus' pained whines reached her ears.

Tyler stopped a second and looked into Klaus' eyes. Klaus struggled to free himself. He struggled to get bigger, but the poison wouldn't allow him. For the first time ever, his vampire side was hindering his werewolf side. Still, wrath burned in his yellow-red-black eyes. He still felt that he could kill Tyler.

Tyler slashed him across the face and resumed staring.

Caroline closed her eyes tight and turned away. She couldn't watch the end. She ran to her car and drove home.

Tyler let his human side out, transitioned out just enough so that his brown eyes looked down at his sire. Klaus quit struggling and transitioned, too, and for the first time Tyler saw something in Klaus' eyes that he had never seen before. Klaus has looked at him with extreme anger, irritation, impatience, and condescension. But he has never looked at him like he outright hated him. He had never realized that, because what difference did it make in how Klaus treated him?

But he saw the unrepentant hate now, and he knew that it was there because Klaus had finally accepted that he was stronger than him. The bastard hated those who made him feel weak.

Tyler roared in Klaus' face and fell back into his lupine state, and he tore his sire to pieces.

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Bonnie and Lucy were cut off in the middle of the spell. There was no longer enough of a body for
the spell to act on.

Bonnie opened her eyes and was disoriented for a moment, because she didn't understand what had happened. She tuned in to the rest of the yard, and all was quiet, the wind gone, the sky a dull blue. Her heart leapt to her throat, and she shot to her feet. She bent down and swiped at the salt to break the circle, and she ran up the yard.

Lucy ran behind her, a tentative hand on the hem of Bonnie's sweater. As they got closer, Bonnie saw scattered animal parts. The women stopped when they spotted the huddled werewolves.

The injured wolfman tended to his pack with Kim's help. When the breathing of the badly injured three evened out, and when the others were strong enough to stand, Tyler left them and followed the strong smell of anxiety.

Lucy moved behind Bonnie as Tyler walked forward, his body a brown mass of muscles. Lucy pulled on the back of Bonnie's sweater, but Bonnie didn't move, her eyes riveted on the cruel gashes on Tyler's body.

Tyler was severely weakened because of the energy he'd just given the others. When he reached Bonnie, he fell.

"No! Tyler!" She kneeled next to him. "Ty?

Tyler suffered on the ground and started to transition down.

Kim ran up on all fours and told him not to do it. She told him that it would be worse, that it might kill him. He would heal faster if he stayed a werewolf. Transition down to all fours, but do not become human.

"What's going on?" Bonnie asked.

Tyler looked up at her and forced himself away from his human side. Lucy pulled Bonnie away when he started to growl. He shifted down to all fours and tried to breathe.

"A healing spell," Bonnie said as she kneeled next to him again and put his head on her lap, "We can do a healing spell."

"Bonnie, he got hurt by an Alpha," Lucy reminded her. "That's not going to help. Magic is useless."

Tyler whined sharply on her lap.

"Oh my God, please make it through this. Please make it through this. You have to—you have to enjoy this. You have to live without Klaus. You have to... know what that's like. Please make it through this."

She adjusted herself and laid her head against his. A spell may be useless, but who said that all magic was? He was undead, but he was also a werewolf right now. He was an Alpha, and he could breathe, not like her, but he could breathe. Surely that counted for something? He was a werewolf right now, the most alive that he could be. She channeled him and trembled when it worked. She didn't care if it didn't aid in healing him. She connected, and she channeled.

Tyler wiggled under her hands, and she stopped, worried that she had hurt him. He moved his head, searching for the magic. He started to get up in his search for her hands, and Bonnie finally understood what he wanted and resumed channeling him so that he didn't exert the energy.
The other werewolves gathered in a circle around Bonnie, Lucy, Tyler and Kim. They lifted their snouts to the sky, and they howled.
A short chapter! Because we needed to check back in with April, and her emotions didn't fit in with the flow of the previous chapter or the flow of the next one.

_Twenty minutes before Klaus' seal broke..._

April finally arrived home.

One of the high school volunteers had peeked into the bathroom despite the _Out of Service_ announcement and discovered her. The volunteer had not been able to shake her awake, so, worried that the amiable pageant queen had suffered a concussion, they had run to the nearest adult, and the ambulance had been called.

They had taken her vitals but been unable to determine what was wrong with her. She had finally woken up at 7:27 in the evening, after which she had been submitted to a CT scan.

One of the neighbors whom she had listed as her emergency contact on the pageant application had been contacted, and it was this red-haired woman with more than a touch of grey at her temples whom she was trying to get rid of now.

"I just think you should sit down, April."

"Ms. Killips, I'm fine, swear I'm fine. I just need you to go."

"I'm afraid to leave you alone. You were out for more than five hours. I mean has that happened before?"

"No."

"So what if it happens again, and there's no one here to find you? At least come stay at the house for a couple of hours, play around with Jaxson."

"I don't want to play with Jaxson. I don't want to be around anybody! Look, I know what happened, and I don't want to talk about it. I just want to be alone! You can check on me first thing tomorrow, if you want, but I just _really_ need you to leave. _Please._"

Ellie Killips was hesitant to leave, and a small part of her wondered why the Department of Children and Families hadn't been contacted. She didn't mind watching over April. Pastor Young had been a great man of Faith. But she had a six-year-old boy who required a lot of work. She could deal with _some_ teenage angst from April, but faintings that went on for hours and that came with stinky attitude was not something that she was ready to deal with.

She gave April her space and left the house and hoped that the girl would be alright and conscious when she came to check on her the next morning.

April turned the locks in place and stomped to her room. She slammed the door closed, the first outburst of the emotions that she's been holding in since she'd woken up in the hospital.
"Silas?! Silas! Please appear, I need you! I need you! These people, they're horrible! They tricked me! THEY TRICKED ME! Caroline pretended like she was my-like she wanted to talk to me, and it was all a lie, and she used me! Bonnie did something to me! Where are you?! She casted a spell on me, and she knocked me the fuck out for eight hours! Eight hours, and I don't remember shit! I HATE THEM! I hate them; I hate them; they're soulless; I hate them!"

She gulped air into her lungs and screamed.
"Come on," Bonnie begged Tyler, panic making her skin hot. His breathing was becoming more and more shallow as the seconds ticked by. She rubbed her ears on her shoulders as she channeled him. The werewolves' howls were getting sharper and louder, and it was hell on her and Lucy's eardrums.

Kim went outside of the circle and shifted back into a human. Her body was killing her, but she tried to ignore it.

"I can't take this!" Lucy yelled over the pack, her index fingers pressing against her ears.

"They're sad," Kim explained, her mouth red with Klaus' blood. She stepped inside of the circle. "They're celebrating, but it's sad because Tyler can't join in, and you guys are worrying about him too much to be able to celebrate. It's a sad celebration."

Kim's voice reached them even though she was speaking normally. Bonnie had to yell above the ringing in her ears. "Can you do something?!

"He's not gonna make it from here to deep enough in the woods, that's too long a trek!" Bonnie fretted.

"He's not gonna make it here. Bonnie, listen to him. He doesn't want to move, because what you're doing feels good, but it's not healing him. He feels good, but it's delirium. He's getting worse. He can make it with us."

"Are you sure?!"

"I am."

But Kim's breath hitched in the answer, which told Bonnie that she wasn't completely sure. She was only hoping, just like her. Nevertheless, Tyler was definitely getting worse.

"Bonnie, you need to let him go!" Lucy said. She took her fingers off her ears and moved behind Bonnie to hold her shoulder in a show of support.

"I know," Bonnie said as she stared down at Tyler. Her breath caught in her throat. "Ty? You need to go. And you need to come back, okay? We're supposed to be in this together. Fifty-fifty, remember? So you have to come back."

She realized that things had turned very bad when she took her hands off of him, and he didn't object. Her heart thudded in her chest, and she beseeched Kim with her eyes.

Kim tightened her lips and gently took Tyler off of Bonnie's lap. Bonnie aided by gingerly removing herself from under him. Kim changed her eyes, red veins coloring her face, and infused Tyler with her healing power.

The others stopped singing their mournful song and came to their leader's aid.
"Come on," Lucy said, and she helped Bonnie stand and walked her backwards out of the shrinking circle. "We can't be here. We're in the way."

Kim trained her yellow, bloodshot eyes on Bonnie. "I'll take care of him."

Bonnie nodded. "Take care of yourself, too. And the others."

Kim smiled. She laid her palm flat on Tyler's fur and concentrated, and a gentle wind swept the pack away.

Bonnie started. "What was that? Was that normal?"

"Uh, yeah," Lucy said as she put her arm around Bonnie. "Their powers are genetic like ours, which means different families from different parts of the world can do different things. It's usually just one special power, but yes it's normal. She looks like she knows what she's doing. He'll be okay."

Bonnie nodded a little too fast, and she could feel her neck becoming stiff. She took a big breath and covered her face with her hands. She exhaled and said, "I need to think about something else."

"We can move all of their clothes inside the house," Lucy said.

"We can clean the house," Bonnie added.

"Hold on a second, they might not be back by the time you're done, so if that's why you want to clean…"

Bonnie closed her eyes.

Lucy looked behind them and said, "Uh, Klaus' wolf bits have turned into human bits."

Bonnie turned around and saw Klaus' body parts scattered over the yard. The son of a bitch just had to leave Tyler suffering. "Here lies Klaus Mikaelson. Everyone hated him."

"What are we going to do with him? Incinerate?"

"Not until Tyler's back. He needs to be here for that. He will be here for that. In the meantime, uh, his family has a cellar….."

When Caroline arrived home, she had to calm a very anxious Carol Lockwood.

"Mrs. Lockwood, everything's fine. I only came back because things got dangerous for me. Tyler, he's-he's winning."

"Well if he's winning how could things have gotten dangerous for you?"

"Because werewolves don't like vampires, and there are thirteen angry werewolves in that yard. Klaus was making a beeline for me, so I had to go. Or maybe he was coming for Bonnie and her cousin. Either way."

Carol put a hand on her hip and the other on her forehead and sighed in relief. "Is Bonnie okay? I mean…"

"She's fine. She's helping."

"And you're positive Tyler's okay."
"He's holding his weight. He's winning, Mrs. Lockwood. He's got a whole team."

Carol closed her eyes and nodded. And then she dissolved into tears. Caroline walked her to the couch and sat with her.

"I'm sorry, I'm just...I'm so scared for him. He's doing all these big things, taking these risks...."

"He's halfway there," Caroline consoled as she rubbed her back. "Trust me, I know how scary it is."

"He was talking about burying himself alive and getting possessed, and he's so driven. I never-" She closed her eyes and shook her head. "I knew Klaus was horrible. He turned my son into a monster. But I never realized how angry Tyler was, how much....he still thought about it. He doesn't give me the details, you know? He left town a lot, and I'm so sick of him leaving, but I always thought....I always thought that he had accepted it, that he was dealing with it. Like I was. I was so busy dealing with it that I ig-ignored my son," she realized, and she broke down again. Her memories were pulled back to a time when Richard Lockwood was alive and would oftentimes carry out a contentious relationship with Tyler. She had dealt with that, too, and it had resulted in the same thing: she had failed to be there for Tyler to the best of her ability.

Caroline comforted her and shortly after, when Carol assured and reassured her that she was fine, she went to her bedroom and closed the door. She sat in front of her vanity mirror and looked at herself. She'd connected to what Carol was saying, and she hoped that Tyler made it. But she still felt sorry for Klaus.

"Fuck," she breathed in frustration. She got off the vanity and dug through her closet for the portrait that Klaus had given her, intent on ripping it, but when she found it she stared at the image of her next to a horse's head.

*Thank you for your honesty,*

-Klaus

Reading the words over again, she went to her bed and sat down. A portrait, a dress, and a bracelet. Those were the only existing evidence that Klaus could attempt to be a good person, and she owned all of them. She couldn't destroy them, not yet, maybe not ever. She'd meant what she'd said to him. She truly wished that he had lived differently. She wished that he had gotten a chance, that he had been able to take a chance. As horrible as he was, he had been dealt a sucky hand by his parents. What must it be like to indulge one's basic nature for so long and then one day want to change it for one person? Perhaps that had been too ambitious for him.

Damon came to her mind, and she put the drawing down. It wasn't the same thing. Damon was unwilling to change and he said as much every chance he got, not to mention that the asshole wanted to be an important part of Elena's life while he insisted on treating the rest of them however he pleased. Klaus had generally left them alone, unless they bothered him, which they had, a lot, with all of their plans to murder him. He had been playing the cure partnership straight, but Tyler and Bonnie had wanted something else.

Maybe people like Klaus weren't allowed to change after all that they had done. Even if they wanted to change, maybe they didn't deserve the chance, for the sake of all of the people that they had hurt.

She didn't hurt people, didn't kill anyone unless she had no choice, and she didn't maim. But she was going to live forever. Time was going to make sure that she ended up surrounded by people like the Originals and Damon and even Stefan, who had a severely ugly side. She was graduating high school soon. She couldn't cling to planning dances and volunteering forever. How the hell was she
Bonnie insisted on driving, because she did not want to be idle.

She and Lucy had walked to the cellar, levitating Klaus' body parts as they went.

They returned without incident, packed their things, and buckled in to leave Tyler's house. She thought about calling Caroline for the sole purpose of speaking to Carol, but she realized that stopping by the Forbes house meant delaying the moment when she would be alone in her room, wondering how Tyler was holding up.

She made the drive and knocked on the door when they arrived, Lucy standing behind her.

Carol moved the curtain to see who it was, and then she fumbled with the locks in her hurry to open the door. "Where's Tyler? Liz called and said the station was getting reports of howls in my neighborhood. Where's Tyler?"

Bonnie held out her hands and said, "He's fine. I mean-Klaus is dead. Tyler's hurt."

Carol stood in shock and looked behind Bonnie at Lucy.

Caroline, who had come jogging out of her room, asked, "What do you mean he's hurt? Is he in the car?"

"The other werewolves took him to heal him. They're banged up, too."

"How are they going to heal him if they're hurt, too?" Carol asked, worry making her raise her voice.

"Because they'll be surrounded by Nature," Bonnie answered calmly. "They'll be in their natural environment. Hey," she said when Carol got a far away look in her eyes like she was about to imagine the worst, "What he needs is for us to believe he's gonna be okay."

Lucy slid her attention from Carol to Bonnie. She sounded so together. Literally up to the moment that she had stepped out of the car, she had looked like she was still picturing Tyler weak and fading on the grass. She had kept a tight squeeze on the wheel for the whole drive over. Now, the only sign of the true depth of her emotions was how quietly she spoke, something she was sure that other people would mistake for the sympathy required when delivering not so great news.

"You're right," Carol said.

"He's gonna be okay," Caroline assured as she rubbed Carol's back. "And I'm sure the first place he'll come when he gets back is here so you can see," she said with an encouraging smile.

Carol nodded and tried to smile.

Caroline dragged her gaze to Bonnie and said, "So, Klaus is dead?"

Bonnie looked at her like she was finally registering that she was talking to Caroline. Here. In Caroline's house. All of that had gone down with Tyler, he was struggling to breathe, and Caroline was sitting in her house. Things could have gotten dangerous for her, sure, but had she really needed to clear the property and go blocks and blocks away to sit at home? Tyler had told her that he felt like Caroline wasn't in his corner, but Bonnie was still flabbergasted by the fact that the girl had missed Tyler's pivotal victory.

When Jeremy had asked her to be there the day that Shane had helped diffuse his urge to kill any
vampire within sight, she had agreed because she'd known that it was a delicate situation for him, and she'd known that he wasn't a fan of people getting inside of his head. They weren't together anymore, but she was still considerate of Jeremy's deepest fears and concerns, and he was still considerate of hers, which was why he fully supported her decision to get the cure for her mother instead of his sister.

Caroline had left Tyler on what she knew was the biggest night of his life and gone all the way home.

"He's dead," Lucy confirmed when she saw Bonnie taking too long. "Chewed and scratched to bits and pieces."

Caroline kept her horror in check.

"He's dead," Bonnie repeated, her voice flatter now than when she'd been talking to Carol. "Gone."
Then she added with a thin smile, "Sorry you missed it."

Caroline recognized an accusation when she heard one. Barely opening her mouth, she said, "You probably missed it because you were busy chanting, but Klaus made a beeline for us. I didn't have anything to protect me."

Bonnie slowly lifted her head in acknowledgment and reigned in her emotions. She shouldn't take her worry for Tyler out on Caroline. "Yeah, I know," she said resolutely. "Things could've gotten more complicated."

But she couldn't tear her hard stare away from Caroline.

Lucy put her hands on Bonnie's shoulders and tried to break the tension. "Okay, well we just wanted to stop by and let you know how everything went."

"Thank you," Carol said.

Bonnie lowered her gaze from Caroline and then lifted it to Carol. "Good night."

Carol nodded. When the women turned away, she quickly said, "And thank you….for helping him. Thank you."

Bonnie and Lucy nodded, and then they walked to the car.

"I'm driving this time," Lucy said, and she held out her hand for the keys.

Bonnie didn't feel like putting up a fight, so she surrendered and directed Lucy to the house.

When they arrived, Lucy cut the car off, and they sat in silence for a moment.

"That was, uh, that was really good," Lucy began. "Tucking your feelings away like that to talk to them? I've had to do that before. But I'm usually talking to strangers. I thought….you guys would lean on each other."

"I've got people to lean on," Bonnie said, and she looked from the floor of the car and smiled at her cousin.

Lucy smiled. "So I take it that was Tyler's ex."

"Caroline," Bonnie confirmed as she looked out of the windshield. "My best friend."
"You say best friend, but I kind of hear frenemy."

Bonnie smiled. "No, she's my best friend. We grew up together, we all did. Things are just different now. We're different, and that makes us not completely compatible anymore. That's what tore her and Tyler apart," she said, turning her head to Lucy.

"And what brought you and Tyler together?" she guessed. Then she warned, "If you say he's not your boyfriend…"

"He's not my boyfriend," she insisted. She couldn't believe that she was smiling right now. "We haven't talked about that. He's just a really good friend."

"You mean a really good friend."

"Yeah, Lucy, a really good friend."

Lucy chuckled.

"He's a good person."

"And Caroline? I mean clearly she knows how good of a friend Tyler's been to you, if that staring contest is anything to go by."

Bonnie exhaled steadily through her nose.

"You can tell me," Lucy said. "I'm not gonna run and tell your parents. I mean I'm not promising not to judge, but you can tell me."

"Yeah, that's the thing: it's complicated. It deals with a whole history between all of us. Bottom line: Caroline is my best friend. She hates me right now, but I'm sure beforehand she thought of me as her best friend, too. The girl who was freaking out so badly last night that she had to literally be put to sleep: would you have guessed that she had not one but two best friends? The other one is Elena. That is...one...giant...mess. Elena's boyfriend is the vampire who turned mom. He wasn't her boyfriend at the time, but....yeah, he still managed to win her over after. And Caroline hates Damon. He was horrible to her. Elena knows that. But a couple of months ago at a sleepover we were having, she was singing his praises to Caroline. We're best friends.

I think we're used to each other. I think we love each other. We just have different priorities. I didn't care about Caroline's relationship," she admitted. "I mean, I wasn't looking to destroy it, I wasn't looking for anything to happen, but...I just felt like if it didn't need to happen, then it wouldn't have been happening, you know? That probably doesn't make sense, but you should've seen Tyler and Caroline at their beginning. They were just....so into each other. Perfect couple, always touching, always kissing. Not that any of us would've ever put them together, but they were working, and then Tyler was into me, and I was attracted to him, and we just clicked. Maybe that sounds typical, but we did. And even still, I assumed they'd work it out in the end despite the connection I felt to him, but then Tyler told me....She couldn't even be there for him tonight."

"She probably really was scared," Lucy said. "You and I don't know what it's like to have a natural enemy that can smell you out."

"She would have stayed if-it was Stefan," she countered as the thought came to her. "I can't imagine her running and abandoning Stefan, but she ran. And that's the thing, that's the whole issue. The people you're supposed to rely on just...disappear. And then they have a perfectly good reason why, and that's supposed to make it okay. This is why-"
"Based on what I saw," Lucy interrupted, laying her hand over hers, "It was more important to Tyler that you were there."

"Based on their history, it sucks that she ran," Bonnie insisted.

Lucy submitted to her point. "Come on, let's get you inside."

When they entered, Rudy and Abby were waiting for them.

"I was about to come check on you," Rudy said. "I heard the car stop a couple of minutes ago."

"We were talking," Lucy said as she reached behind her to lock the door.

Abby crossed her arms and asked, "How did it go?"

"We won," Bonnie said plainly. "Klaus is dead."

"So why don't you look like someone who has something to celebrate?" Rudy asked carefully, throwing a quick look at Lucy.

"Tyler's hurt," Bonnie said quietly. "Badly. He's having trouble breathing, and, um….the others have taken him….somewhere….to try and heal him."

"To definitely heal him," Lucy corrected quietly. "He couldn't be in better hands, Bonnie. Communal pack healing is powerful stuff."

"I'm gonna go to bed," Bonnie told her father.

She was nowhere near falling asleep when Rudy knocked on her door.

"Come in," she said. She turned on the lamp and sat up against the wall.

Rudy sighed heavily and sat on the bed. "You're very very worried," he observed.

"I know he's gonna be okay. I just want to skip this waiting part and have him in front of me, talking, smiling, and laughing. I can't stop thinking about how hurt he is, so I keep forgetting that he's gonna be okay."

"Do you trust the people he's with?"

"I do."

"And Tyler's a fighter. I see that in him. If nothing else, him coming in front of us for your sake cemented it. This isn't what's gonna take him down. Besides, he and I still need to have a talk."

"About what?"

"How sweet he is on you."

"Oh my God," she cringed, even as she smiled. "Sweet on me? You sound like granddad."

"Hey, pop's a good judge of character and situations. I like to think some of that rubbed off on me. And what I judge is that that boy wants to be more than just your friend. But if you don't feel anything for him, then….there's nothing for me to talk to him about," he egged her on.
Bonnie gradually sobered.

"Do you?" he asked.

She opened and closed her mouth twice before answering, "Yeah. I like him. A lot. I love him."

"Based on what he said earlier, he loves you, too."

She smiled shyly. Then she remembered that Tyler might've meant that he loves her as a friend.

Rudy grimaced, because one detail still troubled him. "Isn't he dating your friend? Caroline?"

"They're over," Bonnie said.

"Mmm." He chose not to ask how that had come about. He was sure that he didn't want to hear it. Instead, he switched gears. "Listen. About what you said earlier. About your mother. I want you to know that...." He struggled to find the words as the pain of those fifteen years converged on him. "Your mother and I...were partners. We were partners. And...she broke that. She wrestled with her duty as a witch and what she felt she owed to herself: you and me. I had given her the option of leaving after you turned one. She didn't take it, swore she had to stay. And then...two years later...I got a note from her. A magical note. It said, I'm fine. I still have it. She'd sent me notes before, but I knew that that one.....

I called, and I called. I called for two and a half months. I called on your birthday the next year. Then Christmas. On your first day of kindergarten....I cried, not for the first time, but I cried, and I called her and told her how adorable you looked and that you'd screamed and thrown a fit. I called on your birthday again, then Christmas again. New Year's Day the year that you would turn eight was the last time I called her. I told her not to come back, that she never needed to see you again. I still have that number written down. And all these years, I've wondered....I've wondered if....if I called....would she pick up? Has she kept the number like I have?"

"But you never called," Bonnie said.

"I know that you were the best thing to happen to Abby. I still don't doubt that. She carried you for nine months, and....baby, I was not gonna beg anybody to love you. Not anybody. I wasn't gonna convince anyone of how special you are, least of all your own mother, the woman who-It's one thing for me to beg for myself. But you? Your uniqueness speaks for itself. I've always told you that."

Bonnie nodded. He had. She just had had no idea that it stemmed from what Abby had done.

"Maybe I should've reached out," Rudy considered. "Maybe I should've tried."

"It's okay that you didn't," Bonnie said. "I can imagine what that was like, and I'm pretty sure my imagination is nowhere close to actually going through it. But dad, you should've given me the choice of reaching out. You took away all of the pictures except one. I never....please tell me you have those pictures somewhere. No matter how many times I trained myself not to think about it, part of me still hoped that you just had them in storage somewhere."

Rudy sucked in a hesitant breath. "I do, but Bonnie....I just don't want you to get hurt. I'm not gonna know how to pick up the pieces if she leaves again. At least beforehand you hadn't had any experiences yet. You didn't really know her."

"I'll be careful," she promised. "I'm not running to her, heart first."
Rudy nodded and pulled her into a hug. "I worked very hard to make sure you weren't damaged by her, that you wouldn't miss her in any part of your life. I did my research to make sure that I would be enough. Those years, even with your grandmother, they were torture. I could never really be sure that you weren't lack anything, not internally. Everything scared the hell out of me."

"Like when I told you I wanted to straighten my hair in middle school, and you spent a month talking about black women's hair and gave me old issues of Jet Magazine?"

Rudy smiled as he remembered. "Yeah. Sheila finally convinced me to stop when she pointed out that I could be giving you a complex about your hair by doing that. I guess I didn't do such a great job. You're right: I shouldn't have kept her from you. I should've let you decide."

Bonnie hugged him tighter and closed her eyes. "You did a great job, dad. I wouldn't trade that month for anything."

About ten minutes after Rudy left, Abby softly knocked on the door. Bonnie turned the lamp on again and sat up.

"Come in."

Abby opened the door and smiled. Bonnie smiled back.

"I just, um, I wanted to make sure you were doing okay," she said as she sat down.

"I'm doing a little better."

"Lucy's right: he couldn't be in a better place. Communal healing is the best a werewolf can get."

Bonnie nodded.

"I'm sure you're gonna be one of his first pit stops when he gets back."

She smiled.

"I've thought about what he said. I'm on board."

"Mom, if you're uncomfortable-

"My unease is largely due to guilt, which I brought on myself. This is about you, and I think that Tyler's conviction is...adequate, pleasing. Am I right in thinking that he's important?"

The similarity between how her parents had chosen to frame their question about Tyler made Bonnie smile. "You're right."

"I'm going to trust that someone like that would only want what is best for you."

"Thank you."

Before Bonnie slipped under the covers this time, she grabbed Tyler's jacket and put it on. She sniffed it when she laid down and closed her eyes as his cologne and natural musk filled her nostrils. Her mind was calm when she fell asleep, her thoughts on how valiantly he'd fought for her in front of her family, and she hoped that he somehow knew, wherever he was right now, that she was thinking about him.
Alright listen, now. I need y'all to prepare. I need y'all to get your minds right for the Tonnie reunion, because it's going to be intense, gloves off, all bets off, and I tried to prepare you as best I could by peppering hints in different chapters of the fic thus far. You been waaarned!
On Sunday morning, Bonnie's worry was less pronounced, but it was still at the forefront of her mind. So she conceived the perfect solution to keep herself occupied. She was going to tell the others about Klaus' demise. Unlike when she and Tyler had first started this, she was ready to deal with the fallout. Besides, she had a card now that she didn't back then: the location of the cure. That had been the whole point of them needing Klaus. He had had the sword, which had been the only solid proof that the cure existed. They knew the location of the cure now, so why did Klaus need to be alive?

She was standing in front of her bathroom mirror and pulling her hair back into a high, severe ponytail, to match her mood. Because she was sure that there was going to be a lot of questions and confusion and wringing of hands from the group, and she was setting out with limited patience for all of it. Until Tyler was back safe, sound, and fully healed, everyone needed to tread lightly in her presence.

It was too late for Shane, though. Yes, she was going to go after him. If Tyler wasn't back by the time she finished meeting with the others, she was going to gun it all the way to Whitmore, and she was going to gut Shane for the stunt that had almost ended in Carol Lockwood's death.

The weather app said that it was going to be colder than usual all day, but she still showed some skin in a cotton, army-fatigue-shade green sweater. It had two holes that allowed her shoulders to poke out in the cold before the material resumed to make the long sleeves. She topped it off with a medium-sized triangular pendant that hung down to the middle of her sternum and featured a lapis lazuli crystal as the centerpiece. She wore black skinny jeans, the ankle boots that she had worn yesterday, and nude brown lip gloss.

She wore the necklace for Shane, in case he tried to lie to her. Lapis Lazuli had been Emily's favorite crystal, the crystal of truth, and she had remembered that she'd wanted one when her father had asked her to write down her Christmas wish list.

She'd sent a mass text to the group after she'd woken up, telling them that she wanted to have an emergency meeting at the Salvatore house and now her phone rang out a text from Caroline.

She finished up in the bathroom and retrieved it from the bed.

_I can't make it, have to look after Mrs. Lockwood. Are u gonna tell abt Klaus?_

_Yeah. How's Mrs. L doing?_

_She's holding up. Don't you think you should tlk to Tyler first?_

_It doesn't matter. It was always gonna b my responsibility 2 tell them._

_Have you heard from him?_

_No, haven't heard anything._

_Okay. Good luck._

_Thanks._
Bonnie put the phone in her right pocket, moved her wallet from her messenger bag to a small purse, and she went downstairs for breakfast, stopping to groan internally on the stairs when she was attacked by cramps from her throbbing uterus. Everyone really needed to act right today. Tyler was hurt, and now her body was going to do its painful monthly cleaning.

Abby was sitting at the kitchen table when she entered, and she immediately wanted to know where she was going.

"Uh," she said as she took out the pancake mix. "I'm going to break the news to the others that Klaus is dead."

Abby set her blueberry bagel down. "Are you sure you're up for that? You weren't exactly in the best shape last night."

"I need the distraction."

"Okay. Are you coming home after?"

"Why are you up so early? I thought mornings were worse than vervain for you."

"I can be up at eleven, now. It's that ungodly 6:30 in the morning when you set out for school that I can't stand. You dodged my question."

"I'm coming home."

"After."

"Yes. The meeting might run a little long, but…." she shrugged.

"Hmm. Is that a lapis crystal?"

"Yeah."

"Do you know its magical properties?"

"Crystal of truth."

"Among other things. Do you know I can call Lucy down here and make her use it on you since you wanna dodge my question?"

"Should I use it on you to find out if you're lying about making it affect me even though I'm wearing it?" she asked with a self-indulgent smile.

"You said you want a distraction. I can think of a couple of ways for you to distract yourself, including going after Shane. I didn't forget what you told Lucy the night Klaus attacked the Lockwoods."

"You have no idea how weird it is to have to answer about my plans now. He's just a mortal."

"Who's connected to a God!" Abby exclaimed. "What happened to waiting to go with Tyler? I support that plan now."

"I might not be able to wait for him, and I'm not gonna let Tyler come with me unless he's in tip top shape. Shane put a hit out on him and his pack. I'm going after him. Don't worry. And keep Lucy away. I can handle myself."
Later, she arrived at the boarding house at the same time as Matt. They greeted each other, and Matt threw his arm around her shoulders as they walked to the front door.

Stefan let them in, and Bonnie wondered if he was back to living in the house.

Stefan led them to the living room where Elena and Jeremy were sitting on the couch, and Damon was walking back and forth behind it with a drink in his hand. Matt was about to sit on the arm of the couch, next to Jeremy, but Damon shot him a warning look, so he sat between the Gilberts.

Bonnie took a seat in the individual chair that was to the left of the couch and crossed her right leg over her left. She had a good view of everyone.

"The only one missing is Caroline," Stefan said from his standing position next to Elena's end of the couch.

"She's not coming," Bonnie said. "She's looking after Mrs. Lockwood."

"Why does she need to look after Mrs. Lockwood?" Elena asked.

"Because Mrs. Lockwood is worried about Tyler right now."

"Well, she should be," Damon opined, "Especially since he's trying to run head first into Klaus."

Bonnie gave him a dispassionate look.

Damon didn't notice. "So what is this about? And please don't tell me you've stolen something else from Klaus."

"Klaus is dead." She looked everyone in the eye, one by one, starting with Jeremy on her left and ending at Damon behind the couch.

Damon put his hands on the back of the couch and slowly said, "The next words out of your mouth better be one of two things: just kidding, or I found out that Klaus already had the cure, so I killed him and now I have it."

"Actually, Tyler and his pack killed him. I helped."

"Bonnie," Matt said.

"What do you mean he's dead?" Elena asked.

"I mean Tyler ripped him to pieces."

"That's not possible," Stefan said pensively. "Klaus is indestructible. I don't think a lesser Hybrid could kill him. Not saying that Tyler's lesser," he amended carefully, "But he's not as strong as Klaus."

Telling them exactly how she'd helped Tyler, weakening Klaus, might cause them to question how she could do it by herself, especially since she'd lost most of her powers not even one month ago, so she'd already decided to be vague on that detail. "Like I said: he had me."

"Bonnie, you're sitting here all calm and collected, and I don't think you realize what you've done. Elijah will find out, and he'll want blood," Elena said.

"Forget Elijah," Damon said. "Klaus was supposed to give us a private jet to go after the cure. How the hell are we supposed to go get it now?"
"Okay, Elijah, I get, but you're worried about Klaus being dead because you might not get a private jet?" Bonnie asked incredulously.

"Stefan and I are dead, remember?" Damon asked as he widened his eyes. "The Federal government's gonna have a lot to say when two dead guys apply for passports."

"I have a passport," Bonnie said with a twitch of her neck. "So does Elena; so does Jeremy, Matt, Caroline...you two would be the only ones grounded. And Tyler and I are batting two for two, so if Elijah wants to be stupid, we can make sure he follows his family right to the OtherSide."

"Gee, that's a real nice attitude, Tyler," Damon said.

"It's my attitude, Damon, and it's gonna take me all the way to Capernaum. Meanwhile, yours is gonna take you…"

Jeremy smiled. Meanwhile, Stefan finally put two and two together regarding the mysterious girl who has been intruding on Caroline's relationship. He tried to tell himself that he was wrong, but with the attitude that Bonnie was displaying here, he wasn't sure that he could put giving in to Tyler's advances past her.

"Where's Tyler?" Matt asked.

Bonnie softened a fraction. "He's hurt badly from fighting Klaus and giving his strength to the pack. They've taken him away. He'll be back as soon as he can."

"Wait a minute, did Caroline know about this?" Damon asked.

"She was there for part of it last night. There wasn't really anything she could do to stop it, so don't even go to her about it," Bonnie told him with sufficient warning in her eyes.

"Bon, not that we didn't all need Klaus dead, but the Elijah thing is serious," Matt pointed out softly. "The last time he felt his life was in danger, he kidnapped Elena and threatened to kill her, which forced Stefan and Damon to….your mom. Two of his siblings are dead now-"

"What I'm basically getting is that none of you feel that it was the right time to kill Klaus?" Bonnie asked, her brows raised.

"Not me," Jeremy said. "But I am worried about Elijah."

"I'm not," Bonnie replied. She had bigger things to worry about. "Tyler's safe, free, competition for the cure is gone, no one will be harvesting Elena for her blood again, no one will be killing werewolves anymore, and every witch and mortal is that much safer. So when the people who are bothered by his death finally grasp all of that, please let me know."

Task complete. She got up and walked out.

Jeremy was the one who came after her outside. He touched her elbow to get her attention. "Hey."

Bonnie turned to him. "Hey."

"I just...wanted to make sure you were okay."

"I just came here to let everyone know. We don't need Klaus. We have the one thing he was valuable for: the sword."

Jeremy nodded. Both of them were conscious that the vampires inside might be listening.
"Are you sure Tyler's gonna be alright?" he asked.

"I am. It's just a question of how long."

"You're worried."

Bonnie crossed her arms and raised her shoulders.

Jeremy heaved a big breath. He had recognized the truth in Damon's unnecessary comment. Of course he's always wanted Bonnie to stand up to the Salvatores, but he recognized that her present demeanor was unquestioningly influenced by Tyler's presence in her life.

"I guess that's a no to….what I said." When she looked up and frowned, he chuckled in disbelief and clarified, "What I said at the lake house before Christmas? I didn't think I'd ever be related to an afterthought where you're concerned. It stings."

They both blinked in surprise.

"Uh. A lot's been going on. I haven't really had time."

"Yeah," he agreed. Then he added, "But you've had time for Tyler."

"Uh. Okay. I'm gonna go, Jer."

"You know he all but walked me to the door the day the storm happened? You can do better, Bonnie."

"Excuse me?"

"You can do a lot better. He has a girlfriend."

"And the sanctity of a relationship started mattering to you when? I'm gonna go."

She turned but stopped cold. She faced him again out of curiosity and saw him blinking at the ground.

When he saw her looking at him, he said, "I don't even know why I said all that. I'm sorry. I didn't mean any of it."

"You didn't?" she asked doubtfully.

"A little. I did a little. I really think you should give us another chance-"

"Jerem-"

"He's not your type!"

She was stunned for a second too long, but she recovered. "I'm not having this conversation right now. And my type is whoever I'm interested in. And that's Tyler."

"Bonnie," he began apologetically.

"I'm leaving."

As she walked away, she brought her fingers to the pendant, a worried frown lining her forehead.

Crystal of truth.
"Me and you work so much better, Bonnie!"

"Shut up, Jeremy! Stop!" she yelled back without looking at him.

Concurrently, Stefan, Damon, Matt, and Elena were reeling from Bonnie's arrival and swift departure.

Stefan's phone chimed a text, and it was sent by Caroline.

*Meet me at the Lockwood mansion when ur done with Bonnie's meeting!*

"Uh, I gotta go," he announced after he read the text.

"Where?" Damon asked "We need to figure out the plane situation and maybe figure out what the hell's wrong with Bonnie, *and* figure out a way to deal with Elijah's guaranteed wrath while we're at it."

"We're gonna do all of that in an afternoon?" Stefan asked sarcastically.

Damon grimaced and opened his arms.

"Sorry. It was Caroline," he said as he waved the phone, and then he put it back in his pocket.

"Did she text you about Tyler?" Elena asked with a frown.

"Uh, no. She just wants to meet."

"To talk about what?"

Stefan slowly cocked his head and frowned.

"I'm just curious about what you guys talk about when you get together," Elena explained with a shrug.

"Why does it matter?"

"Yeah, why does it matter?" Damon echoed.

Matt began to feel like he was going to become very uncomfortable. As such, he readied himself for the exit.

"She was glued to your side when you were blind, the dutiful friend, and last *I* checked Caroline hates the fact that I'm with Damon, but she's stopped telling me that, and Caroline doesn't *just* stop talking about something, especially when she feels strongly about it, so I'm just wondering, now that you hate me, if she's moved to bashing me and Damon behind my back and to your ear."

"I don't hate you, but what me and Caroline talk about isn't any of your business."

"Uh, guys?" Damon tried.

"You don't hate me?" Elena doubted.

"I think you're making the biggest mistake of your life, but, hey, it's your life."

Matt stood and began to inch toward the hallway.

"So you *are* talking about me."
"Are you saying I'm not allowed to? Are you kidding? You left me for my brother-"

"I left you because you were suffocating me."

"But Damon doesn't suffocate you? That has got to be the sire bond, because-"

"The sire bond is why I want the damn cure!"

Matt was out the door.

Damon slowly put his hands on the back of the couch and looked to his left at Elena. "I'm sorry, what? You said you wanted to be human again."

Elena blinked and stood. "I'm sorry….I have no idea what that was. Uh. Sorry."

After she left the room, Stefan gave Damon a smug smile. "Trouble in paradise?"

Elena was pacing and twiddling her thumbs inside of Damon's bedroom when he came looking for her.

"I still wanna know what that was about."

"It was nothing. Can you drop it, please? I don't even know what it was about."

"Let me help you out: you said you want the cure not just so you can become human, but because you being human would ostensibly break the bond."

"I want us to focus on Bonnie, and the cure, and what we're gonna do about Elijah."

"Right, the cure. The cure that you want so that you can break the bond."

"Damon, I'm not talking about this," she declared, and she moved for the door.

Twenty minutes have passed since Caroline started speed-cleaning the mess in the Lockwood mansion. The front door opened, and she froze. "Stefan?"

"Yeah."

Her tension evaporated. She resumed scrubbing Tyler's blood off the floor.

"Um," Stefan began as he came within view of her, "Don't say you called me over for housekeeping."

"No. Trust me, I need all of the work," she said, as she scrubbed.

"Is that…?"

She looked up. "Tyler's blood."

He held himself still. "Where's Klaus?"

"I have no idea. I didn't ask Bonnie. She and her cousin probably burned him to a crisp. I've looked around, but I don't see any ashes."

"Bonnie's cousin?"
For the second time, Caroline's blood cooled in her veins. She probably shouldn't have said that.
"How did everyone take the news?"

"Caroline, did you say Bonnie's cousin is here? As in, a witch?"

"Okay, I really need you to forget that I said that, because you're probably not supposed to know," she said worriedly as she stood.

"What do you mean I'm not supposed to know? Why would it be a secret? What the hell is going on?"

"Bonnie probably called her to come help with the Tyler thing."

"She…told us that she just helped him. She didn't go into detail. Why would she omit that detail?"

"I don't know, Stefan, maybe because the last time she got her family to help in this town that family was turned into a vampire?" she snapped impatiently.

Stefan closed his eyes as he remembered. "Right. Right, no wonder. I just didn't know-Wait, so this would be the same cousin who helped us trap Katherine two years ago."

"Why does it matter? You're never gonna see her. She's probably halfway out of town by now," she lied. But she was upset, and his questions were annoying her, and she was doubly upset for letting Lucy slip out. She can just imagine Tyler telling her that she's untrustworthy.

"Are you okay?"

"No. How did everyone take the news, Stefan?"

"Like you'd expect. Damon's upset, I'm still trying to figure it out, and Elena's worried about the pushback from Elijah."

"Oh my God. Elijah."

"And Bonnie's on a confidence high."

Caroline curled her upper lip and rolled her eyes.

"Why are you here? Why didn't you come to the meeting?"

"Because I had to do this. I was on my way, and then I realized-Listen. After I'm through with this, I need you to take me to the old Forbes jail, and then I need you to do to me what Lexi did to you. Only, without the pain. I need a lobotomy. Stefan, I'm losing my mind. I can't stop thinking, and my emotions are being stupid about Klaus. When I realized that I wasn't gonna find his remains, I actually got mad and thought Bonnie should've given him at least some dignity and let m-us know where he's buried. I thought that! I actually got mad! I shouldn't be thinking that, and I shouldn't be getting mad! So can you please help me?"

"You feel bad about Klaus' death," Stefan summised.

Caroline gulped in air and closed her mouth.

"Caroline, it's okay. We've talked about this. We both…saw a different side to him. Or, in my case, he saw a different side to me. I don't think it's hit me yet. I'm still thinking about Bonnie."

"Yeah, speaking of a different side," she said hesitantly as she walked around Stefan, forcing him to
turn in order to see her. "I need to purge. And that's part of why I need a lobotomy. I need to cleanse my mind."

"Caroline, I'm not giving you a lobotomy. I don't even know what Lexi did to me. And what she did didn't even work. I still lust after blood."

"So, I'm hopeless."

"Caroline, feeling sad about Klaus isn't hopeless. Now, maybe you can't go around letting everyone know you feel sad, but that's why you have me, right?" he asked with a small smile.

Caroline didn't return it. Instead, she looked at the living room. Looking back at Stefan, she said, "I needed to get here before Bonnie did. I didn't want Tyler asking her to help him clean up when he got back-"

"Because she's the other woman," Stefan said.

Caroline looked like her clothes had just ripped off in a room full of people.

"It's okay. I figured it out today. Her...attitude...about Tyler and this whole Klaus thing helped me put the pieces in place."

"Yeah, well. I'm not counting it as a loss yet. I can still get Tyler back. I can still...." She closed her eyes and sighed. "I need you to not judge me, okay? I need you to be that one person who knows the whole me. Okay? Just like Klaus knew the whole you."

Stefan nodded. "Okay."

Caroline puffed out her chest and closed her eyes tight. The words took a bit of time to come, but finally she exhaled, "I slept with Klaus."

Stefan stared at her.

"Like, full on, home run, the whole shebang."

Stefan stared at her.

"Say something! This is driving me crazy enough!"

"You slept with Klaus."

She frowned.

"You slept with Klaus."

"Right in there, hours before...."

"You...basically gave him his last meal?"

"Ew, don't say it like that. There was....none of that. Can you please say something else? I just want to not be the only one dealing with this. I thought I could do it. I wanted to do it, but overnight these thoughts have threatened to eat me alive. And that's why I came here to clean up, because when Bonnie sent that text, I remembered that she's psychic and has visions and stuff, and what if she has a vision of me and Klaus while she's helping Tyler clean?"

She suddenly gasped long and loud. "Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my God, I'm so stupid!"
"What?" Stefan asked, alarmed.

"I just confessed! I just confessed! Right here! In Tyler's house. Where Bonnie's sure to come. She was saying this stuff about energies the night before last and how your emotions influence the space you're in and like leaves a mark, and I just put it out there that I slept with Klaus. I just shot myself in the foot!"

"Caroline, calm down, okay? I know a little something about witches, and they're not guaranteed psychic hits and visions. Just because the energy's in the room, doesn't mean they'll pick up on it. You're fine."

"I'm not fine. You should've said that they can't pick up on the energy at all. That would make me fine. Oh my God. Oh my God, Tyler cannot find out about this. No one can find out about this. Oh my God, hopefully she'll be too busy dealing with Silas, Shane, and April to focus on my stupid energy."

"Wait a second, back up. What does Shane have to do with Silas?"

"Ugh!" She covered her face with the inside of her arms. "I'm sick of keeping secrets! You can't tell anyone, but Shane is involved with Silas. Or at least Bonnie thinks so. She thinks he's the one who tipped Klaus off about Tyler's plan in hopes of Klaus killing the whole pack."

"Why would Shane do that, and how can you ask me not to tell anyone, Caroline, this kind of concerns all of us."

"It does, but-I'm sure Bonnie will tell everyone when she's ready. Look, I already put my foot in it when I asked April about Klaus' painting, long story, so I really don't want her to know that I opened my mouth again. Just trust her."

"Trust her? How am I supposed to do that when she has all these secrets? She's putting all of our lives in danger, first Elijah and now Silas? She should be sharing all of this."

"Well, this one isn't malignant," she tried to convince him. "Stefan, her life's in danger. April said that she's the key to Silas' release. Remember she said the storm affected her, and she thought Silas was behind it? So I'm sure she's going to ask for help soon. She can't fight him by herself. She's gonna need us."

"Caroline, there's no way I'm gonna keep this a secret. Not for you, not for Bonnie, not for anyone. Bonnie takes on a lot, and she does a lot, so maybe she doesn't want to worry us, especially with us looking for the cure, but I'm not gonna let her fight this by herself or with just Tyler. They'll both get killed. Elena would be devastated if something happened to Bonnie, especially if it happens because Bonnie's looking for the cure that she's apparently desperate to get her hands on."

"Wait, since when was Elena desperate for the cure? Everyone's been doing the work and the research while she's just been sitting in the background."

Stefan sighed. "It's nothing you need to know."

"If I thought that, then I wouldn't be asking, Stefan. Come on."

He looked at her for a second longer, and then he told her about the strange conversation.

"What, so she's jealous?"

"I don't know. I'm not gonna try to figure it out."
"Well, anything that knocks Damon down a peg can't be a bad thing. And it's good that Elena at least realizes that the sire bond is a bad thing. That's surprising. I just can't believe she's jealous of our friendship. The nerve."

"I'd rather not waste brain power on it. Back to Bonnie and Silas."

"Okay, can you give me a chance to try and convince her to spill the beans to you guys before you say anything to anyone? Give me a day? Make it tomorrow, so I can get myself together. If I haven't convinced her by tomorrow after school, then you can spill it, and I'll just...deal."

Stefan was not pleased with the idea, but he gave her the leeway. "Fine."

Caroline dropped her shoulders in relief. Not that she was out of the woods yet.

Stefan watched her face transform into the most despondent version of itself, the saddest he's ever seen her. She was back to thinking about what she'd done with Klaus. "Why did you even do it?"

"Because I'm an idiot?"

"Caroline."

"Because….ugh."

"You wanted revenge for what Tyler did," he offered.

Closing her eyes, she admitted, "That wasn't even on my mind. It should've been. I mean I was pissed. Finding out about Tyler and Bonnie....I guess it freed me up. But it shouldn't have. Tyler and I are broken up, so technically I'm not guilty. He's the cheater. But, ugh, Klaus was so horrible to him, and I did that. But he was just so....cute and set to die, and I felt bad for him, and he opened up to me, and I just....I wanted to know what it was like. This whole time I've been....

Okay, so this is a purge, right?" she asked. Her chest felt uncomfortable, like there was a weight on it but also like something was pressing to come out, something like vomit. "This whole time....I've wanted to. I've thought about it. But clearly it wasn't an option and was never gonna happen," she rushed to say. "Which sometimes made me feel like it was okay to think about it. It wasn't like I wanted him to be my boyfriend, but....You know how you just said that he saw a side of you?"

"Yeah."

"He saw a side of me, too. And it's a side that I'm not completely comfortable with, but he saw it, and every time he teased me about giving him the time of day, I knew that he saw that side. I didn't even know I had it until I met him, and I don't want to have it."

"What side is that?" Stefan asked calmly.

She closed her eyes and lowered her head. "I don't want to say. It's horrible, and I'm the worst person"

Right then, Stefan thought he had an idea. "You liked what he was."

"No," she said quickly, her head snapping up. Then she deflated. "I didn't want him to do what he was doing."

"Caroline, if you try to split hairs, you're gonna drive yourself crazy."

"But I didn't! I really didn't. It's complicated. It was the whole package. It's not like I'm gonna go for
any old-“ she almost said killer, "-person who's like Klaus."

"So now what?"

"Now, I forget it. Now, I get a lobotomy."

"Not possible," he said with a shake of his head.

"I can't live with it. I don't want to remember it, or think about it, or know about it."

"You know you're gonna have to," he said sympathetically. "Besides, like you said, this won't get out past you and me. You just have to…accept it." He wanted to ask her if she regretted it. Despite her distress, he still wanted to hear her say whether or not she regretted it. But he wasn't sure if she even knew. He felt a little bad for her. Their situations weren't the same, but he remembered the time as a new vampire when he had to wrestle with acting and thinking differently than he had as a human. He had become a stranger to himself.

"It was a one-time thing," he pacified. "Literally. He's dead. So, just think of it as a mistake and move on. Or we can find a witch who's not Bonnie who will suppress the memories for you. Now that sounds like something that comes with side effects, but I'll help you if you want to try."

"Do you think I'm a horrible person?" she asked timidly.

Stefan puffed out his chest and raised his brows. "I don't think it's about being horrible or not horrible. I mean Tyler would probably think you are. No question about it. But I think it's more about you changing."

"I don't wanna change. Not like this, not into this."

"But we don't know that it's a change, and you should focus on that. It was one thing, a mistake. One occurrence does not mark a change, not definitively. I mean look, this is clearly eating at you, tearing you up inside."

She nodded.

"So, you haven't changed. We make mistakes, and in our world, they can sometimes be as high stakes as the risks we take. As vampires, especially young vampires, our mistakes can shock us and make us question who we are. But it's not a death sentence."

"I just want to go back to when Tyler was my boyfriend, and I'd never heard of Klaus Mikaelson."

Stefan pulled her into a hug. "You're not a horrible person, Caroline. For as long as I've known you, you've looked out for your friends and tried to involve everyone in everything to keep their spirits up. I think you care more about us as a functioning group and unit than anyone else. You're just dealing with your own hiccup right now."

"It sucks," she said on his shoulder. "Let's go back to everyone else having the hiccup, and I just hang back and pick up the pieces. If Tyler finds out I slept with Klaus, I'm leaving Mystic Falls and never coming back."

Two hours later, Bonnie pulled up to Shane's building, still trying to temper her annoyance at Jeremy. Yeah, he hadn't meant to say it, would've never chosen to say it, and probably would've felt bad about even thinking it if the crystal had given him a chance.
But he'd said it, because it was his gut reaction when he thought about her and Tyler. *She can do better?* As in Tyler's not good enough? The next time Tyler and Jeremy were in the same room, she was going to walk up to Tyler and give him the lewdest kiss.

Jeremy had no idea what the hell he was talking about. She hadn't known that the crystal pulled the truth out of people willy-nilly. She had planned on saying a couple of words to it before she went up to Shane's apartment, but apparently the lapis only needed to be on her person to be activated. Kind of like Emily's talisman. That would serve her even better where Shane was concerned.

She took off her seatbelt, her eyes on the building. She got out of the car, locked it, and headed to the entrance. As she ran up the steps, she remembered that she had no guard against the smells in the apartment. But she was fine with collapsing if it meant killing Shane first.

And killing him on an early Sunday afternoon was better than killing him at night when everyone would be home.

She got to the door and ignored the knocker. She knocked thrice with her knuckles, then thought better and banged three more times with her fist.

Impatience rolled up her chest when he took a second too long to answer, so she put her hand on the knob and casted the same spell that she'd used on the janitor's office door in Founders Hall at the same time that Shane said, "Be right out!"

When Bonnie opened the door, she found Shane locking the door to the room that had stumped Tyler, Adrian, and Kim.

"Hey, Shane," she said casually as she closed the door behind her. "Coming out of your secret room?"

"Bonnie." He slipped the key in his pocket. "Were you the one who...came through the door a couple of weeks ago?"

Bonnie cocked her head.

"The day I met you and Damon for coffee, ah, I came home to find the front door had been damaged."

"Do you really give a damn about the door, Shane? The *front* door?"

"Bonnie....what's....what are you doing? Why'd you-"

The affected pauses and faux confusion made her send him crashing into the wall above the couch.

"Bonnie. What are you doing?" he strained after he flopped down to the couch.

"You sound like something hurts. Trust me, you're not hurt yet." She balled her right hand into a fist and pulled it to her right. Shane screamed at the top of his lungs when his right shoulder was pulled from its socket.

"I know what you did, Shane."

Shane struggled to his feet, his right arm dangling. "What? What's going on, Bonnie?"

"Talk to me about Hayley."

"Hayley?"
She jerked her left fist, and his left shoulder went. "April," she said over his yell. "Silas? If you're confused about those names, too, I'll go for your kneecaps. At the same time. You called Klaus."

"I did," he labored.

"You did," she snarled. She sent him flying right shoulder first into the adjacent wall that held the door.

"Fuck!" Shane yelled when he'd fallen to the floor. "Bonnie, please. I can help you."

"With what, Shane?"

"I had no choice. I didn't have a choice. Damn it!" he suffered on the floor. "But you can have him back. You can have Tyler back. You just have to do what he says."

Then and there, Bonnie made a strategic decision. Killing Shane would give her immense satisfaction, but it wouldn't give her the upper hand. Lucy was right, she needed to think clearly. And though her next move wouldn't give her much of an upper hand, it would at least derail Shane, Silas, and April and create room for them to make a mistake that could work better in her favor than killing Shane would.

"Do what who says?" she asked as she bent at the waist to look down at him.

"Silas. Silas."

She did her best to look angry-shocked. The only thing she couldn't fake right now, no matter if she tried, were tears to go with Tyler's fake death. She made herself barely say the name, so shocked was she. "Silas."

"I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Bonnie. But I need him. He's real, and I need him. My wife. I need her back."

"Your wife?"

"She's dead."

"You killed Tyler for your wife."

"Silas can bring them back," he said enthusiastically, and then he groaned in pain. "Listen. He can bring back the dead, and he's promised to help everyone who helps him rise. You can have Tyler back. You can have your grandmother back. You can turn your mother back from a vampire. I mean she's dead right? If Silas brings her back to life, then she'll be alive and a witch again."

That shook her composure. "How do you know about my mother?"

"I gleaned it when I hypnotized you that day. Remember? I spent the whole day questioning you about your life: your fears, your dreams, your heartbreak-"

"Stop! Stop."

When he frowned, she realized that it was time for her and the crystal to go.

"Bonnie, I'm sorry. I don't why I said-"

"How do I raise Silas?"
This bout of him trying to catch his breath was a stall. He's been waiting for this moment, yet he was unprepared on how to answer. "He'll contact you. Just like he did me."

"Right. Of course. Why would He tell you his secrets?" The hatred that she felt for Shane's existence was so plain that she distantly wondered how he didn't see through her gamble.

She straightened and headed to the door.

"Bonnie, wait," he struggled. He heaved himself to his feet and faced the door. "Please," he said, indicating his torn shoulders.

"I came here to kill you, Shane. And I will after me and Silas are done. For now, your shoulders will have to do." She jutted her right hand out and twisted it. Shane's knees twisted in the same direction of her wrist, and he crashed to the floor. "That's for stalling," she said.

She opened the door and left him screaming.

Once inside of the car, she put on her seatbelt and wondered how much time she had before Silas contacted her. She didn't have a plan of attack for Him, and she wasn't sure that she was in the right mindset to brainstorm.

"So you didn't kill him because you're going after the bigger fish?"

Bonnie screamed and magically shoved whoever it was away from her.

"OW!"

"KIM!" she screamed. "What the hell are you doing?!"

"What the hell are you doing?! You didn't have to push me like that!"

"You're lucky I didn't push you right through the door! Geez! What is wrong with you?"

"You banged my head against the window," Kim complained as she rubbed the spot. Normally, she wouldn't have felt the pain at all, but she's been using her energy to help heal Tyler and the others, so she was a little tender. The entire pack was.

"That's the least of what you deserve," Bonnie said, a hand over her racing heart. "What the heck are you doing here? How did you get here?"

"I got here the same way I left the yard last night."

Bonnie noticed that, unlike last night, Kim wasn't naked as the day she was born, though her skin was dirty. She cocked her head. "Are those my clothes?"

"Yeah. You're a tiny little thing, though I'm sure my body looks great in these."

"Kim, why are you here? Actually, hold that thought."

She started the car and backed out of the parking lot. When she passed the second street light, she resumed, "Okay, what is it? I know Tyler hasn't taken a turn for the worse, because if he had I'd hope you'd be a little more sensitive than scaring me half to death."

"Tyler's fine. Well, he's going crazy. Hopefully your family's having luck restraining him, but we were in the Appalachians, doing our healing thing, deeply connected to our nature, Nature, and the
moon, we literally have not slept a wink since yesterday, and we're just deeply connected to the pack. And all of a sudden, maybe ten minutes ago, Tyler says he has to leave. Well, he barks it. We ask him why, and he doesn't know. He just knows that something's wrong, that he needs to be somewhere. Our thought processes and memories aren't as concrete in wolf form, and that's made up for by our instincts. We think with emotions. So the bond between you guys is stronger for him when he's an animal, so he knows something's wrong. He just doesn't know what or why or even who. So he starts trying to leave, and of course I don't remember human you either, so I'm convincing him to stay. Finally, he disappears, which I didn't know he could do. I follow him, and he's at his house, in the backyard. He's still barking, so finally I shift back so I can think better.

This sets him off even more, and I realize now it's because I reminded him of you: girl who walks on two feet. So he tells me that there's trouble, that something's not right, and I finally ask about you, and he doesn't recognize your name, but when I say take me to Bonnie, we end up at your house. He ends up inside, I get stuck outside. No invitation. Being inside the house sets him off even more, and he starts to shift back, which sent me bumping against the shield to stop him. He was full on panicking and inconsolable. I try to tell him that I'll find you, by this time I'm inside, but he's not hearing it. So finally, this woman, vampire, tells me where you might be. Or she tries to, because Tyler turned on her, and she had to get out of dodge-

"Is she okay?" Bonnie asked, riveted by the story as she drove.

"She's fine. She ran out of the house."

"So the other woman finishes telling me where you are. I promise Tyler that I'll protect you, and then your dad told me I could find some clothes in your room. I would've come naked, but then I realized I might need to talk to someone, so I took him up on the offer. Still barefoot, though."

"Is Tyler okay? I mean, why didn't you let him shift back?"

"Because it would be too much on his body right now. He needs to stay in one state. Shifting means our bones breaking, remember? Wounds and fractures galore, and we don't heal from them until we're fully human or fully lycan. Tyler could break something bad and become stuck because it's too severe to continue."

Bonnie nodded, both hands squeezing the wheel.

"So, Smelly Asshole did call Klaus."

Bonnie realized then that she hadn't fainted when she'd walked out of the apartment. She took one hand off the wheel and touched the lapis crystal.

"But you want Silas, not him. Who's Silas?"

And in that moment, Bonnie knew. She knew. She went to answer like normal, but intuition, freed for just a moment by the crystal, stopped her. And she played back Shane's words.

*I gleaned it when I hypnotized you that day. Remember? I spent the whole day questioning you about your life: your fears, your dreams, your heartbreak-

He'd gotten in her head. He had entered her mind. He had taken what he'd wanted. Same as Silas had done the day of the storm. The first time, information, the second time, power. Maybe it was about as concrete a proof as the A on Hayley's cell phone had been, but this link resounded. Shane had made her sniff the incense that day in his office, and then he'd given it to her to take home. It had never affected her powers because he hadn't wanted to affect her yet.
Shane wasn't the perfect minion who'd carried out Silas' bidding to a T. He was Silas, carrying out His plan.

"Yo, break!" Kim yelled.

Bonnie stomped the break and swerved to the left lane at the last minute.


Heart in her throat and body numb from shock, Bonnie looked at the rear view mirror. The driver she'd cut off was honking her like they were never going to take their hand off the horn. The car only far enough for her to have barely made the swerve without causing an accident. "Shit."

"What happened?" Kim asked, her eyes still wild.

"I don't know. Nothing."

"Oh really."

Bonnie blinked. Both hands were back on the wheel, and her arms were trembling.

"Let's hope Tyler didn't feel that. I should probably go now and tell him everything's okay."

"Wait, can you take me with you? Like, can you take the whole car if I park somewhere?"

"I'm sure I can. It's just the landing: middle of a Sunday, in a residential neighborhood…"

Exposure. Bonnie relaxed her shoulders in disappointment. "Okay."

"What should I tell your folks? And Tyler?"

"That I'm fine. And that I didn't kill Shane for a reason." She'd gotten more than she'd bargained for as a result of that decision, but would she really have been able to kill Shane? He wasn't just a mortal.

"Okay. Tyler might be waiting for you when you get back-"

"It's gonna take me two hours to get back. He needs to heal. Convince him to go back to the pack. He can come back in two hours. Don't let him stay in the house and miss out. And tell him--" I love him "-I miss him."

"I will."

Bonnie cruised the rest of the way to Mystic Falls. She relaxed against the seat and drove the speed limit like she had taken to the road to clear her mind, to see the sights.

She didn't hurry back to Mystic Falls. Many impatient cars passed her on the highway and on the inside routes. Tyler would probably come back long before she did, if he even came back, if he'd even left in the first place. She didn't hurry to him.

And when she entered Mystic Falls, she didn't go home. She headed to the quarry. She had a little difficulty finding the body of water itself after she parked her car. It wasn't one of her usual hangouts, but she found it.

She found it and released a sigh when she walked to the edge. The water was beautiful. With all of
the tragedy in Mystic Falls, it was easy to forget how beautiful the land itself was.

She traveled her gaze across the water. The quarry was just one ending point of the falls. The lake at the Gilbert lake house was another, the lake where Tyler had thrown his last swimming party, the one she’d missed, was another. A triangle.

She stood on beige-brown dirt and pine, and the water was calm, with not even the shadow of a wind to disturb it. She was glad that she'd come here instead of some place noisier like the embankment near Wickery Bridge.

Calm, was how she felt. Not even Silas' looming shadow disturbed her spirit. She was ready to think. She backed up from the edge of the water and sat down. She crossed her legs and set the car keys and phone next to her, and she thought.

Silas had gotten in her head twice. And maybe that was it. Maybe He couldn't get in her head anymore. The incense was the gateway, and she hasn't taken a whiff since the lightning storm.

But maybe repetition didn't matter, maybe it was still in her system, akin to vampire blood, and He would have access until the fumes of the incense passed through her. She needed to protect herself from His reach. She couldn't go through that pain again.

She also needed a full profile on Silas: His abilities, His goal. He wanted to get out. Why? To cause chaos. Why? Because Qetsiyah had entombed Him. And after? Aim for tenure at the college? Silas was so ambitious that He had declared Himself a God. What was He going to do after He got His revenge? Were Pastor Young and whoever else He'd promised to bring back, Hayley probably one of them, going to factor in somehow?

Getting Silas' profile was going to be difficult unless she asked Him directly or Lucy's plan of contacting Qetsiyah bore fruit.

She put the profile thing low on her list. After all, she's been learning by doing ever since she'd developed her powers. Getting a neat and structured profile on Silas before she made any moves was probably out of the question.

Still, she needed to know His limitations, because He surely had some if His spirit was free yet He still wanted the body. She had just hurt Him. That was something. Unless He had faked it.

No. Those screams had been too real.

His powers. He'd taken hers to cause the lightning storm. He wasn't at full capacity.

And He would never be, if she had anything to say about it.

A hand touched her left shoulder, and she quickly grabbed it, positive that pain was coming next for her. But when she turned around….

"Tyler."

"I've been calling your name."

She sighed in relief. Then she frowned when she registered his nakedness. "Oh my God, why are you human? Kim said that's dangerous," she chastised as they tightened their hold on each other's hand to help her stand.

"Hey, the only one who knows how bad I feel is me. It's okay."
"No it's not, change back." She poked her hands up and down his side.

"Hey, come on," he protested as he flinched away from her reach.

"See? Ty...God, you probably shouldn't even shift back, because that's dangerous."

"This is worth the risk."

"Not from where I'm standing."

"From where I'm standing."

"You could've come see me as a wolf."

"I needed to talk to you."

Despite her muted emotional state, hearing his voice again allowed something that had wilted inside of her since he'd collapsed in the yard the night prior to grow and shine again. She noticed that his eyes were all werewolf. "Can you handle a hug?"

"I just broke every bone in my body for this. I can handle all of you, Bonnie. Come here." He stepped forward and pulled her into a hug.

Bonnie pulled back immediately. "You're burning up," she said anxiously.

"I'm healing. My temperature's higher than normal. It's what's supposed to happen, don't worry."

Bonnie nodded, satisfied by the explanation. She took him in her arms again.

Tyler's body was sore, but her embrace felt so good. He closed his eyes and sniffed her.

Bonnie, too, closed her eyes, and she lifted herself to her toes. He was dirty, smelled a mixture of outside, rocks, dirt, and animal, but it was a nice mix, perfect, and she hugged him closer.

The gesture drove Tyler to inhale her scent more deeply.

"What happened?" he asked in the crook of her neck.

"Shane is Silas."

Tyler tightened his hold on her. He wasn't shocked. It was news, but he wasn't shocked. She didn't seem to be either. They've been saying Silas' name for a while, knew that He was active. The fact that they now knew where He was now was a relief to him. Now they could put a face to the Person who had hurt Bonnie.

He let her go, and Bonnie lowered herself to her real height.

"No one else knows yet. I needed to think."

"I felt it. How are you doing?"

She smiled. "I think I cried all of my tears the other night. This weekend has been one sad or disappointing thing after another. I think I'm stable. Maybe tapped out, too, but definitely stable. Plus I've been worried about you. I don't know if anything could top that. I'm okay. I already cried about Shane's betrayal, Silas is...an obstacle. A goal."
Tyler lifted his knuckles to stroke her cheek. She was all heat, smells, emotions, and sound in his werewolf eyes. Her restrained voice tightened around her body, and he wanted her to release. Everything coming off of her was too….quiet. She was indeed calm, but he wanted her to light up somewhere.

"How come I didn't feel the bond?" Bonnie asked.

"How do you know about the bond?"

"Kim mentioned it earlier. And Lucy said some things last night that put me on the path. We're bonded, right?"

"We are."

Something about the way he answered, not forceful, yet not at all casual, hit it home for her that he was dealing with her from an entirely different vantage point. Still Tyler, but he hasn't changed his eyes back at all. From last night to this late afternoon, in the mountains, with a pack, connecting to his nature, Nature, and the moon, like Kim had said, this was probably the longest he's ever stayed in his wolf form.

Neither fear nor worry found refuge in her. She trusted him to maneuver his world as much as she trusted herself to maneuver hers.

"Are you okay with it?" he asked as he stroke his thumb across her chin.

"I am," she smiled. "Did you….make it happen?"

"We made it happen. It's our connection, our...emotions. It couldn't exist if you didn't….feel for me."

She liked that better. Smiling, she said, "I do. I feel for you."

"You're powerful, Bonnie, strong, and you know how to use it. You know how to show it. We made it happen." He lifted her chin and kissed her. They didn't come any closer, didn't touch except for their mouths and his fingers holding her chin. Bonnie felt that something inside of her grow taller. He was the perfect salve.

Her lips remained parted after he ended the kiss. "You still haven't told me why I didn't feel your worry," she said, and she opened her eyes.

Tyler licked his lips. When he spoke, it was from a place of ancestral knowing, nothing that Kim or Adrian had told him. "For the same reason that I didn't feel it when you panicked during my fight with Klaus. Our bond is mutual but not telepathic. It's a call, or it's a response, but it can't be both. Not right now. And it's stronger on my end when I'm a werewolf. And more intense." His forehead twitched as he remembered the barrage of emotions he'd felt when he couldn't get to her earlier. Now he knew that it was worry, but on paws it had felt like she was off dying somewhere and he couldn't get to her.

His link to his Betas’ emotions was also stronger when he was in full transition, which was another aspect to his injuries.

"When does it become telepathic?"

"When….it exists between Mates. Packs can disband. Kids grow up and leave, despite a bond. Mates are supposed to be forever, especially for an Alpha. It's part of protecting our pack."
"Supposed to be."

He smiled. "Supposed to be. Sucks for us if it's torn."

Tyler's smile widened. Her body was screaming *interested*. It was flying off her skin. Much better than the quiet of before.

"Is it like the imprinting in Twilight?"

"I've never seen Twilight."

"Like hell you haven't," she said with a small smile. "You dated Caroline. There's no way you've never seen it. I made Jeremy watch it."

"We don't stare like in Twilight."

Bonnie smiled. She'd guessed correctly.

"A wolf *Marks* their Mate."

"Can a Mate *Mark* their wolf?"

"Only if they're a wolf, too."

She simmered down with disappointment.

"So they say," he added. "Not a whole lot about were-witch unions. Definitely nothing on Hybrid-witch. We can look into it."

Bonnie parted her lips. *We can look into it*. He was either cocky, or she was transparent. Probably both, considering he was him, and she was her. Either way, she was into the near affirmative statement.

She turned her mouth to the fingers that still rested on her chin, and he brought them up to caress her lips. Bonnie's eyes fluttered closed, and she relied on her sense of touch as he ran the pad of his thumb on her full lips and disturbed what was left of the brown lip gloss.

Tyler found her breathtaking like this, and his dick responded to the texture of her lips.

Bonnie slowly brought her hand up and pulled his wrist down, removing his fingers. She straightened her head, closed her mouth, and opened her eyes. "You should go."

"Why?"

"Maybe the pack can still help you like this. I mean, you are still a werewolf and their leader."

"I'm not going anywhere."

She looked down at his hardening dick and lifted her brows. Looking up at him, she said, "Well, I have work to do. I need to think on this Shane stuff. Like, I'm pretty sure I need my mom and Lucy to leave town so they can be my surprise weapons if I need them to be."

"I can help you think."

With those lycan eyes, he didn't look like he wanted to help her think at all. "Tyler, I can't do...what you're thinking about doing. It's too risky."
"How?"

She self-consciously rolled her eyes. "Because I'm pretty sure I'm getting my period today. Not exactly the kind of reunion I want to have," she said as she looked down at his impressive penis.

"You're not positive that you're getting it today."

She was speechless at first. "My abdomen has been hurting me all day."

"You're so noble, Bonnie. But your body betrays you. Just like it did at the Festival. You want me."

"Doesn't mean I have to have you."

"True."

"And it's not just me. You're too hurt to do what you're thinking about doing. I don't wanna set you back."

"I told you: no one's gonna tell me how hurt I am. I know what I can do and what I can't, and I can do you."

She couldn't help but smile, flattered by how persistent he was in his desire for her. She stepped back from him to pick up her phone and keys, and she left the spot.

She wasn't sure where she was going. She wasn't heading to the car. She didn't set off with any plans to sleep with him. There was her impending situation, and she was worried about his health. But she walked, and the wolf prowled behind her, waiting for her next move while he kept track of their path.

Eventually, she came upon a clearing, the ground made of the same beige-brown dirt and pine, though the pine here was voluminous enough to cover the dirt completely. It was a large clearing. Perfect for spell work.

She decided that this was where she would cast her protection spell, surrounded by medium-sized trees, with the water nearby.

She decided, too, that she wanted him to be a part of it.

She stopped in the middle of the clearing and examined the trees. "Still don't wanna leave?"

Her tone made him promises. He licked his top lip. "No."

Bonnie turned to him and cocked her right hip. "I still have to make sure my situation's okay."

"Your situation doesn't matter to me."

Bonnie's breath rushed out of her, the pulse in her neck quietly speeding up. Sure, he said that now. She set her phone and keys down. She supposed there was no point in asking him to turn around. She turned herself around and lifted her sweater to tuck it under her chin. She undid her pants so that she could pull it and her underwear down. Spotting on the pad. She had judged right this morning and saved her underwear as a result.

She could chance it. It was cold out, but he was hot enough to warm her up. She pulled her pants up and let the sweater fall. Turning to him, she said, "I have. Some."

Tyler licked his lips. "It's fine."
Bonnie took a steady breath. "I still need to work. I need to cast a spell, and I don't even know what it's gonna sound like."

"Right. I'll watch."

"You'll participate. I've never casted a spell while having sex before."

She'd taken a turn at shocking him, and he tried to contain his grin.

"I mean, you are saying that you're willing to chance it, right?"

"Absolutely."

The ins and outs of casting the spell solidified in Bonnie's mind as she looked at him. She was going to channel the earth. If werewolves could have an element, that would be it, children of the forests and the mountains. She wanted to channel him, too. And not like she had the night before. She wanted to try something new.

Tyler sped up and grabbed her waist, and she gasped in surprise. "Anything I need to do?" he asked.

She bent her knees and threw her phone and keys to her left. She looked at him when she straightened and said, "Exactly what you wanna do."

Tyler didn't need to hear anything else. He kissed her and undressed her. She stopped him when he was on her underwear, and she walked away to take that off herself. She magically pulled the rest of her clothes and the shoes to her and laid her underwear on top. Hopefully nothing would crawl into it. She took the necklace off last.

She walked back to him, as naked as he was, and she kissed him. He picked her up and laid her down, and they rolled on the pine and erased the hours spent apart with their kisses.

"I missed you," Bonnie confessed breathlessly. "It's weird, because you've been gone less than 24 hours, but-"

"I missed you, too. I couldn't stop thinking about you, wondering how you were feeling, what you were doing. I missed you."

Bonnie smiled and reclaimed his mouth. He was more hard muscle than usual, a sign of his wolfish state. He moved down her body and coddled her chilly nipples in his mouth.

To her nervous surprise, he kept moving down to her belly button. Her right arm twitched, but she decided not to say anything. If he wanted to brave it….Besides, she'd told him to do what he wanted, and she was still curious about the fact that he hadn't changed his eyes back to their beautiful dark brown.

Tyler's body got even hotter in anticipation. He was sure that he wasn't going to get much, but this was the closest he's been to her during her period since prank night. And when he closed his eyes and smelled her cunt, his mouth watered. It wasn't as strong as last time, but considering how long it's been, it was enough to make him stop and appreciate. She was as natural as he was right now, and that attracted him, and he burrowed further into his nature.

He gave her the first orgasm before she thought up any spells.

Her body was shaking, and he opened her legs wider and smelled the mix of lube and the promise of menstruation. Her primer pheromones were embedding themselves in his nostrils. She was aroused
and ready for him.

Bonnie pointed her toes in opposite directions and held his head down as he once again partook in what her pussy had to offer. She was moaning and was determined to keep her legs lifted and spread-eagled when she started.

With Tyler sucking on her left labia, she reached down and felt the energy beneath the ground, reached lower and planted roots of her power and felt it connect to that which was rolling under them. She pulled up, and the earth's energy rose above ground and crawled into her body, manifesting in black vines. She moaned as the power explored her body in tandem with Tyler's tongue.

He felt the difference in her, smelled the power that she was holding, and when she told him to bite her, he left her pussy and sank his fangs and canines into her left thigh. His eyes widened, and he pushed her thigh into his mouth, wanting more of the power, more of the mix of hers and the raw element. The blood went straight to his dick. It rolled around his heart, crawled around his head, and pulled seductively at his instincts. She was a creature of Nature, like he was.

Bonnie felt him sucking the power out of her. He was literally taking it as she pulled it up, channeling it right out of her to play with it. She looked down, surprised. This was why she loved being with him. This was why she so often wanted to surrender herself to him, even before they'd ever slept together. He exuded power. He had power. He came the closest to matching her, and their powers weren't even the same. He could surprise her like this.

Tyler gulped the blood down. It was even sweeter than in the bathroom, had more of a zing, and it made him restless. He let her thigh go and growled. It was a promise, like the one he'd heard in her voice earlier. He wanted her, and when he was through showing her how much, she wasn't ever going to forget it. He's been wanting her since he'd sensed her closeness after he'd killed Klaus. But he hadn't been strong enough to do anything about it.

"Turn around," he said.

Bonnie turned and got on her knees, and keeping her forehead to the ground. She closed her eyes when he inserted his tongue in her pussy. While he tongue-fucked her, she stretched her arms in front of her and reached for her magic inside of his body. It took some time, she was rocking back and fucking his tongue by the time it happened, but eventually she latched onto it and was able to, in effect, channel herself. Tyler removed his tongue when he felt her inside of him. His pupils dilated. Witch. The only one who can match him. He wanted her to take what she wanted and leave him nothing, if she so chose. He wanted to bear the brunt of her potential. He wanted her savagery. He stuck his tongue in and fucked her faster.

"Mmmm." Bonnie curled her toes as his tongue scissored perfectly in and out of her. Connecting to her magic allowed her to connect to his power, and she felt her whole body heal, aches that she didn't know she had, weakened cells that she couldn't see, they all healed. The wound on her thigh healed. Her mouth fell open at the abundance of his healing power.

Her spells couldn't heal him, but the earth could, and Tyler regained all of his strength.


Tyler recognized the moon in her spell and moved down to lick her clit.

Bonnie thought of another one, meant to help her figure out Silas' secrets. "Quid tenebrarum veniat."
She lifted onto her hands and ground her pussy in his face. He purred and put a strong hold on her thighs. He lifted his head and got her on her back. He spread her legs and went back in.

"Mmmm, yes. Yes, Tyler," she moaned, her hand on his head. "Yes." She looked down at him, devoted to his task, and she smiled.

"*Fiat voluntas quidem moveri, et succendatur, et intumescent stomachum suum.*"

Tyler felt this particular spell close around him. He wasn't alarmed. She would cast no spell that would harm him. He ate her pussy, undisturbed until he felt his desire swell to the point of overpowering his mind. He grinned against her cunt. He could play, too.

When Bonnie got close to her orgasm, she spoke from her heart. She wanted it to last. She wanted to make it so that they cried from wanting to come so much. Grinding against his mouth, she chanted, "*Surrexit ergo, et potestates: alligabis verba illa: adolebitque longa desideria nostra, et adoleret fortes, longo succendetur, et adoleret forti, donec loquar sermones ad nos derivetur.*"

He kept eating, but she didn't come, and oh that fragile foundation on which she stood, ready to tumble into orgasm but unable to, oh it was so sweet. She ground her hips, but still completion eluded her. Tyler didn't notice her state yet, though he'd felt this spell bind to him, too. He was pursuing something of his own. He left her clit and loomed over her. Bonnie ran her hands down his solid chest while he raked in her power-stripped body. He lowered his head to the left side of her neck and fed on her. Bonnie arched into him and wrapped her legs around his waist, her mouth falling open as his werewolf powers allowed him to pull the power from her blood.

Tyler entered her, and the act provided him some release for the increased desire that her first spell had caused him. He fucked her while he fed, his mind hazy from the triple whammy of blood, power, and pussy.

Bonnie squeezed his ass and grunted with every stiff thrust of his forceful hips. "*Eorum-votis-esse-inane. Per-terrarm-iter-caesis-angustans-fortis. Oh-God-yes.*"

She channeled the power in his body and healed her neck. Cut off, Tyler emitted a low growl by her ear. But it was time for him to replenish the blood that she was losing anyway, especially since he didn't want to stop fucking any time soon.

"Come here," he gruffed as he pulled his dick out. He put a hand behind her neck and sat her up. He bit the wrist of the other hand and sat on his calves. Bonnie grabbed the wrist with both hands and put it to her mouth. Channeling him was one thing, but having his blood seep into her body while she was channeling the earth, having the element coming into her from two different points now, with his own power added to it: tasting magic in his blood was more real now than it had been in the bathroom. She brought his hand closer and took more, as if she needed it for sustenance. Tyler got on his knees and held her head to his wrist, pleased and satisfied by how she was gorging herself on something so vital to his survival. Bonnie reached one of her hands down and channeled his dick severely, and he reflexively tightened the hold that he had on her head. He humped his dick into her hand. It felt like she was pulling his power out, which, in his current state, felt like she was trying to pull a crippling orgasm out of him. But he wasn't orgasming.

He bit his wrist again, and Bonnie pulled it down to her mouth before he could offer. He grinned. And now he accomplished his purpose: he didn't want a tease, he didn't want a hint or a reminder. He wanted the whole thing. The hand on her head connected him to her body, no spells or element needed. She was a living animal, and he therefore he had dominion over her. Closing his eyes was
easy, since she was making him feel so damn good. He connected, his first time using this aspect of his powers, and the effect was debilitating. She was a witch, with a lot of active powers currently flowing through her, including his own, and on top of that he was bonded to her. The feeling was so potent that his grasp of the connection slipped, but he re-established it. He channeled his focus on the current state of her body, and looped his powers around her cycle. She was close enough for him to be able to influence the process in the direction that he wanted.

His wrist healed, so Bonnie left it and added her mouth to his dick, keeping her magical hold on it while she sucked the head. She was mostly sure that he wouldn't mind her bloody mouth on him, and she was right, because he groaned and the tight hold on her head turned into a soft, encouraging open palm. She felt a new presence in her body, and she figured that it was him, so she didn't react. She was interested in whatever he was going to do next. She rolled her neck while she pampered him. The added blood didn't make him taste any different. She couldn't taste the magic in the blood anymore now that it was no longer a steady flow directly from his body. It was just good Tyler blood.

She felt a dull pain in her vagina that echoed in her tailbone, but she ignored it because she had a guy who was almost a full head taller than her cursing and croaking because of how she was using her mouth.

Tyler pulled his dick from her mouth and her hand and hung his head back, his member bobbing up and down of its own accord because of the unbelievable remnants of her channeling. He laid her down by pulling her ponytail back. He put his hand on her pelvis, and she felt the pain again, but this time she also felt something slowly leak out of her. She lifted her head, and he looked at her from beneath his lashes. Tyler placed his hands under her butt and lifted her lower half, forcing her to lay her shoulders back down. But it allowed Bonnie a better view of her vulva.

Her heart throbbed against her ribcage, and her stomach swam. It wasn't much, but she saw a peek of the blood. Shocked and more than a little excited, she looked up at him. His smile shouted how much he coveted her. She had no idea why he was doing this of all things, but it was new and something she hadn't known before, and he seemed to be enjoying it, and it felt good, so she was loving it. She loved being under his power. It held a certain thrill.

Tyler turned the wheel of her cycle, and the pain resumed and increased, and her vagina pulsated in response. She usually got horny on the first day of her period, so she experienced this now. Her need for him amplified, and when she locked heavy-lidded eyes with him, she realized from the look on his face that he was the cause of this, too. It wasn't simply the spell she'd cast. He was using his power to increase her arousal.

"God, Tyler." Watching the blood slowly pool out of her, knowing that he was doing it, turned her on immensely. "Please." She wiggled her toes as the combination of pleasure and dull, insistent pain mingled in her body. "Phasmatos salvis. Nemo malum transiens, ne perveniat iniuria mea. Oh God." She lay her head down and rolled her feet at the ankles.

Tyler set her butt down and disconnected from her body. He crossed her right leg over the left, and Bonnie got that he wanted her to turn around. She got on all fours, and she was exhilarated by how open she was to him, especially considering her vagina was bloody.

The new position abated her cramps. Tyler put his face close to her pussy and inhaled deeply. It was perfect. Just like last time. Fucking perfect. He straightened and grabbed his cock. Sliding into her was an experience. She was slick from lube and blood, and part of his dick was bloody from her blowjob, but her aching vagina tried to squeeze him out every step of the way.

"Oh shit. Oh yes, oh shit, oh my G-Yes. Mmmm." It was like she was feeling every inch of him as
he went through, and he went excruciatingly slow. Once she was fully stuffed and once he started
stroking, her cramps all but disappeared.

He wasted no time before increasing his thrusts, in speed and in force. He wasn't going to come yet,
so he tortured himself with the feel of her pussy. He planted one foot on the ground and kept a sturdy
hold on her hips. "Shit. God. Goddamn, you feel good."

She was so good that Tyler experienced an upsurge of energy and roared. He bared his teeth and
roared and roared, and the loud noise shocked Bonnie, which made the geo magic skitter inside of
her, and she trembled. She fucked him right back, throwing her pussy at him. Tyler's roars reached a
three-mile radius, and animals that could fly, flew, those that crawled, crawled, and those that
skittered, skittered. His message was direct, succinct, and left no room for interpretation: this space
belonged to them, to her. No other lifeforms could stay here. Leaves from the trees that surrounded
the clearing detached and fell as birds of gray-brown-white color headed outside of the boundary that
he'd set.

He connected to her body again and pushed more blood out of her pussy. He looked down, and his
dick was wonderfully coated dark brown, almost black, with only a few peeks of red. As he stroke in
and out, she released some dark blood clots, but he didn't give a shit. The smell was all around him.
He wanted more of all of it.

Bonnie slammed her ass against his powerful pelvis, wanting more of his cock. Her cramps were
back, dull and insistent, and she was suffering from her spell again, wanting to come, ready to come,
but unable to until the time when she would release both of them.

Their lovemaking became manic, Bonnie all but hysterical as she returned his fuck. It was all he
could do to keep her hips steady. He gave her some room to maneuver, to lift her hips and disturb the
rhythm as she pleased, but he always brought her back and kept her still in intervals. Bonnie's body
was singing from magic, blood, and dick. Tyler wanted to fuck her until she couldn't move after. He
moved one hand from her hip to her shoulder and pounded.

They fucked with abandon, her body belonging to him, his body belonging to her, and when she
reached in and channeled him again, Tyler threw his head back and roared, his lips and teeth red
with her blood. She worked her spells and fucked him while he availed himself to her cunt.

"Phasmatos salvis! Circulum detentio mea!"

"Surrexit ergo, et redde mihi nunc fortitudinem potestatum!"

He lifted onto his other foot and fucked her in a squat. The change in angle put a tiny pin in the
orgasm rummaging through their bodies, and Bonnie crossed her feet at the ankles and took the fuck.
They were noisy and uninhibited, witch and Hybrid, much more than human. They made the kind of
scene that would've had the unknowing running to civilisation and screaming for their deaths,
spreading fear that would lead to the hunting of both of their kind. I swear I saw it, with my own
eyes. She spoke a strange tongue, the devil's tongue, and he the devil's agent. He was a beast, I tell
you; he certainly roared like one. Did you not hear? I fear what might befall me for witnessing it! No
human woman could handle him, no human man would dare touch her!

"Take what you need!" he half begged and half commanded, his voice coarse.

"You fucking take what you need!" she cried, her tits slinging back and forth. She was desperate for
more of him. She channeled him and the earth on autopilot now. Her brain couldn't handle it. She
didn't want to focus on anything that wasn't him on and in her body.
Tyler hollered and changed their position. He couldn't take it. A coherent thought that wasn't her was simply beyond his reach. He hunkered over her, and she lowered her upper body to the ground and balled her hands into fists, her forehead on the ground. She uncrossed her ankles and spread her knees wide, the globes of her ass pointed and seductive, her hips finally still. He bared his sharp claws and planted them in the ground on either side of her head. The sinewy muscles in his legs flexed as he used his weight to fuck them into oblivion. Histeria built in Bonnie again as her orgasm came back stronger and even more ready, and she raised onto her elbows and hooted through puckered lips. Tyler was beyond ready, but he was not going to beg her to let him come. He would ride this out for as long as she wanted. It wasn't a bad ride at all. His balls were full and stiff, his cock rock-hard and fucking sensitive, his thrusts frenetic and obsessed.

The magic honed in on his prostate and her G-spot, and Bonnie couldn't bear to withstand what would happen if she resisted past this point. It was like Nature Herself needed release now, so She pushed down where it counted for both. Bonnie had no idea where she pulled the spell from or what she was saying when she released them.

"Nullus hominum domare potest cupere! Sit passionibus opprimetur! Dabo ei, dedit mihi Exsolvamus ut numquam ante!"

Their passion started to overflow on the second phrase. Tyler yelled as the pressure on his prostate increased, and he had a meltdown in her cunt. Bonnie's voice trembled through the rest of the spell, which made it take longer for her to complete it. Her legs were shaking beyond her control, and the ground shook with them, and she sprayed her come, his dick and the magic milking spurt after spurt, her urethra shooting out her ejaculation, her toes curled and feet lifted off the ground. The orgasm overwhelmed them and both stopped moving as they reaped what Bonnie had sown. Tyler bit her left shoulder in his feverish peak, and the blood intensified his orgasm, and he yelled around her flesh. Bonnie's eyes rolled, and she sprayed her come again. Her thighs stiffened, then her legs, and they slowly straightened of their own accord, and she just as slowly buckled under her own weight, a loud steady aria going up her vocal chords. Tyler's dick was pulled out of her pussy when she went down and it stayed suspended, and he remained arthritic and loud and experienced the most thorough orgasm of his life as the ground moved under him.

Chapter End Notes

Round two, next chapter? Round two, next chapter. Hope you all are alright :)

nullus hominum domare potest cupere! Sit passionibus opprimetur! Dabo ei, dedit mihi Exsolvamus ut numquam ante!
Bonnie lay on her forearms and struggled to breathe. She couldn't think of a better reason to be out of breath.

Tyler rolled onto his back next to her, convulsions shocking his body.

"Ty, was there an-an earthquake?" she puffed.

"I think so," he answered, closing his eyes in contentment.

"I hope it-wasn't dangerous. I hope it didn't reach-beyond here."

"I hope it didn't." He didn't want anything bad to have come out of that amazing experience.

Bonnie couldn't bring herself to worry about it that much. Her cunt was still squeezing itself from the orgasm. "That was...amazing," she said, laying her cheek on the forest floor.

"**Fucking** amazing. This is what we should do with the rest of our lives. We'll quit school, forget college, and just stay here and--"

"Have sex?" she completed with a brilliant smile.

"Yes. I think we'd be great at it."

"Mmm, don't tempt me."

"I'm gonna tempt the hell out of you if there's a chance of making it happen for real," he said as he rolled onto his stomach to be closer to her.

Bonnie chuckled, and he kissed her forearm. "Bonnie," he said, for no other reason than he wanted to feel her name roll off his tongue.

"So blood doesn't turn you on, huh? Did you say that so you could lull me, give me a false sense of security, only to end up doing what you did just now?"

"I wish I could've been that cunning. Blood *doesn't* turn me on. Not the one vampires usually drink, anyway. The one that comes out of your vagina: that's a completely different story. That one turns me on. Not my fault you're so damn fine you make me wanna explore new frontiers."

"Why does that one turn you on?" she asked, because who didn't like a detailed compliment?

Tyler licked his lips and tasted her again. He's gotten the *why/what* question before after complimenting a girl who liked him. It used to be a harder question to answer when he was younger, more clueless, and just discovering how attractive girls found him. He was mature now and had long been going after girls because *he* liked them, not because he'd heard that they had a crush on him. So he actually had an answer for Bonnie, though he stumbled, suddenly anxious about exposing his feelings.

"It smells amazing. I have no idea why, but I'm not complaining. It just...attracts me, and I know it's my werewolf nature. You're sexy like this."

"Well, that's great. All these years I'd have these horrible moments where I swore people could smell my period. It just smelled so strong to me. And here you come along telling me that you do exactly
"That," she said, glowing from his compliment.

"It does smell strong. I love it."

"Have you smelled me before?" she asked coyly. Because something about the way that he spoke made her feel that he wasn't completely new to her smell.

Tyler hesitated a moment before he answered. "I have. Yeah."

She raised her brows in surprise. "On purpose?"

"No, not on purpose, and it was once."

She was the tiniest bit disappointed by that.

"But I've never forgotten that time."

"Well, you were certainly making up for it. You made me bleed heavy. That doesn't usually happen until the second day. I never would've guessed that that was a wolf power."

"It's an Alpha power. If it's biological, we have dominion."

"Huh."

He watched her tuck the information away and smiled, appreciating how comfortable she made him feel. "I wanted to reach inside you the way you did me. I wanted to...control you....like you were controlling me. And it's a weird level of control, but a deep one, and....I like it. And it looked like it hurt a little, and....I liked that, too." Just talking about it was making him want her again.

"Hmmm. Kinky, Ty. Now who's sadistic?" she asked as she nudged him with her shoulder.

"Hey, I didn't make you beg," he said, referring to their first time.

"I liked your begging. You sounded so overwhelmed and vulnerable. I wanna hear it again."

"And that's the difference between me and a sadist like yourself," he summarized, and he kissed her shoulder. "I'm kind."

"Oh please," she rebutted with a roll of her eyes. He kissed her shoulder again, and she wiggled her brows, pride radiating off of her. "You make me beg, too, you know. Or at least, you make me feel like I'm begging."

"Mmm, I know," he said, remembering the bathroom stall. The color of his eyes intensified in response. "I'll never forget. Please take me, Tyler" he mimicked sensually.

"Leave me alone." He looked so good saying it in his own voice.

"I'm sure that's the last thing you want me to do."

She turned her face to the left, hiding from him.

"You're so hot," he said.

She decided that that was a good enough reason to look at him again. "You're hot, too. And, um, if you ever feel the need to...control me again....please feel free. My body is yours."
She spoke the words knowing they would get him going, Tyler was sure of that. But she wasn't prepared for how deeply they resonated with him. Her smile hovered when he didn't make a quip. The words were important to Tyler. They spoke of trust, complete trust. They were her giving herself to him. They were a responsibility, one that struck a chord. He was in love with her, so those words evoked an emotional reaction, not a physical one like she'd expected.

"My body's yours, too. I'm yours," he vowed.

Bonnie searched his eyes as her body warmed, and he rolled on top of her. "Do you mind if we kiss?" he asked.

"Uh….didn't you...taste my blood? I mean my period blood, not my blood blood."

"No. Nothing came out when I was down on you, not until I made it come out, and after that I was inside you."

Nodding, she raised her head and kissed him. She didn't mind tasting the blood from the other parts of her body. After all, she was already drinking his. If he didn't mind kissing, then she didn't mind. But she didn't want to taste her period.

Tyler tasted the remnants of his blood on her tongue. It didn't taste like food, like when it came from everyone else, and it didn't taste like Bonnie, magic, and everything he could ever want. But it did taste like desire. On her tongue, it was a nice flavor.

Blood was a nice flavor on her tongue. And he wanted to know what it was on her cunt. He had run away almost two years ago when he'd first smelled her, when he'd experienced his first taste of her without even using his mouth. He'd tried to get away, for a lot of good reasons, one of them being his at the time brand new relationship, another being Bonnie's own relationship, and on and on.

He hadn't understood what smelling her had meant then, he still didn't completely understand it now, but now he could inhale her with abandon. Now he wanted to taste.

He parted with her mouth and moved down her body. His aim didn't click for Bonnie, so she said, "Hey, can you make it go away?"

His chin above her mound, he looked down at her and asked, "You want me to?"

"I mean, if we're gonna do this tomorrow, then I guess not. It's just that, before, when you were humping me, the cramps were hot, and now they're just…cramps," she said as she felt a drop of blood expel from her.

Tyler chuckled. "Uh, sure. Yeah."

She smiled and opened her legs, her feet flat on the floor, and she lay her head down, waiting for him to start the reversal.

She was messy. Incredibly, desirably, primitively messy. Tyler used the back of his right hand to wipe away the mixture of her blood and his come, and then he slowly lowered his head to her. But when he was close, he became timid, faltering as he brought his mouth closer and closer. When he was near, he parted his lips and stuck his tongue out. He flattened it, touched it to her opening, and he licked, not a full swipe, more like gathering, collecting, collecting what she had, collecting what was fresh. His eyes drifted closed, and he lifted his head and put his tongue back in his mouth. And he swallowed.

Blood was a nice flavor on her tongue. It was the perfect flavor on her cunt. Rough, aged, sullied,
perfectly tailored to him. His stain was Bonnie-red.

When he opened his eyes, he found that she was looking at him, her right hand dangling while her elbow stood on the ground. Both stilled, suspended by the moment. He exuded a vulnerability that was more important to Bonnie than all of the orgasmic begging in the world. She didn't want to tease him about this one, nor did she want to revel in it. It felt too crucial, like he was letting her in a level deeper, showing her a part of himself and his lust that he was still in the midst of discovering. This wasn't pre-packaged, something of which he knew the ins and outs and was presenting to her. He hadn't been like this when they'd first fought outside of that farm house.

Bonnie grazed her right hand over his hair, and she applied a gentle downward pressure on his head. She lifted her left leg and hooked her arm under the cut of her knee. Tyler's emotions were exposed for her perusal, so she exposed the most private workings of her body for his.

She lowered her head to the floor and craned her neck to the left so that she could still see him. She hooked her other arm under her other knee, and opened herself to him completely, physically, emotionally, everything. When he resumed lapping her blood, growing more confident with every stroke, she realized that she was discovering facets to her lust, too: every bite that made her tremble, every gulp of his blood that made her ache for more, and, after today, each time he reached into her body and controlled it. She used her magic all of the time, she knew that she liked power. She knew that she liked the control of making things happen, and with Jeremy she had learned that she liked the thrill of putting her magic in someone's body through channeling. She had liked that control. With Tyler, she was seeing her affection for control manifest in an additional way: she loved to submit to his power. She loved being one big erogenous zone for him, someone for him to get his kicks from.

When he connected to her body and made her expel more blood for him to suck up, she licked her lips and rolled her ankles from the cramps and felt that now familiar desire to beg.

Tyler wiped away the come that had been too deep inside of her to leak out on its own and inserted his tongue into her pussy to taste her walls. He tongue-fucked her, his tongue a dark berry red each time he pulled it out. He no longer needed to resist this. He no longer needed to run from it. Bonnie was his now, and she understood his desire.

Bonnie looked down in time to see him attach his lips to her opening and slurp. "Jesus," she whispered. He looked up at her and removed his mouth from her pussy. "You're a mess," she said quietly.

Holding eye contact, Tyler stuck his tongue out and stiffened it. Without blinking, he lowered until he penetrated her, and Bonnie watched it happen with bated breath, mouth slack. He resumed fucking her, slower this time, up and down, up, down. He twisted his head like he was making out, slow, up, down, twisting to the other side. Bonnie folded her lips and steadied her breath. Her cunt was slickening with lube in addition to the blood.

"Do it again," she said. "I wanna feel it again."

Tyler removed his tongue and swallowed. And he swallowed again, she was fucking perfect. He picked up her hips, and leaned her ass against his chest so that she could see. Bonnie moved her hands down from under her knees so that she was holding her legs apart by the front.

Tyler kissed the spots on either side of her body where her pussy flowed into her ass. "You wanna be mine. You wanna be Marked."

"I do," she murmured.
"You wanna be my equal."

"I already am."

He grinned and kissed the two spots again. "You can't Mark me, but I can Mark you."

"Do it."

"It's painful. I have to scratch you, and I mean deep. I could bite you, but my fangs might cancel it out."

"Do it."

Elated and turned on at the same time, he trained his eyes on her pussy and reaped more blood. Her pussy flexed and pushed out another clot, and Bonnie arched her neck and moaned, bringing her hands to her nipples.

Tyler brushed the clot aside with the back of his hand and watched one drop of blood break off from the pool to trail down her ass. Another trailed up, over her clit, over her mound. He groaned, his gums throbbing, his teeth wanting out. He spread her ass with his thumbs and watched the blood flow down the crack. When it got to the middle, he pinned it with his tongue and looked at her.

"Jesus. You really like this."

His response was to lightly flick his tongue against her hole, and she bit her lip. She moaned when she felt the cramps again, when he connected again. He used the back of his index finger to make more blood flow down to her asshole, and he licked it as it came, pushing his tongue into her hole.

"You better not stop doing that," she said, her eyes falling closed.

"You're so fucking perfect," he whispered. "Everything about you is perfect. Turn around. Hands and knees."

He set her lower half down, and Bonnie positioned herself. When she looked over her shoulder, she saw that he was on his hands and knees, too, and he brought his nose close to her ass and sniffed her scent. Bonnie bit her lip and did three kegels, tightening and releasing her asshole and pussy in hopes that more of her scent would drift to him in the release. It worked, because his head twitched, and he looked up at her. They grinned at each other, and she did it again. He lapped at her butt and pushed his tongue in, and she made herself relax so that he could go far.

The picture they made didn't escape her attention. He's been living on four limbs for hours, so she wondered if he'd specified that she be on her hands and knees because the simulation of her walking like him turned him on.

He wiggled his tongue in her ass particularly well, and she arched her back and moaned, squeezing his tongue by accident. Her mouth dropped open when he switched to tongue fucking her. She looked up at the trees to the darkening sky. She was naked in the woods with a dirty pussy that was runny with blood and an Alpha Hybrid's face separating her ass cheeks. She had never felt more desirable and coveted.

Tyler deepened his tongue in her ass. It tasted as amazing as the rest of her, memorable, and something that he wanted again. As far as he was concerned in his increasingly feverish state, they were getting started on that *quit everything and have sex in the woods* goal. He was aroused by the image of her on all fours with her asshole being split by his salivating tongue. He was rock hard and feening for her, and she was soon aware because he started to fuck her faster and he was huffing,
Bonnie's face was tense with pleasure. She had no idea that her ass could feel so sensitive from someone's touch. Her vagina was wet, and she wanted Tyler to put something thick in her.

"Oh," she said, high-pitched and jerking away from his tongue when he stroke it good.

"Come here."

She hissed in a breath and backed up and flexed her asshole for him. He growled low in his throat and released his teeth. Bonnie kept flexing, and he watched her asshole tighten and pucker, tighten and pucker. It was looser because of his tongue. When she puckered this time, he intruded his tongue into her rhythm and stretched her, his reward a deep moan and a small wiggle of her ass.

"I want you inside," Bonnie whined as she breathed between her teeth.

He disrupted what he was doing to sass, "I am inside."

"You know what I mean. Put your dick in me. We can come back to this. I'm wet."

"I know, I smell it. You're very ready."

"I am." She robbed him by pulling her ass forward and rolling onto her back. "I'm ready."

Tyler quirked his brows, amused. He countered by lying on his back, parallel to her. "Not so fast."

Bonnie sat up and looked at his dick. It was sitting up, a veritable red-brown pole. She licked her lips and climbed on top of him.

"Fuck me," he emphasized around his teeth.

"You know I'm good at that." She lined her pussy without touching his dick, not wanting to put dirt on it. Tyler held her waist to help her balance, and she sat back, her pussy making a wet sound when it was penetrated. She got him in, the insertion easy thanks to her menstruation, and she began to rock.

She rocked forward-up, then down, forward-up, then down, and her mouth watered from it because it felt like she hasn't had him in her pussy….ever.

"Channel the earth again," Tyler said.

She had to stop rocking to do it. She planted her hands on the ground and concentrated. Tyler picked up where she left off, slowly thrusting in and out of her while she worked. A needy smile played on her lips while he fucked her. She latched on the element and pulled up, and it flooded her body.

She sat back on his dick, goosebumps all over, and he lowered his hips to the ground. "You're a good fuck, Tyler."

"Oh, you're trying to get in trouble."

"Trouble feels good with you."

"This magic feels good," he said, tightening his hold on her hips as the power in her pussy swirled around his dick. "Fuck me with it."

Bonnie put her hands on his chest and did exactly that, and she did it very well. She was glorious in
her power. It built up inside of her until she let it out by connecting to her blood in his body. Tyler hissed, though he continued to help her rock her hips. He was a mere spectator of the sight of her searching for her orgasm. She kept her eyes on him, but she didn't question why he wasn't rocking with her anymore nor why he was staring at her the way that he was.

Tyler gazed upon his future mate, the girl who wanted his Mark, the girl who wanted all of him, who had taken on his burden as her own after she'd tried to kick his ass, and, yes, killed someone that he'd been trying to save. He wanted that. He wanted her to stand on her own, with her own rules and requirements, and she had, she had that night, she'd killed Dylan for laying his hands on her, and he appreciated that now, and she'd gutted Kol, and she was about to obliterate Silas.

She had power over him, yes, just as Lena had said, but the moon spun above all of the elements, it moved the waters, it fit right in.

"Get ready," he said.

"I'm ready," she moaned, nodding a little too hard because she could feel the orgasm coming. She lowered her torso to within an inch of his, her elbows beside his arms on the ground, fisting her hands in his hair, and she kept fucking. The process was probably going to be a lot more painful than she was imagining, but she trusted him, she trusted his world and his customs. Whatever the level of pain, she was going to be okay at the end. She wanted that depth of intimacy. She loved him, and she was ready. It felt right. After years of ignoring her instincts, this felt right.

"It's gonna be okay," he reassured her as his chest tightened from a mix of nervousness and anticipation.

"I know. I trust you."

How was the Mark going to go through her? What was it going to look like? How much pain was she going to experience? He had fought hard to sever the bond that he had not wanted and had never asked for. He wanted this one. This one, he was creating himself. The element in her pussy swirled sharply around his cock, and he shut his eyes.

He pushed his cheek into hers and again felt a kind of vulnerability that he seldom experienced. So often he felt vulnerable in preparation for something bad. Klaus was going to get angry. Klaus was going to scream. Klaus was going to demean him. He was going to become a werewolf. His bones were about to break. His father was about to demean him for not being tough enough. His father was about to lift his hand.

Here, in this private space that he had created, he felt vulnerable because something good was about to happen. The girl he loved was going to be permanently under his protection. He was opening himself, his world, to her.

He opened his eyes and bared his claws. Bonnie heard the sharp sound, but she didn't falter. He rubbed his cheek against hers, and she returned the gesture. "I'm ready," she moaned.

He started a low growl, steady in her ear, waiting. The magic honed in on all of her sweet spots, and she rocked faster, her moans flailing and stumbling. Her hips snapped forward harder and opened wider when she rocked back. Bliss skyrocketed up, up and exploded into endless shivers and shakes. She bounced on his dick, surprised by the orgasm, before reclaiming the rhythm. Tyler brought his claws down, dug in and dragged from the very top of each ass cheek, near her waist, to the middle of her back, on either side of her spinal column, ripping her flesh.

Fiery hot, immeasurable pain barged into Bonnie's orgasm, and she screamed, from her throat first,
then at the top of her lungs when the pain intensified. She bucked and thrashed, missing it when Tyler gritted, "It's fine!"

All she could hear were her screams. All she could feel were the tears on her back. She tried to lift up to get away from his claws, but he held fast and strong, he needed to, the process wasn't complete.

Unable to escape, Bonnie stopped channeling him and slammed her palms on the ground and furiously pulled magic into her body, desperately hoping it would work as a buffer. The ground started to shake on impact, and Tyler cursed, the expletive marked by greed for more of her savagery, when he heard what sounded like a tree break off at its trunk and fall. So impressed by her, he lifted his head and bit her neck, partaking in what she had.

Bonnie's scream abruptly cut down to a yell, surprised by the new intrusion. She opened her eyes, and-

Everything was filtered red, the trees, the leaves, the pines, as far as- 

As far as her eyes could see. And it was pretty damn far. Her eyes pierced through the trees and saw what would've taken her at least fifteen minutes of walking to see on foot.

She heard a snap and gasped when a second tree fell. Her attention was pulled in yet another direction when she felt her back cool to the point of being bone cold. She heard Tyler's claws sheath. He heard it, too, because he ceased feeding and raised his head to look at her back. She felt it heal, the skin molding itself together to become whole as the pain faded until only a dull echo was left.

She loosened her hold on the channel, and the ground stopped shaking. Tears in her eyes, she raised onto her hands and looked down at Tyler. His expression shifted from curiosity to awe. He was staring at his reflection. She was his mate, so her eyes didn't reflect the colors of a regular Alpha's: gold and black.

Bonnie felt a tightness around her eyes and reached up to touch one of them. Veins. Just like his. "Am I a vampire?" She couldn't be. She still felt her magic.

Tyler retracted his teeth and reached up and ghosted his fingers over her eyes, not quite touching them. "You're an Alpha. Mine."

She smiled. "How do I look?"

He shook his head, speechless and emotional.

Her smile widened. She would give him speechless. Closing her eyes, she reopened the channel. She felt the power grow through her body. When it reached the crown of her head, she flung her new eyes open and smiled at his reaction. He was openly staring.

Tyler sat up and bit his wrist. He gave it to her, and she fed, healing the bite wound on her neck.

When she was done, he placed a firm hand on butt and lifted her and himself enough that he could put her on her back while she stretched her legs out. He was still hard, still inside of her, and he was ready to come. He lifted her legs to his shoulders and asked, "Are you okay?"

She nodded, happy to be seeing the same way that he did. He leaned down until she had to move her legs from his shoulders down to the crook of his arms, and he kissed her and began to move his hips, and she moaned sharply, grabbing his forearms.

"What is it?" he asked, alarmed.
"Nothing," she breathed. "I wasn't prepared for that. It was kind of intense. I really felt it."

She wasn't quite sore, but her walls were sensitive. And so he resumed thrusting, and she frowned, folding her lips and willing her body to take it.

"Do you want me to stop?"

"Hell no. It just feels like a lot. Magic, and your powers are still inside me, and I think I'm overwhelmed."

"Good. Put your legs around my shoulders." She fixed herself, and he fucked her slow and long, relishing every peep that came out of her, every roll of her neck from this side to this side, every time she oohed and aahed and grabbed on his biceps.

He spread his knees wide to take his cock deeper into her slick spot. Being hard and horny had never felt so good. As he fucked her, something that was resting inside of him made itself known. It was her power, but it felt different, deeper, like it was embedded into the very fiber of his being.

But he ignored it, focusing on how good her bloody pussy felt on his dick, how otherworldly she looked with those black vines on her face, the veins under her eyes, those vampyric-lupine irises, the blood on her mouth. She looked dangerous.

She moaned and cursed and tightened under him, and he groaned, her slippery pussy queefing from the friction against his slippery dick. He made his strokes larger in search of the orgasm that was going to fill her cunt. His voice trembled, it was coming, it was close. He raised his head to the sky and kept going, and she damned his name, her own control tenuous. He moved his hips into her like it was all he knew how to do. He sighed roughly and lowered his body, forcing her knees down by her ears, and he mounted her, his knees off the ground, a wide squat, his toes pushing against the pines.

"Hold your knees!" he barked unsteadily.

"Fuck! Aaah!" she groaned monstrously, doing as she was told, doing her best to keep her knees near her ears. With his weight on her, it wasn't hard. "You feel so fucking good, oh my God." Her voice deepened until she sounded like she was possessed. "Oh my good fuck."

"I love you," he struggled.

"I love you, too."

She succumbed in a few more strokes, shaking and taking the tectonic plates with her.

Tyler couldn't do slow anymore, not when she was coming and bucking up into his dick because she had nowhere else to go. Not when she sounded like that, not when she looked like that, not when she was causing another fucking earthquake. Not when she felt so damn good, wet and just right, her magic pushing him, his powers reaching for it whereas before it had just accepted it. Not when his groans were weak and his body weakening further. Not when going faster, a lot faster, pushed her into a second, wilder orgasm that made her legs spasm and felt fucking amazing on his dick.

His voice straining every time he fucked into her, he came, finally, giving her everything, everything that he had, everything that had gathered in his balls. He felt his dick twitching, devastated by the best pussy it had ever gotten. He bucked into her, hard and lasting, unable to remember that his hips were capable of moving in another direction that wasn't toward her shaking cunt.
"Note to self: don't have sex while doing earth magic," Bonnie said when she finally caught her breath. She had rolled away from Tyler as soon as he'd gotten off of her, having been unable to withstand any more contact with him, positive somewhere in her sex-addled mind that she would fall apart with no hopes of being put back together if his skin brushed against hers for a second longer. Her vagina felt so very thoroughly taken cared of.

"I want more earth magic," Tyler replied. He was on his back, and he turned his head to look at Bonnie's bare back. Although the sun was almost gone, he had no trouble seeing her.

"Tyler, someone might've gotten hurt. Oh God, I hope no one got hurt. I swear I said to myself that I was gonna let go of the channel as soon as you went inside me, but then…..then you did, and I….I forgot."

He said nothing, so she lifted onto her elbow and looked back. And caught him grinning. "It's serious, Tyler," she pressed, turning around completely to hold herself by her other elbow. "We have a responsibility. I'm a witch; you're a Hybrid, we should be protecting people, not hurting them with our sex."

"We don't know if anyone's hurt."

"And if someone is, what are we gonna do?" she pressed.

"I'd really rather not think about that right now."

She sighed and laid down, turning her arm into a pillow. "It was amazing, though. My God, we must look so nasty."

"If I asked you to come back here tomorrow, what would you say? Remember when I told you that your mouth said one thing, but your body was saying something else? You're protesting so much right now. What would you say if I asked you to meet me here tomorrow so we can do it all again?"

"That's not the point," she answered, turning away from him, and he chuckled.

"You're so beautiful."

She rolled onto her stomach and smiled at him. "So are you. Hey. Your eyes are brown now."

"You're so damn good, you changed my eye color."

Bonnie smiled cheekily.

"Come here."

She scooted over until she turned around to become the little spoon to his big spoon. "I'm happy you came back," she said.

"Mmm, so am I, and that's an understatement."

Smiling, she snuggled against him. "So, are you gonna leave now?"
"In a little bit. I have to make your period stop, remember?"

"I actually forgot," she said, chuckling.

"Are you feeling okay? I mean with the Mark."

"I don't feel anything yet. My eyes are back to normal. What should I expect?"

"A literal mark. I don't see anything on your back yet. We're going to want each other a lot more. You'll want to be near me, and I'll want to...have you. It'll be like...needing to reinforce that you're my mate now, and the most important way to do that is sex."

"Of course."

"I'm serious. It's written in the caves. I'll want my scent all over you and yours all over me. I'll be working on pure emotion now more than ever where you're concerned, and every time we have sex, every time I'll want you, especially at the beginning, it'll be like reassuring myself that I've made the right choice, that I really did find you."

The weight in his voice made her squeeze his hand. "I can handle that," she said quietly.

Tyler smiled and sniffed her hair. "It reads like a fairy tale. I rolled my eyes at it, honestly. But the worse things got for me...Anyways. It might not even happen like that. I'm not a complete werewolf, and you're not mortal. The story in the caves is about an Alpha and his mortal mate. My vampire side might screw everything up, and you have your own power. What's written might not happen to us at all."

Bonnie smoothed her fingers up and down his forearm in silent contemplation. He'd been about to say something but stopped, and now he was writing off their potential. Something had just happened, but she wasn't sure what. She wasn't going to pry, though, not yet. Instead she said, "But you did scratch me, and it hurt like hell, and then it disappeared, and that's normal, right?"

"It is."

"So I am Marked. And we'll figure out the rest together."

He smiled and nuzzled her shoulder, closing his eyes. "We will. Now about stopping what I started."

Bonnie wanted to protest the end of the cuddling, but she knew that they needed to make haste, especially if the earthquake had reached beyond the woods.

Tyler got on his knees and moved around to her front while she rolled on her back and opened her legs. He put his hands on her knees and mourned the beautiful sight that he was about to reverse.

"It'll come back, you know. Naturally," Bonnie said, amused.

He smiled and closed his eyes. He connected to her uterus and began to reverse the process. The connection loosened immediately. He reinforced it and tried again, and it loosened immediately, her body shaking him off. He opened his eyes and looked at her mahogany red vulva. "It's not happening."

"No?"

"No. And I had a feeling. You're not a yo-yo. I think that if your period was naturally at this point, I could scale it back, but since I made it happen,...it's a one-way street."
"Great, so I'm stuck with these cramps. At least I have good memories attached to them. I bet if witches could do what you do, it would be a two-way street."

"Well, sorry I don't have dominion over all natural elements."

"And death. Don't forget death. I'm more versatile than you."

"Mmm."

"So, I guess we should go."

"What happened to our dream of becoming forest people?"

"It went down the indoor plumbing," she said, and she chuckled at her own joke.

Tyler shook his head, remembering the days when she was this corny on a regular basis. "Are we washing ourselves in the quarry?" he asked skeptically as he helped her stand.

Bonnie grimaced. "I don't want that water near my…private parts." He'd just spent an inordinate amount of time acquainting himself with her menstrual cycle, yet she hesitated on saying the word. It was just kind of weird to say it in normal conversation. But she forced herself to say it. "My vagina."

"Right?" Tyler asked.

"What are you worried about? You're a Hybrid. You can't get an itch or an infection."

"My brain doesn't care about that. It's picturing the bacteria."

"But the water doesn't look dirty….." she tried.

"So I'll go after you?"

Bonnie turned from him to go get her underwear, and he laughed.

"I'm gonna be so dirty," she complained.

"Let's go to my house. You can shower there and then go home."

She left her clothes on the floor and turned to him. "Let's? You're supposed to leave. I know where your house is. I mean…do you really need to shower since you'll be an animal?"

"I'll leave later tonight, but I'll be back in time for tomorrow."

"If you're planning on coming back tomorrow for me, don't. I've been missing you, but that's because I was worried sick. You're all better now. I see it. I felt it. So you can go be with your pack."

"Clermeil's supposed to go crazy tomorrow, and Rebekah's waking up, and no one in the pack knows where Klaus stored her body."

"Tyler."

"Bonnie. We talked about this-"

"I know, fifty-fifty-"

"No: taking care of you is not abandoning the pack."
"I know that, too," she implored as she walked up to him. Wrapping her arms around his shoulders, she said, "I believe you. But that's not where this is coming from. I just want you to be with them, especially now that you guys are getting better. You haven't had a chance to celebrate Klaus' death."

"I think I just had one hell of a celebration," he returned with a wink.

Her skin warmed. The last time he'd winked at her was at her fourteenth birthday party. "You know I'm talking about you and them," she managed to chastise.

But she was reminded of what she'd told Caroline in Founders Hall all of a sudden. Tyler had sought her out, and he'd given her incredibly intimate kisses that she'd never forget. And she'd rocked his world, too.

Sure enough, he said, "I know. But Bonnie, this, today, was one for the damn books. I've never….come so hard in my life. I'm talking about the first time. It was just….all over me, like my whole body, just everywhere."

"What is it?" she asked through her smile when she felt his end of the bond vibrate. "You're holding something back. If it's props, give me all my props."

"Egotistical."

"Something you should appreciate, Lockwood," she returned. "Seriously," she said as she caressed his neck. "You don't want to talk about it? Because I feel it."

He smiled, happy to hear her so casually acknowledge their bond. "The Mark did work. You felt something from me that wasn't a visceral emotion. It was just…nothing I ever felt before. Kinda weird…...but maybe not. Just….how I felt myself about to come. Like...what was happening at the time?"

"Remember when you said you didn't know I could ramble? Tyler, I didn't know you could stall like this."

He exhaled a chuckle and shifted nervously on his feet. He was growing more nervous by the second, which was ridiculous, because he knew that she was not going to think he was weird. "It's just….where I felt it right before I came. Like, what made me come?"

"Mmm-hmm."

"Stop."

"I'm not doing anything."

Smiling, he shook his head. He was making this take more time than it needed to, which was only serving to make it seem like a bigger deal than it was. "I felt it in my ass," he blurted, his tone a mix of are you satisfied? and as if you didn't know.

Bonnie grinned. Yeah. She'd rocked his world. "Hmm."

"It was freaking amazing," he said, like he was unloading a huge burden. "It was...Jesus. Like, right before it happened? I'd never felt so small in my life. It was like…." he sighed in fond remembrance.

"So you liked it in your butt."

Tyler took her arms off his shoulders and walked away.
"Is that why you suddenly want to live in the forest?" she continued to tease. "Hey, where are you going?"

"I'm leaving you," he called back playfully.

"You can't leave me. I can't see without you."

He stopped and half turned. "I'm going to the quarry to wash my face. I was gonna ask you to come, but you're having fun, so I thought I'd leave you to have fun all by yourself."

Bonnie did a bizarre shuffle-jog to get to him, and he reached his hand out and walked back to meet her. He heaved her off the ground and into his arms. "I should make you walk," he threatened.

Bonnie wiggled to make herself more comfortable in her perch, and he kissed the top of her nose, leaving a bloody print.

At the quarry, they scrubbed their hands and the bloody part of their faces. Bonnie cleaned her upper thighs, and Tyler kept his bloody dick away from the water, afraid of the microbes, but he did wash his pubic mound.

"This stuff is not easy to wash off," Bonnie said as she dragged the pads of her fingers over her thighs, her breasts shaking from the effort.

But once they were done, they walked out of the water. Bonnie grabbed his hand and snuggled up to his arm, cushioning it between her breasts. He was forced to stop walking. "I can't wait to make you feel it in your butt again," she promised.

Tyler looked down at her over his left shoulder, a smirk chasing after his lips. "Good," he responded, and he felt her chest lift and press into him as she inhaled deeply in response to the tone of his voice. "Bonnie?" he asked as he turned and moved the arm that she was holding behind her back.

"Yeah?"

"I love you. Can you see my face?"

She smiled and softly responded, "Yeah, a little bit."

"I love you. In case that wasn't obvious after everything we did just now," he elaborated with a chuckle, "I know we were kind of in the middle of something when I first said it, but it wasn't the heat of the moment. I love you. And I want you to know, and I kind of didn't want you to know yet because I just went through a breakup, and maybe I shouldn't have told you because I just went through a breakup, and you know that, and I don't want you to think-"

"Tyler," she said as she put her three middle fingers over his mouth to stop the outpouring, "Your breakup has no place here. I mean, I'm glad you thought about the possibility. God knows I let that relationship make me question how you really felt about me, but we don't need to frame what we're doing around it anymore. Unless you feel you need to for your own reasons?"

She removed her fingers to let him answer.

"No," he promised. "I just don't want you to think that how I feel about you has anything to do with how I feel or felt about her. I want you to take me seriously."

"I do," she promised. "And I love you, too."
He gathered her closer until their torsos touched, and her smile widened. "I love you," she repeated.

"I love you."

Tyler's version of the words wrapped itself all around her and squeezed, making her feel giddy.

He carried her back, his steps as light as his heart.

Bonnie could've sworn that she bounced on her feet when he set her down, she was so elated. She went to her clothes and got dressed, hating the feel of the clothes against her wet body, and Tyler stood back and waited. She held the necklace in her hand and picked up her phone.

"Shit, my dad was blowing up my phone. All of these calls. And he texted. There was an earthquake, please tell me you're okay! Four exclamation marks. Crap. Lucy's locator spell is not working! One exclamation mark. Abby's calling Jeremy for Shane's address! Fuck. Two exclamation marks. Shit."

Tyler squeezed his eyes shut. "Was anyone hurt in the earthquake?"

"Hold on," she said as she called her father.

"Bonnie!"

"Dad, where's mom?"

"Losing her mind over here like the rest of us, where are you?! Are you okay? Did you feel the quakes? Were you attacked?"

"Where is she?" she heard Abby ask.

Bonnie sighed in relief. Abby hadn't gone to Whittmore yet. "I'm fine. I felt the quakes. I was casting spells."

"Wait. You caused them?" Rudy asked.

"No," Bonnie struggled. "I think it was Silas."

Tyler stuck his neck out at her, completely taken off guard.

"I mean, it might've been Silas." Bonnie raised her free hand up to shoulder-height in a what do ya want? gesture. Maybe it was extreme to blame Silas, but did she need her dad and entire family to know what she'd been doing when the earth had quaked? No.

"And you're sure you weren't attacked?" Rudy searched.

"I'm sure. I was with Tyler."

"This whole time we've been worried sick about you, and you were with Tyler?!"

She imagined an exasperated eye roll from Lucy at the mention of Tyler's name and a pissed off huff from her mom. "I was casting, and he was here. I was casting protection spells, that's probably why Lucy couldn't find me."

"Why were you casting? What happened, Bonnie? Not only did you go to Whitmore by yourself, but that girl, Kim, said you didn't kill Shane. Why didn't you call us when the ground started to
shake, especially if you suspected it was Silas?"

"I'm gonna explain everything when I get home, I promise, okay? I promise. I'll see you later."

"Wait. Is Tyler okay? He was kind of a danger to himself earlier."

Bonnie looked at the boy in question. "Yeah, he's fine. I'll talk to you later."

"Get home."

"Yeah. Oh, dad, wait! Was anyone hurt by the earthquakes?"

"No idea. The news isn't reporting anything fatal yet, just things falling in people's houses."

She visibly relaxed, so Tyler did, too. "Good," she said.

"Get home, Bonnie."

"Yeah," she said, and she hung up. "My dad wants me to come home," she informed Tyler. "Let's hurry up and stop by your house. Um...how are you gonna get there?"

"You mean I can't ride in your car like this?" he asked, spreading his hands and looking down at his dirty, naked body.

"No."

"Damn, Bon, have the good vibes disappeared already?"

"Shut up," she laughed with a shake of her head. "Seriously, how are you gonna make it? Oh, you can just teleport, like Kim."

"No, not like Kim. I can't do that unless I'm a wolf, which was how I got here."

"Lucy has a teleportation spell, but it takes a lot of work to move from place to place. I tried it when I was waiting for time to go by yesterday, and I didn't go anywhere. Ty, I really don't want you in my car."

"It's cool. I'll run," he said, feigning hurt. He watched her eyes go down to his penis. "I can hold it," he said.

"That's a pretty picture." She paused for a moment to imagine it.

"Hey. Wanna come back?" he needled her.

She came back and sighed in resignation. "You can ride with me. I have a jacket in the backseat that I keep forgetting to take out."

"No seriously, I'll run. If for no other reason than: imagine someone driving up next to us at a red light and they see the mayor's son shirtless and dirty. My mom struggles enough with the people who work for her."

"Okay. I wish somehow, someway, someone would take a picture of you, though."

"Perv."

She smiled. "Okay, so, um, we should clean up the mess we made," she said, eyeing the splotches of
red, white, and wet on the floor. "I have a water bottle in the car. I can do a cleaning spell."

"Uh, but you won't. This doesn't need to be cleaned."

"Ty. I'm sure no one's gonna come here with a forensic kit, but we made this. We should at least clean it up."

"But we won't. Bonnie, it's a mark. It's my mark. It's my territory, and if you erase it, no one's gonna know that. This is where I took you, and I want it to stay."

"Took me?" she asked with a very interested smile.

"You know what I mean: was with you."

"So, this is a werewolf thing."

He picked up on her interest and smiled. "Yeah, it is. We mark our territory with…body fluid and…other stuff. Always in wolf form, but I'm an Alpha: I can do it while I'm human, and that is mine. You can clean it up in a couple of months or a year when I'm over it."

"A year? Ty, I'm not coming back out here in a year to clean up dried up blood and come."

Tyler grinned, enjoying her you've gotta be kidding tone.

"So, there's a mark of me in the woods. Cool. Who's gonna be able to tell?"

"Any animal that so much as flies or crawls within three miles of this spot will know that an Alpha was with a witch. I kind of…set a boundary. And if they ever come across me, they'll know it was me."

"But they won't know me?"

"No, not off top. They will know that you're Marked when they see you, and if they've seen me then they'll make the connection. Otherwise, they'd need to smell your period to compare the scents."

"Got it. So…are you the king of the animal kingdom?"

He smiled and licked his lips. "Uh, not really? It's more like prestige in the hierarchy. Like, my word goes a long way. My decisions go a long way. But a werewolf or mountain lion or…I don't know…a dog, could come along and ignore what I said. They could mark this for themselves. Then there'd be a fight, but they could still show the disrespect. But, like, you're a witch, so some shapeshifter could decide they'd rather listen to you than listen to me, because your powers can affect things on a bigger scale."

"Like how Shane said—well, how Silas said that His followers include werewolves."

"Exactly. There's a big part of us that's all about power and aligning ourselves with dominance."

"Huh. So…you see dominance in me?"

"You know I do. I definitely do. I didn't recognize it at the time, but remember when I was fighting Damon, and you made me pass out?"

"Homecoming, when Klaus' dad died."

"Yeah. I felt it after I woke up. It was like it stayed with me. It actually pissed me off, because it was
"a reminder of you…"

"Getting the best of you?" she supplied smugly.

"Yeah."

"And to think I did it again that night," she sighed dramatically.

"Uh...if you're talking about the night I think you're talking about, then no. You didn't."

"Tyler, please."

"Bonnie, I could've cut into your neck. No magic would've saved you from a fatal wound."

"I had two of your people."

"Having two of my people is not having me."

"Tyler, you could barely stand. If I had hit you with one more aneurysm-"

"You would've slashed your own neck, like I promised."

"Like hell. You weren't gonna kill me."

"You were gonna be in a world of pain. I can do a lot more than make you bleed for fun."

"And that magic I put inside you can do a lot more than make you come," she challenged.

They stared each other down, defiant, hungry, their bodies too weak from before to carry out what their brains were imagining. Tyler sped up to her, and Bonnie blinked. When her eyes refocused, she stared up at him, daring. They both wished they could kiss, but Tyler's mouth still tasted of her period, so they settled for him rubbing the back of his index finger over her left nipple.

"We should go," she murmured.

Tyler rolled the nipple between his fingers and nodded. He would love to tussle with her again, flex their powers against each other.

Undeterred by stop lights, cars, and speed limits, he made it to the mansion before her. He was almost done showering when she arrived. Bonnie frowned at the cleaned-up floor and the glued together sitting room on her way to the stairs.

When she entered the bedroom, she saw a folded towel on his bed, and she wondered if it was for her.

In the shower, Tyler stopped the water and called out, "Bonnie?"

"Yeah."

He turned the water on again.

Bonnie remained standing until he finished. She was beyond ready for a shower. She'd brought an extra pad that she always kept in the middle console between the two front seats to help her feel fresher. Looking around the room, she saw the clothes that he'd worn before the fight with Klaus lying on a chair. His cell phone was on top.
When he was done, Tyler brushed his teeth, going through two toothbrushes in the process, and then walked out and told her that the bathroom was all hers. His tongue and parts of his teeth were still stained with her blood, but they were loads better than before.

"It looks like a crime scene in there," he warned her. "I need to scrub the tub when I get back. I need to *lock* the bathroom before I go. Oh shit."

"What?"

"I used the last spare toothbrush. There's one left, and I was gonna use it for my regular toothbrush, but you can take it-"

"No, it's fine. I'll just not open my mouth all that wide when I get home. I don't have enough spares at home to clean this completely, though," she said, running her index finger across her mouth.

"Me neither. I thought about doing the romantic thing and waiting for you so we could shower together, but I actually felt dirty when I walked in the house."

She smiled and shook her head. "It's okay. Did you clean up when you came?" she asked, gesturing out of the bedroom.

"You saw it? Even my clothes are up here. I know it was Caroline. It couldn't have been anyone else."

"I guess she was worried," Bonnie said quietly, instantly forgiving her for running away from the fight. Well, she half forgave her. "My turn," she said to Tyler with a lift of her brows.

"This is for you," Tyler said. He reached for the towel on the bed and handed it to her.

"Do you have a shower cap?" she asked, squinting one eye.

"Uh, my mom has one."

"No way. I'm not using your mom's stuff. Do you have a plastic bag or something?"

"Uh, maybe one?"

"Please find it for me."

As Bonnie washed her fingers down the right side of her neck to make sure all of the dried blood was gone, they brushed over bumps that she didn't remember having before. Assuming they were grime from the woods, she took the sponge that Tyler had given her, added more showering gel, and scrubbed hard. She rubbed her fingers over it to help it loosen under the water, but it stayed in place. Curious and just a little worried that she'd contracted some fast-working bacteria from the quarry, she finished showering, wrapped a towel around herself, stepped out of the shower, and went to the mirror.

She wiped her neck with the towel, and then she used her hand to clear the vapor from the mirror. She touched the bumps and leaned forward to see just what the hell it was.

"Tyler?"

"Yeah?"

"Come here." Even as she said it, she moved to the door and opened it. She stopped short when she
saw that he was still wrapped in his towel. Cleanliness was hot on him.

"What is it?"

"I think there's something on my neck. Please tell me I didn't get bitten by something. Is it ringworm?"

Tyler removed her fingers to have a better look. When he saw what it was, he smiled and licked his lips. "Uh. I think you did get bitten."

Bonnie's skin crawled at the confirmation. "I don't even remember how to get rid of ringworm. Ew. Oh my God, I hope it doesn't spread."

Tyler left her and went to get his phone. The battery was dead. So he got hers and told her to cock her head to the side so that he could take a picture. After the phone clicked, he assessed the picture and handed her the phone.

Bonnie's deep frown smoothed out as she made heads and tails of what she was looking at. There, at the base of the side of her neck, right above her collarbone, were two thin, flesh-colored, letters that looped lavishly and bled into each other: TL

"You jerk," she murmured fondly. "It's the Mark. It looks like a scar that's fading. It's beautiful. It's not gonna fade for good, is it?"

"I don't think so."

The subtle distraction in his voice made her look at him, and her stomach somersaulted. "What do you think?" she murmured.

"It's beautiful. It's right where it belongs," he said, tracing the initials with his index finger. "Does it hurt?"

"No, but it's...I feel it all over me."

Tyler took his finger off. Then he resumed tracing.

"Yeah, uh, definitely happens when you touch it."

"A new spot to get you going," he said with great interest.

"Hush. Is there anything on my back?" She turned around and lowered the towel down to her tailbone. She felt him lower to his knees, and then she felt four fingers from each of his hand trace from above her waist down to just before her bottom flared out. She shivered so hard that her shoulders shook. "You marked me twice."

"This was where I wanted it," he murmured. Her period smelled so much stronger, so much better, and he understood now. He looked at the Mark, it didn't stretch as far up her back as he'd scratched, which was normal, and he understood. And he was suddenly fond of his confusion and attempts to get away from her that night, junior year.

On the night he'd died, his heritage forever tarnished with undeath, before it had happened, the wolf had woken in him, eyes wide open, and recognized his mate, and he'd recognized her by her most unique smell: her menstruation. Her body and his had aligned that night, and his subconscious had woken up.
He remembered now, as if it was replaying in 3D in front of him, that right before Klaus had snapped his neck, his eyes had flickered to Bonnie and the scent that he'd been running away from that whole night. And then everything had gone dark.

He kissed her tailbone now and closed his eyes, feeling sympathy for how much he'd failed to understand without a teacher or mentor.

Bonnie dropped one half of the towel and moved her other hand so that the towel hung on it. With her free hand, she half turned and stroked his wet hair. "Are you okay?"

"Yeah," he answered, his chest heavy. He opened his eyes and felt the urge. The urge to physically boast that she was Marked, that he'd found her, that she wanted him, the urge to touch her in a way that no one else could, where no one else would. He kissed down the lining of her butt, spread it open, and pinned the center with his tongue. He made himself salivate, wetting his tongue in hopes of giving her a better experience.

She inhaled loudly, and then a chuckle burst out of her. The sounds spurred him on, to hold steady to what he was doing. When she said, "Ty, we did that," all he heard was the softness of her voice, the clear indicator that he was making her feel good. He ran his fingers over the shadows of his claws, and her body came alive, shivering above him. His ears picked up the quickening of her pulse, the blood rushing inside of her.

"I'm supposed to be getting home," she said weakly, but what he noticed was that she protruded her butt toward his doting tongue. He wiggled it past her pucker and went inside where it was warm and snug, and he licked her for the taste, wanting the imprint of her scent on his taste buds.

"What's gonna happen next?" he asked, stopping his machinations for a second.

"What?"

"With Silas. What's gonna happen next?"

He wiggled his tongue back in, and she reflexively lifted her right foot off the floor and then set it back down. "You really wanna talk shop right now?" she asked, wondering why she needed to go home. Why did she have responsibilities that went beyond giving her butt to Tyler for the pampering?

Tyler interrupted himself and said, "It'll make you feel like you're not taking too long to go home."

Bonnie laughed, and he once again stretched her sphincter. She cut her laughing short so that she wouldn't inadvertently push him out. "Um. I'm not going after the cure anymore. Not for me and not for Elena, not for anyone, including Silas. Going after it is no longer on my terms. I wanted it on my terms. I could die for me. I could die for my mom. This feels really good," she said, caressing his head.

"Disturbing Silas or waking Him was incidental for me," she continued. "Now….me getting the cure is incidental. I'm not walking to my death for Him. It was one thing when He was still trapped and buried. But He's here, and….He doesn't need that spell broken, just like some people felt that I didn't need the cure."

Tyler swallowed her down, and kissed her right cheek, and stood.

"Did you even catch any of that?" Bonnie asked as she turned around, amused.

"I did," he answered seriously. "I'm sorry."
"I'm okay with it. I'm not happy about it, but after today I'm in a place where I just want to stop Him. I want to kill Him for...for the lie, for thinking He could use me. If the cure's still there after, then I'll go for it. If it isn't....I'll deal with it. Not getting it now isn't the huge disappointment that it would've been before. Things are different. I feel it now. My parents changed their minds," she shared with a soft smile.

"They did?"

"They did. They were with you. They still are, since I haven't told them it's over yet. I think seeing how affected I was by you being hurt, how sad I was, I think it helped them see everything I was dealing with and the importance of the cure. I think it drove your point, and my point, home."

"That's good. I'm-I'm really glad they changed their minds. We can still get the cure."

"Ty-"

"Bonnie, we can."

"I need you to be with me on this. Don't switch places with me now."

"I'm not. We've been on the same side since I realized how important it was to you. I'm not giving up. I'll bring it to you. You don't feel you need it anymore, but only going after the things you need isn't...a way of living. You should have what you want, too. That's what you told me: you want it all. I want you to have it all. So we're going to kill Silas, stop Him, and I'm going to bring you the cure. I can go to Capernaum by myself."

"No way. You're not going there by yourself. Besides, the tomb is spelled."

"I don't care. I'll figure something out. I'm with you on this, one hundred percent, but we can get the cure, too."

She smiled, his love making her feel light on her feet. "I promise that this isn't me....falling down. My life is still in danger. Maybe now more than ever. Silas is still the one that kills me, and He's closer than we've been thinking. I don't need to go to Israel to die. I can die right here. But it's not gonna happen the way He's planning. If I die, I will take Him with me."

Tyler nodded, flinching internally at her casual mention of dying, but he understood the sentiment. "I'm behind you one hundred percent," he repeated.

"Wait a second, didn't you say-" she cut herself off when she felt blood flow down her vaginal canal. "Hold on." She left Tyler and retreated back to the bathroom, very aware of his saliva in her butt. She closed the door and wiped her vagina and then got dressed.

"Didn't you say it's not good for a werewolf when the bond ends?" she asked when she came out of the bathroom.

Tyler had used the opportunity to dress himself, too. "I did."

Bonnie closed her eyes, guilt reaching for her. "We shouldn't have done it. You shouldn't have Marked me. If I die...."

Tyler worked his mouth and lowered his gaze.

"You didn't....you didn't do it as some....please tell me you didn't do it so that we could be Mates in my last days like some at least she was happy at the end stuff."
"I didn't do it because of that, but so what if I had? What would've been wrong with wanting to Mark you if these were your final days?"

"Because I don't wanna be with you for just a little while. I don't want being with you to be the last fun thing I do. I don't want you to be my last hurrah."

"I won't be."

"You don't know that. I'm not convinced that I'm gonna die, I promised you that I would have more hope, and I do, but considering the possibility is only realistic. What happens to a werewolf when their Mate dies?"

He hesitated.

"Tyler? What happens?"

Stretching his mouth, he answered, "It's painful, physically and emotionally. The emotional scar lasts longer, of course, and they usually don't recover. That's what it says in the caves."

"We rushed into this," she realized. "We shouldn't have done it. We should have waited."

"I don't feel that way."

"You shouldn't have Marked me until I was in the clear."

"Are you ever in the clear? There's danger around every corner."

"And we know that around this corner there's a God trying to kill me. My God, I don't wanna do this again," she said as Caroline's mocking words from the bathroom came back to her. She walked to the bed and sat down heavily.

"Do what?"

"Die. Get a boyfriend right when my life's about to end. It happened with Jeremy, and we never recovered. I don't want to be the girl you get with when the world's about to end."

"Wait a second, woah-where is this coming from?" he asked as he joined her on the bed.

Reluctantly, she said, "Caroline said it. She's not wrong."

"She must be if she's got you feeling like this."

"Tyler."

"Bonnie? I'm not with you because the world's about to end, or because you're gonna die, or anything else. I'm with you because I love you. Nothing's ending. We're going to win, just like we won with Klaus."

"I want us to be together for as long as we want to be, not with an expiration date. Damn it."

Frustrated, she shoved the towel on the bed and got up, covering her face as she paced away. Tyler got up and followed her. He walked around her so that he could face her, and he took her hands off of her face.

"I'm not your last hurrah," he promised.
When she raised her head and opened her eyes, they were Alpha-colored, and she blinked, surprised and literally seeing red. "You don't know that," she said. "Of course you're all positive right now. You're fresh off your victory over Klaus, not to mention the sex. I bet it's hard for anything to look bleak to you right now."

"I'm not Jeremy," he impressed upon her. "Your life being in danger wasn't what took you guys down. He cheated. His stupidity, my luck. Why do I feel like we got drunk and got married and now you're regretting it?"

"Are you—Did you just make a joke? I'm telling you about my track record with temporary happiness, and you're joking?" she asked, taking her hands out of his. Pacing away from him, she continued, "Something good can't happen to me without something worse happening at the same time. Here's a really cute Hybrid who likes you, but before that, how about a cure for your mom? Like that? Well, your funeral's coming soon. Here's Jeremy: he's into you. Yeah, go ahead and like him, love him, but don't forget the powerful Original you just might die trying to kill. That didn't work? You lived? Well, here are some ghosts to tear you apart. Oh, here's your mom. Get ready to get all those pent-up feelings off your chest. Kidding! She's a vampire now, and she has to leave to go take care of it, but you get to deal with the whole fucked up shit that surrounded that—"

As she ranted, Tyler remembered the effect that drinking his blood had on her. It made her energetic, pumped her adrenaline, fired her up. And her eyes had changed, which meant that she was especially feeling it now. An Alpha, Lena had called her. She was that, before he had ever marked her, before he had ever smelled her, perhaps when she'd had to reshape herself after her grandmother had died. She was a member of his pack, a very special member, the female Alpha, but a wolfette was what he called her in his mind now. It was silly, and he'd probably never tell her, but that was what he came up with as he watched her.

"But you're making jokes," Bonnie said as she rounded on him.

"I'm not making jokes," he said, his tone measured as he closed the distance between them. "I just don't want you to regret what we did."

"And I'm trying to get you to understand that I don't want to leave you crippled with pain if I die. We should've waited. We should've been thinking clearer."

"Your life's always in danger, Bonnie. Because you're always involved in something. So let me know when would've been the perfect, most safe time to Mark you, and let me know if what you're really realizing is that if you could have a do-over you would never have asked for it at all."

Bonnie's tongue froze in her mouth as she wondered if she was really leaning toward the second option. Her heart sank like a cinder block when Tyler's hurt at her failure to deny the claim rushed to her over the deepened bond.

Tyler was unprepared for how fiercely his emotions reached for her. Barely pulling himself together, he walked out of the room and left her with her hand on her chest.

Chapter End Notes

How about the first sentence of the next chapter? [Carol Lockwood peeked into the living room and saw through the other archway into the sitting room, where Klaus had tried to take her life.] And guess who's with Carol. :) See you then!
Carol Lockwood peeked into the living room and saw through the other doorway to the sitting room where Klaus had tried to take her life.

"You really did clean up. Caroline, you didn't have to do this. Tyler and I could've handled it. Or we could've handed it with you. You didn't have to do it alone."

"Super speed helped," Caroline said as she lugged Carol's duffel bag in addition to Tyler's two. She had insisted on carrying them. "I needed to keep busy."

Carol smiled over her shoulder. "We're gonna have to replace all of this stuff. But-

"Mom." Tyler's surprise preceded him, and then he walked into the women's view.

"Tyler! Oh my God. Oh my God, you're okay!" Carol exclaimed as she ran to him and swallowed him in a bear hug. "You're okay. Let me look at you. Look at you! Oh my God," she said, pulling him into a hug again.

Tyler hugged her close and closed his eyes, relaxing against her.

"What are you doing here?" Carol asked. "When did you come back?"

"What are you doing here?" Caroline asked. Flabbergasted, she looked in the direction from which he had come. The second floor. She and Carol had seen the car outside, and Carol had wondered about its owner. She had responded that it was Bonnie's, her stomach churning at the prospect that Bonnie had come to the house to dispose of Klaus' remains and she was about to walk in on it.

Instead, Tyler was in the house. And he looked like he had just stepped out of the shower. Resentment and hurt made quick work of her, and her lips narrowed so tightly that the blood drained from them. "Is Bonnie here?" she asked, her lips curling. "She's here, isn't she? Are you freaking serious? Hey, Bonnie!" she yelled suddenly, dropping the bags and moving closer to the middle of the foyer. "Bonnie, I know you're here! No need to hide like a coward! I can smell you out!"

To prove that fact, she stretched her nasal ability. And made a huge mistake. Soap and water do not stand against a vampire's sense of smell, and Stefan had once told her that her sense of hearing and smell were sharper than his had been when he'd first turned.

The blood that stained the bathtub, the blood that still nestled under the skin of Tyler's mouth, Bonnie's period, Tyler's blood on her mouth, the blood on his dick, his wrist, her neck, her ass, Tyler exuding more pheromones in the wake of the mating ritual, which gave him a stronger smell, he and Bonnie were walking olfactory evidence of their time together, and it all hit her so hard that she was confused at first about where it was all coming from. Then she slapped a hand over her mouth, her eyes widening.

And then she wanted to throw up, wishing she was smelling anything else, anything else. But the shock kept her traumatised in the plethora of scents.

"Are you serious?" she asked, her voice trembling with the bitter, familiar feeling of being put aside. "Are you freaking serious?"

To her continued shock, Tyler...looked pleased. She didn't mistake the mellowing of his lips, the mirth in his eyes, or the confident settling of his shoulders.
"You're fucking serious."

"What's going on?" Carol asked, frowning.

"He was having sex! He was having...sex, it's all over the house, it's all-

"We weren't in the house," Tyler insisted to his mother.

"Wow," Caroline said. "No shame. You just don't care. This is what he does now, Mrs. Lockwood. Something's going down, you're worried sick about him, his life is in danger, meanwhile he knows he's fine and out of the woods and instead of letting you know, sending out a call or a message, he chooses to take time to himself, let you worry, and spend it with Bonnie. What's the matter, were there no bathrooms available? I was completely wrong when I said you'd be the first person he'd come see when he got back," she said to Carol. "No, what Tyler does now when everyone's distracted and worried about him is find the nearest vertical surface so he can back Bonnie-"

"That's enough, Caroline. I'm sure you have somewhere to be that's nowhere near here," Tyler said.

"Ashamed?"

"Get out."

"Screw you."

Tyler walked up to her, grabbed her arm, and started dragging her toward the door.

"Get off me!" she yelled, trying to snatch her arm away, but he was a Hybrid and therefore beyond her strength.

But Tyler did let arm her go. "Get out."

"You're a piece of work," she said, her voice breaking much to her frustration. "In case you still don't get it, he's been cheating on me," she said to Carol, and then she stormed out of the house.

She grew more angry when the tears came on the other side of the door. It was like he legitimately didn't give a damn about her anymore. Did he give a damn about anything or anyone when Bonnie dangled herself in front of him? His mother almost died two nights ago, and here he was.

She'd gone from being his number one confident, the first person he turned to when he experienced anything, to this invisible person whom he couldn't even consider. She was having an existential crisis and quite possibly losing herself, and he was having...fun. They'd been under attack by two murderous Originals, and she'd walked in the bathroom to find that he'd taken the opportunity to spend some alone time with Bonnie.

It was one thing to correctly guess that he and Bonnie had possibly found themselves alone in another bathroom to definitely have sex on Friday. It was something completely different and crushing to fucking smell it on them. They'd shared blood, a lot of blood. She didn't need to see them fucking to know that that was exactly how the blood sharing had happened.

And then she remembered Bonnie's boast.

*Tyler's going to kill Klaus tonight. And after he does, he's going to kiss me*

*as soon as he can, he is going to take the time, just like he did after Kol attacked? And he's going to give me more....thorough....kisses*
As the car idled, she stared at the second floor of the mansion, and she hated Bonnie. She hated her for being right, hated her for knowing Tyler whereas it seemed like she had been getting him all wrong for the past couple of months, she hated Bonnie for being her friend, hated her for making things change, and she hated her for being in the damn house.

Shifting into reverse, she backed out, and then she rounded to leave the property. She turned on the car's bluetooth and instructed, "Call Stefan." She squeezed the wheel when his voicemail came on. "Can you please call me as soon as you can? I'm having a bad night."

She then dialed Elena. Her voicemail came on, too, and she left a message. "Hey, it's me. I'll take you up on that offer to talk now. Or maybe not. Maybe I'll find Matt."

She disconnected the call and drove straight-

It occurred to her that Klaus was probably the only person who would listen to her right now. Stefan and Elena were unreachable, and Matt was probably working. She could call Klaus, and even if he told her that he was busy, she would simply keep talking and he would listen. He would be frustrated, but he would listen. Or, she would make her disappointment at the fact that he was brushing her off very clear in her tone, and she would say, "Okay. Sure," and hang up, and he would call her right back, because he wouldn't want to miss out on her actually wanting to talk to him. He had been a good listener the day of the pageant.

But Klaus was dead.

So maybe going to his house would have to be enough.

But then she remembered Bonnie's psychic abilities. She was still supposed to convince her to tell everyone about Silas and Shane tomorrow. She wanted to say screw it and go to the house anyway, but she wasn't enough of a risk-taker to go surround herself with Klaus' energy the night before she was set to talk to Bonnie.

So she drove straight….home.

Inside of the Lockwood home, Carol was eyeing Tyler as he locked the front door. "What was that about? Is Bonnie here?" she asked.

"She was," he lied as he walked toward the bags and picked them up.

"Caroline said that's her car in the driveway."

"Yeah, she's about to leave," he amended.

Carol narrowed her eyes, and the corners of Tyler's mouth stiffened uncomfortably in response to being caught in his lie. "How are you holding up?" he asked.

Carol allowed the distraction. She was too relieved to see him, and in perfect health, too. He looked refreshed and beautiful, like he'd never known a day of fighting in his life. She lightened his load, taking one bag, and she wrapped her free arm around his and leaned her head against his. "I'm better now," she responded.

They went up the stairs, and Tyler steered her to her room. He told her how everyone else was doing, and he even told her a little bit about the fight, hoping that Bonnie would take the chance to sneak out of his room, down the stairs, and out of the door.
Bonnie did exactly that, escaping from the bedroom as soon as the coast was clear. She could've descended the stairs and faced Carol, but this option was so much better, so much easier. She'd heard what Caroline had said, having opened the door to listen, and then Caroline had helpfully raised her voice. Going down wouldn't have done her any favors where Carol was concerned, and she quite possibly might've cussed Caroline out.

When she made it to her house, she was swallowed into Rudy's hug. "Finally," he said, managing to sound more impatient than relieved.

Still, he squished her, and her arms hung helplessly at her sides. She smiled, definitely glad that she'd taken a shower. She had taken her ponytail down after the shower and shaken the tiny pines and dirt out before redoing it.

"I'm fine, dad," she wheezed, careful to keep her teeth clenched and her mouth as closed as possible. As soon as she was released, Abby took her, and she chuckled.

"We were worried sick," Abby said. "Why didn't you just come home?"

"I'm going to explain everything."

She actually got to use her arms to reciprocate when Lucy hugged her.

"I need to, um," she said, strategically placing a hand in front of her mouth. "I need to go upstairs and put the necklace away. I'll be back." She ducked away and went upstairs to brush her teeth and change her clothes.

When she returned to the living room, she was surprised to see Tyler there. Rudy was telling him that they were glad that he'd recovered.

"Skimp on the details, dad," Bonnie said, a little embarrassed. She looked at Tyler and found him smiling at the fact that she'd been gloomy because of him. "I thought you were leaving," she said.

"Not yet," Tyler answered.

Bonnie hoped that she would get a chance to explain her earlier ramblings before he left. She definitely didn't regret the Mark. But she felt that she had a point. How the hell was she supposed to be okay with him being in agonizing physical and emotional if she died? It wasn't unreasonable for her to want him to understand her dilemma. She was positive that if the roles were reversed….She made a mental note to remind him that he'd broken every bone in his body today just to make sure that she was okay.

When she expanded her attention to everyone else in the room, she saw that their brief staring at each other had garnered them three captivated onlookers. Her father, mother, and Lucy were playing a three-way ping pong, looking from her, to Tyler, and to the other adult of their choice to confirm that something…extra...was happening.

Bonnie was breathtaking, not just the stunning she'd been the day that Abby and Lucy had come to Mystic Falls, and Tyler….well, he almost matched her.

But there was something else, something more, something still forming, something that teased Lucy's third eye and tickled Abby's nose and even nagged at Rudy's common sense. Having been in the
supernatural world for more than a decade, he knew there was a reason why both teenagers looked...sharply inhuman.

"Can everyone have a seat please?" Bonnie asked, hoping to steer their throughs away from wherever they were heading.

Tyler explicitly avoided looking in Abby's direction, now very nervous about being in the same room as both her and Bonnie. He had come over in order to support Bonnie when she told her family about Silas and her putting a fork in the search for the cure. Now, suddenly, his life was in danger, because if Abby found out—and if Rudy found out—what had kept Bonnie in the woods, Bonnie wouldn't have to worry about the impact that her death would have on him. Her parents would surely kill him.

Caroline smelling their sex had been annoying but more than a little gratifying. Bonnie's mother smelling it?

He sat as far away from Abby as possible, walking behind the couch to take a seat on the solo chair. Abby sat in the same chair she'd occupied during his meeting yesterday, crossing her arms and legs attentively, and Lucy and Rudy took the couch.

Bonnie positioned herself in front of the audience and began. "Okay. So. I didn't kill Shane. I told Kim to tell you that. Uh. I realized when I was there and hurting him that it would be more advantageous to us if we tripped Silas up by lying to Him rather than by killing one of His minions. And...it was during the drive from Whitmore that I realized that...Shane is Silas."

Tyler looked at the family and waited for them to react.

Abby uncrossed her legs and leaned forward. "What?"

"He's Silas."

She finally went over, in detail, what she learned from April the day before, and then she took them back to the moment the lightning storm had happened. "How Silas could've possibly channeled me that day is less of a mystery if He's been here all along. He's not fully powered, because Qetsiyah stripped Him. But His spirit must've escaped somehow, or...was rescued. Shane did say— I mean—He did say that He has all types of worshippers, including witches."

"Like the twelve who sacrificed themselves," Lucy realized.

"Yes. I'm calling off the search for the cure. Um..." Looking at her parents, she said, "You guys will never know how much it means to me that you changed your mind. I know it wasn't easy. I know it was a risk, but you decided that it was a risk you were willing to take, and that's...it's everything to me. But I'm not gonna die to give Silas His powers or His body. He wants me dead, and that changes everything. I'm not dying for anything that I don't want. So let's plan out how we're going to beat Him."

"You're still in danger," Rudy said pensively. "Isn't she?" he asked Lucy.

"I didn't see a location for the death. Trust me, Abby asked me enough times. I just saw her head to the side, her eyes opened and lifeless, some blood on her mouth. I've tried to have the vision again, but no luck."

"You're still in danger," Abby said. "That's the point you've been trying to get across to us, right? This is your life. You just wanted to at least get something in return by finding the cure. You're leaving it alone now, but...we might still lose you."
Bonnie didn't say anything. There was nothing to say. Her point was playing out.

"Part of the plan was to save Bonnie," Tyler said. "Remember that. It's just that the location has changed from Capernaum to Mystic Falls."

Abby nodded and sat back in the chair, crossing her legs.

"Okay, so what we're thinking about going forward are ways to stop or stall Silas," Bonnie said officially as she began to pace. "First option is figuring out where His third duodecad is going to be and stopping it."

"Useless option," Lucy said with a frown. "If they're supernatural, like the witches, there might be no point. He's probably, no not probably, He's been planning this for years. If He can channel you through some herbs and incense, then He's developed enough power to manage Himself without the full set of duodecads. Trying to stop the third sacrifice could be a waste of time."

"The sacrifices are probably not about managing Himself," Abby said. "The day of the storm, He chose to channel Bonnie's powers rather than the sacrifices. They're for whatever He's planning to get His powers back."

"The third duodecad could be like me and the pack," Tyler offered. "Completely innocent. He's had an inside person involved in every sacrifice so far: He had Hayley trying to lead us to our deaths; He had pastor Young before that; the twelve witches were all inside people. Maybe we can look for the third inside person?"

"Without a personal object, that would take a long time, if it even worked at all. Hold on a sec," Bonnie said.

"What are you doing?" Rudy asked when she started to bounce her curved right hand as she walked.

"Counting. April's an inside person, and we know she has it out for us because of her dad," she said to Tyler. "I'm trying to figure out how many of us there are."

"You think April's trying to kill us?" Tyler asked incredulously.

"Hey, don't doubt her. Okay, Caroline, Elena, Jeremy, Matt, you, me, Damon, Stefan. That's eight. The question is, do they have four more people that we don't know about?"

"We can kill April," Abby said. "That was an earlier idea. The problem is that He can just replace her."

"April replaced Hayley, I'm guessing," Tyler said. "But Silas called Klaus directly to get him to kill us. April hasn't tried to get close to me or any of us. So her function is still pending."

"Right," Rudy said. "What function could a human girl possibly have? Why would He replace a werewolf with a mortal? Why put her smack dab in the middle of powerful people who can tear her apart if they want?"

"Because she was primed for His influence?" Bonnie asked, not believing her own explanation, but she said it out loud anyways to empty her mind for the next idea.

"Actually," Lucy said, leaning forward on the couch, "Primed is not a bad word. You said that the man from the first sacrifice, Pastor Young, is April's father, right?"

"Yeah," Bonnie answered.
"What if Silas had His sights on her all along? What if she didn't necessarily replace Hayley? What if He led her father to his death and then waited for the opportunity to prey on her?"

"When Damon confronted Shane about being connected to the explosion, he told him that Pastor Young was a colleague and that he'd counseled him after his wife died. Which means He would have known about April."

"Do you know when a mortal is more useful than a witch, or Hybrid, or anyone? When they can access something that the rest of us can't. When a witch, which Silas is, wants to protect an asset, usually a weapon, they make sure that only a mortal is allowed to touch it."

"Like the daggers," Bonnie remembered.

"Wait a second, hold on," Tyler cut in, shaking his head. "We should probably go back to April trying to kill all of us, because if you're telling me that you think her function is to wield the weapon that kills Bonnie? Bonnie can wipe the floor with her. She can literally speak her out of existence."

"I'm just saying-" Lucy tried.

"Silas wouldn't need a weapon to kill Bonnie," Rudy said.

"But we just said that He doesn't have His full powers," Lucy said. "I'm not saying that April definitely kills her-"

"Silas doesn't have His full powers, but He does have power," Bonnie reminded them. "Him channeling me instead of the sacrifices just means that He didn't want to taint the power base. What He's planning is so big that I literally found out about it while I was possessed by a Spirit. He has the power to kill me. But who said He was going to do it fast? The three of us, the four of us," she amended to include her father, "Know that the most powerful spells require a lot of preparation, or they have many steps, or they have both."

"We needed both for Klaus," Tyler said.

"Exactly," Bonnie said, turning to him. "So my death could involve both Silas and April."

Tyler set his lips in a dangerous line. The next time he saw April, he was going to scratch her face out of existence.

"Okay, so April could be involved because of a weapon," Abby continued. "Or, maybe and, she could be part of the spell without even knowing it. Human sacrifice, anyone? Those are always great for breaking powerful spells."

"Wait, wouldn't that mean that Qetsiyah killed someone for her spell?" Tyler asked.

Bonnie flashed him such an impressed smile that he almost forgot his train of thought.

"You're catching on," she said.

He didn't lose his train of thought, but he did lose his voice, a notable occurrence that made Bonnie's family smile.

"Another possibility is that He wants to trade April's life for that woman He loved, the one Qetsiyah killed?" he continued, trying to get back on the path of contributing to the discussion. "Or maybe He wants to put her in April's body."
"Great," Bonnie said. "Dealing with Silas is enough. I don't want Him reviving any past affiliations."

"Except Qetsiyah," Lucy said. "Trying to reach her is a worthwhile idea, I think," Lucy said, her eyes on Abby.

"I'm for all ideas right now," Abby said.

"Going back to Lucy's idea that there could be some kind of special weapon that only a mortal can hold," Bonnie continued. "Silas has a tombstone, His tombstone. He told me, back when He was Shane, that He got it from His ex father-in-law. Who knows if that's true, but the point is He has it. Maybe that's the weapon. But He has it, so that should mean He can touch it. He brought it to the exhibit a couple of months ago. But I never really saw Him touch it. Not that I was watching out for that. And I don't remember whether or not He touched it when He was making the presentation."

"He wouldn't let Bonnie touch it," Tyler told the family.

"I felt like it was calling to me," Bonnie elaborated. "Kind of like a pull. I think there's Bennett blood or Bennett magic in it, just like the swords."

"Now wait a minute," Rudy said. "Why would Silas create a weapon that He can't touch? Maybe it's something Qetsiyah created, something that went along with the spell, something that He may need April to remove or push."

"My guess is all hell's gonna break loose when He starts that ritual," Tyler said, "Bigger than what you guys said Klaus' ascension was like," he said to Bonnie. "He's gonna be wielding power then, so if He's still gonna need little 'ole April to hold or push something, all the power He'll have must be completely useless against that thing."

"Wait a second, you're making me think of something," Bonnie said, her heart rate quickening. "Qetsiyah killed Silas' lover, if there ever was a lover, stripped Him of His powers, and buried Him alive. What are the chances she left it at that? She buried Him alive. And He was already a God, a God with followers, followers that probably included witches even back then. What if Qetsiyah did a couple more spells, say….spells that kept witches from casting spells on the grave, from entering the grave?"

"That would explain why His soul was rescued and not the full package," Lucy said, her eyes brightening.

"Why wouldn't Qetsiyah make sure the soul can't leave either?" Tyler asked. "And if they were able to get the soul, then they did cast spells on the grave."

"Typically when witches entomb people, they cast the spell on the body," Abby explained. "We don't figure that someone will save the soul, because they usually don't. I casted my entombment spell on Mikael Mikaelson's body, his person. If you restrict a spell too much, then it stops being a spell, and it doesn't work. Because the bottom line is that you can't restrict the elements to your complete liking."

Tyler nodded, knowing that all too well. Werewolves couldn't restrict their element, the moon, at all, let alone to their exact liking.

"As for casting spells on the grave," Abby continued, "They must've found a loophole. And it must've taken years, centuries even. If the people who saved Him didn't extend their lives to do it, which witches can do," she said to Bonnie, mistakenly thinking that she didn't know that, "Then this must've been a multi-generational deal."
"So let's say Qetsiyah casted a power nullification spell to keep witches from rescuing Silas and to keep every supernatural from being able to get to him, which is something I would do," Lucy began, "I'd do it too," Bonnie said.

"Me too," Abby confirmed.

"Which means all the supers in Silas' arsenal are useless to Him," Lucy continued, smiling at her family. "Which means He needs April to go where His powers and their powers can't: the grave."

"This is all assuming we've guessed right," Bonnie tempered.

"How about you try to get in her head again," Rudy suggested. "See if you can confirm any of this."

"I left her passed out in the bathroom yesterday. She's probably gone squealing to Silas by now. She might be under His protection."

"That reminds me of something," Rudy said. "Be careful how you get in His way. If that incense is still active, then He has a direct link to your head, and He can attack you again and make sure you're powerless and out of His way until He's ready to..." He couldn't bring himself to say it.

"Well, I wore a lapis crystal today, and...it protected me from the herbs in His apartment. The last time I was there, with Tyler, my head swam when I got out, and I almost passed out. This time, nothing happened."

"So you can wear the necklace for protection," Tyler said, relieved to have one thing that would protect her without anyone needing to be with her.

"Uh...maybe. It has a little...side effect where it makes whoever I'm talking to tell the truth."

The room waited for the pivotal reason why she was hesitant to wear the necklace. She lifted her shoulders, silently asking what they wanted from her.

"Bonnie, I don't care what the necklace does to anyone else. If it keeps you safe, you're gonna wear it," Abby said, frowning in bewilderment. She looked at Rudy and silently asked, did she really just consider not wearing protection? Even Lucy looked confused.

Rudy sighed tiredly and rolled his eyes from Abby to Bonnie.

"Okay, fine!" Bonnie pleaded, holding her hands up in surrender and conceding to all of the judgment. "I'll wear the necklace."

Tyler grinned, thoroughly enjoying the fact that others scratched their head at the risks she sometimes took, too. Bonnie saw him and narrowed her eyes. He wasn't phased.

"So let's talk killing Silas," Bonnie continued, making a show out of ignoring him. "Or maybe just destroying the body. I bet there's still a link between walking Silas and buried Silas. We'd probably need to be in Capernaum for that. Or...I'm thinking the tombstone would be the perfect object to channel," she said to Tyler, a twinkle in her eyes. "Or actually?" she continued as the idea rearranged itself in her head, "Why not just destroy the tombstone itself? He told me that it's kept in the school. He had no reason to lie to me about that, so He must not have minded me going to see it."

"Yeah, but that's different from you taking it or even being able to touch it. It'd be in some glass-" Tyler cut himself off when he felt Bonnie's power move inside of him. His face transformed, and he put a furry hand over his teeth.
Bonnie's eyebrows rose to her hairline as her soul exited her body in alarm.

Tyler tried to reverse the change, but Bonnie's powers pushed back.

"Are you alright?" Rudy asked.

"Yeah, excuse-Ah!" He shut his eyes tight when his corneas suddenly burned fiery hot.

Bonnie headed for him but stopped in her tracks when he opened his eyes. Flames burned in his irises. He squeezed his eyes shut and then the same black vines that had been running through her body earlier dashed up his arms to disappear on his neck.

"I'll be back. Sorry," he said, his hand covering his eyes. The pain had gone as soon as it had come, but he didn't feel stable, so he left the room and ran up the stairs.

Bonnie turned to her audience, and they looked to her for an answer. Just to emphasize the fact, Rudy asked, "What just happened?"

"I have...no idea," Bonnie answered faintly, gulping hard. "So the tombstone."

Abby frowned. Bonnie's acceptance of not knowing why Tyler, whom she's been vocal about caring for, was in pain didn't make sense. It didn't make sense to her, it didn't make sense to Rudy, and it didn't make sense to Lucy. But it was Abby who remembered that Bonnie's green eyes had once changed to golden yellow, it was she who considered that perhaps what had afflicted Bonnie then, afflicted Tyler now. It was Abby who put two and two together and remembered that Tyler was a werewolf with the extremely rare ability to feed people that werewolf blood.

Upstairs in Bonnie's bathroom, Tyler gripped the sink and gritted his mutated teeth together. His temperature rose through the roof. The flames were still in his eyes, and his face looked like Bonnie's had earlier. His claws came out without his meaning them to, and he desperately hoped that he wouldn't shift and rip his clothes.

But then he cooled down. Gradually, his eyes shifted back, his claws retracted, and then he felt a chilly breeze on the back of his neck. He swatted at it, not knowing what was causing it. He tensed when he felt something start to form there, behind his neck, slowly, meticulously, right under his skin, lifting his skin and disturbing the smoothness.

He felt a line start in the middle of the left side of the back of his neck and run down to his shoulders, and then he felt a second line stretch horizontally from the top of the first one, it curved suddenly, looped, and curved again. The end point curved up and then went straight down, and the process began again, a vertical line, a horizontal line that quickly swooped in a curve, a loop, and another curve.

He knew it was done when the breeze disappeared and the temperature in that spot rose to its normal level. He closed his palm over his neck and felt the raised scars. He outlined them with his middle finger, following the steps of formation. BB

His cheeks trembled when he smiled. A witch could Mark an Alpha. At least, one who was a Hybrid.

"Hopefully Silas' very mortal body will keep Him down long enough for us to get a couple of things done. Like cleansing the death sites," Bonnie said downstairs. "Will it affect His mojo?" she asked Abby.
"Uh," Abby attempted, trying to get her mind away from wondering why Bonnie had been drinking Tyler's blood on Friday. Maybe he'd healed her. Yes. She had been attacked by an Original. "It will weaken His base, but it won't be by much. Stopping the third sacrifice would make the biggest difference, like you guessed earlier, but, like Lucy pointed out, He might have a hundred backup sacrifices lined up. Cleansing the sites and banishing the spirits to the OtherSide will make it a lot harder for Him to pull the energies back to what they were."

"Then we'll do that," Bonnie said. "Anything that gets in His way. So we can do that tomorrow: me here, you guys in Eden, because I also need you guys to leave. Before you argue, I need you to be my backup. I've only gone up against one witch, and he ended up taking my powers. I need you, Lucy, to be able to swoop in and get me out if I fall in a hole. Actually, maybe I should take care of the site in Eden-"

"No, Bonnie," Lucy objected.

"If the cleansing doesn't work, I don't want the witches telling Him about another witch-"

"You can't hide us forever," Lucy pointed out. "And you need to be practical. Eden is three hours away. I can take care of it. I have gone up against a few witches before."

Bonnie and Abby looked at each other and thought the same thing: this would be a lot easier if Abby was a witch, too. Abby was the first to break eye contact.

"Dad, I need you out of town, too," Bonnie said. "This isn't me hiding anything, this is me protecting you."

"Who's gonna stay here with you?"

Tyler came down the stairs, and all eyes turned to him. He'd heard the last of what Bonnie had said, followed by Rudy's question.

"I'll be here by myself," Bonnie said to her father.

No one in the family believed her. Rudy was staring impassively at Tyler. Now he was as stunning as Bonnie.

"Uh," Tyler said. "I can look after her. I mean, I can check in on her. Come over and check in on her. And then leave."

Abby kept her focus on him. Lucy pursed her lips, trying not to smile.

"It's better if no one's here with me, dad," Bonnie said softly. "Especially you. I'm gonna fight," she promised.

"And she has us," Tyler reminded them. "Okay, even if you guys aren't here, we can still talk about how we're gonna save her."

When the conversation was over, Rudy asked to speak to Tyler.

When they were outside, Rudy put his hands in his pockets and exhaled into the cool, windy air. When he didn't say anything for what felt like a minute, Tyler spoke. "She's not going anywhere. I'm gonna do everything in my power to protect her."

"And your pack?"
"I can't involve them, Sir. I did what I did to free them from Klaus, to free them from danger."

"But you're their Alpha. You're all supposed to be-

"That's not what we are. A lot of them are going home, and we haven't really talked about….where the pack goes from here. I'd prefer it if-if they just went home. I scraped by to protect them from Klaus. I can't guarantee the same against a God who can reach across towns. I promise that I will do everything in my power to protect Bonnie."

"I believe you," Rudy said, looking at him. "And I want you to be safe doing it. Like you said, you scraped by Klaus, though I think you're selling yourself short, based on the little I've heard from Bonnie."

"I really appreciate what she did."

Rudy exhaled a chuckle. "She's an amazing girl. Stubborn. A bull. I swear I saw it in her before she ever came close to developing her powers. There's this way that she holds her mouth when she disagrees with what you're telling her. She got it from me. And her grandmother. And her mother. My whole side of the-basically, the girl was doomed from the start.

I'm glad you're gonna be here for her, Tyler. I know she has her mom and Lucy, but I'll feel a lot better if there's someone here with her. It helps me rest a little easier to hear that you want to do it. What I don't need, what she doesn't need, is distraction. I don't want you here distracting her. Now correct me if I've completely misread the situation, but you're interested in her. And last time I checked, you were heavily involved with the Sheriff's daughter."

"That's over," Tyler said simply. "My feelings for her changed a long time ago. I meant what I said yesterday. I'm in love with Bonnie. And she knows it. I told her. She loves me, too. I'm not here to distract her. Far from it. I'm not gonna….sugarcoat it: some of the things you're thinking, the main thing you're probably thinking, are probably correct. We didn't happen….cleanly….but we did happen legitimately. I stand behind it, and so does she. I love her, and I can't get enough of her. I'm not gonna break her heart."

"You can't promise me something like that," Rudy said.

Tyler suddenly wondered how the hell he and Bonnie were going to break it to her family that they'd Marked each other and made a cosmic commitment. Something told him that her family was not going to be happy. If Bonnie was questioning the commitment not even two hours after it had been sealed, then her family was definitely going to be resistant to the idea.

And now he wondered how likely she was to help him defend their decision as opposed to agreeing with her family.

"You can certainly feel it," Rudy continued, compromising a bit, "But you can't promise me you won't break her heart, and I'm not sure how I feel about you promising it to her."

Tyler suddenly felt like he was at the bottom of a very deep hole and looking up at Rudy.

"She's gotten her heart broken before, and I'm sure that boy would've told me back then that he had no intention of hurting her."

"I have nothing in common with him," he said, his neck growing stiff.

"You're both young," Rudy countered, and Tyler tightened his lips. "God willing, you both have a long future ahead of you. Just…do your best to respect what she's giving you. Do your absolute best
"So far you seem to be as dedicated to being there for her as she is to you. That whole thing earlier today with you trying to shift back to your human form to get to her despite the risk…." Rudy nodded in approval, not seeing the need to finish his thought. "I know that werewolves are big on gut instinct and emotion, and yours are geared toward Bonnie's best interests so far."

"They are," he nodded, burning with offense at his bond being questioned and belittled.

Bonnie, Abby, and Lucy migrated to Bonnie's room, where the younger witch summoned the swords from beneath her bed.

"If I'm going to antagonize Silas, then I can't be sitting on these," she said.

"You should at least keep one," Lucy said. "Bennetts, one, Hunters, zilch, remember?"

Bonnie noticed that her cousin's smile was strained. Although her parents have been more vocal about it, she knew that Lucy was just as worried about her coming out on the other side of this. After all, she was the one who'd had the vision. She was the only one who knew what her death looked like.

She grabbed the renovated sword from the lineup and made it stand in front of her. "I'll take this one: Jeremy's."

"Now the Hunters aren't a bad idea," Abby considered. "All hands on deck, right? There couldn't be a better time to find out what they're made of. I mean the Guy that they're supposed to kill is walking around doing what He pleases. So, how about Lucy summons them using the swords? Especially if the swords do belong to a specific Hunter. It would mean that we have a personal item of theirs. If the summoning slash locator spell works, then we're in business."

"I'm all for it," Lucy said.

"Uh, and if they don't know that they're Hunters yet?" Bonnie asked, and the hope in the plan was sucked out of the room. "Just being realistic."

"Well, they'll get a crash course on their destiny. And I'm not a patient teacher when I'm stressed. They'll need to catch up quick and ask as few questions as possible," Lucy said.

Abby grinned. Standing so close to Bonnie, she lifted her left hand and began to separate the hair hanging out of her ponytail. "I don't think we should leave. I think we should stay here."

"Silas knowing you're here means Silas-He knows about you," she remembered. "He hypnotized me months ago. At the time, He'd sold it to me as some spiritual treatment. I was hypnotized for hours, and apparently He got me to tell Him everything about my life. He knows that you're a vampire."

"Which means He can still use me against you."

"Yeah, but it won't be the first option if He keeps thinking that you're just a regret, not someone who's actually in my life right now. Same goes for you," she told Lucy. "Maybe He got me to say that I met you once, but that was a long time ago. If He knows we're working together, then He can get in the way of you guys helping me. He can stop you from saving me."
"Don't worry, Teetee, Tyler's gonna stop by every night. You heard him," Lucy teased.

Bonnie turned to Abby, and her mother admonished her with a single look. "He's gonna stop by during the day," Bonnie assured her.

"I don't think she was born yesterday," Lucy said helpfully.

"Are you serious right now?" Bonnie asked her.

Lucy made herself comfortable on the bed, a mocking smile on her face.

"Mom, nothing's...." Lying probably wasn't wise.

"What came over him earlier?" Abby asked.

Bonnie's stomach pooled at her feet. "I don't know." Then she realized how close Abby was standing to her scar. Why hadn't she worn a turtleneck?!

Because that would've been suspicious. The house wasn't turtleneck-cold. "You guys, I'm gonna be fine," she said, her body growing hot. Because Lucy was psychic. If they stayed on the Tyler topic-

"I know that you two have and deal with a level of responsibility that other kids your age can't fathom," Abby said, pursuing the Tyler topic, "But I know that at the end of the day, you are two hormonal young adults, hormones, I might add, that are also operating on a level that is higher than normal kids. Werewolves are very physical, and it's possible for you to channel his....arousal."

"Mom. Tyler's a Hybrid. He has perfect control." When Abby slowly cocked her head, she realized how that sounded. "You know what I mean."

"Please behave yourselves with decency and respect-"

"Mom!"

"Bonnie, I don't want you to get so into each other and so...busy that you take your eyes off of what's important."

"That is not gonna happen! Can we please focus on the swords and the Hunters?" she asked, with a wary eye on Lucy.

"Not on purpose," Abby said, as if Bonnie had only said the first part. "But it might happen, and I want you to keep your eyes open. And make sure that....whatever....happened to him earlier....make sure that...it doesn't happen to you. No more drinking his blood."

Bonnie's eyes bulged, her mouth dropping open. She might as well confess her activities to Lucy, because at the rate her mother was going....!

"You don't need your powers acting up," Abby said pointedly. "I don't need to know the details, but your eyes were yellow on Friday, and maybe that time was necessary-"

"We need to go. Now. Downstairs," Bonnie said, crossing in front of Abby.

"I'm just trying-"

"It's fine. I'm okay," she said, turning around and backing towards the door.

"I want you to know-"
"I do."

"Bonnie-"

"I'm leaving." She bumped into the doorframe and wished the OtherSide would take her. She'd at least be free from this conversation.

"You need to know what happens to your powers when you! Have sex," she finished quietly, her shoulders slumping. Bonnie had escaped.

"That was...the most beautiful thing I've ever seen," Lucy said.

"I completely fumbled it," Abby said, shocked at herself. "I never thought the conversation would happen like this. Of all the times I imagined teaching her things over the years...I thought I was better than this."

"You were talking to your estranged daughter about witch sex with an Alpha Hybrid who just might be drinking her blood. I think you did fine," she said with a casual shrug of a shoulder.

"Did you see his eyes earlier?" Abby asked conspiratorially, lowering her voice as she moved closer to the bed. "They were on fire. I swear she did something to him."

"Yeah, I feel like they have something going on. You see how they look, right?"

"Like they're too good for the cover of a magazine?"

"I've never seen anything like it."

"Me neither."

"I'm trying not to think about it, because I don't want to know my cousin that well."

"I just feel like there's a lot she doesn't know. A lot that both don't know. A lot that we don't know. There's no blueprint for a Hybrid, and if he's biting her on a regular basis, feeding from her-"

"Okay, that's too close! Let's just hope she comes to us if they hit any bumps."

"Oh, don't say bumps."

Lucy frowned.

"It makes me think of bump and grind," she explained, grimacing.

Lucy raised her eyes to the ceiling.

Bonnie was grateful when her father and Tyler entered the house two minutes after she hit the living room. The last thing she needed was for her mother to follow her in hopes of continuing the conversation. It would be one thing if her and Tyler were having regular sex. But they weren't. They were having bloody, public bathroom, magical, dick-riding, woods, period sex, not to mention the butt licking, and her mother wanted to talk about it while her aurally gifted...boyfriend...surely he was her boyfriend now...was standing outside.

And Lucy was in the room, ready to receive a psychic hit at any moment, and if she lived and managed to give her mom the cure, the total of family members always on the verge of learning too much information about her sex life would go up to two.
Surely there was a way for a witch to have a healthy, active, adventurous sex life without her equally witchy family stumbling onto the details.

It was a good thing that Tyler's mother was normal, at least. She didn't have to worry about anyone from his side smelling anything. Although...Kim and Adrian had acted very suspiciously that day in Whitmore.

She expelled a small sigh of relief when Tyler walked in in front of her father. The relief hit Tyler through the bond, and he raised his eyebrows at her. She shook her head. And then she saw how troubled he looked. But when she knitted her brows together in question, he shook his head.

Her eyes flitted to her father, who was locking the door, and she wondered what he'd said to him. She wanted to take Tyler outside for a private conversation. She didn't know what had sent him running up the stairs, though she figured her blood had played a part, that had been her fire power in his eyes, and now he was upset, and they needed to finish the conversation that had started in his bedroom.

She got her chance when Abby and Lucy returned to the first floor. They all idled. There was nothing more to say for now as far as the meeting went, so she took Tyler by the hand, and they went outside. She took him down the porch and went to her left, stopping when she reached the side of the house. Thinking better of it, she went a little farther, deeper in the shadows. And she backed him against the house.

"What's going on?" she asked, her hands resting on his chest.

"Nothing."

Bonnie blinked hard. "You're hiding your feelings now?"

"Your dad thinks I might break your heart. He's worried. Thinks this is some frivolous...thing. Which only makes sense, I mean...it's normal. He even compared me to Jeremy after I told him I wouldn't hurt you, said that Jeremy would've said the same thing back then."

"You and Jeremy aren't alike."

"He has no guarantees about that. And, honestly, neither do you."

If she hadn't already known the reason behind the steel in his voice, the last statement would've told her: he was still ticked off by what she'd said.

"Okay. You're upset," she said, rubbing his chest. "I want you to tell me how to be okay with leaving you crippled forever if I die. I love you beyond myself, Tyler. I want you to be happy even when I'm not there. I don't want to hurt you, but that's exactly what's gonna happen because of the Mark."

"I would've been hurt regardless because of the bond, because our bond is strong enough to become a Mark. Because you're my Mate. You didn't become it because of the Mark, I was able to Mark you because you are. Are you kidding me? I was doomed the moment we connected. Every part of this is serious, Bonnie."

"Doomed, that's an interesting word choice," she said. She removed her hands from his chest and walked away from him.

"I used it, because that's what you think."
"No, it's perfect, because that's what you are," she said, turning to face him and crossing her arms. "Only you don't seem to realize it, or you swear you aren't, which just makes me feel….it's the same thing with you being positive that I'm gonna make it….

"What about it?"

"Maybe it's not just the sex, maybe you're really one hundred percent sure that I'm gonna make it, and if that's the case? You're in Lala Land, which means you're not getting this. You wanna talk about serious? Every part of my life is serious, Tyler, and if you're in Lala Land about that, then it means that one day you're gonna crash. One day, you're gonna wake up and realize that it's hard. One day you're gonna wake up, and realize that….that you made a mistake," she said, tearing up. "Something is wrong if there isn't a single part of you that questions the fact that you Marked me. Because not to bring up another comparison, but Jeremy was positive about my life, too. Everything about me was cool and awesome and worth it, until I was the only thing standing between Klaus and this town. Then all of a sudden a dead vampire was the better option.

Sometimes there's a Klaus, and I need to channel one hundred witches and possibly die. Sometimes there's a God. Sometimes I slave away on coffins, trying to defeat Klaus. Sometimes I'm put in a trance and made to feed the ultimate vampire. Sometimes I fail to save you."

"What was that like?" he asked curiously. "When you didn't get back to me in time."

"I tried not to think about it. You were alive, more or less. Caroline was happy, relieved. The next time I saw you, you looked fine. I even heard that you were happy to be a Hybrid. I thought something might be wrong there, but….if you were fine with it, then it was one less thing for me to worry about. I still needed to kill Klaus."

Tyler nodded. He slid down against the house and squatted, resting his arms on his thighs, his fingers loosely interlaced. "There isn't a single part of me that questions the Mark," he said steadily. "Then you haven't been in my circle long enough to get it."

"You don't understand what this feels like," he argued, pushing against the house to stand and walking to her. "You don't have something like this. The Mark is important to me. It's absolute, and it's never wrong. It comes from the deepest part inside of me. It comes from my subconscious. It's the most vigilant part of my instinct, choosing the person who's supposed to go through all of this with me. You know what it says on that wall? Someone in my ancestor's pack ended up killing someone because his ass got overzealous and mistook a good bond for something that was Mark-worthy. He scratched a girl up, and she bled out and died. That's how serious it is. You cannot heal a scratch that was meant to Mark someone as your mate forever. So when you ask me to question it, you're asking me to doubt a part of myself that looks out for me in a way that I can't even control. Do you understand that?"

"Yes," Bonnie replied dutifully.

Tyler scrubbed his face. They were gridlocked.

"I don't regret the Mark, Tyler. I don't," Bonnie said. She uncrossed her arms and started to leave the privacy of the shadows.

"My eyes are open, Bonnie," Tyler said, turning to face her retreating back when she walked past him.

Bonnie stopped. However, the way her shoulders dropped told him that she didn't believe his claim.
"I know this is hard," he continued. "I know it's serious."

"Klaus-" she said, whirling around. "Jesus, I'm getting them confused. Silas is determined to kill me. Just like Klaus was before. He possessed Alaric once to try and get me to use all of my powers against him and die. Silas is determined. I am literally the key to Him getting what He wants, which means there's no other way for Him, which means He's not gonna stop.""And scares the crap out of me."

"Tell me that," she begged.

"That's what you wanna hear?"

"I wanna know that there's a part of you that's going: holy shit, my mate's a witch, I just might be screwed. People in my family die, Tyler. Witches die. I didn't go looking for Silas. He's been planning my death since before I was born. And maybe it wasn't me, maybe it might've been some other Bennett witch, but as luck would have it, the stars aligned so that it'd be me. The Mark is different than you telling me that you can handle everything and that I should give you everything. It's on a whole other level. It's a big deal. That's why I'm freaking out!"

Tyler closed the distance between them and gently framed her face. "I'm scared. I'm scared that there's a God with a hit out on little 'ole you, and He's got an arsenal of supernaturals to make sure that He wins. We only have you, me, your parents, and Lucy. And you're dad's mortal."

"Tell me that. I don't need you to be positive all the time. You weren't positive twenty-four-seven when it was your butt on the line."

Tyler smiled. "I never thought you needed me to be positive. Well...that's not true. You were so okay with dying. I did think you needed a heavy dose of the bright side."

"I did, but don't be so bright that I have to wonder if you're even in the real world. It does suck for me that loving me comes at this huge risk for you. I'm going to be more careful, I have to be, but not being careful isn't what got my ancestors killed, Ty. Duty is. I would take the Mark again, but….I have to tell you that I would hesitate if I had a second chance."

"I really wish you didn't feel that way. I really do. It makes me feel like you're rejecting it.""You wouldn't feel like that if it was me? If the Mark was my thing, or if I had some special witch thing, and you didn't have the Mark at all, if you were just a guy with a dangerous life that could wound up hurting me: you wouldn't feel like a burden?"

"You're not a burden," he insisted, his jaw tensing.

"Risk, then. How would you feel? Tyler, you shifted earlier despite the danger to your health because you thought I might be in danger. I'm coming from the same exact place. I love you."

She felt the skin around her eyes loosen and then tighten up into wrinkles, and the space around her got hotter due to Tyler's proximity. She could now smell the emotions coming from his body, some drifting off and some spiking off. They tickled her nose, and she scrunched it.

"I love you, too," Tyler said, relaxing a fraction. "Bonnie, I think what I need to tell you is that I was afraid before the Mark. Losing you sucked before the Mark. That's why this...doesn't make any difference to me, not because I don't get it, but because the fear you're talking about, I felt it before. And yeah, there is a part of me that's in denial that you might be gone. Can you blame me? That's
normal."

"It is. But you didn't answer my question. How would you feel if we switched places?"

Tyler exhaled through his nose. "The same way," he admitted, and he lowered his eyes.

Running both sets of knuckles over his cheeks, she said, "I'm not questioning the Mark. I'm not questioning your instinct or that I'm your mate. I just….hate that it's so hard."

"It doesn't feel hard," he revealed quietly. "I don't care how long I've been in the circle. It doesn't feel hard. The fact that you love me like I love you….makes being in the circle a relief, not a risk."

A relief, not a risk. Bonnie didn't know what to do with that. She couldn't possibly love him more in that moment. She couldn't possibly feel more wanted and special. She opened her hands on his face and hugged him, pressing her face against his when he bent down to hug her back.

"I'm scared," she said.

"I know."

"Not of Silas. I'm more pissed than anything at Him right now. But there'll be another one, and I'm scared of leaving you."

"I know that, too," he said, closing his eyes. "I can die, too, Bonnie. I have no idea how that would affect you with the Mark. The cave doesn't say anything about that, and even if it did…Immortal doesn't mean invincible."

"I was worried about you before, but I think I did forget that. Klaus is dead. Somewhere in my mind that means you're gonna have a calm, quiet, long normal life. No one's gonna hurt you anymore."

"I'm sure I'll get plenty hurt helping you out. I do have responsibilities," he said, mimicking her words from the clearing earlier.

Bonnie smiled and stroke his hair. Tyler reached back, and moved her hand down to his neck, and moved her fingers over the scar. His body responded and made him sigh over her shoulder.

Bonnie stiffened her fingers in surprise and moved her head so that she could look at him. "What is that?" she asked, on the precipice of believing.

"Your Mark."

Her face opened in a smile, and she chuckled. "Are you serious?"

"Feel it."

She happily shuffled and traced the Mark with both hands. "Is it my initials?"

"Mmm-hmm," he said, descending into bliss.

"So this is why you went upstairs."

"Yeah, it turns out."

"So I can Mark you. And it feels pretty big. I wish I had my phone so I could take a picture."

Turning her face, she pressed her lips to his ear.
Tyler was in heaven. Incredibly, more than anything else right now, he wanted to turn. He wanted to shift down and have her rub his belly and scratch under his chin and kiss his neck and run her hand over his tail and hug him. He wanted to flop on his side and let her have at him.

"Well, this is sweet," intruded a new voice.

They parted quickly, more out of surprise than anything else, although Tyler's arms were still around Bonnie's waist, and her arms were still around his scar. Bonnie frowned when she matched the voice to the partially-lit face. He was standing at the edge of the shadows. "Damon. What the hell are you doing here?" she asked as she went to meet him, her steps large.

She stopped when she had almost reached him, remembering the state of her eyes. But who the hell cared? It was more important to send his ass packing. Her mother and Lucy were inside the house.

"Hostile," he said jovially. "This is very interesting. Does vampire barbie know?"

"What are you doing here?" Bonnie asked again.

"I'll take that as a no. Whew, she is going to f-lip. Never would've pegged you, Bon Bon."

"Get to the point."

"So you guys must still be on first base. No way you'd be this testy if you were on second or thir- What's that in your eyes?"

"I already asked you a question."

Damon's eyes widening, he grabbed Bonnie by the arm and sped her out of the shadows and into the light. No sooner had he come to a halt than he was rushed off himself and pinned roughly against the house, a muscular arm pressing against his trachea.

Bonnie turned around when she realized what had happened, and she quietly hissed Tyler's name, her her eyes flickering to the house. She didn't want either Bennett to come out to see what was wrong.

But Tyler paid her no mind. "Boundaries, Damon. Keep your hands off of her."

"Get your fucking arm off," he choked.

Tyler let him go.

"Are you fucking kidding me?" he asked as he rubbed his throat. "Earthquakes shake the town, and you two are here getting busy? How the hell'd you get her eyes to look like that?" he asked Tyler. "What the hell have you two been doing? Are you a fucking witch-Hybrid now? Is that what we need?"

"All of these questions, and you still haven't answered my one," Bonnie said calmly.

"Since you've obviously forgotten, the last time mother nature acted up, it turned out to be Silas. You ended up severely downgraded, so why the hell didn't you think to check your phone? I've been calling everyone, and you're one of two who didn't bother to answer."

"I checked my phone. I didn't see anything from you," she said.

"Convenient. You," he continued with Tyler, "Congrats on the Original kill. Now you need to repeat that with his much smarter brother. You made the mess, and you're gonna clean it all the way up."
"The call obviously didn't go through, Damon," Bonnie said. "I'm fine, Tyler's fine, which means you're officially overstaying your welcome."

"Uh-uh. I ain't leaving yet. Not until I find out why you look like that."

Bonnie walked past Tyler and cornered Damon against the house, her hand by his shoulder. Damon leaned his head back against the house, just a little bit uncertain.

"I drink his blood," Bonnie said quietly, giving the word four syllables and putting extra emphasis on the first and last letter. B-l-o-o-d.

Damon stretched his face into a smile, crows feet crowding the corner of his eyes. "No idea you were into that."

"Do you need the both of us to tell you to leave?" Tyler asked calmly.

"I thought you hated vampires," Damon chastised Bonnie nevertheless.

"He's a Hybrid," Bonnie returned. Hy-b-r-i-d. She moved aside so that he could see the path to getting the fuck out. Tyler moved aside, too.

"Careful, Bon Bon," Damon said as he strolled away from the house, a pep in his step. "Lot of death in this town, and you're not immune. That Hybrid blood will cost you your precious powers. But while you still have them," he said, turning to face her when he'd cleared Tyler. No way was he going to have Tyler standing behind him. "Take a break from all that hot hugging and come up with some juju that'll tell us just what in the hell Silas has gone and done now. I know those earthquakes were him. Stefan isn't answering his phone, so I'm gonna check out the apartment. This was just a first stop."

He turned around but then turned back. "What about Jeremy's warm and fuzzy feelings?"

Bonnie raised a strong hand and played bubble wrap with his brain cells. Tyler smiled when Damon grabbed his head and fell to his knees screaming between clenched teeth. Bonnie put her hand down when she was satisfied with his desperate supplications for her to stop.

Groaning, he struggled to his feet and stumbled to the car, head in his hands. "Good night."

They saw the headlights come on and Bonnie walked up to stand next to Tyler, and together they watched him drive away.

"Why couldn't a vampire be the key to Silas' release? I'd happily give Him Damon," Tyler said.

"You and me both."
Abby and Lucy didn't leave until around one twelve forty-five in the morning. Abby asked Bonnie for what used to be her Grimoire, because she had an idea of how to get Silas out of Bonnie's head. She wasn't going to wait for an attack to find out if the incense was still wrapped around Bonnie's aura.

Of course the Hopkins house didn't have the ingredients that she needed, so she asked Lucy to teleport to her house in Eden to retrieve them.

"I call it Magic in a Bottle," she told the kitchen as she watched Lucy fill the clear 65oz jar that Rudy had provided them with tap water.

Lucy carried the jar to the island. Resting her right hand on the Grimoire, she silently read through the purification spell so that she wouldn't stumble over the words during the casting, and then she picked up the book and casted the spell. The tap water became unnaturally clear.

"When it's done, she's going to put it on your nightstand," Abby explained to Bonnie, "And it'll do its job every time you sleep on the bed. If you're gonna sleep on the couch, bring it down with you. You're going to sleep next to it until one of two things happen: the herbs are at the bottom of the jar, meaning they've expired, or the water turns black, meaning it's pulled all of the toxic magic that it can, and can't pull anymore."

Bonnie nodded. She was seated at the breakfast table with Tyler and her father. They were helping her go through some of the grimoires from Jonas Martin's collection, in search of home-cleansing spells. She was going to blend them into something that would clear the negative energy from the farmhouse.

"I'm going to earmark the page for you so that you can recreate it yourself when this jar's done," Abby continued.

"Okay," Bonnie answered distractedly.

"That means I need you to get more of everything, Luce."

"Remind me what juniper does again?" Rudy asked Abby as he perused the instructions for a cleansing ritual.

"Uh," Abby said, racking her brain, "It helps witches see any spirits strong enough to hide. It makes them feel off-balance, something similar to being drunk, and that forces them to become visible."

"Hey, that would help you see whether or not pastor Young's the only spirit in the house," Tyler said.

Bonnie put the book that she was looking at aside and held her hands out for the one that her father had. Rudy passed it to her and picked up another one. Bonnie read the instructions and decided to only write down juniper in her notebook.

"I don't think I have any juniper at the house," Abby said. "I haven't needed it in a long time."

"I have some in my apartment," Lucy said. "I can go get them after this. You activate them by commanding the spirits to show themselves," she told Bonnie, her eyes on the order of the ingredients that needed to go in the jar. "Okay, milk thistle, half of a bergamot orange, pine needles,"
Bonnie slid her eyes from the notebook to Tyler. He was looking at her, too. They shared a smile and returned to their research. Yes, they'd been very close to some pine needles recently.

"Angelica," Lucy continued, oblivious, "And the other half of the bergamot orange." Abby handed her a knife, and she cut the orange in half. She then added everything in, following the order. She closed the lid on the jar and picked up the book to recite the spell that would activate the herbal mix.

"I found something," Tyler announced. "Betony. Usually used in purification rituals, betony is also a protective herb and can be placed under a tormented sleeper's pillow to protect them from nightmares." He turned in his chair to face Abby and asked, "Can we remix it to keep Him out of Bonnie's head while she's sleeping? The jar's gonna pull all of the bad magic out, the crystal protects her from His herbs, but we don't have anything that keeps Him from putting anything new in her head."

"Well, there's the protection spells that she cast. Those will be her strongest defense. There isn't anything that absolutely keeps magic from touching you. That would put you at odds with Nature. Actually, the people, or… beings who come closest to being impervious to magic are spirits."

"Because they're dead," Bonnie reasoned.

"Exactly. You can only cast two spells on a ghost. You can manipulate their environment, like cleansing a house or cursing their grave, but….

"What are the two spells?" Tyler asked.

"A summoning spell and a banishing spell," she told him.

"And the older they are, the more choice they have in whether or not they come," Rudy told him.

"But we can still remix the betony," Abby picked up. "You can put it under your pillow, spell it first, and it'll get in Silas' way if He tries to reach you while you're sleeping."

"What if He's too powerful?" Bonnie asked.

"Herbs don't care how long you've been practicing magic. That's why I love them. I have betony at the house," she told Lucy.

"Have you ever had a nosebleed?" Bonnie asked. "I'm serious," she said when Abby smiled. "You know all of these herbs and plants."

"Herbs and plants don't take care of everything, so, yes, I have gotten nosebleeds. I do love to prepare my magic and store it in bottles, though."

"Very cool," Bonnie approved.

"Are we gonna tell the others about Shane and Silas, plus Him wanting to get rid of you?" Tyler asked.

"Um…when I'm ready. As soon as they know, it's gonna be a big deal, and I don't need that distraction right now."

"It's gonna be a big deal because of the cure, you mean," Tyler said dryly.

"Exactly."

"Wait, can they help?" Lucy asked. "If they can help, then we should bring them in as soon as
possible."

Tyler made a nasty sound in his throat.

"We don't have the same priorities," Bonnie told her cousin. "They can help, but there'll be arguments and disagreements. I'd rather get as much done as I can with just us before I tell them."

Abby frowned. She hasn't liked the idea of Bonnie's friends since she'd met Stefan Salvatore.

"Okay, it's ready," Lucy announced. The ingredients inside of the jar were slowly spinning close to the lid. She turned to the table and said, "Your treatment is ready."

"Thank you," Bonnie said.

Lucy smiled at her and set the jar on the island. "I sometimes sell protective amulets made out of burdock root. I'll grab some while I'm getting everything else. I can hide them around the four corners of the house," she told Abby who nodded. "I can give you one for your trip," she told Rudy.

"Uh, can you...also grab one for my mom? Please?" Tyler asked.

"Absolutely."

Lucy left the kitchen to go put the jar in Bonnie's bedroom, and, for a moment, Bonnie contemplated what was happening in her kitchen. Her father was concentrating on a Grimoire on her right, her mother was flipping through her former Grimoire, the cousin whom she'd come to think she would see again was about to teleport herself hours away, and then there was Tyler: steadfastly reading across from her. They were all participating in her magic, participating in what used to be the loneliest part of her life. They were all working their hardest to save her.

She breathed steadily, content in a way that she has never been despite the uncertainty of the future.

But if certainty fell on the side that worked out for her, then...she wanted more of this. This was how she wanted her future: her family and her boyfriend working together and sharing in her world.

"Oh, Bonnie," Abby called as she picked up the Grimoire.

"Hmm?"

"I know what you can use to represent water in your Grimoire. There are different symbols for water, but this one's always been my favorite."

She set the book in front of Bonnie, and Tyler and Rudy leaned in to see.

"Upside down triangle," Bonnie mused.

"It's a thought," Abby shrugged. "There are also the two horizontal squiggly lines, that's a cue for water."

"Neither of them sound right," Bonnie complained.

Abby smiled and retrieved the book. "You have time." She was going to make sure of it. Speaking of which, she turned to Tyler and said, "I need your number, so we can talk about..." She nodded her head in Bonnie's direction.

"Yeah," Tyler said, and he pulled his phone out.
Lucy appeared at the doorway and said, "Okay, I'm leaving."

"Wait, we're exchanging numbers," Abby said.

"My phone is in the room," Lucy said with a roll of her eyes. She cupped her hands together and closed her eyes. A moment later, her phone floated in from the second floor and settled in her hands. "Okay, I'm ready."

Tyler blew out a breath and shook his head, inciting Bonnie and Rudy to smile at him.

Lucy left after the exchange, leaving a warm breeze behind her.

"Uh, I should probably go, too," Tyler said with an apologetic look at Bonnie. "Everyone's waiting for me, and I've left Kim by herself long enough."

"You're not back for good?" Rudy asked.

"Not tonight," he said as he stood. "I'll be back in time for school tomorrow. We've progressed far, but not everyone is completely healed. I've probably set us back by transitioning out of the wolf, used up some of my strength, but I needed to see Bonnie."

Bonnie stood and walked around the table to stand by his side. She looped one arm around his lower back and placed her other hand over his belly button.

"I hope everyone's okay," Abby ventured.

"Thanks. When she comes back with the amulet, keep it for me, and I'll get it tomorrow," he said to Bonnie.

"Okay."

"Okay, well, um, I'll see you."

Bonnie stepped in front of him, cupped his face, and pulled him down for a kiss. Her family has questioned her about Tyler, and she's answered, but it still felt like they needed further explanation.

_Didn't he have a girlfriend? In the beginning, but it was complicated_.

_Isn't she your best friend? Uh, kind of; it's complicated now_.

She pressed her lips against his warmer ones, and this kiss was the final answer. He was hers, no more questions would be received.

She left Tyler in a haze. He opened mutated eyes, so he ducked his head to hide them. The change remained.

And then he raised his head. If Bonnie was going to claim him, then he needed to stand tall and be claimed. He liked her doing it, liked it very much, so he should stand in it.

It was incredibly embarrassing, considering these were her parents. He would take Lucy being here over the two of them anyday, but he kept his head up.

He pursed his lips, wilting on the inside. Bonnie noticed and felt very bad for him. "Come on," she said, failing to hide her smile.

Bonnie picked up her phone from the table and said, "I'll see you guys later."
"Where are you going?" Rudy asked.

"Well, you're gonna transition, right? You can't go back otherwise," she said, turning to Tyler.

"Right," he confirmed as his eyes changed back.

"I want to be there," she told her father. "Unless you can do it in my room?" she asked Tyler.

"No, I need someplace roomy if I can help it."

"I'll be back," Bonnie told her parents. She ran up the stairs to get her car keys and wallet. When she came back down, she slipped her hand in Tyler's.

"Good night," Tyler said to the former couple.

"Good night, Tyler," Abby said, amused. Her smile enticed Tyler to smile back.

After the front door was closed and locked, Abby slowly turned her head to Rudy. "Hmm," she commented.

"Mmm-hmm," he responded.

"Okay, so I definitely didn't expect you to react like that," Bonnie said after she drove away from the house.

"I didn't expect you to do that," Tyler countered. "Trust me, I would've helped it if I could," he said, shaking his head from lingering embarrassment.

"I forgot you have that kink about me being possessive," she said cheekily.

Tyler licked his lips, blushing. When was the last time he'd blushed?

He took her hand off of her thigh and held it. "Are you sad that your mom and Lucy are leaving?"

"A little bit. It's been really nice having them here, annoying in the beginning, but…..nice now. And my dad's gonna leave, too, and it's just gonna be me, with Silas lurking in every shadow." She imagined herself becoming very scared at night. Suddenly, Silas was the great boogeyman.

"I'll be here," Tyler assured her, linking their fingers. "I'll be making very frequent visits, remember?"

Bonnie smiled and squeezed his hand. "Good."

They enjoyed an easy silence for the duration of the ride. When they arrived at the woods, Bonnie took her hand back to park the car, and then they went on foot.

"Are you okay with your mom sleeping alone tonight?" she asked as they walked.

"Yeah, a little bit. She should be more scared than me, but she's adamant about sleeping in her own home. She just wants me back in the house, and then she'll feel all the way better. Caroline cleaning up is a plus. She doesn't have to look at that blood or all of the debris."

"Did she happen to say anything about me after I left?"

"Not yet, but I know she will."
"Great," she dragged between her teeth.

"She's gonna have a hard time with it, but she's gonna accept it. She doesn't have a choice."

"She's gonna more than have a hard time. I know how your mom can be."

"Hey," Tyler said, stopping their walk. He almost told her that Carol was not going to be like that with her, but he couldn't guarantee it. "I'm on your side," he promised her instead. "She can be mean, rude, but I feel like she's changed a little bit. She's not going to disrespect you. I'm not going to let her."

His record wasn't spotless when it came to standing up to his parents on behalf of the girls that he was dating. He hadn't done it for Vicky. Standing up to them had been too hard back then. Standing up to them had meant a possible blowback: overt criticism from both of his parents that only made his life harder.

But he could do it now.

"I made my bed, and now I have to lie in it," Bonnie said. Not that Carol Lockwood would've welcomed her if the genesis of her relationship with Tyler hadn't necessitated the end of his relationship with Caroline. Carol wasn't known for welcoming anyone with open arms.

"I don't want you to feel uncomfortable," Tyler said.

"I don't. Really, I'm just thinking about having to fend off the tag team of Caroline and your mom now."

"I'll worry about my mom, and I'm gonna talk to Caroline if she keeps bothering you."

"I can handle her," she said. Tyler kissed her forehead and then pulled her into a hug.

"So….are you okay?" he asked when they resumed walking.

"Yeah," she answered definitively.

"I mean about what we did in the woods, or…what I did to you. Like, are you feeling any…. pain?"

"Oh. No," she answered, smiling. "Not so far. I'm fine." She was touched that he'd thought to ask. She moved closer to him and cradled his arm between her breasts as they walked, running her other hand over his arm.

"But speaking of that, I don't think I'm ready to be a witch who's having sex."

"Excuse?" he asked, dipping his head and raising his brows.

"My mom questioned me about what happened to you earlier, with your powers? It was awkward and horrible, and I almost passed out, because I kept waiting for Lucy to have a vision of us or something."

Tyler stopped walking. "But they don't know, right?"

"No, they don't know. But they already have too much of an idea. Turns out my eyes had changed color in front of my mom and….oh my God, my dad was there, too! Oh no, I need to work on controlling my eyes."

"They change when you're emotional. And when you're fresh from drinking my blood, but look they
just have to be realistic. We're supernatural people. We're gonna create some sparks when we come together."

"Is that what you're gonna tell them if they ask you about it?"

"Hell no, I'm gonna act like I don't know what they're talking about. I'm glad your dad talked to me about not breaking your heart if that conversation was the alternative."

Bonnie blew a strawberry when she laughed, her body folding into his. "That's what I thought. You'd do worse than I did."

"Maybe" he said, wrapping his free arm around her waist. "But we do need to talk to them. When and how are we gonna tell them that I Marked you?"

Sighing noisily, Bonnie said, "I have no idea. I can't even imagine their reactions."

"I can," Tyler deadpanned. "I'd say let's try it out with Lucy first, but I don't think her reaction would be much better."

"We made a big commitment," Bonnie said.

"Yeah, your dad will definitely think we rushed into it," Tyler said, stretching his face into a humorless smile.

Bonnie cocked her head, her smile more genuine and sympathetic. "He's gonna come around. Heck, he's already around, he just….has reservations."

"I know."

"I'm around," she said seductively.

"I know that," he responded in kind. He closed the distance between them and kissed her.

"And I'm tired," she said, resting her head on his chest when they parted, her hands going around his waist.

"Me too. I haven't slept in almost twenty-four hours."

"I feel like you should sleep in tomorrow. Let me handle the chaos, and I'll call you if it gets hairy."

He didn't respond. She didn't expect him to. He'd already told her his plans for tomorrow. He was going to be at her side.

"You're my hero," she said.

Tyler smiled and kissed her head. "You're mine, too."

"Uh, quick change in topic: what's our status? I mean I'm pretty sure, but….."

Smiling, Tyler rubbed her back and asked, "Do you want me and only me?"

"I do. Do you want me and only me?"

"I do."

"I'm your boyfriend."
"Good."

Tyler waited for her to say that she was his girlfriend, but Bonnie kept her mouth closed. Her cheeks did twitch with amusement, and Tyler felt it on his chest, so he ran his fingers over her ribcage, tickling her.

Bonnie screeched and jerked away from him. "What?!

"You know what," he said, advancing menacingly, fingers at the ready.

He attacked, and she squirmed, bringing her body closer to his in the process. "Okay, you are! You know you are!"

"Do I?" he asked steadily.

"Tyler," she laughed, her knees buckling. "You're my boyfriend; leave me alone. Ah!"

"Fine." He let her go and straightened. He couldn't remember the last time he'd done that either, tickled someone. Sixth grade?

"Oh my God," Bonnie sighed. "Geez."

She smacked his leg, and he helped her up, and they soon resumed their walk. When they arrived, he didn't take her down to the cellar. He stopped just outside of it. "It's better to transition out in the open, where the moon can touch you all over. It makes the transition go faster. A woman named Jules taught me that. The problem is that once we shrink down, we're animal, and we'll attack almost anyone that we see, so unless you're a hermit who lives in the desert, it's just not practical."

"But I'm safe, right? I'm your mate," she said with a confident shrug of one shoulder.

Tyler smiled. "Yes. It's gonna be scary and disturbing," he warned.

He was suddenly very aware of the fact that he's never changed in front of her before. She'd been busy casting the night he'd killed Klaus.

Bonnie nodded, but she wasn't prepared. He stripped down to nothing, having no problem baring it all in front of her. He backed up, putting enough distance between them, and he dropped to his hands and knees, and he started.

She wasn't prepared. Nothing could have prepared her for the noises that he made, for how hard he forced it, for the sound of breaking bones, was this really what bone sounded like when it broke, this thing that echoed in the ears?

And none of it ever ripped through his skin. He tore himself apart, and the horror, the pain, remained under his skin.

Tyler has shifted over one hundred times and still, something will dislocate, and he'll flinch against it and cry out with fear that irreversible damage has been done to his body.

But he did it, and he walked on paws now. His emotions settled, his senses intensified, he saw differently, and he processed differently. He recognized the female standing in front of him. He didn't recognize what she was saying, but her body emitted a mix of wonder, horror, and sadness. She dropped to her knees, and he knew that she was also impressed by him, by his ability to handle such pain and come out transformed on the other side.
She opened her arms, and he trotted to her. She petted his thick fur, running her fingers underneath. He nuzzled her cheek and sniffed her face. When she pressed her face against his, he rubbed his cheek against hers. He wanted to erase the horror and sadness and leave only the wonder.

She started to play with his ears, and they pricked sideways, his body relaxing in bliss after being stretched to the brink, his bushy tail wagging feverishly from the attention.

"I love you," Bonnie said. Because of Klaus, he's gone through this metamorphosis more times than he should have had to. Tyler was proud to be a Hybrid now, proud to be an Alpha, but the journey that he'd been forced to take still sucked. "I love you. I love you," she repeated, and she hoped that he somehow understood.

Bonnie frowned when she noticed that there was something on his face. It actually took up a large portion of it.

She stood from him and said, "Come here." She looked around for a clear slice of moonlight and walked to it. She looked behind her to motion for him to follow, but he was already trotting to walk beside her.

When they arrived, she faced him and kneeled. He walked into her hands, his tail a heavy, bushy blur. Bonnie held his face and peered at his skin. It was still difficult to make out because the dark color blended into his fur. But it was green like her eyes, and it when she touched it, his reaction told her what it was.

Tyler moved forward and used his strength to knock her off her knees.

"Woah, geez!"

He pressed his paws on her shoulders, pinning her to the ground, and he proceeded to lick her face.

"Tyler, ew! Ew!" she protested, laughing.

He leaned down and pressed his snout to her nose, his eyes intense on hers, and there he remained.

"Hi," she greeted, her heart in his captivity.

Hi, sexy.

She didn't hear the words. She felt the feeling. And she remembered what he'd told her by the quarry: the bond is telepathic when it exists between mates.

He more than found her sexy. He found her interesting, enigmatic, curious, and it all made her smile.

"You're not so bad yourself. Not at all."

He moved off of her and retreated. When she sat up and could see him again, he bowed to her, stretching his forelegs in front of him, his butt high in the air, his tail pointed straight out.

Bonnie wasn't sure how to respond at first. But then she imagined herself as a werewolf. The simplest answer was to mimic him. She positioned herself on her knees, placed her forearms flat on the ground and touched her forehead to the ground, her butt sticking up.

Tyler barked and jumped in circles, happy. She raised her head and smiled.

He knew he had to go, though. He wanted to have more fun with her, but he needed to leave.
"I know," Bonnie said. "We can play another time. I promise."

Tyler barked, telling her that he loved her, and she responded with her words. He turned around and ran off, because he wanted to show off his speed, and then he disappeared.

Alone in the woods, Bonnie stood and dusted her hands off as much as she could before she wiped them on her pants. She knew what she wanted her water symbol to be now.

It would not only represent the fourth element, it would represent her bond with Tyler.
Thick, vibrant clouds of smoke thinned into see-through wisps that disappeared before they reached the ceiling. And then the fire went out completely, the five matches arranged in the shape of a pentagram atop the stove burnt and wheezing smoke.

Galen Vaughn scratched his dirty blonde sideburns in confusion and looked at the witch beside him. "Okay, I thought that was weird, and now I'm looking at you, and you seem to think it's weird, too, which is....."

The witch frowned at the matches.

"...not good," Galen finished. "What the hell just happened?"

"I told you I don't like it when you curse," the witch snapped, her thick black hair bouncing softly against her cheek and tickling her neck.

"And you only mind when magic's not going your way. What the hell just happened?"

"I don't know," she forced. She broke the pentagram and opened the box of matches, her movements jerky and impatient. She lit five matches one by one, laying them down on the stove to form a fresh pentagram.

"I seek....the witch. I seek....the future. Show me."

The fire continued down the matches, down, down, until it swallowed them.

"What the fuck was that?" Galen breathed. "I've never seen that before."

"Something's happened," Aja Stowe said, her voice just a little too flat. "Something's different."

"Don't tell me she found you."

"She has no idea I exist. Something is different, something cosmic. I don't see anything."

Just to be sure, she lit another five matches. All five went up in flames. "She must've done something, or....."

"Or what? The future's changed? We can get back to our hobbies?"

"Say one more stupid thing, and I will get rid of you," she said, lips cutting over pearly white teeth.

"You need me," he reminded her coolly.

"Four more Hunters in the sea."

"None of whom you can be sure will work with you. Do you have an answer for what happened or
Slowly, she turned back to what was left of the ten matches. "Maybe."

"Maybe….

Aja closed her eyes, not really praying for patience, more like trying to come up with the quickest spell to get rid of him for good. She would do this herself if she had to. Her own voice never got on her nerves. "Or maybe the future's just like these matches: unrecognizable. Unreadable."

"Or maybe it means the future doesn't exist anymore. Maybe this is the clearest sign of the shit that's about to happen."

"That's way too many maybes, and the future not existing anymore means we fail, and that's not an option. I've prepared too much for this, invested too much. This is…this is what's gonna make me."

"You're doing that thing where you're breathing hard with a distant look in your eyes."

"You have no idea what notoriety means in this world. You haven't been important long enough."

"But working with you is supposed to propel me to supernatural superstardom, I know. I actually want to kill Silas—"

"So do I. Don't forget I'm the one who found you, who made you, who taught you. But I'm not ignorant about what killing Silas will mean. I've been killing these vampires and corrupted witches my whole life. After all the damn sacrifice, I'll finally get something out of it."

"Except you can't read the future now."

"We're still going to Mystic Falls. I'm still going to kill her. You are still going to kill Him. And I'll keep trying to see into the fire. The cosmos always resolidify."

In Grove Hill, Massak raised a hand towards his white bedroom door but was stopped by the voice inside.

"Come in."

Breathing gently, he lowered his hand to turn the knob, and he walked in. There, healed and meditating on his bed but looking anything but relaxed, was Silas.

"Something's happened," he announced.

"I know," he responded, eyes closed and lips barely moving.

"What is it?"

"I know as much as you."

Massak was the follower that Silas charged with monitoring the future. He was His second pair of eyes.

"The witch must've done something."

"Without a doubt."
"And You're not worried?"

Silas opened His eyes, and He looked ready to kill. Massak lowered his gaze. Long ago, he had made the mistake of thinking that the length of time that he's been with Silas afforded him the right to….afforded him any kind of right at all. He hadn't been completely to blame. The God hadn't seemed to mind.

Not until a gross miscalculation on his part had led to the death of Silas' wife and son. He still didn't know how much time had passed between the time the God had spelled the elaborate tattoos on his face and body into haunting illusions and when He'd finally put a stop to it.

He knew that he was forgiven. Silas had insisted that he was, even calling him His best friend and giving him gifts in apology for what He'd done. But there were times when he was in Silas' presence where his heart quickened in fright, and he felt like he was still on shaky ground.

"Bonnie did something. Probably tied to the earthquakes I felt. That's all I know. That's all it could possibly be. No one else is important enough. No one else could affect my future."

"How affected is it?" Massak asked as he looked at the Man in front of him.

"Whatever she's done...it's permanent. Everything's in shambles. I can't read anything, not my future, not the plan, not her future, nothing. Whatever she's done has thrown everything up in the air."

"So You do know more than me," Massak commented, earning a smile from Silas. "She lied to you, we know that. There is no third sacrifice."

"It's bigger than a little lie."

"What could she have done in the hours between this afternoon and now?"

"I'll have to ask. Is everything a go with April?"

"The talisman is active," he said, half-turning his body towards the door to indicate the teenager in his living room. "She's safe."

"Good. Thank you." He reached further up the bed and grabbed the shoebox that He'd been keeping next to the pillows. Running His hands down the box, He repeated, "Thank you."
She Needs to be Exposed: Karma

On Monday morning, Bonnie rolled over to look at the jar. The water was visibly flatter than it had been the night before. The herbs were working. She was relieved and more confident about sleeping in the house alone now. There were less shadows for Silas to hide in.

She checked her phone for messages from Tyler. Jeremy had called her during the drive back from the woods, and she had assured him that she was okay.

There were no texts from Tyler now, so she sent him a message.

You are the cuuuutest werewolf. Good morning :)

She showered afterward, truly waking up in the process, and decided that she wanted to make Tyler lunch. She also decided that she wanted to cast the Blackout spell again to show him what it looked like.

She turned off the water and decided that, yes, she would do both of those things. Even if something came up and got in the way of these plans, as had happened for the eighties dance and a number of other things, it was important that she'd thought to make them. It was important that she'd thought of doing one or two things for herself. This was different from her usual habit of hunkering down to fix the problem, and because of that she was proud of herself. Dedicating her brain power to defeating Silas didn't have to mean shutting herself off to everything else or carving any free time that she had around working to defeat Silas. She had done that with Jeremy back when stopping Klaus' sacrifice had been her goal.

After she got dressed, she put her notebook and two grimoires from Jonas' collection in her school bag, and then she slipped on the lapis lazuli and tucked it under her blouse. Everyone had insisted that she wear it until Silas was defeated, uncomfortable truths spoken by her friends be damned.

She traveled downstairs and greeted her dad.

"All set?" Rudy asked.

"All set," Bonnie answered as she went into the kitchen. Lunch needed to be something quick that wouldn't go bad before the bell rang. "Dad, can I use one of your insulated lunch bags?" she asked the living room.

"Uh, yeah. Don't want to eat the school's lunch today?"

"I'm making something for me and Tyler." Opening the fridge, she chanted, "Quick, quick, quick. Sandwiches are quick. What kind?"

She took out an unopened container of cottage cheese, some tomatoes, and a bag of lettuce. She put them on the breakfast table and then grabbed a bag of english muffins and two small avocados from the pantry. There were four muffins left, and she toasted all of them, and then she dressed them with a spicy mustard spread. She built the sandwiches, sprinkled garlic powder on top of the cottage cheese to finish, and placed them in two different ziplock bags when she was done. She then transferred them to the lunch bag.

"What'd you make?" Rudy asked when she came to the living room.

"Cottage cheese sandwich."
Rudy looked at his watch. "You're probably gonna be late."

"Probably, but I can skip breakfast."

"Grab a banana." He put the laptop aside and stood as she went back to the kitchen. "Listen," he said when she came back out and was putting the banana in her messenger bag. "We're gonna talk or text every day."

She nodded.

"And I want you to go after Silas with everything you have."

She smiled.

"Give him hell, and then send him straight to it. And I want you to be careful with Tyler."

Her smile shrunk.

"Y'all didn't fool anyone with that he's gonna come over, check on you, and leave that you tried to pass off yesterday."

"Dad, we're not-"

"I like him. He has good intentions. But I also see that he likes you very much. I know he loves you, but I'm talking about like. He likes you, and you know what I mean. That type of like will have you acting a fool. Now I don't care that he's undead and shooting blanks."

"Dad! Oh my God!" she exclaimed, covering her face, the lunch bag slung over her left wrist.

"I'm just saying. You wanna do adult things, then we gotta have adult conversations. I heard about werewolves back when I was with your mom-"

"Oh my God."

"And I'm guessing Alphas are worse."

"Dad," she pleaded.

"Hybrid, werewolf, Alpha, vampire, boy. And don't think I'm underestimating you, either. You're the one been walking around here lying and generally being into this boy. I don't approve of how you two went about it. Caroline is your friend. And maybe that's something we need to talk about."

"We don't," Bonnie assured him. "Things are different, for me and for Caroline, and some of the things we've gone through….there's kind of a fissure, and we all had a part to play in it. I know you think I've had my friends for support this whole time, and I guess we have been a kind of familiar….presence for each other, but it's not this….strong, great thing that you thought. It's not pretty, the way me and Tyler got together, but I do love him. And he does make me happy. Are you disappointed?"

"A little. No one wants their child to be doing that. But the outcome might be better than how it happened, and apparently there are some things I don't know. Are you disappointed? In yourself?"

"No. Not at all. I'm happy with how we became close. We didn't….find solace in each other or save each other. We're not….an answer for each other. We're just drawn to each other."

"You're clearly happy. And I think I'm glad that you're happy with how it happened, because, baby,
regret is a horrible feeling. Your mother and I can tell you. We both made mistakes where you're concerned. I'm sorry that your friends aren't...what you need. I knew that there was something off with Elena, but I didn't realize that things had gone south with Caroline, too."

"It's fine. We just are what we are."

"Bonnie, I don't want you in bad relationships, friendship or otherwise," Rudy said with a concerned frown. "I don't want you to tolerate them."

"I know. I'm not tolerating them. Not anymore."

Inside of the Lockwood mansion, resentment churned in Tyler's chest as he stubbornly kept his eyes closed. His alarm was ringing, and he hated it. He hated the sound, he hated his phone for producing the sound, he hated Monday for being here, hated the sun for coming up, and he hated school for existing.

He imagined a perfect world where everyone knew about supernatural people. And in this world Hybrids could excuse themselves from going to school on a Monday because they had returned from the Appalachians at four in the morning, a mere two and a half hours ago.

He has never tested how long he can go without sleep after he'd triggered the werewolf curse, but he had been nurtured for going on eighteen years that there was such a thing as too much activity, and at the end of that activity one needed to rest.

He hasn't had a good night's sleep since Thursday. Every member of his pack was healed and Klaus was dead, so by his calculation he deserved to sleep in for a week.

Klaus was dead. He opened his eyes, picked up the phone, and dismissed the alarm. He had two text messages. He opened the app and saw that one was from Caroline and the other from Bonnie. He rolled onto his back and opened Bonnie's message.

You are the cuuuuutest werewolf. Good morning :) 

Smiling, he typed a reply: Thank you. You are the best smelling witch. Good morning babe :).

He put the phone on his chest and reflected on the fact that he could call her babe now. Bonnie Bennett was Babe now. He picked up the phone and edited her contact information. Deleted: Bonnie. That's been her identifier in his contacts since he'd gotten a cell phone. He replaced it with Wolfette.

Because why not? It was super lame, but he liked it, and no one really had to see it, and maybe he'd change it to Babe at a later point, but he prefered Wolfette for now. He scrolled up to the Bs and deleted Babe. In it's place, he wrote Caroline.

Crap was going down today, so he needed to get up and shower.

But Klaus was dead. The pleasure had been in ripping the motherfucker apart. He would never hear Klaus' voice again. Fuck him and everything he came with. He hoped that Mikael's ghost was chasing his ass in hell.

And he hoped that Klaus saw his face for the rest of his damnation and remembered that he had beaten him.

Klaus was dead, but there was life after death, and he hoped that Klaus' was miserable as fuck. He
deserved nothing more than that.

The shower woke him up, sort to speak, and he of course presented better than he felt. His genes were supernatural. He looked great.

He wanted to go back to bed.

He descended the stairs and went to the large dining room. "Good morning," he greeted his mother. He walked to the head of the table and bent down to kiss her. "I'm leaving. How'd you sleep last night?"

"Well enough. I kept waking up to see if you'd come in. You came back after three fifteen?"

"Yeah, around like four thirty."

"How is everything?"

"Good. Everyone's fine."

"I'm glad to hear it. So...it's all over?"

"Pretty much. We kind of said our goodbyes. I didn't want them taking the risk of coming back to Mystic Falls. We also said goodbye to...to Chris. He was one of us. He didn't die in the fight. He died before that. We said goodbye to the others who'd died beforehand. I dedicated our win to the werewolves who died back when Klaus was still experimenting."

"I'm so proud of you," Carol said.

"Thanks. And now we're free," he said, speaking of him and her. "You don't have to play nice with him anymore or welcome him here. There are a couple of loose ends. Well, two: his siblings, but they'll be taken cared of."

"Good. You know, you don't have to go to school today. You can stay home. You've earned it."

"I need it. But I can't. I need to be at school. Bonnie has a couple of things going on, and it's my turn to be there for her."

"Uh, I actually want to talk to you about that. Can you sit down, please?"

Tyler pursed his lips, knowing what this was about. He put his backpack down, pulled the chair out and sat.

"I'd like to know what Caroline was talking about last night when she said that you've been cheating on her...with Bonnie."

Tyler licked his lips and said, "Exactly what it sounded like." He's never been great at choosing his words carefully. "But that was also Caroline making the situation sound a lot simpler than it is."

"So tell me the situation."

"I can't."

"You can't."

"Basically, Caroline and I have grown apart. And Bonnie and I have grown closer."
"This all seemed to be news to Caroline. Why is that?"

"Well, the me and her part she hasn't noticed because she hasn't been paying attention. I know you like her, and the last thing I want to do is ruin your opinion of her, but….we're over. And what she said last night was because she was pissed. We broke up on Friday."

"You just admitted that you've been cheating on her."

"I did, but mom, like I said,-"

"It's complicated. But you can't tell me why it's complicated. So then I hope you won't mind me reacting based off of the little information you're allowing me to know, and that's another thing Tyler: the withholding of information and the lying needs to stop. Klaus is dead now, so I can know."

Realizing how that sounded, she said, "What I mean to say is that now that Klaus is dead you're out of excuses for keeping me in the dark. And, God forbid we encounter another Klaus, I want to be in the know about everything. It's unforgivable that I didn't know that you were planning to kill him until you dropped that bomb on me at the Festival."

"I'm sorry for that," Tyler said.

"It's my fault," she said. "I turned a blind eye. I-I was content to be under his thumb, and I didn't realize how much you weren't. I was afraid. You were angry. And I never noticed the difference. That's the unforgivable part. I want you to tell me things from now on."

"Mom, I can make that promise, but it's not always easy to keep. It's not," he insisted. "Being the one involved in this stuff is kind of like….kind of like being a parent. You and dad didn't expose me to everything you knew, and it was because you wanted to protect me. It's kind of the same thing."

"I get that, but I don't want you to use it as an excuse to leave me so far in the dark that I'm smacked with another revelation of you intending to bury yourself alive. It's just the two of us, and we can't surprise each other like that. Okay?"

"Okay."

"We have a deal?"

"We have a deal," Tyler confirmed with a small smile.

"Now back to Bonnie. You cheated on Caroline with her, and you did it while she was helping you kill Klaus, am I right?"

"Mom, my feelings for Caroline-"

"Don't even go there. Did you tell Caroline about your feelings for Caroline?"

"I didn't have time."

"You didn't have time? But you had time to cheat with Bonnie?"

"It's not as easy as it sounds-"

"Tyler, I cannot believe you would do something like this after what you saw me go through with your father! You cheated! That girl is humiliated! She's done so much for you, has literally been my eyes when I didn't know what you were going through. She's turned out to be a sweetheart, and she's supported you-"
"She hasn't," he interrupted. "She hasn't, and please stop telling me she's done so much for me. That's the same thing she said, and it doesn't count for anything anymore."

"So why not just tell her that? Why not just be honest? You're throwing away a relationship that's more than a year old, the strongest relationship you've ever had for some-"

"Mom, I swear to God, say one bad thing about Bonnie, and I'm walking out."

"Now, see, that sounds familiar. I remember the day when Caroline was the one worthy of this defense. I remember you posturing that she wasn't a whore the day that I caught her sneaking out of here. What are you doing, Tyler? You're throwing away your relationship for a thrill. Worst, you're throwing away trust-"

"Bonnie's not a thrill. What we have is not a thrill. You know what, actually it is. It feels great. It's a thrill, and it feels better than what I've had for the past couple of months with Caroline. I love Bonnie-"

"Love? Tyler, yesterday you were with Caroline! Do you understand how this looks? If Bonnie's not important enough for you to have even told me about this-"

"Mom, you don't even know how long this has been going on or when we got together. You literally don't."

"Well, I've been told that I don't need to know the information-"

"If you call Caroline right now and ask her why I cheated on her, why I'm not interested in the relationship anymore, I swear to God she won't be able to answer you. Not because she doesn't know, but because she won't want to say it, because she knows how it's going to come off."

"Did she cheat on you?" Carol asked.

"No. But….she let me down. She's changed. Mom, I don't like….how I feel with her anymore. I don't like how she makes me feel. I don't like how the relationship makes me feel. And it's not that I didn't tell you about me and Bonnie. We literally haven't had time. We literally just got together. Of course I was planning on bringing her to you, because I want her to come here whenever she wants. She means a lot to me, mom. She's important to me, and you might be thinking that you've heard this before, and you have, and you're hearing it again. I wasn't married to Caroline. I can move on."

"You can. I just think that you owed her a little more respect. And Bonnie, too! Look at how this is making her look!"

"This isn't making her look like anything to anyone except you. And Caroline."

"Still, Tyler, do you think any girl wants to be introduced as the other woman?"

"She's the woman. And I need you to treat her like that when she comes here, because I want her to come here."

"What I'm worried about is that you're playing with your feelings and as a result you're playing with these two girls. You love Bonnie now, but you loved Caroline for a year. I hear you when you say that she was doing things that you didn't like, but I think the fact that you chose to step out on the relationship instead of talking to her says something. I don't buy that you didn't have time. You have your phone on you all of the time. You two were always together. I don't buy that suddenly getting to her house or her coming here, or seeing her at school, became impossible. There's a reason that you didn't break up with her until she apparently found out about Bonnie, and I think that that fact
might get Bonnie's heart broken, especially if she's thinking she's in love with you, too."

"Okay, mom."

"Tyler, I don't want you to walk in your father's footsteps. You're young, but it's never too early-

"Okay, if you're gonna talk to me about this, then talk to me about what I'm doing. Don't bring dad into it, and definitely don't tell me I'm like him, or that you don't want me to be like him, or even that I saw what you went through for that matter."

"I bring it up because it's context. You didn't have a good example-"

"Right, exactly, because you know what I saw, mom? You stayed. You never told me why. You never felt the need to, so I don't understand what great lesson I was supposed to learn from the situation just by watching you guys. I swear to God, dad sucked a lot, but he actually said more to me about that crap than you did. You hid. But I guess I was supposed to just pick it up and know what to do and what not to. My situation with Caroline and Bonnie have nothing to do with yours and dad's. I know what I'm doing. I did learn from you guys. I'm not going down the wrong path or whatever. You deserved better, dad should've been better, but Caroline isn't you. She's not walking in your shoes, mom, so don't….do this thing where you bring up dad to make a point. Before I had a steady girlfriend, I was calling girls all around this house, and you never said anything."

"I won't mention your dad. I loved him, I know he loved me, and we both had our problems, but that's not what this is about. You're right. That's a different beast…..that I do think need to talk about. But we're not talking about that right now. You're right. But the rest of everything I said still stands. Bonnie's a nice girl. I haven't seen her with a whole lot of boys. She might be naive and think-"

Tyler picked up his backpack and stood. "I have to go to school. But mom, any time you think about belittling Bonnie any kind of way-

"I'm not belittling!"

"-a thrill, naive, thinking she's in love with me, don't. Any time you're about to make a guess about her or how she's feeling or what she's thinking, just know that you're wrong. You're just wrong," he said with an easy shrug of his shoulders.

"You seriously outed her name to his mom?" Elena asked Caroline as they walked across the courtyard to head inside the school.

"I did, absolutely. Why should her name be kept secret? I kept it secret back when I only suspected, but now I know for sure, and she needs to be exposed. Mrs. Lockwood's gonna give her pure hell. Ever since Tyler's dad died, he's become her angel, her treasure. And she liked me for him. And now some girl helped him cheat on me? Bonnie's gonna run for the hills."

"Caroline, I think you should think about your strategy a little more. Just because Mrs. Lockwood might not like Bonnie doesn't mean Tyler's gonna run from her."

"I don't need Tyler to run. I just need Bonnie to. One runs, and the relationship's over."
"Do you really think they're in a real relationship? That fast?"

"It's not real to me. But she was in the house, Elena. Just complete peace of mind for her while me and Mrs. Lockwood are wondering where the hell he was and if he was okay. It's bullshit. I used to be that person. Whenever Tyler left town and came back, I was the first person he came to see. When he was leaving town, I was the last person he saw. When he was out of town, I was the only person he spoke to. He wanted to run away with me when we thought Alaric had killed Klaus! He didn't care about anything else; he just wanted to be away with me. It was freaking..........perfect. Scary, cause we thought we were gonna be dead meat, but perfect. And then Bonnie swooped in and put a stop to it."

"Yeah, she should've let Ric kill Klaus so that you and Tyler could have had a movie-perfect story. It would've been a short story, because all of you would've died, but hey," Elena mocked amiably as they entered the building.

"You know what I mean. Oh my God, you know what? I wonder if they were talking to each other way before the Festival. I wonder if something happened before she had him possessed. Why did she choose him to host Klaus' spirit? Like Damon said, no one would guess that they even knew each other considering how much they talked."

"Okay, it sounds like you're about to enter Paranoiaville. They've talked. It's just that none of us had any reason to notice. But you know what? I think we need to take your mind off of this. How about a party?"

"Thrown by whom?"

"Me," Elena answered, affronted.

"No offense, Elena, but you have never ever thrown a party. And I don't feel like planning anything right now."

"Wow, you really are sad."

"You don't know the half of it."

"Well, I don't need your help. I can do it by myself. A party in your honor to cheer you up."

Caroline suddenly wondered why the brunette was doing this. She'd just stated the reason for the party, but, according to Stefan, she was jealous of their friendship. Before she could restrain her mouth, it spewed, "Will Stefan be invited?"

"What?"

"Nothing," she answered, mentally frowning at herself. "Just make sure you don't invite Bonnie," she tried to recover. "Or Tyler."

Elena had heard the question, of course. She wasn't listening to anyone but Caroline. She wasn't distracted. But her response had been automatic. "I'm not not inviting Bonnie," she said. "I'm not choosing sides--"

"How are you not choosing sides? It's a clear-cut case."

"She's wrong, I know that. I get that. But I can't help you declare war on her, and I'd really rather you not declare war on her. The entire situation is weird. I mean you dated Matt, but he and I were over. We've never...taken each other's guys."
"Bonnie didn't take from me, okay? Tyler's just a jackass. And what you really mean is that you don't wanna rock the boat with her because you need her to cast spells for you."

Elena abruptly stopped walking. "What the hell, Caroline? What is your problem?"

"My problem?"

She snapped back to herself and stopped. "Uh. I don't know. Sorry. I gotta go." She shuffled away to go wait by her first class.

"Aha. Dad and I were wrong. I am not late," Bonnie said as she came up behind the cute boy dropping books into his locker and tugged on his jacket.

Tyler turned around and bent down to kiss her. "Hi," he greeted straight-faced.

"Hi. Are we doing that in public now?"

"I don't really care."

"I figured," Bonnie said, her smile disappearing. She softly ran her knuckles along both sides of his jaw. "What's wrong? Is the pack….

"They're fine. I had a nice chat with my mom this morning." He turned around and shoved the physics book in the locker and yanked the statistics one out.

"Oh," Bonnie said, going over to lean on the locker next to his. "Sparknotes version?"

"I'm wrong for cheating, I'll probably go back to Caroline, Caroline's done so much for me, I'm walking in my dad's footsteps, you're just a naive girl cause you haven't had a lot of boyfriends, and I don't really love you' cause I loved Caroline for a year. It's a bunch of bullshit, and I can feel my emotions trying to get the best of me. Where's my damn vampire side now?"

He squatted to put the book in his bag, and, trying to help, Bonnie bent her knees to run her fingers over his mark. Tyler exhaled and stood. Giving her a long look, he deadpanned, "That's not helping me calm down. It's making me think that your fingers feel good and working out my frustrations by getting you naked sounds like a good idea. If that's your intention, then there are plenty of out of order bathrooms in this building, and I'm all set to skip lunch."

Chuckling, Bonnie removed her fingers. "My intention was to calm you down. You can't skip lunch. I made you lunch," she announced, lifting the bag for him to see.

Touched, Tyler smiled. "Okay. That calms me down just a little. What'd you make?"

"Cottage cheese sandwiches."

"Uh," he frowned.

"Cottage cheese gets a bad wrap. They're good."

"My taste buds will decide."

"Well, my experience with your taste buds so far is that they've got good….taste," she flirted, leaning against the locker.

"Mmm-hmm, I love everything that comes….from you." He bent down and kissed her again.
He sighed and touched his forehead to hers.

"It's gonna be okay," she soothed.

"I just don't wanna deal with this. It's making me feel more tired than I already am. Speaking of which…." He dug his cell phone out while Bonnie caressed his bicep.

"Oh, I brought you the talisman for your mom."

"Thanks," he said. "Caroline sent me a text. I'm thinking about deleting her from my damn contacts all together."

Bonnie smiled, knowing that he was going to do no such thing. After four years, Elena was still in her contacts.

"I just don't want to tell my mom, hey my friend Chris died, but she didn't give a shit, you know? Who knows if she would even get the is-"

Tyler frowned when the message opened.

Clothes. And a ripped up bra with a girl's underwear next to it.

He looked down at the date, and his memory told him that the message was sent on Saturday. His eyes moved back to the group of pixels, and he tried to understand what he was looking at.

"What is it?" Bonnie asked. "What did she say?"

"Nothing. It's a picture."

Naturally, Bonnie moved over so that she could look at it, too. She even moved his hand down so that she could see better.

Maybe the image confused her, too. Maybe it didn't. But he was thankful that no noise penetrated his eardrums.

Not until he was ready to speak. "So she slept with someone? And sent this as a way to, what, gloat?"

But he couldn't stop looking at the picture. A couple of things about it didn't make sense.

"She was so angry last night and then slept with someone?"

"It happened on Saturday," he said evenly. And that was one of the confusing things. Caroline had slept with someone, yet she'd been pissed about him and Bonnie last night.

"Oh my God, do you think it was Stefan?"

Tyler hit the home button and got rid of the picture. He couldn't answer that question. He didn't want to think about this. He didn't give a damn how mad Caroline was about him and Bonnie or their break up. Sleeping with someone else….with her shoddy record lately….it felt like another betrayal.

"I'm gonna-"

The bell rang.
"Perfect," he said. "I was about to say that I'm gonna go."

"Okay," Bonnie said, the shadow of a frown on her forehead. Stepping forward, she kissed his cheek and then his lips. "I love you."

"I love you, too," he said, and he swallowing hard.

By the end of first period, a boulder had settled in Tyler's stomach. The possibility that Bonnie had posited was legitimate. It could have been Stefan. Which gave him plenty of reasons to be pissed. Stefan was a bastard who hadn't given a shit about the hell that Klaus had been putting him through.

What other guy was in Caroline's life? Stefan was her best guy friend.

They were close.

They understood each other.

What other guy was in Caroline's life?

On Saturday?

The Caroline he'd broken up with and the one who had yelled in his house last night had nothing in common with this Caroline who had apparently slept with someone out of anger.

Out of anger. Right? She'd slept with this guy and then sent him the evidence in order to rub it in his face.

Rub it in his face.

She'd been pissed about the breakup, so she'd slept with Stefan and sent him the picture to rub it in his face.

That didn't sound right. Why would Caroline think he'd give a shit about Stefan? He didn't like the guy, no, but her sleeping with him…that wasn't exactly a lethal blow to his peace of mind. He wanted Bonnie.

On Saturday?

What other guy was in Caroline's life?

When the bell rang for the switch to second period, the boulder kept him trapped in his seat so that he was the last student to get up and leave.

On his way to the third floor, he spotted Caroline a couple of steps ahead of him. He was moving slower than everyone else, and she was on the phone. She was animated, her hand emphasizing whatever she was saying. When he walked through the double doors, he didn't see her heading down the hallway to the class that she shared with Bonnie. She wouldn't have gone there, since there were teachers who would tell her to put the phone away.

She would have gone to the girls bathroom in the east wing, located on his left, so, in a stupor, he followed her. He didn't have a plan. He didn't know what he was going to say or if he wanted to say anything. He just wanted to see her face.

He heard her voice when he got close to the bathroom door. She hadn't gone inside. The wall had a
“I mean I haven’t really looked at my phone since I don’t know when, and-Fucking Christ, thank you so much, Klaus, for reminding me why we could never actually be together. Like ever. Now I have to figure out a way to get Tyler’s phone and delete that shit before he says it, and he can’t have seen it yet, because he hasn’t said anything. Look, can you please call me when you can? I’m really freaking out, and my life’s falling apart, and I’m seriously about to cry. Bell’s ringing, I gotta go. I wanna disappear.”

Tyler's brain dried up when she came out and saw him. She said something, or maybe she asked something, but he couldn't hear her, wasn't even sure that he was really looking at her. He continued past her to head for his class.

"Tyler, wait!" Caroline exclaimed. She grabbed his hand to stop him, and he yanked it back, whirling around to face her.

"What was that?" he asked. "What was that? What was it?"

"I was talking to Stefan."

She was a little too nonchalant and carefree. She was clearly lying. She was a horrible liar, but he still tried to meet her halfway. He tried to believe her. If only he wasn't looking at her face.

"You were talking to Stefan about what? About what, Caroline?"

Her head kept bobbing from side to side. She'd gone from wanting to cry to her eyes drying up. Her throat was closing down.

"About what, Caroline? What were you talking to Stefan about?" he asked, advancing on her.

"Nothing. It was just a message. Not like I don't have a whole lot to talk about. You just broke up with me."

Keeping his eyes on her, Tyler reached into his pocket and took out the phone. He looked down, and opened the message app, and pulled up the picture. "What is that?" he asked calmly, handing her the phone.

The phone was light as a feather in Caroline's numb hands. There it was. The same thing that was on her phone. The same thing that was in her photo gallery. And Tyler had just handed it to her. "It's a lie," she said at the picture.

She deleted it, and Tyler let her. Looking up, she gave him the phone. "It's a lie," she said, her tongue heavy.

The bell rang.

"I should go," Tyler said faintly.

He turned to leave, and he kept walking, but then he turned around, and when he did she was still standing there. "Klaus?" he questioned. "Really?" There was no need to raise his voice. She could hear him. She could at least read his lips. Two easy, simple words.

Caroline shook her head. "No. I don't know who sent it. I don't know who took it."

"The hell you don't," he said, his voice a little less faint.
"I don't know, Tyler."

"The hell you don't," he said angrily. Finally. Something solid.

"I really don't."

"The hell you fucking don't, Caroline," he said, his voice rising, his legs eating up the space between them.

"Hey! Y'all need to get to class," Ms. Rabkin said as she walked in from the hallway where Caroline needed to go.

Tyler glared at Caroline. He could compel Rabkin, easy. Instead, his jaw stiff with growing disgust, he said to the girl in front of him, "Don't be a coward. Don't leave school."

During second period, he received a text from Caroline: *It's not what you think. We need to talk. Meet me after class.*

He didn't respond. Instead, forty minutes into the class, he texted Bonnie.

*I can't concentrate.*

*Why?*

*I overheard Caroline on the phone with Stefan. She was talkin about Klaus*

Bonnie looked up from her phone and found Caroline, two columns to the left and one row up. Her regular seat was on Bonnie's immediate left, but she'd chosen a different seat today.

She looked down at the phone and typed, *What about?*

Bouncing his right leg, Tyler responded, *She was talkin about why she and Klaus could never be together.*

*Why would she be doing that?*

*Because I'm fucking positive that the other set of clothes in the pic r his.*

Stunned, Bonnie reread the words. He was wrong. He was wrong, wrong, completely wrong. The clothes didn't belong to Klaus. For his sake, the clothes did not belong to Klaus.

She looked up at the teacher. The man paced in front of the room and listened to the student who was reading. She'd already read, so she was good. She would have to read again, but the next student up was three rows away from her.

Tyler couldn't be right. Klaus was….the worst person. And for Caroline to have slept with him? No.

Her phone lit up with another text from Tyler.

*It wasn't Stefan, Bon. I kno it wasn't. Sleeping with Stefan doesn't hav the same effect as sleeping with Klaus. If u wanted maximum gloatage, u wld sleep with Klaus.*

*What did she say?*

*She denied it. Said the pic was a lie and she doesn't know where it came from*
He mentally replayed the voicemail that she'd left Stefan. She had not sent the picture. It had been Klaus. Probably when she'd been dozing. Klaus had sent the picture.

*This is bullshit,* he typed, *I wanna hear her say it.*

*Wait a second,* Bonnie typed. And then she stopped. The next words were going to be, *when could this have possibly happened?* But Tyler had told her. Saturday.

And where had Tyler been on Saturday? Out of town. And she hadn't seen Caroline since she'd left Founders Hall, not until it had been time for the fight. The fight that Caroline had quickly abandoned.

But

*She cleaned the house,* Tyler sent.

Bonnie slowly swiped her thumb over the screen. Yes she had. Because the *But* had been the fact Klaus had been incarcerated inside of Tyler's house.

What would it have taken for Caroline to simply drive to the Lockwood mansion, enter the seal, see him, walk out, and drive away? And then clean it all up?

Absolutely nothing. It would have been easy.

Bonnie stared at the screen and felt like there were a million miles between her and Tyler. She wanted to see him.

*She cleaned the house, Bon,* Tyler wrote, *She slept with him. And he took a picture.*

Tyler stared at the sent message. He felt like he was talking about two strangers. Caroline and Klaus. They had nothing to do with him. Nothing to do with him. They were two people that he did not know.

"Tyler."

He didn't give a shit about the teacher catching him texting. He would get up and walk out of class.

But that wasn't it.

"You're wanted in the principal's office."

---

Three minutes after that and Bonnie wondered why she was being escorted to Mr. Hill's office. Caroline had been summoned there maybe a minute earlier.

She desperately hoped that she and Tyler were blowing the picture way out of proportion. It was one thing for her friend Elena to be close to people that she hated. It was another for Caroline, who was supposed to be in love with Tyler, to have slept with Klaus when she'd had a first-row seat to the damage he's done to Tyler's psyche and self-esteem.

But would it be that unprecedented? After all, there was Jeremy. His situation was the closest to Tyler's (probable) present one. Damon had killed Jeremy and threatened him multiple times after that. And yet his sister was able to stomach spending some of her nights inside of the boarding house.

Tyler had just killed Klaus and his entire pack had made it. It was time for him to celebrate. Sure, his mom had put a dent in his mood earlier, but he'd been on his way to perking back up when she'd told
him that she had fixed him lunch. He should be nowhere else but on cloud nine right now, so she really, really hoped that Caroline had not somehow found it in her to fuck it up by fucking Klaus.

Her escort opened Hill's office door for her, and there was Elena, Caroline, and Tyler, already seated in chairs that were arranged in two rows in front of the desk, two in the front and two in the back. Elena occupied the first row by herself. Caroline had moved to the second row when Tyler had shown up and taken the seat behind her. She'd felt his eyes scalding the back of her skull.

The three occupants turned to look when Bonnie entered, and then they all slumped. Tyler faced forward and Caroline turned her eyes on him. Bonnie waited until her escort left to ask, "Are we in trouble?"

Elena waited for either Caroline or Tyler to answer, but they remained frosty, so she said, "Probably. Remember Friday?"

"Crap," Bonnie said with a roll of her eyes. They were going to be grilled about the shattered display case in the auditorium. She didn't have time for this. Something was up with Caroline and Tyler, and she needed to go cleanse the farm house after school. She couldn't be stuck suffering consequences in detention. She was already limited to doing everything that she needed to do after school.

She examined Tyler as she came around the seats. He was slouching, a nice ninety degree angle formed by his back and the chair, his fingers interlaced on his abdomen. He raised his eyes to look at her as she walked past.

"Hey, are you wearing that truth necklace thing?" Elena asked, noting the silver chain around Bonnie's neck when she sat.

"Yeah. I need it."

"You need it?" Caroline asked.

"Bonnie, that thing is trouble," Elena said.

"Wait, it affected you, too?" Bonnie asked.

"Me, Stefan, and then it just went away."

"I didn't think it would have that much of an effect, but….let's just hope it's fine today."

"Can you please just take it off?" Caroline asked tiredly. "I'm not in the mood for this. Just take it off while you're in here, and then you can put it on when we leave."

Tyler inhaled slowly.

"I need it for protection," Bonnie enunciated as she turned to look at her. She stared at her for an extra second, and then she faced forward.

"Protection from what?" Elena asked.

"Silas. No surprise you've forgotten."

Elena blinked. Tyler raised his eyebrows, and Caroline titled her head toward Bonnie's profile.

Her eyes dancing with confusion, Bonnie apologized.

"It's okay. Apparently it's gang up on Elena day," Elena said as she gathered herself in her chair.
Tyler cut her a tired look. After Damon had left the night before, Bonnie had told him about everyone's reactions to the news of him killing Klaus. So when Elena had congratulated him on Klaus' demise while they'd been waiting for Mr. Hill to walk in, he'd flatly asked her if the sudden inconvenience where the cure was concerned wasn't too much. He hadn't meant to say that. He'd meant to utter a noncommittal thanks. But he hadn't regretted it after he'd said it either.

"Did Silas attack you again?" Caroline asked.

"You have a lot of questions, Caroline," Tyler said.

"I'm just asking. The were earthquakes yesterday, and the last time Silas struck-"

The door opened, and Mr. Hill walked in. Tyler straightened his posture and Caroline sat back.

Rondal "Ron" Hill set his untouched water bottle on the red and black coaster on the left side of his desk and took his seat. One by one, he observed the four young adults who were about to lie to him, starting with the one he's known since before she could hold her head up by herself, going behind her to the one who used to have a giant chip on his shoulder but had never hid his academic potential, going across to the one who knew the most teachers on a first-name basis, and ending back in front with the one who would've surely been staring daggers at him right now if she knew that her mother had been planning to divorce her father in order to explore something with him.

"Anyone want to hazard a guess as to why you're all here?" he began.

Predictably, they all remained quiet.

"The four of you were caught going into and walking out of the auditorium. Bonnie, you went in alone and later walked out with two men. The rest of you walked out a couple of minutes after she left. And during that time, two men, one of whom I've never seen before, and Stefan Salvatore, who's pretty much been expelled for truancy, walked in and out. No, I'm sorry. No matter how many times we watched that footage, we never saw one of them walk back out. Bonnie, we can talk about this in private if you want to, but I'm ready to call your father. Who was that man?"

"No one I was meeting, if that's what you're asking," Bonnie answered.

"I'm asking what you all did to the display case. I spoke to Mrs. Sover. When she did her routine after-school run in the auditorium, it was fine."

Caroline bit the inside of her lip.

"So then the answer lies with you all. That's almost twenty thousand dollars worth of damage."

"For some glass?" Tyler blurted.

Caroline looked at him. Elena held herself still, and Bonnie blinked twice.

"I'm sorry," Tyler apologized, lowering his eyes.

"No please, get smart. Get smart with me, because I have no problem making examples out of you four. None of you have paid for prom or the senior trip yet, and Elena your volunteer hours still aren't complete, so you don't even have a diploma in your future."

"Note to self: compel volunteer hours," Elena said, pursing her lips.

Rondal stared at her.
Bonnie's lips felt like they were glued together. Caroline's hands stiffened, and Tyler wondered what the hell was wrong with Elena.

"Sorry. Nevermind," Elena said quietly, avoiding Hill's eyes.

"Now is not the time for you to be having a moment," Caroline scolded.

"I'm not," Elena answered, spinning around in her chair. "It's Bonnie's stupid-"

"Excuse me," Rondal stated.

"All of you have detention, how about we just cut to the chase?"

"What?" Elena asked.

"I hadn't made up my mind, but yes. You do. And you will every day until one of you tells me what happened to the display case. Bonnie, what was it that you carried out of the building?"

"Uhh, I don't-Oh. A prop."

"A prop?"

"Yeah, a sword. Well, it's not really a prop. It's actually a real sword."

Tyler lunged forward and placed a hand on her shoulder. There was no was he could play that off as anything other than him wanting her to stop talking.

Bonnie inhaled slowly, and Tyler sat back, avoiding Hill's eyes.

"Mr. Hill, can we go back to class?" Caroline asked with a smile that felt like day-old crust on her face.

"You will all be in detention every single day until I get what I'm looking for," Hill repeated. "And if the senior trip comes and I still haven't gotten a confession? None of you are going. Because what I heard was that you all got into a scuffle inside the building."

"That's ridiculous," Elena said, the same annoyance she'd felt at the senior assembly when he'd threatened to cancel the senior activities coming back. "You can't punish us for something you didn't even see. Senior year started out more sucky for me than you would believe, and I mean than you would believe."

"Elena," Caroline warned before she said too much.

"And I just wanna be a senior right now. I just wanna go to the stupid dances and the stupid trips," she said as she rose from her seat. "And you're gonna let that happen," she said, her voice taking on a playful lilt as she leaned her hands on the desk.

"Oh, am I?"

"No, he's not," Bonnie said, bolting from her seat and grabbing Elena's wrist before she could compel him. "Let it go. I mean it. Mr. Hill….we were smoking. That's….that's what we were doing. We were smoking. I went in first, and then the others came, and we….we lit up. Stefan and his brother joined us 'cause they thought it'd be fun. It was like our private senior prank. The other guy was….Damon's creepy friend. He was obnoxious and couldn't handle his stuff, so we all forced him to leave. On the other side of the building. We all stepped out to make him leave, so…..maybe that's when the display case got broken, because we didn't hear anything when we were on the stage. I left
with Stefan and Damon to make a food run, and there was nothing unusual about the case then. Maybe whoever did it came in after we left."

"Except no one went in there after you all left until I found the mess."

"No one went in where the camera could see them, you mean."

Tyler was impressed. They all were.

Except Hill. "How about we start with detention today and see where we end up?"

"Fair enough," Bonnie readily agreed. "But we're telling the truth."

Just as Bonnie thought that maybe she shouldn't use the word truth so liberally, considering the crystal, the cap on Hill's water bottle burst open, and the water jutted out, forming a mini fountain. Hill quickly stood up and grabbed the bottle, a couple of the folders on his desk getting wet in the process. The water was still spilling over in his hand and the fountain was getting higher. Bonnie stretched her body across the desk and grabbed it from him. Using her power to still the water would be too obvious, so she chucked it in the trash on the right side of the desk.

Hill scrambled for paper towels to salvage the folders, and Bonnie quickly lifted the keyboard before the water reached it.

Tyler helped Hill dry the folders while Caroline took some paper towels to the wet areas on the floor, and Elena walked to the trash can to see if the water was still spouting. It wasn't.

Bonnie put the keyboard down when the desk was dry enough.

"Go back to class," Hill said. "You have detention after school."

They all filed out, with Tyler bringing up the rear behind Bonnie.

"Okay, that was clearly supernatural, right?" Elena asked quietly once they were outside of the front office. "More of that overflowing water stuff? Which I didn't even realize was supernatural until now."

"Yeah, it's supernatural," Bonnie confirmed with a sigh. "Something's supposed to happen today. I casted a spell on Rebekah after I returned her to Klaus two weeks ago. It's supposed to keep her from telling Klaus what she knows about Tyler and his pack, and I asked for the help of this Spirit, and I didn't know there was a caveat to asking for His help."

Caroline and Elena stared at her. "You knew what this was the whole time, and you never said anything?" Elena asked.

"Well, I've been kind of busy trying to kill an Original and find the cure."

"We both know you've had time to do a lot more than that," Caroline blurted.

"As have you," Tyler shot back.

"So I've heard," Bonnie added smoothly.

"Bonnie, you can't keep stuff like this a secret," Elena said.

"I didn't keep it a secret. I just literally didn't tell you, because it literally has nothing to do with you."
"Okay, you need to get rid of that necklace," Elena said.

"That wasn't the necklace, that was me."

"Okay, Tyler can I talk to you for a second?" Caroline asked.

"No, we're supposed to go back to class," Tyler said, starting for the stairs.

"Tyler, come on, please," she said, taking a step after him.

"Do you even know what you want to say to me?" Tyler asked, spinning around to face her.

"I just want to talk to you," she said slowly.

"You want to sell me bullshit. But okay, fine," he said, glancing at the chain around Bonnie's neck. "Tell the truth: tell me about the picture."

Caroline froze and waited for something to happen. But nothing happened. "Don't do this," she said.

"Tell the truth," he said nonchalantly.

"Don't do this here, Tyler. I'm asking to talk to you."

"Talk to her, Tyler, you owe her that much," Elena said quietly, and with the way Tyler moved his eyes to Elena, Bonnie couldn't have diffused the situation fast enough.

"Stay out of it, Elena," Bonnie said. "You have no idea what's going on. None."

Elena felt she had some idea, even if it wasn't all of it. Tyler had cheated on Caroline with Bonnie. She knew that much. But she zipped her lips.

"Ty, come on," Caroline said, grabbing his arm and giving it a small shake.

Tyler looked at her and then headed for the stairs. She followed. Bonnie and Elena hung back, and then Bonnie led the way to another staircase so that she wouldn't overhear their conversation. Elena's class was on the second floor, which was why she stopped Bonnie before she put her foot on the first step.

"Listen. I know I haven't really said anything, but...I know about you and Tyler. Caroline told me, and she told me that they broke up."

"Then I'm sure you didn't hear the full story."

"What's the full story?"

"Tyler's to tell. And Caroline's, if she ever wakes up to that half of it," she said with a shrug of her shoulder.

"See, you're being defensive, which means you know you're wrong."

"Wrong? Am I about to get a lecture from you, Elena?" she asked with exaggerated confusion.

"Not a lecture, just...some caution about a friend."

"Then you're still barking up the wrong tree if you, of all people, are about to tell me how to be a good friend."
"Okay, is this the necklace? Look, you did something shitty. Don't point the finger at me, because I didn't do it, and if I'm such a bad friend, then why are you doing anything that comes remotely close to being like me? I've never stolen anyone's boyfriend."

"He wasn't up for the steal. He kind of just walked his way to me."

"Okay, Bonnie. Fine. I only hope you snap out of it eventually and realize how much you're hurting Caroline. Even if your feelings for Tyler are real, which they probably are, she doesn't seem to think so, but I believe that you wouldn't do something like this if you didn't feel strongly about him, but real feelings aside, you're hurting her."

"Elena, your words mean nothing to me. Literally falling on deaf ears. Don't worry about Caroline, or do but keep it from me. You wanna know what she's talking to Tyler about? I mean let's just say it since I'm sure she thinks she has every right to trash me right now: she sent a picture to Tyler, a picture of her clothes, complete with ripped up bra and underwear, and some guy's clothes. Tyler then overheard her on the phone freaking out on a call with Stefan and saying that Klaus proved to her why they could never actually be together. We were thinking that she'd slept with Stefan to spite Tyler, but she slept with the guy on Saturday. That, plus the phone call, is making Tyler think that she slept with Klaus. And he wants to hear her say it."

And I hope to God he's wrong, but what the fuck can I put past you two? Me being with Tyler is completely inappropriate, but you sleeping with Damon and now, maybe, Caroline sleeping with Klaus is completely within bounds?

She still has the gifts he gave her! She's kept them this whole time! And do you know where she was when Klaus died? Home. She was home. Not on the front lines cheering for Tyler, but home where she wouldn't have to see Klaus die. I didn't think in a million years that that's why she left, and I still kind of don't, but it would make sense, wouldn't it? Wouldn't it? I mean you would know about feeling bad for the bad guy.

So yeah, I'm sure Caroline's told you that she's only a victim. I screwed her over, and Tyler screwed her over, and the universe was screwing her over back when you were getting all the things she wanted. I'm sure that's her battle cry. But I know better. Yeah, I was shitty," the crystal forced her to admit, "But she's been especially shitty to Tyler, and before you go giving him advice about what he owes her, keep in mind that one of the ways she was shitty toward him had everything to do with you," she said, her raised voice bouncing up the stairway. "So drop it."

Bonnie turned and started up the stairs.

"You think that being your friend and helping you comes with absolutely no consequences. It does," she said when she reached the landing between the stairs. "And that's what Caroline is suffering right now: consequences. It has nothing to do with me. Ask her how she and Stefan managed to save you back when you were hallucinating, and make her tell you the part that Tyler's friend was forced to play. And tell her to stop telling everyone that she didn't ruin her own relationship!"

On the other set of stairs, Tyler crossed his arms and listened to Caroline in the nook under the stairway.

"Okay," Caroline exhaled, her fingers linked with her palms facing up. She was indeed going to lie. There was no other option. She could not just admit to what had transpired with Klaus. Not to Tyler's face. She'd worked on this during the first forty or so minutes of class.

"I don't know where the picture came from. I think it was doctored. I was playing with my phone
during first period, and then I thought about Klaus. I mean I saw that you were back last night, so I started to think about the whole ordeal with the fight and all that. And then I remembered that he's still in my contacts, just like he's in all of our contacts, and I realized that I could delete his number now. I mean it's not like we'll ever be working with him again. And so I went to my contacts, but then I decided to look at the last text I had received from him, just because. And it turns out that he'd texted me while he'd been stuck in the seal, and it was this long….ranting….schizo thing, where he of course started out by trying to coax me to come free him, and then he promised that he never planned to hurt me on Friday, only your mom, and then it went into how he thought he was going to die so he wanted to tell me one last time how he felt about me. It was all….What's that thing in literature where it's like….just a flow of words with like no theme?"

Tyler didn't answer.

"Stream of consciousness. That's what it was. It was just all over the place. So," she exhaled, "I saw it towards the end of first period, because I haven't checked my phone since…..God, since I texted Bonnie about Founders Hall."

She realized right then that he could catch her in that particular lie. She'd texted Stefan to come meet her at the Lockwood mansion. But Tyler couldn't know that. And since Bonnie had already left when Stefan had received the message, according to the youngest Salvatore's detailed account of the truth fiasco, she didn't know either and so couldn't have told Tyler.

"So, because Klaus sent you a long stream of consciousness text message, he reminded you of why you could never date him."

"Yeah. As for the picture, I have no idea when he could have sent it-"

"Saturday. He sent it on Saturday. When I was out of town? What were you doing in my house, Caroline?"

"I wasn't."

"So why'd you tell Stefan you want to delete the picture before I saw it?"

"Because I knew it would cause this. I would never sleep with Klaus."

"When did you stop giving a shit about me?" he asked softly. "When did it happen? When did everything...that I've been through….stop mattering to you? When did all of it become an inconvenience?"

"I care about you," she implored, blue-green eyes wide.

"You liked him."

"Tyler.....please."

"You were a better liar when you were human. I don't believe a word you're saying. I don't believe that you care about me."

"Please," she begged, barely audible, reaching out to touch him.

Tyler backed up, swatting her hands away, but she kept advancing, so he kept pushing her hands away. "You liked him. After everything that he did, to me, to you, to your friends that are so important that my friend was worth getting killed.....you liked him."
"I didn't. He was a creep."

"You can't even be honest."

Closing her eyes tight and shaking her head, Caroline said, "There's nothing to be honest about."

"You owe me this. When you confronted me about Bonnie, I stood behind it. So tell me how the moment you found out about me and Bonnie, you decided to say fuck it all, and you went to him. Tell me about how good it felt, Caroline."

"Tyler, please, please."

"Tell me what it felt like to clean it up afterward so that no one would find out. It was so fucking good that you fell asleep? How long had you been waiting for that? Tell me how grateful you are that I finally gave you the chance."

"I didn't sleep with him!"

"You did! You fucking did! He murdered my friend, and you slept with him! He killed me, and you slept with him! He fucking tried to kill you, and you slept with him! Holy shit, do you regret it?" he asked suddenly, breaking out into a smile, eyes flashing with ridicule. "You regret it, don't you? It was a mistake. He played you. Gave you the orgasm, and then sent me a picture. You didn't plan for that, did you? It was a supposed to be a big secret, but Klaus could never truly give a shit about anyone other than himself. You, f*cked up."

"I was….I was never unfaithful," she tried, but her voice broke before she could complete the last word.

"Tell me what you did. Or I will ask Bonnie to make you tell me. Do you want to lose the last shred of your dignity?"

"Don't make me do this. I didn't plan it. I swear. I didn't do it to hurt you. You were out of….town. I swear I didn't plan for it to happen."

"He attacked you?"

Her lower mouth moved, but no sound came out.

Tyler slid past her and left the nook. "Thanks."
When Caroline came back to class, it was clear to Bonnie that she'd been crying. Her face wasn't puffy nor was she burdened by sniffles, so she hadn't had a full breakdown, but she'd been crying.

Bonnie looked down at her phone and asked Tyler if he was okay. He replied seven minutes later: \textit{no. it didn't go well.}

\textit{What happened?}

\textit{I can't talk right now.}

Bonnie wiped her thumb across the message. She'd just come from the principal's office, so she couldn't exactly ask for a bathroom pass. She couldn't meet up to hold him. Her phone lit up with a new message.

\textit{I don't think i wanna be here}

\textit{Are you leaving?}

\textit{I don't know. I don't think so.}

\textit{You can leave n compel your way out. I can ask Elena to compel Mrs. Shaw for detention.}

She was still calming down from her anger at Elena, but she would absolutely ask the doppelganger to do her a favor. What was she going to say? No? She herself has been called on for favors after worse occurrences than someone yelling at her.

\textit{It's okay. I'll make it through.}

\textit{I love you. Pls talk to me when you're ready.}

In his class, Tyler smiled. \textit{I love you too. I will.}

For the rest of the class period, Bonnie stole glances at Caroline, her aura contemptuous. Caroline never looked back at her.

When class let out for the switch to third period, Bonnie looked out for Tyler but didn't see him before she was through the doors and heading down to the second floor. But during third period, slowly but surely, his hurt feelings and potent disappointment saturated the bond and reached her. His dejection was so palpable that it made her tear up.

Before class was over, he was actively calling out for her through the bond.

By the time class ended, her heart was beating uneasily in her chest.

Sharing his feelings with Bonnie helped quiet the storm that was Tyler's emotions. He felt alone in class. He knew that he was going to be alone for most of the day, so bridging one of the gaps between him and Bonnie helped a lot.

Before the bell rang, he suggested that they eat under the bleachers that were by the track field.

When the bell rang, they met up on the ground floor and walked to the bleachers together. They
didn't speak, but his eyes asked for something familiar and hers offered it in abundance.

When they arrived to the spot that he'd chosen, they quickly divested themselves of their bags, her much faster than him, and they hugged. She held him tight, and the tension left his body for the moment.

They let go when they were ready and sat facing each other cross-legged on the spot of concrete that led to the grass under the bleachers.

"We don't have anything to drink," Bonnie realized.

"I'll go buy us some milk," he said, moving to rise to his feet.

"No, I'll go," she offered, and he sat back down. "Chocolate milk?" she asked as she stood.

"Of course."

"Boy after my heart."

"I drink white milk when I buy breakfast, though."

"I still love you," she replied generously, and he smiled for the first time since he'd opened Caroline's text.

He opened the lunch box while she was gone and smiled when he saw what awaited him. He wanted to tell Bonnie about the conversation with Caroline. He was going to. But part of him didn't want to tell her because it was freaking embarrassing. What does it say about him that he couldn't keep his own girlfriend's loyalty and she went and slept with his tormentor? It wasn't flattering, and a part of him didn't want to reveal that to Bonnie.

"I'm loving the way you do paybacks," he said when she returned.

"I guess this is the yummy payback," Bonnie said as she handed him his milk carton and straw and sat down.

"I wish we were sitting somewhere more comfortable, but if we sit on the bleachers we'll get caught."

"This is private and quiet," she agreed.

She took out the first ziplock bag, opened it, handed it to him, and then she took out her own. She waited for him to take the first bite, and she smiled when he started to nod while chewing, her belly shimmying with happiness.

"It's good," Tyler said. "Really good."

"I was a little worried about the lettuce."

Tyler shook his head. "It's good. It held up."

Pleased, she took her first bite. They ate in silence for a while. Bonnie stopped thinking about his conversation with Caroline. The bond was calm, even if he might not be, but she was going to wait for him to broach the subject.

"So, um, I can't do anything about Clermeil until He acts up, so after we're through with detention, we're going straight to the death site. I brought everything that I need, though I haven't come up with
the banishing spell yet. I'll do it in the next couple of classes. Are you still up for coming with me? You don't have to if you're not."

"I'm up for it. Speaking of me needing to sleep, the others and I had a send-off for Chris last night. Sort of a we did it, and we did it for you, you know? And I was thinking….I want you to meet him. You worked so hard to help us."

Bonnie smiled. The celebrations and the condolences: he wasn't leaving her out of anything. "I'd be honored to meet him. Close your eyes."

Tyler straightened and followed her direction without question.

"Keep 'em closed. And relax. Relax. Just let everything fall away. Now open your eyes. Klaus is dead. How does that feel?"

A huge grin brightened his face. "Fucking amazing. No more surprise visits at the house, no more phone calls, no more surprise visits at school, no more put-downs, no more feeling powerless, no more of that face, that fucking smirk of superiority, no more of his voice. He's burning in hell. He's laughing in hell," he finished softly, his smile disappearing.

"But you did it. You killed him," Bonnie encouraged quietly.

"He had some last words, though," he said, his eyes on the sandwich in his hands.

"I'm sure he did." She let him choose whether or not he was going to elaborate. He took so long that she returned to her sandwich.

"He basically said that killing him makes me nothing. That my story means nothing if he's not around to….to validate it, to basically show everyone how horrible he can be. From now on, when I talk about Klaus Mikaelson, people won't be able to imagine what I'm talking about. I won't be able to say: I swear to God; he's in Mystic Falls right now doing exactly what I'm talking about. Go look and see for yourself."

"He's wrong. Tyler, your words are powerful. I've seen it. Twice. You don't need Klaus to make your story matter. You are all the proof that you need. And if anyone can't see or understand what you're talking about, then they're probably not too far from Klaus on the evil spectrum."

Or far from Caroline, Tyler thought bitterly. "I know he was just trying to get in my head. Like usual. But….I'm pretty much an endangered species now. There are twelve of us, fourteen, with Dai and Lily. I don't know if we can make vampires, let alone Hybrids. Trying is way too dangerous. And I don't even know if I'd want to try. I mean, what is a Hybrid? What is the Hybrid experience? Terror, pain, fear, death, being ripped away from everything you knew and your family legacy. I haven't thought about the one single upside to being a Hybrid, not turning on a full moon, since I first became one, and now I'm an Alpha, so I'm turning anyway."

"Klaus is gone," Bonnie said. "What it means to be a Hybrid is up for a….reworking, I guess. You guys get to redefine what it means."

"If we don't get picked off first. According to Klaus, there are werewolves who can't stand the idea of us. The vampires don't care 'cause they've already got the numbers anyway, though a lot of them still look down on us, like we're nothing but werewolves running away from our nature."

"Well, a hearty fuck you to all of them, then," she declared.

Tyler smiled. "What I'm worried about more than numbers is….legacy. I want what we went
through to matter. I want people to-to know. But will they? Klaus will be remembered. I mean let's see: Original vampire, the first vampire, his mom created vampires, a whole doppelganger line started because of his death, he was fucking horrible, and he created Hybrids. And that's after he became the first Hybrid. There's a lot to say about him, and we'll...just be an anecdote. Just details of his story. No one's gonna know the personal hell we went through. No one's gonna know that Klaus dying was a victory for us, not a loss for him."

"I think about that," Bonnie shared. "Leaving an impact? I told you a little bit about it, you know, when I almost stopped my heart for Elena? It's like, I do so much, and it hurts so much, and it's so hard, and there are all these spells, but who's gonna know? Who's gonna talk about it? Or will I be just a nameless witch? A prodigy whose name won't even be a blip in history?"

"Everyone will know what you did to take Klaus down," he promised.

She smiled. "I wanna be remembered. I wanna leave a mark. Especially with this whole possibly dying thing. I want someone to look over what I've done and just...know. Maybe even be impressed, 'cause God knows I don't stop long enough to be impressed by what I do anymore. But I want them to talk about me. Just like Emily and Qetsiyah are still talked about. Amelia has a school named after her."

"I want a section in the caves about Hybrids," Tyler decided suddenly.

"Then create it," she said with an encouraging smile. "I can even help with a little bit of magic."

"No. I can draw, remember? I can figure...something out," he said with a frown.

She nodded. "We should go on a date tonight. This is me formally asking. Do you wanna go out with me tonight?"

"To the caves? You know, I'm actually not sure if they still exist."

Bonnie rolled her eyes. Yes, it's been forever since he first asked her to go spelunking. "I was thinking we could dress up as a couple of crazy eighties kids and, yes, go to the caves. I still have my outfit."

"I still have mine, too," he responded with a smile. "Yeah, we'll definitely go to the caves where no one will see us wearing them."

She laughed. "Great, it's a date, then."

"Am I picking you up?"

"Yes." She was already looking forward to it, barring, of course, an emergency cancellation.

They fell silent again and both polished off the first sandwich and got started on the second one.

A short time later, Tyler was contemplating what was left of his sandwich. He waited for her to swallow the milk that she'd sipped and then, "Bonnie?"

"Yeah?" she answered as she put the carton down.

"She slept with....with Klaus. She slept with Klaus," he repeated, his eyes still on the sandwich.

Bonnie wanted to ask who he was talking about. She really did. She really did. He looked at her, and he looked the most lost that she has ever seen anyone look, and she lost her appetite. Her jaw felt
heavy, like her tongue was crowding her mouth. She couldn't even ask "what?" as if she couldn't believe it. Could she believe it? Was that even the point? He said she'd slept with Klaus. **Caroline** had slept with Klaus. She put the rest of the sandwich in the bag. She needed to stand.

"The day we killed him. While I was out of town. While he was….in the seal. She….walked in there, and she slept with him. Woah, wait, where are you going?" He dropped the sandwich in the lunchbox and scrambled up to run after her.

Bonnie heard him coming up behind her, so she ran faster. Tyler turned on his speed and cut her off. Bonnie tried to go around, but he caught her. "Bonnie-

"Get out of my way," she said as she struggled for freedom.

"Bonnie. Wait-

"I'm going to kill her. I'm gonna **kill** her. Tyler, **move**! Get off me! The **bitch**, calling **me** a piece of ass. If you don't get out of my way now, I'm gonna see her in detention later, so go ahead and choose."

"Okay, but you can't get in a fight, and you can't **literally** kill her."

He wasn't holding her anymore, so she ran. Tyler looked back at their stuff, cursed, and ran after her.

Bonnie sprinted all the way to the cafeteria. She went inside and power-walked to where Matt and Jeremy were eating. Planting her hands on the table, she demanded, "Where's Caroline? She's not in the courtyard."

"Uh," Jeremy answered, throwing a questioning look to Tyler, who had come up behind her. "No idea."

Matt shrugged his answer. "What is it?"

But Bonnie was done with them. She walked out of the closest door, closed her eyes and balled her hands into fists, her legs tingling from the run.

Tyler, Matt, and Jeremy followed her outside and took off after her when she ran in the direction of the front office and the same stairs where Caroline had confessed to Tyler earlier.

She yanked one of the doors open and zoomed in on Caroline, who sitting on the third step. She barely registered Elena, who was sitting next to Caroline. She power-walked to Caroline who rose to her feet when she saw the purpose with which Bonnie was approaching her. Bonnie put one foot on the second step, the other on the first, and she pulled Caroline by her jacket and sent her tumbling to the floor, no powers needed.

"Woah!" Jeremy exclaimed, and he moved to get Bonnie, but Tyler stepped in his way and said, "Don't."

Jeremy frowned.

"What the hell?!" Caroline exclaimed, quickly getting up.

Bonnie lunged for her, but Caroline held her hands out and caught Bonnie's wrists. When Elena moved to pull Bonnie back, Tyler got in her way. "Stay out of it," he warned.

"You're not gonna let them fight. Are you kidding me?" Elena asked.
On the contrary, Tyler was now enjoying Bonnie's anger. He wanted to see her attack Caroline.

"Bonnie, stop it!" Caroline yelled.

"Bitch!" Bonnie used her power to latch on to Caroline's hair and yank her head far back, and the vampire yelped and tightened her hold on Bonnie's wrists.

"What the hell is going on?" Matt asked.

Caroline yanked Bonnie closer to her, grabbed her arms, and pushed her back hard, loosening Bonnie's magic on her hair.

Tyler rushed to catch her before she collided with the cement staircase. He gritted his teeth and glared back at Caroline, his eyes turning. Elena quickly stepped in front of Caroline and held her hands out to the side.

"Keep her away from me," Caroline warned Tyler.

"Why?" Bonnie asked. She wrenched herself free from Tyler and swept her hand to the right and sent Caroline crashing into the wall. She wasn't sure how much of a roadblock Elena had thought she was going to be.

"Really?" When her brain cleared, Caroline sped up, grabbed Bonnie away from Tyler, and slammed her back against the wall into which she'd just flung her. "You wanna fight like a big girl?" she asked, her face transformed. She sped Bonnie over and slammed her back into another wall.

"Tyler, seriously!" Jeremy protested, but Tyler just watched.

Caroline has been wanting to curse Bonnie out more than fight her, but if she wanted to bring it on, then she wasn't going to hold back.

Feeling like her lunch was going to be slammed right out of her stomach and positive that she was going to get a knot on the back of her head later, Bonnie balled her right hand into a tight fist and assaulted Caroline's brain with aneurysms. Caroline screamed and fell away from her.

"Show me a big girl," she said breathlessly, her eyes turning as she continued the assault.

"Bonnie, stop!" Elena yelled.

"She slept with Klaus," Tyler announced calmly, and he flicked his eyes from Caroline, who was screaming through clenched teeth on the floor, to Bonnie.

Bonnie released Caroline and rolled her back, prepared for the blonde's retaliation.

"What?" Matt asked, the only one able to speak.

"She slept with Klaus," Tyler repeated, his eyes on Caroline again. "She screwed him the day we were supposed to kill him. He was sealed in and everything, but she just….had to get it in."

"Yeah," Bonnie heaved. "So did you clean up before or after you fucked him? Were you prettying up your love den or cleaning up your mistake?"

"Are you guys freaking serious?" Caroline asked from the floor. "Really?"

"You slept with Klaus?" Matt asked her.
"I hope the orgasm was worth it," Bonnie spat.

"I'm pretty sure she kind of regrets it now, because Klaus took a picture and sent it to me to make sure I'd know," Tyler told everyone.

"Okay guys, this isn't necessary," Elena protested as she went over and helped Caroline stand.

"You slept with Klaus," Matt said, still trying to understand it.

"Yeah, we heard it, Matt," Elena said curtly.

"And no one is surprised you're trying to sweep it under the rug," Bonnie said with a dramatic roll of her head.

"I'm not sweeping it under the rug," Elena defended.

"The hell you're not. What do you call it?"

"We all know it's bad-"

"Right, but we're supposed to shut up about it. Just let her deal with her so-called guilt and not say anything, what, like you with Damon?"

"I think we've established that some of us have no problem talking when it comes to me and Damon," Elena corrected, referring to Caroline.

"Go to hell, Bonnie," Caroline spewed. "You wanna tell me that you slept with my boyfriend because you somehow foresaw me with Klaus? What, you made a preemptive strike with your vagina? Can your vagina tell the future, too?"

"I could sleep with every boyfriend you've ever had, and it still wouldn't be as bad as you SLEEPING WITH THE ASSHOLE WHO WAS BEATING HIM UP THE NIGHT BEFORE!"

She charged for Caroline, but Tyler rushed behind her and grabbed her by the waist. Elena tried to move Caroline behind her, but Caroline refused to move.

"Was it worth it?" Bonnie asked. "Was it worth sleeping with the guy who made his life a living hell, the guy who's hurt you? Or is it just beyond my scope of understanding? How could you do this? You make it seem like I destroyed something precious and sacred when you turned around and slept with Klaus! This is what you guys do, both of you, and Damon, and Stefan, this is what you do! You care until you don't. You care until it gets in the way of what you want. Fuck you, Caroline, and FUCK YOU, Elena! Tyler's fucking precious and your boyfriend until Klaus was about to die and then you throw away EVERYTHING YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO GIVE A SHIT ABOUT, and you slept with him. Was Tyler precious then? Did I need to stay away from him then? You're disgusting. You're fucking disgusting."

"What did you do to her?" Elena asked Tyler, her tone beaded with accusation. "What's wrong with her eyes?"

"That's what I've been trying to ask," Jeremy said, his face pallid.

"Oh this?" Bonnie asked, pointing her fingers up under her eyes. "No, I haven't turned. It's Tyler. He clawed my back and bit me," she said to Caroline. "And now I'm bound to him for life. Those earthquakes you guys felt yesterday? Silas couldn't dream of doing something like that. It was us. We were fucking. And he was good. And yeah, he came to see me first. I tried to tell you. He killed Klaus and needed to get rid of the extra energy. Where else would he have gone? Who else would he
have done?"

At the end of her cocky tirade, everyone looked either hurt, shocked, or both. Their eyes shuffled between Bonnie and Tyler, and Bonnie's skin was rich with aggressive pheromones. She was in full attack mode and now with added boastfulness. It was a combination that Tyler was smelling on her for the first time, and his whole body responded.

"Any other questions?" Bonnie asked. When everyone remained mute, she removed Tyler's arm from around her waist and walked toward the doors. When she got there, she caught two students standing on the landing of the staircase in her peripheral. They jolted and turned to run up the stairs.

"Tyler, compel them," she said quickly.

Tyler sped toward Bonnie, and rounded to the stairs, and compelled both students to forget what they'd heard and seen.

Bonnie pushed against the door and left, careful to keep her eyes down.

Tyler caught up with her after, and they walked side by side. "Are you okay?" he asked.

"Am I okay?" Bonnie asked, stopping. "I'm the one who doesn't have loyalty, not you." She felt herself tear up and closed her eyes. "I'm sorry," she said when she opened them. "I'm so sorry."

Tyler closed the distance between them, hugged her, and swayed with her. "It's okay," he said over her shoulder. "I feel a lot better now. You kicked ass."

"Thank you," she murmured sadly.

"So Bonnie and Tyler are together?" Matt asked Jeremy after Elena took Caroline to one of the bathrooms upstairs.

"I don't wanna talk about it."

"Right. Are you okay?"

Feeling like his heart was meticulously tearing in half, Jeremy swallowed hard. He was unable to answer.

"You wanna talk about it?" Elena asked as she leaned back on one of the sinks with her arms crossed.

Caroline was curved over the sink next to her, and she shook her head. The bathroom was out of service, the same one that Bonnie and Tyler had christened.

"You're gonna have to at one point," Elena returned. "I mean it's not like you have anything to be discreet about: the cat's out of the bag." When Caroline didn't offer up her thoughts, she said, "Look, I meant what I said to Bonnie: what you did is bad. I just didn't think it was fair for them to….pretty much embarrass you like that."

"Gee, thanks," Caroline said as she straightened from the sink. "Is a morality lesson coming up next? From you? If it is, you can actually leave right now."

"Bonnie took that same tone with me earlier, but unlike her, you don't have a leg to stand on. Not anymore. You barely did before," Elena said as she straightened from the sink.
"Oh, I don't? And what do you mean barely?"

"As if it wasn't obvious that you liked Klaus. Or you at least liked the attention he gave you. All of your exasperation and complaining: you were acting. Don't think I didn't notice the look on your face when you first told us about the portrait and dress and all that. Bonnie asked you when you were gonna burn them, and I said I'd bring the fire wood. You said you'd let us know, but you looked completely fake. I never said anything all those times you talked to me about Damon, because I didn't want to risk being wrong."

"You've been monitoring me? What, looking for a sister in your I Love Sickos club?"

"Is it smart to be attacking me when I'm the only person even willing to listen to you right now?"

"Well I don't know how much you're willing to listen when you've already judged that what I did was bad."

"It was."

"Do you want me to list Damon's crimes?"

"Yeah, please do. Maybe then you'll realize how much you fucked up. Damon is a lot of things, but he isn't Klaus."

"Oh, so it's a matter of degree."

"It is. Say whatever you want about Damon hurting Stefan by being with me or whatever, but he isn't Klaus. Damon and Stefan are not Klaus and Tyler, not even close. And if you can't see that, then you did some awesome mental contortions to make yourself able to sleep with him."

"I just really don't need any finger-pointing from you right now, okay? I just can't take that, so if you're gonna stay, then can you just….not? I don't wanna talk about how Klaus is worse than Damon. Besides, as far as Bonnie's concerned, we both suck, so why don't we just keep it at that?"

"Shoe's hot when it was on the other foot, huh?"

"Elena."

"Fine."

Caroline walked farther into the bathroom, crossing her arms as she went.

"Why did you do it, Care? Are you regretting it? Listen, I can tell you from experience that if you don't make peace with it, then it's gonna eat you up inside. Whether you regret it or not, you can't take it back. Definitely not where Tyler's concerned."

"I don't wanna talk about it like he was just some normal guy."

"Okay. So then he wasn't normal."

Caroline sighed and closed her eyes tight as she put her hands on either side of her head. She brought them to the front of her face and scrubbed them down. Turning around, she said, "When I told Tyler earlier….I'd never seen him look so hurt. So whatever I say from here on out, I never meant to hurt him. I never meant for him to find out."

"But Klaus had other plans," Elena said.
"As usual, I don't even know how to talk about it."

"Then let me start: you wanted to get back at Tyler for cheating with Bonnie."

"No. I would never sleep with Klaus with the intention to hurt Tyler, ever."

"Okay then….he was gonna die. And you wanted to be with him. You didn't...want to miss out on the chance," Elena said, small wrinkles appearing on her forehead.

"I didn't go over there for that. Yes, I wanted to talk to him one last time, because, yes,….I did like him. But I also hated him. But I also wished he could just change like he kept telling me he wanted to. I'd just told you that Tyler and I were broken up. I'd just had a nasty encounter with Bonnie inside Founders Hall. I was sitting in my car, and then I realized that I had nothing to do for the rest of the day, and I was pissed. I didn't want to go home, and then my thoughts landed on him. And I remembered that….I wanted to see him one last time. Look, I know he was horrible: that's why I hated him, but....he showed me a different side. You guys never got to see it, but I did. Even Stefan saw something in him. And we talked and….it just made me wish even more that he could've changed and gotten a real chance."

"Klaus wasn't interested in a real chance, Caroline."

"Don't interrupt me. I'm talking about the Klaus that I knew. All that crap you said at the sleepover about Damon always being there for you, I've never seen that. I've seen him obsess over a girl who wasn't his. I've seen him care a whole lot about you being alive because of that obsession, but I've never seen him be there for you. Stefan's been there for you."

"Fine," Elena bristled.

"Yeah," Caroline needled, her point proven. "I left," she continued. "I left the house. For an hour. And it was five minutes into it that I knew that I was going to go back. I wanted to make him wait. Don't ask. Talking to him usually made me feel...like I could be something close to…. Mrs. Klaus. I didn't wanna marry him. And after this little stunt, I'm positive I wouldn't have dated him."

"Do you think he slept with you just to.....mess with Tyler's head?"

"No. And that's the thing: I know he wasn't using me. He saw an opportunity after we slept together, sure, but he didn't go into it with the intention of using me. He liked me way too much. He loved me. I know he was really into it. I know he wanted it. It was just....Klaus, you know? He was vindictive, so yeah he could totally have a good time with me and then want to throw it in Tyler's face. But he made me feel….powerful and important. Like I was unique. I mean the most powerful, scariest, dangerous guy in the world wanted me, you know? It sounds so messed up."

"A little bit. But....I felt that way about Damon back when I was human."

"Then it's definitely messed up."

Elena ignored the jab. "I felt that way about Stefan, too. He was a powerful guy, you know? Old and smart. He's seen so many people, so many girls, but he wanted me. Elena. I've never won a single award. Or even thrown a party to see just how popular I was," she said, remembering Caroline's earlier quip. "But he liked me. But...Damon.....that was the real thrill. Stefan was, is, personable. Damon's prickly and turns everyone off. I mean the thrill's mostly over, I just love him now, but back when I was human? That was what shook me up even when I hated him and wished he would change. I still want him to change. It sucks not being able to plan a movie night with him and my friends because everyone hates his guts. But he's kept me alive. And he makes me feel a lot stronger.
"Because I didn't have the guy that I loved at the time?" she tried.

"You know, I'm sure Tyler has a list of reasons for why he chose Bonnie over you," Elena said. Caroline wanted to joke, and she wasn't joking. She wanted her to work out her feelings for Klaus, because otherwise she was going to be miserable. She knew Caroline. She wouldn't come to terms with her feelings by herself.

"I'm sure he does," Caroline said. "This is something else that I hate: I don't want Bonnie to be better than me."

"She's not."

"She is. She is to Tyler. She didn't sleep with Klaus. She didn't sleep with a murderer, and she never will. And I wouldn't want her to. She'd never look twice at a guy like Damon. And so because she hasn't and because she wouldn't, I feel like she's up there, and I'm down here."

"And down here is....."

"Uncomfortable. I don't want to be having this dilemma. I don't want to be going through this phase, and I can only hope that it's a phase, because look at what it's already cost me. I've lost Tyler. I don't even know if we can be friends, and my reputation is gone. I liked that Klaus was a killer, Elena. If I could wish him into not being a killer, I would, but that's not the real world, and I liked that....he could be so terrible, and then turn around and be soft with me. It's like this sick....living vicariously through him thing. I never went through what you're going through. I thirsted for blood, and I got jealous over Matt, but I never thirsted for a kill, and even wanting blood disgusted me until I learned to control it. I never....connected with that killer vampire nature that Stefan told me about. And I think I finally did through Klaus. And it freaks me out."

Her face crumpled, and Elena closed the distance between them and hugged her.

"I don't regret it," she said tearily over Elena's shoulder. She closed her eyes. "Tyler's wrong, but he doesn't need to know that. I don't regret it. I keep waiting to, but I don't, and I know that I'm not going to. I feel horrible but not because I regret it. If I could go back, knowing what I know now, I would still do it. I'd just make sure to take the stupid phone with me. How fucking messed up is that?"

"It's not-Well, Care, it's pretty messed up. But if you could go back, no one would know that but you. There are times when I wish I could make you guys ignore the crap that Damon does."

Caroline straightened and sniffed. Elena went to grab her some paper towels. "You know that stuff you said about Damon making you feel capable and strong?" she asked after Elena handed her the paper towels. "I felt that about-I would never blame him for what happened to him-but....Klaus was capable and strong while Tyler was...struggling."

Elena lowered her eyes, wishing she hadn't heard that.

"I know, I know, it's so wrong, but I found myself making these stupid comparisons, and it didn't help that Klaus made comparisons as much as he could. But sometimes I got tired of waiting for him to figure out how to get out from under Klaus. Sometimes I got tired of worrying about him. He tried so hard, and it scared me every time, because I didn't want Klaus to get mad and kill him."

"Tyler was struggling, so you turned your eye on the man in charge," Elena said, the words giving
her heartburn.

"Because I'm the most horrible person on the planet," Caroline concluded.

Rubbing the blonde's arm, Elena said, "I don't think you should go near Tyler for a while. I don't think you should ask him to forgive you. Give him his space. He deserves it."

"Stefan still loves you, you know. He's still hurting. He acts like he's not, but he is. It's why he wants you to be human again so bad: so that maybe he'll see the girl who loved him, even if you guys don't get back together. I want that. I want Tyler to see me. Maybe then I'll see myself, too, the me that I knew. I want him to forgive me. I want him to forget this and move on. I don't wanna be…this black spot in his mind. I wanna be the girl he thought I was."

"I don't think you have that choice."
Damon hurried to the door, a deep scowl pulling his face inward. Whoever was banging…..

He unlocked the door and pulled it open. "What?"

"Where's my brother?"

"Rebekah," he said as he appraised the disheveled Original. She *looked* like she'd been stuck in a poison-induced nightmare. Yes, a vampire's eyes could indeed be bloodshot. She was pale as all get out, two weeks hardly enough time for a vampire to severely desiccate. Klaus had taken the dagger out of her since she was in a magic-induced sleep. When she walked past Damon, he saw that her hair was badly knotted in the back.

"I don't have time for games, Damon. I need my brother. He's not at his house. *No one* is at his house, which is probably good because I might kill all his Hybrids when I see them. There is something-"

Water rushed out of her throat, and she garggled, tension marring her forehead as she sunk to her knees and choked on Damon's floor.

"The hell is that?" Damon asked.

Rebekah coughed, her empty stomach contracting severely. The last drops of Clermeil's water tickled her throat. "What was that?" she heaved.

"You'd have to tell me. Have you eaten yet? You look….scary."

"No I haven't, Damon. But I've already picked out my lunch. *Where* is Nik? Out of town? I don't know where my phone is."

Damon grimaced. Why did it have to be him? "Uh, Rebekah. There's something you should probably sit down to hear."

"What?"

"I said you should probably sit."

"I've been lying down for who knows how long!"

"Fourteen days."

Too fast for him to react, Rebekah got up and pinned him against the front door, her hand around his throat and squeezing. "I am *very* short on patience, Damon. I'd compel it out of you, but hitting," she gritted as she tightened her hand, making him gasp, "Feels so much better."

"Your-" he peeped.

"Yes?" She loosed her hand a fraction.

"He's dead."

"What?"
"Rebe-you're hurting-"

She let him go and he propelled himself away from her, grabbing his throat.

"Who are you talking about? Who's dead? What are you saying?"

"Your brother….is dead. Klaus….is dead."

"That is not possible."

"I know. I'd begun to think the same. But he's dead. Team Tonnie, or….Boniler, or….witch-Hybrid-hey!" he yelled when Rebekah forced him against the closest wall and put his throat in a new lock. "It wasn't me," he croaked.

"My brother can't be dead," she snarled. "He can't. Now, where is he?"

"Dead." He was officially pissed off. He shifted his face, but he remained impotent against Rebekah's strength.

"He can't be dead!"

"Get the fuck-"

"Tyler's just a Hybrid, and Bonnie-" She let him go, and Damon once again hurried away from her.

"Alright," he said, forcing himself to speak despite the pain in his throat. "I get shock, but if you're gonna keep attacking me, then you need to leave. I got a brother of my own to find."

"Niklaus can't be dead," she said, but the news was starting to sink in. "Tyler's just a Hybrid, and Bonnie….well, she doesn't make a move unless you say so."

"Don't even come near me again. It was all her and Tyler. I don't know how many times I gotta say it. Things have changed."

"Where's Kol?"

Jesus Christ.

"He would never let this happen," Rebekah continued.

Damon eyed her warily and readied himself to dodge the next attack. "Rebekah….it's been a long fourteen days."

"Remember what I said about patience?"

"Kol went before Klaus."

"Went where?!" she yelled, advancing on him.

"Rebekah….he died before Klaus. I told you: it's been a long fourteen days."

Rebekah's face slackled, all tension gone. "I did not lose two brothers."

"You did."

"I did not. I don't believe you. Tyler and Bonnie didn't do this. Where were you, asleep?"
"They’ve learned the art of secrecy."

"And this conveniently clears the way for you to get the cure without competition, doesn’t it? I don’t believe you. You were part of their demise."

"If you don’t kill me or Bonnie, we can get Silas to bring them back. That’s His specialty."

"Why the hell do I need you?"

"Because you won’t get very far by yourself. And you are by yourself. Your buddy April is now on Silas’ team."

"I still don’t see your value. Because unless one of the things I missed during those long fourteen days was you acquiring magical powers, I can kill you and still get the witch. I doubt she’ll mourn."

"Okay, but that witch and her loyal Hybrid managed to kill two of your brothers, and, little homemade torture session aside, you’re nowhere near as violent as they were. You’re not gonna convince Bonnie to bring them back by yourself."

"Remember the key foundation of that little homemade torture session, Damon?’ she asked, referring to the time she’d kidnapped him, strung him up in Klaus’ foyer, and attempted to bleed him dry. She sped behind him and snapped his neck. "The element of surprise. There are more than a thousand witches in the world. I don’t need Silas, and I don’t need Bonnie."

She took off her heels and squatted to pick him up. She heaved him over her shoulder and carried him to the dungeon.

"Damon Salvatore. To what do I owe the interruption?"

"Elijah, it's me."

"Rebekah?” Elijah asked after a beat.

"Nik is dead and so is Kol," Rebekah reported as she paced in front of the Salvatore mansion.

"What?"

"They're dead, and I don't believe it, but Nik isn’t in his house, and I can't reach his cell, same for Kol. I'm going to kill a witch."

"Rebekah, wait. Don't do anything. Niklaus called me late Friday afternoon and said that he believed that a conspiracy was mounting against him."

"Well, the conspiracy was mounted. He's dead."

"Rebekah—"

"Our family is dead, Elijah!"

"I hear you. But keep your hands off the witch. Kill some mortals if you have to, but Niklaus spoke of a buried witch who could bring Kol back. Now he'll simply have to bring both Kol and Niklaus back. And we might need Bonnie in some manner. I don't want you running off half-cocked, angry, and getting killed. I don't want to lose you, too."
"I will not do nothing!"

"Rebekah."

Rebekah smashed the phone on the ground. She did it again and again until the mobile lay in pieces.

Bonnie felt like her head weighed fifty pounds as she approached the detention room. She had declined both Tyler's Alpha healing touch and his vampire healing blood when they'd gotten back to their food. She had wanted the dull headache that she'd felt. It would keep her angry and pissed off at Caroline's gall. Plus, she had wanted to wear the battle wound. Now, however, she was beyond ready to be healed.

She gently twisted the knob and opened the door, and she peeked inside the classroom.

Tyler was half slouching in the second row of desks, and he raised his eyebrows at her. "She's not here yet," he said, referring to Mrs. Shaw.

"Good," Bonnie said, relieved as she opened the door wider and walked in. "Can you heal me? I'm dying."

"I did offer," Tyler reminded her with a fond smile.

Bonnie set her bag on the chair that was to the left of his. "I know, but my head didn't feel like the size of a hot air balloon before."

"You should've texted me. I would've met you in a bathroom," he said as he stood.

"It didn't get unbearable until the period before last."

"You waited for it to get unbearable. You're so weird."

"Can we go to a bathroom now?" she whined above the loud drum that was beating inside of her head.

"We don't need to," Tyler said. He glanced at the door that was behind her, and then he took her hand and made her walk in front of him toward the right back corner of the class. He watched her butt as she trundled miserably in front of him. He's been having lurid thoughts about her since the fight with Caroline. Show me a big girl has been echoing steadily in his head all day. He wanted her to show him a big girl.

The corner that he steered her to was on the same wall as the door, so anyone who looked into the rectangular window in the door would not see them.

At the corner, Bonnie turned and rested her back against the wall."This is risky," she pointed out with a small smile.

"Why? Mrs. Shaw walks in, and I'm just necking with the hottest girl in detention," he said as he braced his right hand by her head. "Do you want warm blood or cool healing?"

He offered the options like he was using the hottest pickup line. It made her remember what she'd wanted to show him when she'd woken up this morning. As long as they were taking risks….

"I'll take cool. For now."
Tyler placed his left palm behind her head. His turned his wolf eyes on her, and, honing his power, he sent a soothing, cool energy into her head.

"Oh my God," Bonnie murmured as the pressure against her skull began to decrease. She closed her eyes and put the full weight of her head on his palm.

It was only when he finished that she realized that her eyes hadn't been opened to their full capacity because of the headache. She'd been sitting in her classes with a squint. "Can you tell when I'm healed?" she asked.

"Yeah. I have to connect to what's wrong before I can heal it. It's dangerous when it's something in the blood, though. There can be adverse effects."

"Like it's transferable?"

"Sometimes. You never know."

She nodded, and it didn't cause her head any pain. "I have something for you," she said.

"Mmm-hmm?" They should be naked right now, was how he felt.

Bonnie bit her lip and then casted the tweaked version of the Blackout spell. The electricity invaded her skin, and she gasped. "Holy Jesus," she twitched.

Intrigued, Tyler cocked his head. The classroom had fallen into darkness, but his wolf eyes allowed him to see her, and he also saw the magic that glowed under her skin.

"You asked me what I felt, once, when I first did this spell, remember? I had planned to show you at the D-Decade Dance. I wanted to show you tod-today."

Tyler licked lips that were getting hungry for a taste of her. "What does it feel like?"

"Like I'm vibrating all over. Very, very softly. And then suddenly….not softly." She inhaled through her nose as her mouth salivated.

Tyler caressed her right cheek with the back of his knuckles, and Bonnie gasped when the vibration sped up and became erratic. A steel blue light shone where Tyler's skin touched hers.

Tyler took his hand away, surprised, and the light disappeared. "Are you okay?"

"I'm good," she replied, almost too eager. "Do it again."

Tyler touched her again, and the light appeared. He could smell it, the magic of it, and it smelled as cold as it looked. But Bonnie was blinking slowly, a smile hanging on her parted lips. She looked the farthest thing from cold. "It doesn't hurt?" he asked.

"Not at all. It's more-electric now. This little zap."

Tyler ran his knuckles up her temple and across to the middle of her forehead, and the light moved with his kuckles. He splayed his fingers then and softly ran them down her face, and she moaned. He continued down to her neck. He should've listened to her and taken them to a bathroom.

Without bothering to check behind him, the room was dark anyway, he slipped his hand under her shirt. Bonnie worked on controlling her breaths as the low zap of electricity concentrated where his fingers were, as if the light was attracted to his warmth. Her whole body was still a conductor, but Tyler's fingers created a nexus.
Tyler moved his hand around her stomach and ran his fingers up her back to her bra, causing Bonnie to arch into him. He kissed her, and she chuckled from the tingling blue light on her lips. Tyler used his other hand to rub up and down her spine, and she moaned against his lips.

When they parted, Bonnie ran her fingers down his face, but, to her disappointment, nothing happened.

"I think it's the undead thing," Tyler said.

"Can't va-vampires be shocked?" She applied more pressure and rubbed his cheek. The resulting spark made both flinch and sent Tyler stumbling away from her.

"Ow!" he exclaimed, roughly rubbing his cheek.

"Shit, I'm so sorry! I'm-I'm sorry, Tyler." She walked to him and put her hand over his. When he removed his hand, hers fell on his cheek, and her mouth dropped open. "Oh my God. Tyler."

"You didn't know. It's okay. Damn, it hurts," he said, removing her hand.

"Shit." Bonnie reversed the spell, and the room lit up.

"Hey, you didn't have to do that," Tyler protested.

"I can't believe I did that."

"It's okay."

"Your skin burned, Tyler."

Tyler licked the inside of the first row of his teeth. He wasn't mad at her. It was an experiment gone wrong.

"Next time, if something doesn't work on you, I won't force it."

"Hey, sex, or sex stuff, between a Hybrid and a witch was never gonna be easy. Can you recast the spell, please?"

"No, I think I'm over show and tell," she said, her eyes on his slowly healing cheek. When he sighed petulantly, she looked at him and said, "I'm pretty sure the others are coming."

"Fine. You'll cast it the next time we have sex," he said, bringing her pelvis into his.

"Are you sure you wanna risk that? I mean that'll be your most sensitive part rubbing against me. I don't care how big your….pack is. It's still sensitive."

Tyler lowered his head toward her as if to ask if she was serious with that pun. "I wanna try it," he maintained. "It'll just heal back up anyway."

"You're kidding. I don't wanna think about your thing getting burned and healing back up."

"Well I don't really believe I'm gonna get hurt, is the thing. Nothing happened when I was touching you, so if I control the sex, then everything should be fine," he said with a winning grin.

"Oh, you get to be in control. How very convenient."

"How very worth it for you."
Bonnie rolled her eyes. "Maybe it'll work if my blood is inside you like with the channeling."

"You wanna try?" he asked, already knowing her answer.

"No."

"Too bad. We're doing it anyway. I'll be the first person to stop if it hurts," he said. Linking their fingers, he lead them back to their seats.

She gave him a long kiss on the cheek after he sat down. "Mmmwuah. Thank you for healing me."

"You're welcome. You and I need to get together later on," he said, pulling her closer by her hips when she straightened. "In private. I want you." I flattened his nose against her crotch and inhaled.

"Tyler!" Bonnie whispered. She looked back at the door, even though one hand automatically went to his head to cradle him where he was.

"My mind's been on fire since lunch. You looked so hot," he shared.

"As happy as I am that you're turned on by that, I do regret one part of it," she admitted as she caressed his head. "I shouldn't have boasted about us like that. Not with Jeremy there. That was no way for him to find out."

Tyler left her crotch to look up at her.

"I was just so angry and so hurt for you. I didn't care who heard what. But I need to talk to him. I should apologize, and… I never really got back to him about… his feelings for me."

Tyler nodded.

"So, update on how I'm feeling after the woods: no cramps. At all. But the blood's running a little heavier than usual."

"Is that okay?"

Bonnie moved her hand down his head to caress the Mark on his neck. "Yeah, I'm thinking it's because of the disruption. Both your powers and your penis. I'm okay, though."

"So we're all set to do it again," he said, smiling.

Bonnie bent over and kissed him on the lips. "Yes, we are. But the next time either of us are naked, it'll be me on my knees with your dick in my mouth."

Tyler watched her walk to the front of the row, around the first desk, and come to a stop at the third desk. "Are you kidding?" he asked. He looked at the door. Could Mrs. Shaw have another family emergency? He would be very grateful.

"Oh no!" Bonnie exclaimed suddenly.

"What?"

"I can't do the Blackout spell at home," she said, shoulders slumping. "I already tried, and it's not the same. I need artificial lights."

Tyler eyed the door.
"Uh uh. We can't be the last two people to walk in. Everyone will know what we were doing."

"Fine. Tomorrow during lunch. A bathroom, any bathroom. You owe me."


"I'll have to decide if that'll be enough. You might end up paying me back with interest."

"My mouth on your dick not enough? In what world?"

"It's not what I'm in the mood for right now."

"Ty. You'll be in the mood after the first lick," she said, pushing her tongue against her bunny teeth before letting it pop down to the base of her mouth.

Tyler licked his lips, knowing full well that she would deliver on her promise. Still. Digging his heels in and making her pay him back with interest sounded like a great idea. They would both win.

"So how does it feel to be on this side of detention?" Bonnie asked nonchalantly as she moved her backpack from the chair to the floor.

Tyler let the clock on the wall tick two seconds before he answered, and he watched her sit down. "I prefer how it was before. You being punished and me supervising."

"Mmm. You weren't too bad as a supervisor," Bonnie said as she crossed one leg over the other. "You were definitely something nice to look at."

"As were you. If this was a repeat of last time, I'd let you earn your way out of here."

"Oh really. Tell me how."

The classroom door opened then and the annoyed look that Tyler threw the interloper was so severe that they stopped in their tracks upon seeing it. "Mrs. Shaw," Tyler said, trying to fix his face.

"Hi. Early arrivals."

Mrs. Shaw was the youngest teacher in the school, so she walked with more authority than even the principal in order to silence the doubts about her experience. Her short heels clacked loudly on the tile floor as she walked to the desk. Shaw's stomach protruded over her pants, just a little, but unmistakable because of her otherwise thin frame. It was the bane of her existence.

Bonnie looked from Shaw to Tyler, and she covered her mouth to keep from laughing at him. He still hadn't fixed his face.

"I'm very disappointed in you, Tyler," Mrs. Shaw said.

"Thanks," he said as he stared the woman down.

Bonnie lightly smacked his arm.

"I never expected to see you here." Shaw set her briefcase and her purse down. She dug in the side pockets of the purse in search of a hair tie, and then she put her freshly relaxed hair up.

"How's your family?" Bonnie asked, referring to the emergency that had kept Shaw from supervising her last month.
"Very fine, thank you."

Bonnie got a psychic hit as soon as the words left Mrs. Shaw's mouth. There had been no family emergency. Shaw had spent the afternoon hanging out with her family. Bonnie focused on her and explored the psychic link: her husband's brother had been set to head back to Connecticut later that night.

Her hair tied, Mrs. Shaw looked directly at Bonnie, and the witch's palms tingled in a panic. Bonnie averted her gaze.

The classroom door opened once more, and Elena and Caroline filed in.

Forty-seven minutes later, Mrs. Shaw excused herself to go use the toilet, and Bonnie was done. She couldn't go to sleep in front of Mrs. Shaw like she had when Tyler had been supervising. Furthermore, she wasn't even sleepy. She had finished the cleansing spell twenty minutes into detention and since then she has only focused on how horny she was. She hoped Tyler could smell it.

Tyler was again feeling the effects of the abysmal amount of sleep he's gotten since Klaus' attack on Friday. He was doing homework, but he wanted to rest his body. Preferably next to Bonnie. After she sucked him off good, because, yes, he sometimes stopped writing in order to smell her blood-infused arousal. He officially couldn't remember what she'd smelled like before she'd gotten her period.

Caroline sat three seats behind Bonnie and although she was writing down activities she can do to keep her mind off of her dilemma, she was also looking from Bonnie to Tyler and from Tyler to Bonnie. She kept thinking about the petite brunette's earlier outburst, and her vantage point allowed her to see Tyler's Mark when he straightened.

BB

How fucking perfect.

What the hell did bonded for life even mean? Like soulmates? She believed in soulmates. For a short while, she'd believed that she and Tyler were soulmates. And now he was gone from her life, more or less. He had never once tried to scratch her when they'd been together.

Back when they'd been together, he'd hated his werewolf side. Had that been some kind of sign that they weren't meant to last? Vampires and werewolves were known to be opposites. With Bonnie he was apparently being all he could be.

Sighing loudly, she tried to refocus on her list.

Elena, seated on Bonnie's left and reading one of the chapters that she was assigned, was wondering why they were all humoring this. They were two vampires, a Hybrid, and a witch….in detention.

The door opened, and Jeremy leaned his weight on the left side of the frame, keeping the door slightly opened with his back when it swung forward again. "Well check you guys out."

"Come to join us?" Elena deadpanned.

"Nope. Come to look at the sad picture. Four supes imprisoned in detention." He tried not to look at Bonnie, he really did. But he failed.
"How'd you know we were in here?" Caroline asked.

"Elena texted me her shame," he said, taking his eyes off of Bonnie.

"I wish I could get out of here," Elena droned.

"She'll be back any second," Tyler told the Hunter.

"She's back this second," Mrs. Shaw corrected behind Jeremy as she pulled the door off his back. Jeremy straightened and turned to face her. "Uh, I was just leaving."

"No please, join us. I've missed seeing you in here. Though not the reason why you were always in here," she said as she entered the room.

Jeremy rolled his eyes affectionately. "I-

Mrs. Shaw's right knee buckled when she was near the desk, and she slumped to the floor, landing hard on her right cheek. Jeremy dropped his backpack and ran to her, but he was too late to catch her, and none of the supernaturally agile people had noticed her falling in time.

"Jesus," Jeremy said as they all headed for her.

"Excuse me," said a male voice in the doorway.

Bonnie quickly backed up in her tracks and moved to stand across from the newcomer. "Shane."

He looked down at her hands and watched them ball into fists. "Tense?" He asked as he moved to the desk, the orange and light brown shoe box in his hand.

"Jeremy, move. All of you, move," Bonnie commanded.

The others scrambled, all confused except for Tyler, who readied himself to come between the God and Bonnie. Then a tiny part of him squashed the idea, and then the tiny part got bigger. He couldn't get between Bonnie and Shane, because Bonnie was ready to fight Shane. If he threw himself in the middle, she might end up getting hurt. She knew how to fight. He might mess her up.

"I'm tense, too," Shane told Bonnie. "And sore. I hope you all have been having an interesting day so far."

He opened His palm, and the lapis necklace flew from Bonnie's neck. She didn't so much as blink. "I hope the coven's curse worked. I would've casted it myself, but I was busy getting my shoulders put back in their sockets."

"You cursed the necklace," Bonnie realized. "That's why it was working on me, too."

"You're a witch?" Elena asked.

"More than a witch," He answered, dropping the necklace on the desk. "I believe this belongs to you."

He picked up the shoebox, opened it, and threw its contents on the floor.

Bonnie's heart tensed in alarm at His quick movement, her right thigh twitching, but she relaxed a fraction when He only threw sand. And then she tuned in to the clamor of metal on the tile floor. She lowered her eyes, but not her head, to the floor. The sand was an ashy grey.
Shane had addressed Elena. The vampire took a hesitant step forward, because the metal object looked familiar. Her steps quickened when she saw that it was definitely a ring.

"I don't know where the universe took a wrong turn to make them think they were at the top of the food chain," He said to Bonnie.

"What is it?" Bonnie asked Elena, her eyes on Shane.

"It's a ring," Elena said softly from her squat on the floor, her eyes wide on the object in her hand. "It's…"

"Lapis lazuli," He informed Bonnie. "It's Stefan's. And the rest would be….Stefan himself. You lied to me. It would've been one thing if you'd caused all that pain and you really were this hurting, lost, desperate orphan child. But you lied to me. And then you hurt me. And then along came Stefan. Kratíste kratoumén gia mou!"

Tyler, Elena, Caroline, and Jeremy flew up and were pinned each to one of the four walls of the classroom, Tyler on the one that the chairs faced, Elena on the one that was behind Bonnie, Jeremy in the back, and Caroline on the one that was on the same side as the door. Heavy chains wrapped around their bodies as they flew up. The chains tightened, looking to crush their bones.

"Mea pugno forent!" Bonnie counteracted.

"Sígasj tou stómatos pou miláei tétoia xórkia!"

Bonnie's upper lip stretched down and covered her lower lip, and it continued down to wrap itself under her chin. Her eyes widened in surprise, and she teared up from the pain.

Silas locked her arms to her sides and pushed her legs together, and He threw her up on the wall, right next to Elena.

"Damn it, Bonnie. I wanted to ask you about yesterday before I did that. I can't have you casting spells. Oh well. There's always….."

He turned to Tyler.

Bonnie's spell had loosened the chains on the group somewhat, but they were still struggling. Both vampires and Tyler shifted into their other self and were trying to use their strength against the chains. Jeremy had no recourse but to attempt what Bonnie had done on Friday: summon the sword that he'd touched, but the pain around his body was a major distraction.

"You're alive," Silas said to Tyler. "Which means your entire pack is alive. Congratulations. It'd be such a shame if Klaus came back to life, though, wouldn't it?"

Tyler stopped struggling.

"Just poof, just like that, everything you've done is reversed."

The chains around Tyler tightened, and he gritted his teeth against the agony.

"Tyler, as Bonnie's principal distraction for the past, oh, month, can you tell me why there were earthquakes last night? You see, things are different. Things have changed. The universe is...unreadable. The future is unreadable. Now that doesn't mean my plans are ruined. It just means that I can't see anything. You must understand," He said, turning to Bonnie, His lecture professor demeanor on, "I'm telling you this on purpose. I'm hoping you'll react, or not react, in a manner that..."
will make the future readable again. But in the meantime...."

He turned back to Tyler.

Bonnie wiped her head from side to side and screamed from her throat. It came out as a muffled sound behind her sealed mouth.

"Tell me what happened," Silas said. "I can probe your mind, you know. Like she did to April, but...old school. Nasty stuff. But I already have a curse at my disposal. Sorry for making you think you had a choice," He said with an affable chuckle.

"Silas, look out! Sword!" someone shrilled.

"Pyknósei!" Silas boomed, snapping His right hand into a fist and closing His eyes. When He opened His eyes, the space around Him glowed a faint white. It looked wrong. He turned around and saw that a quarter length of the sword had penetrated the shield, and it was aimed at His torso.

He stepped to the side of the shield and reversed the spell, and the sword crashed harmlessly to the floor. He swiped two fingers across His body and impaled the sword into the door across the hall.

A look at Bonnie confirmed that the sword had not come from her. Jeremy was the one who was glaring at Him. "Next time, it goes through you," He promised the Hunter.

Turning to the desk, He held out His hand, and pulled the lapis talisman. "Tyler, what caused the earthquakes?"

"Us," Tyler answered angrily as the curse burned in his chest. "It was us."

"You and Bonnie," Silas specified.

"Yes."

"How?"

"We were having sex."

"Sex," He deadpanned, frowning. "Sex changed the cosmos. You're lying."

"How can I?!" Tyler yelled, a vein jutting out in the middle of his forehead.

Bonnie was still screaming and thrashing her head. It allowed her a glimmer of concentration that was separate from her torture, one vital enough for her to latch on to a possible solution.

\textit{Clermeil! Help me!}

Damn the consequences.

\textit{Do something! This is Your day! Stop Him! Stop Him!}

"Fine, then, let's rephrase the question," Silas said.

But Bonnie couldn't let that happen. Silas had sicced Klaus on Tyler in part because He'd determined that Tyler distracted her too much for His liking. If He learned that she was now mated with Tyler, it would give Him an \textit{urgent} reason to kill him. He would not allow that level of distraction. So she stopped moving and screaming. She fixed watery, vivid green eyes on Silas, and she thought one thing. It uncoiled dangerously from her mind.
Bonnie's powers mixed with Clermeil's and a ceiling-high tube of clear ocean-blue water appeared around Silas, like turning on a light. Wasn't there before, suddenly it's there.

It swirled and threw Him about. He couldn't see, and He couldn't concentrate long enough to cast a spell. Water seeped up His nose, and He squeezed the holes shut with His fingers. The water in His nose landed in His throat, but He forced Himself not to cough in fear that He would swallow more water.

Bonnie looked at the ceiling, eyes wide in supplication. *Free me!*

*Phasmatos Salvis!*

*Ego libera!*

*Mea pugno fovent!* She latched onto that one and worked with it, embellished it. She reached into the earth and its brown vines crawled up her body. *Mea pugno fovent. Eaque alligo me ad corpus et sepelierunt illud sal terrae!*

Her limbs unlocked, and she landed on the floor in a heap. She moaned from the pain of her stretched upper lip. *Eaque alligo me ad corpus et sepelierunt illud sal terrae!*

Her top lip started to unfold from her chin, and a tremor rolled through her body as the reversal brought with it a new kind of pain. She shut her eyes and more tears rolled out.

*Ne aquam excipiant dolor sentio. Sit faucibus eius repere, palpebrae eius anguis, pop in aures eius!*

A soothing balm rolled over her lips. Opening her eyes, she slowly brought her hand up and touched her lips. Her upper lip was normal. Another tremor rocked her, her brain acknowledging that the body was no longer in pain.

She looked to her right at Silas and yelled, "*Repere ab iugulo, cum moritur! Die, you son of a bitch! Circa flumina nostra constringo vos adiuro vos per Clermeil! Take him!"* she commanded Clermeil, greedy for Silas' death. His immortality would permit Him to wake up. But He would die first.

The pitfall of immortality was that death spells were fair game. And simple. Like a vampire snapping another's neck. And Bonnie's frothing anger had allowed her to accidentally stumble onto that fact.

"That's for the weekend, you son of a bitch."

The two windows in the classroom shook as Silas' heart struggled to keep beating.

Inside of Founder's Hall, Carol Lockwood reviewed a get well letter that she had written for one of the county's Commissioners, a long-time family friend. *She* could use a get well letter right about now. She felt like she hadn't slept at all the night before.

Her office door closed, and she looked up from her work. She stood quickly, the chair rolling away to hit the printer and fax stand behind her. "Rebekah."

The last time she'd been frightened by someone's appearance had been when Tyler had transitioned into a werewolf in front of her. Rebekah looked like death warmed all the way over, ugly black and red veins still visible on her arms.
"Good afternoon, Mayor," Rebekah greeted as she stalked unsteadily toward the woman.

Carol held on to her desk. She couldn't run past the vampire. She's been mixing vervain into her lemon water since Richard had told her the truth about the town years ago, so Rebekah would at least get a nasty surprise when she bit her.

"You must forgive my appearance," Rebekah said, her words running together. "I haven't eaten in a while. I can feel my stomach collapsing. But I'm going to rectify that now. You're going to help me send a message to your son."

The door quickly opened and shut, and Rebekah's hair swished forward in a gust of wind when someone ran past her.

"I'm good at delivering messages," the newcomer said.

"You. Oh, this may be even better."

"You're in no condition to fight, Rebekah," Kim warned.

Rebekah backhanded Kim with her fist, but the encounter with Damon plus the run to Founder's Hall took a lot out of her. Kim's head snapped right back.

The worst part about fighting was getting hit in the face. It never failed to piss Kim off. She transformed her features and Rebekah did the same.

Rebekah ran at Kim but moved to the side just a bit and used the momentum to punch her square in the face. Kim's head snapped back and rocked her on her feet. She righted herself and attacked.

Rebekah caught her and threw her against the wall. When she sped forward to land another punch, Kim quickly moved out of the way, grabbed the thrusted wrist, and used it to pull Rebekah around and disturb her equilibrium. She placed her other hand on Rebekah's arm and pulled the wrist clean out of its socket.

Rebekah fell to her knees screaming and cursing, and Carol covered her mouth with both hands, her eyes going to the door and the staff that was on the other side.

Rebekah crawled fast on her knees, lifted Kim's shirt, and sank her fangs in, locking her mouth on Kim's flesh, intending to rip it out.

Kim yelled and bared her claws. She sliced five ugly trails from the base of Rebekah's head to the crown of her head, strands of weakened blonde hair tugging off at the root and clinging to her claws.

Rebekah ripped Kim's flesh out and blindly sped to a corner of the room her head stinging and bleeding.

Forcing the pain out of her mind, Kim sped to Rebekah. Rebekah dodged, slipping below Kim's shoulder and escaping out of the door.

"Fuck," Kim cursed. Rebekah was now hurt on top of being weak. Based on the woman's conversation with Elijah earlier, she was going to find mortal victims to alleviate both ailments.

Kim sped out, opening the door and body-slamming Carol's incoming, middle-aged assistant to the floor in the process. She stumbled over the woman, but she kept going. Stopping and getting caught wouldn't do her any good.
"Deborah!" Carol yelled as she ran over to the woman. Deborah had had to leave work early last month because her hypertension had flared up and now she'd gotten knocked on her ass by a Hybrid. "I'm sorry. Are you okay? No, stay down until you feel better," she cautioned when the woman tried to sit up.

"What in the world was that?" Deb asked deliriously.

"I have no idea," Carol said, managing to sound as surprised and lost as Deb.

"I think someone ran into me."

"I don't know how. I-I just had my computer on, and the volume was a little loud."

Bonnie stood from the floor and looked at Tyler, who was still straining against the chains. She stretched her hand toward him, but a quick movement at the door caught her attention. Someone had been watching, the same person who had warned Silas. And now they'd run off. The hint of black hair that she'd seen told her that it could be no other than April.

Bonnie dashed out of the classroom after her.

"April!" She swept her hand to the right as she pursued the girl, intending to send her smashing into the wall, but a faint orange circle flashed around her. Protected. It didn't stop Bonnie from trying and trying. She rounded a corner after her and came up with something else.

"Et crassiora sint aeris tractum claude vias!"

April hit an invisible barrier and stumbled back, stunned. She pushed against it, and the air rippled, going in opposite directions and stopping on either side of the wall of classrooms.

She turned around and moved sideways until she hit the door of a trigonometry class. Bonnie stopped running and walked to her, her panting giving her angry and otherworldly appearance a very scary bent. She looked like the witch from the worst nightmare, the evil that Silas had spoken about. She looked like she could very well strip someone of their powers and bury them alive.

A string of mellow green malachite beads hung from April's neck. "Called it," Bonnie said. "You told Silas I did something to you, so He gave you protection."

She grabbed the necklace but snatched her hand back when it electrocuted her hand.

"You can't hurt me," April said, a little more confident despite how terrifying Bonnie looked. The vines on every inch of Bonnie's exposed skin were moving, scrolling up her body, a symbol of the terra energy that was roaming inside of her.

"What are you supposed to do for Silas, April?" she asked like she pitied the girl. "Why is He stringing you along?"

"I will leave you alone. Don't worry about me trying to break through the talisman. You're safe. But your father….April. As soon as he wakes up, I will kill him. You continue messing with my life or help Silas mess with my life, and I will give you one day with your father, and then I will make sure that you are at his funeral. Have
you talked to Silas about His policy on resurrections? Does He perform the same one twice? Three times? Four?

Continue walking behind Him and I will hold you accountable for His actions. Let Him come after anyone that I love, and I will strike you as quickly as I will strike Him. And I bet you're banking on me dying."

Taking the girl's chin in a punishing grip, Bonnie intruded further on her personal space and said, "You should ask your God about witches who keep their powers after they die. As soon as He stops inhaling water. Walk away, April. Let your father rest. Or damn him to become my puppet."
Bonnie returned to the classroom, still a spectacular manifestation of magic, and found everyone on the floor.

Silas was still being ravaged inside of the water tube. His restraint spell as well as the truth curse were broken.

Bonnie looked down at Tyler and said, "We need to go. Now. While we have the opportunity."

"Gimme a second," Tyler grunted as he rocked on the floor.

Bonnie started to go to him, but her attention was stolen by Jeremy's pained cries in the back of the classroom. Remembering the sword, she turned to the hallway, held her hand out, and pulled it to her. She made it stand on the floor and went to Jeremy. Tyler's supernatural genes would help him get better. Jeremy's case was worse.

Bonnie kneeled next to Jeremy and placed healing hands on his body. Closing her eyes, she chanted several spells that served to reduce his pain.

"Are you okay?" she asked as she stroked his forehead.

"I think so," Jeremy panted. He sat up and cried out, his face contorting.


"I'm surprised it worked. I swear I stopped thinking about it and could only focus on the fact that my bones were getting crushed."

"You're connected to it. I think it still felt you. Come on," she said, and she gingerly helped him get on his feet.

"Can you bring a little of that over here, please?" Elena asked between clenched fangs from her position on the floor.

Jeremy nodded that he was okay, so Bonnie went to help his sister.

"What are we gonna do about the God?" Tyler asked as he stood, shifting back to his normal face.

"Let Clermeil do His thing," Bonnie answered after she finished with Elena. Moving across the room to Caroline, she continued, "He's a Spirit. Higher than Silas. I don't want to disturb His magic."

"I'm sorry, did you say Silas?" Elena asked as she stood. She couldn't figure out which emotion to feel: anger at being held prisoner by the chains? Shock over Stefan's apparent death? Worry about how she was going to break the news to Damon? Fear about whether or not Bonnie would be able to bring Stefan back? Resentment that this had happened to her in detention when she should've never been serving time for damage that none of them had done on purpose? Or should she feel confusion over whatever the fuck was going on?

"Shane is Silas?" Elena specified.

"That's not possible. Silas is in the ground," Caroline said as Bonnie helped her stand. "You said Shane was working for Silas."
"Who's Clermeil?" Jeremy asked as he came up to the front of the room.

"I'll explain later," Bonnie said as she turned away from Caroline to head to the front of the room.

"No, Bonnie, you will explain now," Elena said sternly. "Stef-" she looked down at the ring. She had clutched it in her fist this entire time. "What did He do to Stefan?" she asked Bonnie softly. Of course she didn't think that Bonnie knew. She knew. Stefan was ash. But she couldn't think of anything else to say about her ex's state.

And that was when Caroline remembered. "Jesus," she said, taking a step back and hitting the wall behind her. "Jesus. Oh my God, no. I told him," she said to Bonnie. "I told him about….about Shane working with Silas. I told him what you thought. He wasn't supposed to go."

"Go where?" Elena asked her. "What is going on?"

"He wasn't supposed to confront him," Caroline said, horrified by how badly the situation had unfolded. "He was supposed to wait for me to...to talk to Bonnie," she said to Elena.

"Can somebody be specific?!" Elena asked impatiently.

Tyler glanced at the column of water. It was still spinning, and it was throwing mists in its immediate vicinity, wetting the floor. He then looked at Mrs. Shaw. They needed to move her.

"The story that Silas is buried came from Shane," Bonnie said plainly. "It was a lie. He's Silas, and I'm the key to His release."

"Why would you keep something like that to yourself?" Elena asked.

"Because it had everything to do with me?" Bonnie asked incredulously. "I had other things going on."

"Bonnie," Jeremy said, surprised, "You could've at least said something to me."

"I'm sorry. I'm telling you now, all of you. If I go through with this cure thing, I will die. So I'm not. The search is off. I don't know how I'm the key to His release, but I do know that His release means my death. There was a vision," she said to Jeremy.

"Are you serious?" he asked.

Bonnie realized that she'd made a serious faux pas. This whole thing, getting the cure for her mother, had started with her and Jeremy, and, very soon after, she had closed him out without thinking about it and kept Tyler up to date about the goings on in her life. She still considered Jeremy a friend, and yet….she hasn't been treating him like one at all.

Jeremy took himself out of the circle that they had formed sans Caroline and sat on the edge of one of the desks. Tyler looked at Bonnie and registered the contrition on her face.

"You should've told all of us," Caroline said to Bonnie.

Bonnie grimaced. "Why? What were any of you going to do? I told Damon that Silas channeled me and siphoned my powers, and he still wanted to go for the cure."

"So did you," Elena pointed out.

"Look, can we have this discussion someplace else?" Tyler asked. "We don't need to be here when Clermeil gets through with Him, and we need to move Mrs. Shaw."
"I got it," Jeremy said, unable to hide the glum in his voice.

"Where are you gonna take her?" Tyler asked.

"I don't know," he answered with an impatient sigh. He wished like hell that he was taking Bonnie's withholding of her possible death from him better, but he wasn't, and it was plain for anyone who looked at him to see.

"I'll help," Tyler said.

_I'd rather you not_, Jeremy thought.

"Caroline can help him," Bonnie said, knowing that Tyler helping would be akin to rubbing salt in Jeremy's wound.

"We need to go tell Damon about Stefan," Elena said to Bonnie.

"You can go do that. This isn't me being insensitive. I have something very important that I need to handle. Silas tried to sacrifice Tyler and his pack over the weekend. He's got two sacrifices down, and he's planning a third one, and then he'll be on to the next stage of what he's planning. I need to disrupt his power base."

Elena wanted to argue, but she couldn't think of anything to say.

"Let's go," Bonnie nodded to Tyler. She closed her eyes and loosened her grip on the earth's energy. It was difficult, because her emotions were still running high. But eventually, the vines dripped down to her toes and disappeared through the floor. She went to her chair and packed up her things and grabbed the lunchbox, and then she made the mistake of looking at Jeremy. A shadow came over her emotions.

After Tyler zipped up his bag, his phone vibrated in his pocket. When he took it out, Kim's name was on the screen.

Bonnie looked at the column of water. Silas' body was limp now.

"Hello?" Tyler answered.

"Hey, it's me. Rebekah's awake."

"Uh. Okay. Why do you know that?"

"Because I remembered that today was the day, and none of us knew where Klaus had put her, remember? I cased out Klaus' mansion, just in case she went there, and she did."

"Kim, you're not supposed to be here. You're supposed to have gone home."

"Tyler, she went after your mom."

Tyler's face numbed. "What?"

"She's fine, but Rebekah wanted to send you a message. I intercepted. Listen, shit's about to ratchet up. She went to see some vampire. Damon? He told her that Klaus and Kol are dead. She called Elijah, and he's on his way to town. They know you and Bonnie are behind the deaths. He told her not to touch Bonnie because of a witch who can bring people back to life, but he also told her that she could kill mortals to soothe herself. She wasn't happy about that, which was why she went after your mom. I stopped her, and I'm sporting some bruises for blocking her from killing more than the
two mortals she'd already managed to go through. I've lost her, and even if I track her, I have no way of stopping her from doing more damage, not by myself, especially since she's gaining her strength back. Oh, and she snapped the Damon guy's neck and stuffed him somewhere.

"Where are you?"

"Outside of Founders Hall. I'm about to go in to check on your mom."

"Stay with her. I'll-"

He looked at Bonnie. They're supposed to go to the farmhouse together. "I'll get back to you."

"Okay. Adrian's at the school watching over you guys in case Rebekah went there after she woke up, so if you need him....."

Tyler paled. "I'll call him," he said. He bid Kim goodbye, and they hung up. "Rebekah's awake," he said to Bonnie. "She went after my mom. She's fine. Kim was there. Rebekah went to see Damon first and snapped his neck," he said with a quick glance at Elena, who stepped closer to him. "Damon told her that Klaus and Kol are dead. She called Elijah. She's pissed off. And they know about Silas. Elijah gave her orders not to touch you. I think he's gonna convince you to get Him to bring them back."

"He's out of luck," Bonnie said simply. She wasn't phased. One thing at a time. Carol was safe, which was the most important thing. Next, she needed to go to the damn farm house.

"Kim said that Adrian's here," Tyler said, his voice thick. "He's supposed to be watching over us, but....."

"Silas got through," she said gravely. "We need to find him. I think He casted a sleeping spell on the whole school."

Elena went to her desk, packed up her stuff, and made her way to the door. She didn't know who the fuck Kim and Adrian were; Bonnie and Tyler seemed to know the scope of what Rebekah being awake meant, obviously this was a conversation the two of them have had before; and now Elijah was coming to town. Bonnie wanted to go find Adrian, but she thought that Damon learning about Stefan could wait. She and Tyler were going to take care of what was important to them, so she was going to take care of what was important to her. Damon was lying somewhere with a broken neck.

At the door, she turned and asked, "Is Damon at the boarding house?"

"I'm thinking yes," Tyler answered.

She left without another word.

"What about Stefan's ashes?" Caroline asked, still shaken by the sight.

"Uh, well, the box is still here," Jeremy said. "But we need to move Mrs. Shaw, too, remember?"

"Take care of that, and let us know if anything happens," Bonnie said. She nodded to Tyler, and they went in search of Adrian.

"I don't know why they're still here," Tyler said once they were in the hallway, irritation masking his worry. "They should've left last night. We all clearly said goodbye and until next time."

"They're your pack," Bonnie said.
"We didn't talk about what that meant in light of Klaus being dead. We were a pack with a goal. We accomplished that goal."

Bonnie stopped him with a hand to his chest. "I can do a locator spell, um, maybe using your bond to him as Alpha and Beta."

"No, I can smell him out. I just….my mind's going a mile a minute."

A second attempt on his mother's life, Rebekah awake, Elijah coming to town, Adrian hurt, and not to mention the fact that Silas had just attacked Bonnie.

"Close your eyes," Bonnie instructed, moving her hands to his biceps. "Close them. And concentrate."

"Keep talking," Tyler said. Her voice anchored his mind. He made it his focal point, and then he branched out. He picked up Adrian's smell. There was nothing alarming about it. It was calm and even a little serene. The one detail that gave away that something was wrong was the flatness of his smell.

"Let's go," he said, grabbing Bonnie's hand, and they ran, passing sleeping bodies as they went.

Caroline and Jeremy moved Mrs. Shaw four doors down and across the hallway to another classroom.

"Are you coming to the boarding house?" Caroline asked. "I mean, it looks like Bonnie and Tyler have a handle on things. A functioning unit all on their own."

"I gotta call Bonnie first. Make sure she doesn't need me."

"I don't think she does, Jer. She couldn't have made it any clearer."

"She could still need my help."

Caroline nodded and moved to exit the classroom.

"Hey, Caroline?" Jeremy called. "Whatever that was….don't do it with me. I'm not in the mood, and I've never been the type."

"What are you-"

"I don't need you rubbing it in that Bonnie's with someone else so that I can feel-that's your baggage, not mine-"

"I wasn't-"

"Just don't," he said curtly, and he walked passed her and exited the room.

Caroline relaxed her shoulders. She hadn't been rubbing anything in. Just highlighting what was true. Bonnie and Tyler were dating now, and she couldn't be the only one who thought that that sucked. She wasn't the only one. Bonnie had been almost completely callous about withholding the fact that her life was in danger, like none of them needed to know. Bonnie was also pretty blase about Stefan's situation, which, given that her own life was in danger, Caroline understood a little bit. Bonnie couldn't do anything for anyone else if she couldn't figure out a way to do for herself first.

But something about the way that Elena had left made Caroline feel like something was brewing.
And it was going to bubble over into Bonnie's face.

Bonnie was copping more and more of an attitude, becoming almost mean, and she wanted someone to give the witch as good as she was giving.

Tyler led Bonnie to a spot of nicely cut but dense shrubbery at the side of the main building. If the walls disappeared, one could walk forward, forward, forward and directly into the detention room.

"Adrian!" Tyler yelled as he took off his backpack and kneeled on the Beta's right.

"Is he breathing?" Bonnie asked as she kneeled on Adrian's left, her first and most preferred thought being that he was under the same spell as the others.

Tyler put his hand on Adrian's chest, not trusting his other senses. "He's alive."

"He's sleeping," Bonnie confirmed.

"Adrian. Adrian," Tyler said, shaking him.

They both exhaled when Adrian sniffed. He opened his eyelids, but his eyeballs rolled back. He moaned groggily.

"He can't wake up," Bonnie said. "But he hears us. Right, Adrian?"

A tired moan, longer this time.

"It's a strong spell," Bonnie said.

"What, you think there's a time limit on it, or…?"

"No, I-No," she answered with more certainty. "If there was a time limit, he wouldn't have been able to open his eyes or make a sound until it was absolutely time. It's just a strong spell, one that he can't fight. Sleep, Adrian," she said, touching his forehead. "Go to sleep."

"Sleep," Tyler told him, and Adrian's body went deceptively limp. Tyler even touched his chest again to make sure that he hadn't suddenly died. "We need to kill Rebekah as soon as possible," he told Bonnie. "Before Elijah gets here."

"I know."

"Kim and I can handle it," he decided. "She's not like Klaus. She's not invincible. We won't need a spell to weaken her."

"If you don't kill her right then, she could escape and run to Elijah. Or go into hiding."

"We're still vampires, Bonnie," he said, a little amused. "We're familiar with the snapped neck trick."

Bonnie's lips twitched in a smile. Her mouth relaxed, however, when she realized something else. "You have to go check on your mom." She knew that he wanted to, needed to.

Tyler sobered. "You can't go by yourself. I can send Kim-"

"You just said you need her for Rebekah."

"I can handle her by my-"
"No. I'll go by myself."

"Pastor Young almost killed you with an oven last time, remember? And that was just because you were in the house. Now you're gonna try to evict him."

"I think that was about him not wanting me to discover Shane's true identity."

Her phone vibrated against her butt, and she stood up and took it out. Jeremy. "Hello?"

"Hey. Caroline and I moved Mrs. Shaw. Caroline's on her way to the boarding house, after getting Stefan's ashes, I'm guessing. Did you find the guy? Adrian?"

"Yeah," she answered, looking down at the guy in question. "He's knocked out cold, fast asleep."

"So what happens next?"

"Tyler's staying with him, and he's gonna go after Rebekah, too. I'm going to the farmhouse where pastor Young died."

"Do you need my help with any of that?"

Bonnie hesitated. "I don't think so. Not necessarily."

Tyler leaned over Adrian's body and smacked her ankle with the back of his hand. When she looked at him, he gestured for her to take Jeremy with her.

Bonnie wanted to go by herself, but she did want to talk to Jeremy. She turned her attention back to the call and said, "If you don't mind coming with me...it's okay if you don't want to."

"I'm coming. I'll come."

"Okay, I'll meet you out front." She hung up and stooped to grab the lunch box off the floor. She walked around Adrian's body to get to Tyler. She leaned down as he stretched up, and they kissed.

"Be careful," he said.

"You too."

"Bonnie, wait," he said when she turned to leave. "You don't have the talisman anymore. I think it got swallowed up in Clermeil's water."

"I wouldn't have wanted it anyway. Silas messed with it."

"But now you don't have any protection against His herbs."

"I still have my protection spells. Here," she said, sliding off her backpack as she kneeled. She pulled out the talisman that Lucy had retrieved for Carol and gave it to him. "I'll be fine," she promised.

Jeremy reached the parking lot before Bonnie. She appeared behind him and saw that he held the sword.

He didn't see her until he put everything in his car and turned to the school to wait.

"I don't know whether to tell you to keep it or give it back to me," Bonnie said when she was close enough. "Either way, we're screwed. Silas saw it, and He knows it belongs to you."
"How long do you think He'll stay dead?"

"No idea."

Jeremy's eyes went to the Mark on the right side of her neck and neither of them could figure out what to say.

But Bonnie tried. "Jeremy…"

"We don't know when He's waking up, right?" Jeremy asked, taking a step back. "So we're kind of on a deadline."

Bonnie nodded, her stomach twisting uncomfortably. When had doing anything with Jeremy become awkward, least of all talking?

"Hey, Jeremy?" she called when he turned and opened the car door. "I don't regret being with him. I don't regret the Mark," she said, touching it. "That's not what I want to talk about. Just so you know."

She remembered what he'd said about Tyler not being good enough for her.

Swallowing around the lump in his throat, Jeremy got in the car.
Bonnie dialed her mother as soon as she cleared the parking lot.

"Hello?" Abby answered.

"Hey. Don't freak out, but Silas attacked me while I was in detention."

"What? Are you okay?"

"I'm fine. He's dead. I mean I got hurt and so did my...people,...but we're all fine. Well,...Stefan's dead, but...

"Bonnie, can you please...?"

"Right. From the beginning. Okay, we were all in detention because something that cost a lot of money got broken the day we fought Kol. Nothing was happening until the teacher suddenly fell over. Then Silas appeared. I mean He walked up to the door, not that He materialized. Long story short, He said a couple of spells, and then I channeled Clermeil's...need for mischief, I guess? Like, I didn't literally channel Him, but I basically gave Him someone to play with? Hopefully that will satisfy His desire to exercise His power. Kill two birds with one stone. Silas killed Stefan, burned him to ashes, I'm guessing to make a statement. Turns out Stefan was told about Silas, and he went to confront Him."

"Where are you now?" Abby asked.

"On my way to the farmhouse."

"Okay, Bonnie, be very careful. I've got Lucy on the couch," she said, sounding like she was switching the phone from her hand to cradle it between her ear and her shoulder, "and I'm not doing too hot."

"What happened?" Bonnie asked.

"We went to the site. As soon as she started the cleansing ritual, the spirits of the witches attacked me: aneurysm and burns that have turned into fuc-freaking welts. Lucy suffered a massive psychic invasion, and I can't cleanse her of it, because I don't have any powers," she said. "She can't function enough to do it herself. Her magic is polluted."

Bonnie felt her ears pop. "I should've been the one-"

"Bonnie, stop. This is precisely why you weren't the one. Silas attacked you, and you wouldn't have been able to defend yourself if the witches had gotten to you."

"It's gonna be worse when He realizes what happened. Did she get through the ritual?"

"Of course she did. She's a fighter."

Bonnie could tell by the fondness in Abby's voice that she was looking at Lucy. "We've got some time now that Silas is dead, but once He wakes up..."

"Instead of killing Him, we need to take a page out of Qetsiyah's book and figure out a way to imprison Him. We can kill Him later."
"I actually thought about turning Clermeil's water into ice and freezing Him, but I didn't want to do anything to mess with Clermeil's magic. He might've gotten offended and freed Silas."

"Yeah, smart call."

"And He has a crew of people working for Him, different from when Qetsiyah imprisoned Him."

"We'd have to grab the body before His people come looking for Him."

"And then throw up all kinds of wards to keep them from finding Him. That's too much work. We're officially stretched thin with Lucy out."

"Right. Is Tyler with you?"

"Uh…..no. That's another thing: Rebekah is awake, and she went after Carol Lockwood. Kim saved her, but now Tyler's gone to check on her. And Elijah Mikaelson is coming to town."

Abby closed her eyes and scraped her teeth over her bottom lip. "We're focusing on Silas."

"My thought exactly," Bonnie said. How could any other threat compare to the one that she knew was going to kill her? "Besides, if Tyler and Kim are lucky, Rebekah will be dead before Elijah steps foot in Mystic Falls."

She and Abby eventually hung up, with Abby expressing her wish that Bonnie was being accompanied by a werewolf instead of a Hunter. Mortal ghosts tended to be afraid of werewolves when they're in their four-legged form. Tended to be, because sometimes things worked out where a ghost's lack of solidity was too much for a werewolf's senses, and they freaked out.

Bonnie didn't ask Abby why she'd asked about Tyler. She assumed that her mother had wanted to pass him a message. Abby, Lucy, and her father had all exchanged numbers with Tyler, and the deal was that they were going to figure out a way to save her without her knowing a single clue about the how, lest Silas learn of it from her mind.

Her protection spells were working, though. Silas had had to come in person to lay siege on her, and although Lucy, her mother, and Tyler had gotten banged up, Lucy and Abby hadn't been attacked by Silas, and Tyler had escaped with his life. And her father was fine. Her inner circle was fine.

Everyone else had survived Silas' visit, too. Well...Stefan was dead, but……

Her spells were working.

After Bonnie left, Tyler sped Adrian to the back seat of his car, then went through the painstaking process of arranging his limp body in a comfortable position. He sped back to the bushes, grabbed his backpack and sped back to the car.

Now he was walking into Founders Hall with a half groggy Adrian and hoping that Silas had taken care of the cameras in the school before He'd attacked. They were fucked where Mr. Hill was concerned otherwise. He was sure that Jeremy and Caroline had not bothered to dodge the cameras when they'd moved Mrs. Shaw.

"Finally," his mother sighed, when he walked into the office. She'd been worried that Rebekah would find him, despite Kim's assurances that he could handle himself and that he was surely with Bonnie.
Mother and son hugged, and he asked her if she was okay.

"I'm fine. Can't say the same for my confused secretary. But I didn't get a scratch on me. She saved me," she said, nodding at Kim.

Tyler turned to Kim and said, "You look like crap."

"I've only been doing the heavy lifting," she said with a smile. Her bruises had healed, but her hair was still a testament to what she'd gone through.

"Don't bet on it," Adrian said. "Something else is going on, but he won't tell me about it."

"We're gonna find Rebekah, kill her, and then you guys are gonna get the hell-heck out of dodge," he said, with a quick look at his mother.

"It's clearly about the Silas dude," Adrian told Kim.

"Which you never needed to tell him about," Tyler chastised Kim.

"I told everyone about it. I told them that you and Bonnie were in trouble, and that we could come back and help. It was totally up to them, and they chose to go be with their families, with most of them, like Alex and the Fis(es), telling me to call them when we needed back up. The rest,.....well, you already know Lena said a loud no to sticking her neck out when there's a witch involved. Not to mention,.....we all felt the change. We saw the Mark on your forehead when you came back. I told everyone beforehand not to say anything."

Tyler gleaned from Kim's demure tone that she wasn't particularly crazy about the change. "You guys are free," he began.

"We're a pack," she insisted.

"Apparently not. People wanted to say something about the change. Most of them aren't gonna come back. We'll always be...connected...because of what we went through. But they're not gonna cross state lines for the sake of a pack, and they don't have to. I'm not Klaus. We said goodbye yesterday."

"Well, some of us didn't think it was goodbye forever," Kim said.

"I didn't save you so that you could get killed by another assh-douchebag. Silas is a lot more dangerous than Klaus for the simple fact that He doesn't need minions or slaves to be able to reach you wherever you are. He's a witch, a God, like, legit. He will kill you, and I don't want that to happen. Bonnie and I can handle it. We've got people."

"Ty, we're not here for you to save us," Adrian said. "You didn't save us from Klaus. Your plan worked, and your idea panned out, but you're not responsible for our lives."

"I am if I'm your leader."

"Yeah, but it doesn't work the way you're thinking. We're not kids. You protect us, but you don't hide us. And we protect you, too. And Bonnie, now. And I do want to be in this pack. And so does Kim. We can be a pack of three if we have to be, with some outside help now and again."

"You guys haven't seen your families in a year," Tyler emphasized slowly.

"I called my parents," Kim said. "Adrian called his aunt and uncle. They know we're okay, and they also know that we have business to take care of. Look, you can't make us leave, and you can't make
"He can, actually," Adrian disagreed, earning an alarmed look from Kim. "He can. You're Alpha. You choose your pack. You can also disband the pack. But that won't stop us from helping you. Unless you also banish us."

"Why are you giving him ideas?" Kim asked, irritated.

"Because he can't do it unless he really means it. You know us, Ty: all about that raw emotion. You'd have to mean it to get rid of us."

Tyler worked his mouth, wishing he could mean it.

"You want us. You just don't want us to get hurt," Adrian said.

"And we're not here to die," Kim said.

"That doesn't mean you won't," Tyler replied stiffly.

"Tyler, if they're offering to help-" Carol began

"Mom, don't. Don't," he repeated, shaking his head.

"This is what it means to be in a pack," Kim said. "This is what it means to have Betas. I told you that we were a family. I'm not gonna turn my back and pretend you and Bonnie aren't dealing with some shi-mess. Especially not after the huge ass-behind favor she did for us."

"So, can we go find Rebekah before her trail turns as cold as the blood in her veins?" Adrian asked.

Flexing his chiseled jaw, Tyler said, "Fine."

Bonnie swung the messenger bag over her shoulder and closed the trunk of her car. The car chirped when she locked it, and she regretted the decision immediately. The ghosts had probably heard that.

She put the bag on the trunk of the car and opened it. "Things will get ugly in there," she said when Jeremy came up to her. "I'm going to cleanse the house and then banish the spirits to the OtherSide. Pastor Young attacked me for less than that the last time I was here. Unlike Tyler, you're not gonna be able to see the spirits if they attack you," she remembered with a frown. "My mom and Lucy banished the witch spirits that were sacrificed in Eden, and they got banged up. I might get overwhelmed when I go in there, so I need you to help me focus."

Jeremy nodded and Bonnie conceived an idea. "I'll need to channel you. I mean...can I?"

Another bout of awkwardness. She has never asked for permission to channel him. The very first time that she had channeled him, he had volunteered. Every time after that, including the two times she'd channeled him after their breakup, his permission had been implied. But she was with Tyler now. She couldn't go around playing with Jeremy's energy.

"Yeah," he answered, the word sticking in his throat.

"After we're done with this, we should talk."

"I mean, there's nothing you need to explain."

"I do need to explain something. You shouldn't have found out about the vision at the same time as
everyone else. You're not like everyone else. I don't...think of you like that. I want you to know that."

"I'm out; Tyler's in. What else is there to explain?"

"See, that's exactly why we need to talk, because it's not like that at all."

"If you weren't dating him, I would've known about the vision a long time ago: true or false?"

"It's not like that."

"It is from where I'm standing. The dice fell on his side."

"Okay, how about we go take care of the spirits instead of standing here where they can plot against us, and then we'll talk."

Feeling a little rankled, she took out the juniper that was wrapped in a paper towel and handed him the bag. "I'm hoping they'll focus on me. When that happens, you take the candles out and put them in a wide enough circle for us to stand in. I didn't bring a lighter, so I'll take care of the fire."

"Got it," Jeremy said as he looked at the house. The last time he'd encountered unfriendly ghosts, they had pinned him to the ground.

Bonnie was a little apprehensive as she headed to the house. She would've been more confident if she'd come by herself, weirdly enough. Having someone with her made her think that the chances of her getting hurt and needing to be bailed out were high.

They walked into the house and stopped in the living room. The house was so quiet that Bonnie could almost believe it wasn't haunted. And then three alarming questions formed in her mind. Were the sacrifices able to speak to one another? Had one of the witches somehow gotten word to Pastor Young that someone was trying to banish them? Was the house quiet because they were lying in wait to attack her?

And just like that, she was nervous. She didn't waste time. She opened the paper towel and threw eight juniper berries on the ground. "Ego purgare hac domo omnium negativus industria."

The junipers started to bounce, barely lifting off the floor, so it looked more like they were vibrating. The house seemed to inhale and suddenly it became animated, every door except the front opening and shutting.

"Ego purgare hac domo omnium tenebris magicae!"

"Get! Out!" pastor Young shouted as he dove for her. Bonnie turned in time to throw herself to the left, landing on the floor. She screamed and reared back when a thin black snake rose through the floor and lunged at her face. Its tail, much much thicker than its head, appeared through another section of the floor, and wrapped tightly around her right wrist.

"Ego purgare hac domo omnium tenebris magicae!" she chanted, her heart seizing in abject fear. More of the snake's upper body came through the floor, and it made a beeline for her head.

"The candles are out!" Jeremy said as he came down next to her and touched her. His solidity shocked her out of the dead's hallucination. "Incendia!" she yelled, and the five candle wicks caught fire.
Something hard hit Jeremy in the chest, and he was thrown away from her and pinned to the wall.

Bonnie turned to look at him, and the living room's couch flew over her head, headed straight for his body. She whipped it off course with her right hand, and it fell in front of the kitchen door, blocking it. She stood and chanted, "Quidam parte pro vivis et defunctis pro parte, id est Naturae rationem."

Her arms suddenly felt heavy, and she looked down to find them covered with brown, black, and green insects that were way too big. She violently shook her arms as her whole body broke out in goosebumps. Some of the bugs fell to crawl on the floor, but the majority stayed.

"Jeremy!" she cried in a panic, her voice shaking.

"Bonnie, concentrate! It's not real!"

"It's real! It's real!" she screeched, shaking her arms so hard that the sockets hurt.

"Tell yourself-"

"Jeremy! Ego purgare hac domo omnium tenebris magicae! I bind this magic to the earth! Get off me! Get off!"

A solid hand slid down the length her left arm and sent both columns of bugs to the floor. Bonnie scurried away from the insects as they continued their leisure crawl. She looked up at Jeremy through tear-soaked eyes.

"I told you to leave. Didn't I? You refused. You came back."

"You're not Jeremy," she trembled, feeling like the bugs were still on her arms.

"We'll never get out of this house, Bonnie."

"The hell we won't. I think your Lord and Savior would have something to say about you holding me prisoner."

She dashed around him and headed for the circle of candles.

Pastor Young turned around and lunged for her shirt and caught her. As soon as he did, his last living words streamed through her ears: we are the beginning.

Pastor, seriously, what's going on here?

The strong smell of gasoline accosted her nose.

The flicker of a lighter sounded in her ears.

So much confusion.

"No! No!" She closed her eyes and fought against the psychic intrusion. The smell wavered, but the confusion stayed.

We are the beginning.

"Fear not. For I have been chosen to lead us in the movement."

His voice was very close and very clear.
She opened her eyes.

She was in the kitchen, and Pastor Young was moving around the room, locking the door that led to the laundry room that then led out to the back porch and handing out vervain. Bonnie whirled around. No one was holding her captive.

"Hear me, loved ones. Soon you'll be free-"

"This isn't real," she murmured.

Pastor Young unplugged something that she couldn't see, and the smell of gasoline rose unnaturally fast.

"To pass through the gates."

"This isn't real," she said as she took a step back. He opened the oven door, and the smell became stronger.

She was going to die.

"And we'll all be united."

Her eyes drifted to one of the parishioners who was sitting at the table. Sandy brown hair that fell in loose curls and a light blue sweater, the woman turned her quizzical attention from pastor Young and looked balefully at Bonnie.

"For eternity."

"Get out!" the woman shouted, her body coiling from the vehemence of her command.

The door to the living room flew open and sent the couch crashing against the adjacent wall, and Bonnie ran on legs that she couldn't feel.

We are the beginning.

Far away now. The past, not the present, not her present. She whipped around to face the kitchen. No explosion, not even in her third eye.

"Bonnie," Jeremy said, grabbing her wrist.


She ran a short distance and hopped inside of the candles. "Qui non potest celare hunc circulum."

He charged for her, but the flames flared high and blocked him. He cried out in pain, covering his eyes.

Bonnie stretched her hands out to the flames and pulled them up her arms. She channeled the energy back to the candles and created a cycle.

"Are you going to kill me, Bonnie?" he asked.

"Fire doesn't just destroy, Pastor," she said, balling her fiery hands into fists. "I threatened your daughter today."

That tidbit wiped away his smug veneer.
"Were you hoping that Silas would keep her out of it? When's the last time you two talked? You dropped the ball, Pastor. You've been working with an evil God, completely ignorant about what that would mean for your daughter once we all figured it out."

"Silas will protect her."

"Caroline wanted to suck her dry. Remember her? Sheriff's daughter? Tyler wants to rip her to pieces with his teeth. Stefan and Klaus went all the way to her doorstep, your doorstep."

"No. Silas protected her that day. I felt it."

"And I got in her face right before I came here. I made her a promise. A very horrible promise. And do you know where Silas was? He was dead. Your God... was dead... is dead... by my hands. You fucked up. And I'm going to make sure that your daughter pays for it."

"No!" He disengaged from Jeremy's body and floated to her. She ran out of the circle, because the spell only blocked those who were hiding from entering the circle. He was no longer hiding in Jeremy's body.

"Jeremy, get in the circle!"

She caught her breath when pastor Young flickered in inches away from her face. The air between them rippled hotly, and she realized what he'd just tried to do. "You can't possess me," she said, a hint of fear in her voice. "Fire protects."

His face twisted in anger, and his distinctive features disappeared inward. Bonnie ran around him, and he roared. The house seemed to shrink, and she screamed to stop herself from getting distracted by the unnerving psychic anguish that was coming from him. She hopped over the candles and shook her hands out to get rid of the fire.

She grabbed Jeremy's hands, and they held tightly to each other. Jeremy closed his eyes so that he wouldn't see whatever the hell pastor Young did to him next.

Bonnie closed her eyes, channeled him, and began. "Omnis anima, in locum suum, id est naturae rationem. Quis furatus fuit, nunc dimittis. Deleo spiritus in hoc habitaculo. Ego vos de angustia trans dolor accipere."

The ground started to shake beneath her feet. She squeezed her eyes tighter so that she wouldn't get distracted, and she focused on Jeremy's energy. Jeremy, however, opened his eyes and saw that pastor Young was trying to bring the house down. His hold on Bonnie's hands tightened in alarm, but he resisted the urge to pull her. Still, he wanted her to know that she had a limited amount of time to make the spell work.

"He's trying to bury us in here."

"Non est vobis in loco hoc! Nullus est magicam hic domus!"

They both felt the difference when the house's tremor transformed into the workings of Bonnie's spell. Bonnie opened her eyes, her heart at the bottom of her stomach, and she saw the eleven innocent victims, including the woman who had broken her out of pastor Young's psychic hold.

She looked down and saw that the juniper berries were still jumping.

The spirits shifted their focus to something beyond her and Jeremy. Some looked sad, some apprehensive, but they all looked irreverent in front of whatever it was that they were seeing. Pastor
Young was the only one who protested the transition, screaming and hollering and swearing revenge.

And then everything stopped, suddenly and completely.

Bonnie and Jeremy looked around, but nothing happened. The living room was in disarray; the candles were snuffed out, with long wisps of smoke rising from the wicks, and the ripe juniper berries were now soggy and flat.

This time, the emptiness of the house whispered that it had been inhabited for too long and had held too much.

Bonnie turned to Jeremy, her forehead creased from the ordeal, and they hugged.

"Are you okay?" he asked when they got to her car. He set her bag on the hood.

"I'm, um,.....no. I'm getting there, but I'm still freaked out. I still feel those..." she shuddered and scrubbed her arms. "I need a shower. I need soap."

"Sorry," Jeremy said. He helped her rub her arms, and Bonnie shivered all the way up to her scalp as she felt a million tiny legs on her skin.

"God," she said, shaking out her arms. "You know what I know now?"

"What?"

"There are no defenses against a ghost. I mean, not really," she said as she continued shaking her arms. It was helping. "I tried to think of a lot of things, and I kept hitting this wall: they have no body, so you can't hurt them. Can't use their emotions against them, because, again, they're not attached to anything. They're energy. What can you do with energy?"

"Transform it?" Jeremy suggested.

Bonnie stopped shaking her arms. "But they're a kind of energy, one that might not be malleable. But the next deadly ghost I run into, I'll definitely try to transform them into something else."

"How do you think the pastor's gonna deal on the OtherSide?"

"Emotional torture, hopefully. I stretched the truth and pretty much told him that we all wanna kill April."

"Don't we?"

She smiled. "No one's touching her. I made her a promise, and I intend to live up to it. But if I'm lucky, pastor Young will be wringing his hands and waiting for her to join him on the OtherSide at any minute. Are you okay?"

"I'm fine. Freaked out, but fine."

"You were possessed."

"I figured. Everything went black."

Bonnie hopped her butt on the hood of the car and laced her fingers between her legs. "I found out that Silas wanted to kill me on Saturday. I should've told you."
"You don't owe me anything."

"Stop saying that. You've never been passive aggressive."

"Fine. Not passive aggressive: it feels like because we're not dating anymore, you didn't think it was important to tell me. Did you think about telling me at all?"

"Of course I did. I wasn't trying to hide it from you."

"But you weren't in a hurry to tell me."

Bonnie closed her mouth.

"It wasn't a priority, and it wasn't a priority because we aren't dating."

"That's not it."

"If we were dating, if you were still interested in me, I would've been the first to know."

"I got distracted. I found this out, and then Tyler fought Klaus, and he was hurt, and I was dealing with my family, it was a lot, and, and….you're right: if we were still close, you would've been the first to know, but not in the way that you're making it sound. Jeremy, I'm pretty sure you have some things going on that I don't know about, and that's how it's been ever since we broke up. We deal with everything away from each other until circumstance brings us together. I didn't know about you walking around with an invisible mark on your hand until circumstance needed me to ask Shane how to make you into a Hunter. Remember that?"

Jeremy averted his gaze.

"That's just how we are. It's how we've always been, and it did always feel right whenever we came together. It felt like no time had passed. But it's different now. I am sorry that I didn't think to tell you right away, but I also don't think it's fair for you to act like I'm throwing you away for Tyler."

"That's what it feels like," he said after a beat. "It just….it sucks. Because you do like him, don't you?"

"I love him."

Jeremy felt his chance slip away completely.

Bonnie lowered her eyes and smiled. "You said...what you said...a month and some weeks ago. And we're only now really talking about it."

"You can't bring yourself to say it?" Jeremy asked with a dejected smile, his heart hurting.

"That I'm important to you?" Bonnie asked, lifting her eyes to him. "That you care about me so much that I'm the only one who can function as your anchor? That you still have feelings for me."

"I still love you."

A year ago, those words would've brought Bonnie so much relief. Now she only felt a distant sorrow in memory of the time when she'd needed to hear those five words. She once loved Jeremy so much that his betrayal of her trust had left her devastated. She never thought there'd be a day when she would actually be turning him down.

"You thought you had all the time in the world to tell me that," she said quietly.
"I ran away from it for a while. I was dealing with a lot, seeing Anna again, and the decision I made because I didn't want to feel anything that reminded me that I was living while my aunt and uncle were not. I still had feelings for you, Bonnie, but I didn't realize how much I still loved you until...until that day when Damon brought you to the house and your neck was bleeding."

"The day after Alaric attacked me. And you still waited," Bonnie observed.

"I wanted to figure everything out. I needed to be sure, because I already messed up once. I needed to be sure that I was okay enough to be in a relationship, and then I had to figure out how to....come to you."

"I was in love with you for a long time after you hurt me," she admitted. "But I'm not anymore. I still love you as a person. I still care about you, and I still want the best for you. I want you to be okay. I still think of you as my friend. You were really important to me once, and you were an important...change in my life."

Head lowered, Jeremy bit his bottom lip.

"It was a good change, but....I'm in a different place."

"A place where Tyler belongs," he said, lifting his head. "I mean....causing earthquakes: that's a huge deal. I still can't help but feel that he sucks for you."

Bonnie felt her face tighten in defense as the mark on her neck warmed. Tyler wasn't just her love nor her lover. He was her Alpha. And Jeremy was disparaging him.

"I know that everyone takes the easy way out and links whatever Tyler and I say and do to how we feel about each other, but I promise you that me moving on from you happened before I fell for him. I didn't realize that I had moved on until you said those things that I've wanted to hear since we broke up. You said them, and my heart jumped, because I was finally hearing them. But afterwards, I realized that my heart jumped because I was surprised by what you said. And that's all it was. Once the surprise passed, there was nothing behind it. You guys blaming what me and Tyler say and do on how we feel about each other is your way of avoiding the part you played to get us all to where we are. You're avoiding responsibility and acting like you're perfect."

Jeremy moved his eyes to the scenery behind the cars.

"I want you to move on," Bonnie said, taking the harshness out of her voice.

"I made a mistake," he said, bringing his eyes down to her. "I was going through something that....I had never really figured out how to handle. I'm still not sure how to handle it, but I didn't go off the deep end when Ric died, so I guess I've made progress. Saying I loved Anna, I chose the easy way. I was still hurting like hell, but...at least she wasn't expecting me to function."

"Like I was?"

"Like everyone was, everyone who loved me. I screwed up."

"You did. But it doesn't hurt anymore. It's a nice bonus to hear you say it, but that's all it is," she said with a small smile. "I'm okay."

Jeremy looked at her Mark. "How can you know this early on that you want to be with him forever? No seriously, outside of anything to do with me, how can you make that kind of commitment so soon?"
"You can't tell me you're in love with me and then say that your questions about my relationship are outside of anything to do with you. Let's not talk about Tyler, Jeremy," she said, jumping down from the car, "Because I'm finding that every time you bring him up, I get really irritated."

"Why?"

"Why? Gee, maybe because I don't like hearing that my Mate sucks for me?"

"Your Mate? Since when do you talk like that?"

Bonnie stared at him. "Since I became one," she challenged, the skin under her eyes tightening as Tyler's Alpha flashed faintly in her irises.

She grabbed the bag and unlocked the car.

"What's gonna happen now? With Silas," he specified.

He sounded irritated. Why the hell was he irritated? Tyler was the one being insulted left and right. Bonnie found herself becoming more and more irked. Jeremy thought it was open season on Tyler, and she was starting to wonder how she could put a stop to it.

"Now we figure out a way to trap Him," she said stiffly as she got in the car, forcing him to move away.

"And saving you?"

"Talk to-Tyler," that should go well, "The less I know, the better, in case Silas breaks through my wards. Get in your car and leave, Jeremy, I'm ready to go," she said as she put the key in the ignition and turned it.

Without another word, Jeremy closed her door and went to his car.
"Question," Tyler said as he, Kim, and Adrian neared the Salvatore boarding house. He had left his car at Founders Hall, and he, Kim, and Adrian had split up to speed-look for Rebekah on foot.

Although her scent was strong in certain parts of town, the parts that Tyler was sure would report a dead body by tomorrow night, they had reunited on the outskirt of the Salvatore property and concluded that she wasn't actually in town anymore.

Now they were making their way to the house on foot, and Tyler wanted to be enlightened.

"Why is me marking Bonnie being referred to as the change?"

He kept his eyes on the path ahead, because he knew that he wasn't going to care for the answer. He knew that it was going to be along the lines of Lena's objections on Saturday night. But he was surprised that Kim and Adrian seemed to agree with her now.

"I like Bonnie. I really do. She's cool," Kim said. "But Cohen wasn't wrong when he said that witches are always tangled up in vampire drama. Lena wasn't being….unreasonable when she said she didn't want her as an Alpha."

Tyler stopped walking and faced her, the mark growing warm on the back of his neck.

"Yeah, I know I'm treading into a minefield right now," Kim said, lifting her hands to show her submission.

This was precisely why she'd commanded the others not to say anything the night before. Say the wrong thing about his Mate, especially on the heels of him having mated with her, and Tyler could very well attack. It was especially insulting to have his choice questioned by a Beta from his own pack.

"The same way we felt it when you Marked her is the exact same way we'll feel it if she dies," Adrian picked up. "Not saying she will," Adrian said quickly, putting his hands up, "But she has a lot going on, and I'm betting that none of this is new."

"You guys were all for us before," Tyler pointed out. "Ki-ki'ing and laughing about how I smell different and crap."

"I never dreamed in a million years that you'd Mark her," Kim admitted. "It just seemed like an obvious thing to not do."

"It was irresponsible," Adrian said. "If she dies, there goes your ability to function. It'll affect us. You have a bond with us, too, remember? Who you mate with is our decision."
"I'm sorry, what?"

"What I mean is it affects the whole pack. Of course we don't choose who you mate with, but we also kind of do."

"It's implied because it affects us," Kim explained. "You're supposed to think about us when you choose a mate, the best person who'll make us….better. And you didn't. If anything happens to Bonnie-"

"It'd have been better for you all if the threat to her life had nothing to do with you. You would've gone home then, huh? Is that why you two came back, to ensure the future of the pack?"

"Of course not!" Kim said, her brown eyes widening. "Tyler, that is not what we're saying at all."

"We would've come back whether you'd mated or not," Adrian said. "We weren't thinking about the pack. We were thinking that you guys need help."

"And I said we don't need your help. I have to mean it to banish you guys from helping, huh? Keep this up. I'll get there."

He turned and continued toward the house without them.

"That went well," Adrian deadpanned as he put his hands down.

"Yeah," Kim said, dropping her hands. "Let's put a pin on the topic? Because I really do think he's getting there."

"Ditto. But we do have a point. Our point just sucks."

Tyler was flanked by Kim and Adrian when he rang the Salvatores' doorbell.

Damon opened the door, and he forced one word out before he punched Tyler across the face. "You."

Tyler was caught off guard, but he regained his composure fast enough to thwart Damon's second punch. He brought his right arm around and returned what the vampire had given him.

Elena appeared at the door, yelling Damon's name as he stumbled, Caroline and Matt on her heels.

"Let's not do this, Damon," Tyler said.

Damon shifted and attacked. "You did this! You and your fucking-" He stopped talking and communicated with his fists.

Most of his attempts failed, and Tyler tried to stay on defense, but he figured that punching Damon a couple of times might get the vampire to stop and help him work out some of his irritation at Kim and Adrian.

"Tyler!" Elena protested, stepping forward.

"Nope," Adrian said, speeding in front of her to block her. "Vampire wanted a fight and now he's got one."

Frustrated, Elena tried to see around Adrian's body. "Damon, please stop. We can fix this."
"Get the hell off me," Tyler huffed from the ground as he threw Damon aside. After the fight with Klaus, this felt more like light exercise. If he'd known fighting Damon would be this easy, he would've picked a fight with the older Salvatore a long time ago.

He got on his feet, and held a staying hand in front of his left hip, and said, "I know you're hurting right now."

"You don't know anything, and you're not gonna know hurt until I'm through with you," he swore, blue eyes cold and deadly. "Where the hell is Bonnie?"

"Out slowing Silas down. Listen, I suggest you get all your anger out now. I change my mind: come at me. Because if you try to touch Bonnie when she gets here-"

Damon made an impatient sound and walked back to the house, but he stopped in front of Kim. "Who the hell are you?" he asked, though he was referring to both her and Adrian.

"No one you need to worry about," Kim answered with a pleasant smile, and she stepped out of his way.

Damon continued into the house and Tyler said, "Suit yourself, Damon. You should ask Elena what Bonnie looked like earlier. Don't mess with her when she gets here! It'll be your funeral!"

"Are you fucking serious?" Elena asked, disbelief and disgust all over her face.

"Shit. I really didn't mean it like that. I kind of...forgot, in the moment."

"You forgot Stefan was dead. Wow." Elena turned and went inside the house.

"Don't turn into too much of a prince charming, Ty," Caroline said. Shaking her head, she retreated into the house. Looking uncomfortable, Matt followed.

"Are we gonna get in a fight?" Adrian asked lightly.

"Probably," Tyler answered.

When the three entered the mansion, they found Damon leaning on his favorite spot in the living room: the alcohol stand. Elena was pacing next to him with her arms crossed while Caroline and Matt sat on the couch, Caroline's left leg a dizzying, bouncing blur.

"Did you find Rebekah?" she asked Tyler.

"No. But we're pretty sure she killed four people in four different parts of town. That's on top of the two that Kim saw her kill. We're thinking she bailed."

"To meet up with Elijah probably," Elena said, closing her eyes as she walked.

"How's your mom?" Caroline asked.

Kim sat on one arm of the couch, and Damon said, "Off," without looking at her. She slowly got up.

"She's fine," Tyler answered. "Shaken, but fine. I told her to ask one of the staff for a ride to the precinct. She'll be with your mom until I'm done here."

"Great, so let's get to the problem we don't have a solution to. My brother is dead, and you and your make out buddy are responsible. So how the hell-"
The front door opened, and Bonnie and Jeremy walked into the living room shortly.

"Speak of the witch," Damon seethed, his lips barely moving. He straightened from the stand and swayed as if unsteady on his feet.

"We need to figure out what we're gonna do about Silas," Bonnie said to him without preamble.

"Your sensitivity is killing me," Damon snarked.

"Maybe a bowl of lasagna will help?" Bonnie asked, and then she blinked in confusion.

But neither Damon nor Elena were confused. They immediately remembered what Damon had quipped about Abby after Elena had told him to be more sensitive about her death.

"How'd you know I said that?" Damon asked, throwing an accusatory look at Elena.

"I have no idea what you're talking about," Bonnie said. "I'm psychic, and it doesn't always come with an explanation. Though I'm sure I don't want to know."

"I didn't tell her, so be quiet before you get yourself in trouble," Elena said to her boyfriend.

"How did it go at the house?" Tyler asked the two newcomers.

Jeremy nodded to Bonnie, and she answered, "Horribly. I did it, but now I need a shower. You and I need to talk." She needed to tell him what had happened to Lucy and her mother.

"No. Enough with the secrets," Damon cut in.

"What did you do?" Caroline asked Bonnie.

"I cleansed the house and banished the spirits to the OtherSide. Both of the twelve deaths we've heard about, the one here and the one in Eden, were sacrifices. Silas has been pulling on the resulting energy to buffer His magic. But the main point of the sacrifices no doubt has to do with His resurrection. Cleansing the site of the sacrifices lessens the amount of power He can pull from the deaths. Not by much, but it's something."

"On the drive over here, the radio said there was a murder-suicide involving a cop early this morning," Matt said.

"What?" Tyler asked.

"It happened in Grove Hill," Matt quickly explained. "He was off duty. He was meeting with a group of parents in his church to plan out a camping trip for the youth group. Eleven people. He shot them all, then shot himself. Right there in the church."

Bonnie closed her eyes. "The last sacrifice." When she opened them, she looked at Tyler.

"He's dead. Remember that," he said quietly.

"We don't know for how long," Bonnie said.

"We need to go to Grove Hill next," Jeremy mused.

"Did you find Rebekah?" Bonnie asked the three Hybrids.

"She's in the wind," Tyler answered.
"So back to what I was talking about," Damon cut in, his eyes on Bonnie. "You do realize you're gonna exhaust every type of magic on earth to bring Stefan back."

"Not before I save my own ass, Damon, have you not been paying attention."

"Saving your ass wouldn't be a problem if you and Alpha-wolf hadn't insisted on running around half-cocked and keeping secrets," he said as he advanced on Bonnie. "We could've taken care of Silas by now if you'd really been sharing everything you knew."

No sooner had he stopped an equal distance between the stand that he'd left behind and Bonnie than the thick White Oak stake lodged inside of his heart. The room jumped as he caught on fire. Elena tried to run to him, but Caroline snapped out of it and lunged for her, pulling her back.

"Bonnie, stop, what are you doing?!!" Elena yelled.

"It's not me!"

Nevertheless, she extended her hand toward the stake as Matt quickly grabbed the throw from the back of the couch.

The stake was stuck, impervious to her magic. She racked her brain for a spell, having never undone a vampire on fire before. She recited the spell that she'd used when the grimoires had caught on fire in Jeremy's bedroom two summers ago, but it didn't work.

Damon fell to his knees and burned brighter, his pained screams filling the room.

"Ow!" Matt yelled when he tried to cover Damon with the throw and got burned instead.

"Matt, be careful!" Jeremy warned.

Damon fell forward, unable to move anymore, the fire curiously contained to his body and not spreading on the expensive rug under him. His body was held up at an odd angle, the thick stake preventing him from falling flat on the floor.

Bonnie fired off the spell that she'd done to quiet the raging fire in the basement on Founder's Day three years ago when Stefan had gone in to retrieve Damon.

It didn't work. The fire melted the older Salvatore's skin to reveal the blood-soaked bones underneath.

"Bonnie," a weak male voice called out.

Bonnie spun around. The projection was barely visible, more of an outline than anything, but she recognized Silas.

"I can bring back...the lives I take...if I so choose. You….can't say….the sam-"

He flickered out before He could finish, having exhausted His powers by projecting into the house, locating the stake, and throwing it.

Behind Bonnie, Damon exploded into a pile of ash.

"No, Damon!"

Elena's agonized cry on the heels of Silas' words shocked Bonnie to the core. She slowly turned to the scene, her body getting very, very warm. "You're all gonna die," she said numbly.
"Did Silas do this?" Caroline asked as she held Elena in front of Damon's remains.

Bonnie nodded.

"He's supposed to be dead," Caroline protested, accusing no one in particular.

"He was here. I saw Him," Jeremy confirmed. "He looked weak. Very weak."

"What did He say?" Tyler asked, leaving the crouched group to approach Bonnie.

She shook her head. "That He can undo all the deaths He's causing if He chooses. And I can't. It was a warning."

"A warning?" Elena asked incredulously as she looked up from Damon's ashes. Eyes soaked, she wrangled herself away from Caroline and approached Bonnie. "I think this qualifies as more than a warning, Bonnie. No one dies in a warning. This isn't even a message. You did this."

"We need to think clearly," Bonnie said, her mouth moving mechanically. Her mother might have two days to live at most. "I know you're hurting right now, but this isn't our biggest problem."

"Bonnie, Damon sired us, remember?" Caroline asked. "You just said it: me, Elena....."

"Damon was right," Elena continued. "If you hadn't been running around keeping secrets--"

"Silas was going to come after me anyway, Elena. I'm Qetsiyah's descendant. I'm the key to His release."

"And you've known this for how long? First your lie sent Kol chasing after us, and then Klaus would've all but killed us for his death, and now you messing with Silas has cost Damon and Stefan their lives."

Tyler had made a correction in the auditorium the day that Kol had died, and it vibrated in Bonnie's ears now. "Kol didn't come chasing after us, Elena," Bonnie responded calmly. "He wasn't trying to kill you, or Caroline, or even Tyler. He came to kill me. Just like Silas wants to kill me-

"You shouldn't have fought Him!" Elena exploded.

"Elena, calm down," Jeremy advised.

"You definitely shouldn't have killed Him, and I'm pretty sure you knew that," Elena continued, ignoring her brother. "Look at how He reacted."

"It sucks to be wheelbarrowed by bad news, doesn't it?" Bonnie responded, undisturbed. "When the shit just drops in your lap and you're expected to catch up? There is no us. My life is in danger, and that is what I'm going to focus on. And to do that effectively, I need to cut out every distraction, which means that the most pressing problem, my biggest problem, is making sure that Elijah and Rebekah die as soon as they step foot in Mystic Falls. You can go along with that or you can not, but I don't have time for this."

"Elijah might be days away from Mystic Falls," Matt pointed out gravely. "If Rebekah's in the wind, she's not going to risk coming back without him. Even then, they'll need time to come up with a plan."

"Not much time," Bonnie countered. "He didn't need much time to come up with the ultimatum that ended with my mom dead, because oh yeah! She's a vampire, too. Damon sired her, too. I know
it's old news," she said, her eyes narrowing severely on Elena, "But I haven't forgotten," she ended on Caroline.

Caroline wanted to argue. Why the hell was she catching an attitude with her? But she kept her mouth shut. Now was not the time to lash out, especially since her days were now numbered.

"Okay then, perfect," Elena said with a shrug that was way too casual to actually be casual. "We're on the same page. Damon's rescue is guaranteed, because if he stays dead, then your mom dies."

"Elena!" Jeremy chastised, his deep voice a touch too loud.

The right corner of Bonnie's upper lip curled involuntarily.

"Can you not piss her off right now?" Caroline asked, annoyed.

"What? I don't see why I should bother giving a damn about anything that's coming out of her mouth when she's been walking around barely giving a damn about what's happening to the rest of us. She didn't care that Stefan was dead: she chose to go look for Adrian, whoever that is,"

"I'm Adrian," Adrian said politely with a raise of his hand.

Ignoring him, Elena went on. "And she stole your boyfriend, remember?"

"Elena, that doesn't have anything to do with anything right now," Matt said.

"She doesn't care, so I'm just playing on her level," she said, shrugging in Bonnie's face. It felt good. It felt much better than crying and hurting, though the ache still banged against her heart. She wanted to lash out more just to keep it at bay.

"I am so done with you and all the shit that comes with you," Bonnie said, shaking her head. She turned and headed for the door.

"Yeah, walk away. What you do best."

Bonnie pivoted and returned to the doppelganger's face. "You know what I'm gonna do, Elena? I'm gonna figure out a way to save my mom. I'm gonna figure out a way to save Caroline. I'll even figure out a way to save you. But you know what I'm promising you right now? It won't revolve at all around bringing Damon back to life. The dust on the floor right now? I call it a favor from Silas."

Outraged, Elena stepped back and slapped Bonnie across the face before she could think.

"What the fuck, Elena?!" Caroline yelled.

Her cheek stinging and a headache forming from Elena's brute strength, Bonnie returned the slap. She flexed her palm and slapped the shit out of Elena a second time, fire sparking where her palm connected with her cheek.

Elena cried out and stumbled to the side, clutching her cheek. Jeremy rushed to her, eyes wide.

"There," Bonnie said to the vampire. "Remember me."

When Elena took her hand away, her cheek was stinging. Jeremy saw that Bonnie's handprint was burned into her cheek, staining it a hot pink.

"Leave her alone, Elena," Jeremy warned his sister.
"Really?" she asked Jeremy, betrayal in her voice.

"Yeah, really."

"Of course. You don't care about Damon, either."

"Never had any reason to. But I will help you through this."

"Don't bother." She left them and went to kneel at Damon's side.

Bonnie pulled out her phone and went outside.

She dialed Abby as soon as she stepped out. She put a hand to her forehead as the phone rang.

"Hello?"

"Mom," she said, relieved.

Tyler came up behind her and put his hands on her hips. Quietly, he said, "Hey, you sure you wanna make this call here?"

"I don't care anymore, Tyler," she said, placing her other hand on his.

"What's going on?" Abby asked.

"Mom, something horrible just happened. Damon's dead. Silas killed him, and he's the one who sired you. He killed him with the White Oak stake, which means Damon's entire line is going to die. We need to figure out a way to save you-"

"Bonnie, woah, slow down."

"No, there is no slowing down. You don't have long to live. The last time this happened, the vampire's line was affected in like less than four hours. Oh my God, wait. Slow down. That's a good idea. I can try to slow down the effect of the stake."

"Put Tyler on the phone."

"What?"

"Put Tyler on the phone. Is he there?"

The volume on Bonnie's phone was loud enough for Tyler to hear Abby, so he took the phone from Bonnie before she could decide whether or not to hand it over. Bonnie turned around to face him.

"Yeah, I'm here," he answered.

"Do not let her take her eyes off of Silas. Do you hear me?"

"Yeah-"

Abby hung up. Tyler looked at the phone, but Bonnie was more surprised than he was. She snatched it out of his hand and redialed. The phone rang until Abby's voicemail kicked in. She tried again and got the same result. The third time, she left a message. "You better not be coming back here. Do you hear me?! Do not come here, okay, just-just-..."

She closed her eyes and put the phone to her shoulder, needing a moment. Bringing the device back
to her ear, she said, much more calmly, "Mom, I love you. We're gonna figure something out."

She hung up and looked up at Tyler with an entirely new demeanor, calm and focused, as if she hadn't been on the verge of panic less than a second ago. "I need to figure out how to stall the process."

"You're talking about getting in the way of a natural process."

"I need to do that, and I need to cleanse the site in Grove Hill, and I need to go after Silas, strike Him while He's down. The third sacrifice is complete, which means He's closer than ever. He might be weak now-shit, with the third sacrifice done, He might just need to pull from it to heal completely."

"Or He won't want to mess with the power," Tyler reminded her. "Your mom wants you to focus on Silas and Silas only."

"I heard her, and you know that's not gonna happen."

"I know, and I get it, but I need you to calm down," Tyler said as he framed her face.

"I am calm."

"I'm feeling something completely different. Don't let Him knock you off course."

"He's right," Adrian chimed in. "You need to stick to your plan, whatever it is."

"That's just it," Bonnie said, turning her face in Tyler's hands to look at him. Tyler let her go.

"There is no plan, not one that's more concrete than 'get in His way.' There's no course to be knocked off of."

"You got in His way, and He got in yours," Tyler said. "You're matched right now, don't think you're not. The walls aren't closing in. You just killed Him, you and Clermeil, and to a Guy like Silas, that has got to sting."

"He just made sure that my mom will die, Tyler," she said, her wide green eyes watering.

"I know," Tyler said softly, framing her face again. "It's not gonna happen. You're not going back to that place. I promise you."

He kissed her hard on the forehead, and Bonnie's face crumbled. She didn't want it to, but it did. He hugged her, and she held on to his waist, trying to anchor herself, trying to figure out where the ground was.

"We're here for you, Bonnie," Kim said quietly.

Bonnie nodded and sniffed. Then she heard what Kim actually said. "You guys aren't involved in this. I don't want you involved in this."

"Tyler already tried telling us. Didn't work," Kim said.

"Well now I'm telling you. Silas is dangerous. You saw what He just did, and He can do worse. I'm not gonna give Him more people to kill."

"Yeah, He's scary. Definitely. But with us here, you have less to do," Kim pointed out. "Like Rebekah and Elijah? Leave them to us."

"Tyler, you can't let them stay here," Bonnie argued to her Mate.
"I'm their Alpha, not their Sire. I can't force them to do anything."

"You cannot possibly be okay with them staying here."

"Of course I'm not, Bonnie, but I can't get them to leave."

"Okay… I don't have the energy to deal with this. I can't." She turned around and went to her car, and she drove off.

Tyler faced the Betas, and Kim raised her eyebrows. "She's not used to people who wanna help," Tyler explained. "She freaks."

"How did Silas even know about the stake?" Matt asked, having appeared in the doorway with Caroline, Elena, and Jeremy.

"We've been going to Him for help this entire time. It wouldn't take much for Him to come to the house and snoop around," Jeremy pointed out. "Or appear out of thin air, like He did just now."

"Um," Caroline began cautiously as she twisted her fingers, her eyes wide and focused on Tyler. "She clearly has a lot going on. And I'm definitely not trying to die. So, if there's anything I can do, please, please let me know. This has never happened before. Two of us have never died before."

"Don't hold your breath," Elena deadpanned, Bonnie's hand still on her cheek. "We don't ever wanna help. Didn't you hear him? Poor, poor Bonnie." She left the group and went back to Damon.

"Same goes for me," Jeremy told Tyler, in reference to Caroline's offer.

"Someone should stay with Elena," Matt said. With that, he headed back inside.

"We'll let you guys know," Tyler said. "We'll probably definitely need your help. Hunter."

Jeremy nodded. "We also need to talk about…the other thing. The one that has to do with Bonnie."

Tyler nodded. "I need to go be with her right now, though."

"Right."

With a nod, Tyler left with his Betas.
Drip drip drip drip, One two three four

Chapter Notes

Happy New Year, lovelies! Please stay safe! I'm thankful for your support and proud to make you happy and give you enjoyment with this story. I'm proud of the number of chapters I've written since July when I started this fic. Thank you for every single review.

Enjoy this chapter! I have a four-day weekend, so the next one will be edited and published before Monday.

The last ray of the sun was almost gone, and Bonnie was alone in her bathroom. She put the handle down to stop the cold water that was running out of the faucet. She sat on the edge of the bathtub and cut the water with her fingers, forward, back, forward, back. She didn't know why it had occurred to her to do this now of all times, but the idea had come, and she had the succinct feeling that not thanking a Spirit for Their help was a sure fire way to piss Them off and make Them resentful.

Clermeil had come through for her today, so she was confident that He wouldn't drown her if she summoned Him.

"Clermeil? If You can hear me...I want to thank You. What You did was a big...deal, and I know that You don't have to care. I know that You probably don't care. You're a Spirit, and You're above all of this, but...You involved Yourself in some mortal's business, and I'm....I'm thankful that You did. You saved me, and You saved my-my friends."

It was easier to lump them all together under the umbrella of friends rather than Tyler, the one she loved, Jeremy, the one who was actually her friend, sort of, and Elena and Caroline.

Forward, back, forward, back.

She took her hand out of the water and shook it. But the water kept moving. Forward, back, forward, back, one wave, one lazy wave. And then not so lazy. The forward push was strong enough to make the water splash against the tile wall.

Bonnie stood on her bare feet, because this might be Clermeil warning her that He was going to pull her into the tub and drown her.

Her hand flew to her chest when a disembodied voice said in Haitian Creole, "Ou pa bezwen pè."

She balled the hand on her chest into a fist and waited for Him to appear. Her heart trembled again when He translated what He'd said. "You don't need to be afraid."

The translation allowed her to pick up the amusement in His voice.

"Clermeil," she said tensely. She shuffled on her feet when the drip started. It was as if her entire bathroom was one big bathtub filled with water and someone had neglected to turn the faucet off completely. Drip drip drip drip, one two three four.
When the water in the real tub waved forward this time, a pale White Man with blonde hair appeared. His legs were too long for the tub, so His bare, badly pruned feet rested on the wall. He cupped His hands and filled them with water and then let it splash down.

Drip drip drip drip, one two three four in her bathroom.

His ear-length hair was wet and stringy. He wore bright blue pants that were too small for Him. They stopped at His ankles. He wore a pale blue, long-sleeved shirt, the sleeves rolled up to His elbows.

Drip drip drip drip, one two three four.

Bonnie surmised that someone could be driven mad if locked in a room with only that sound.

Drip drip drip drip, one two three four.

"Clermeil."

"Oui."

He fixed eyes on her that were a solid blue, and Bonnie's lips parted as a terrible regret enveloped her being.

"Don't fall in love, Bonnie. I might take you with me."

"No. I'm sorry."

His eyes were so blue, reminding her of the calmest, cleanest ocean. The regret was that she would never visit such an ocean, because there existed none so perfect in the mortal world.

But she kept staring, and Clermeil smiled. He wasn't attractive. His skin had long been ruined by the water. But His eyes.....

He extracted a wrinkled hand out of the water and stretched it to her.

Bonnie shut her eyes and shook her head. "No. No."

"Fine."

"I just wanted to thank You for helping me earlier."

"Is that the end of the conversation?"

"N-No. You can...stay. If You want."

He smiled, exposing perfect white teeth. Such a contradiction. Beautiful eyes and good teeth. Bad skin, bad hair, and bad clothes. And He was-

"White," He finished, playing with the water.

Bonnie started. He can-

"Read your mind, yes. You submerged a part of you in the very water you used to summon me."

Bonnie swallowed nervously. "I didn't mean anything by the...bad skin and...."

He smiled, and His face was reflected on the surface of the water that filled the tub. "I only care about the ones who swim out far enough. And the ones who fall overboard. Or are....thrown
"You drown people."

"Sometimes. Sometimes I save them from drowning."

"For a price."

"An exchange," He corrected, turning His eyes on her.

Bonnie shifted her eyes up to the shower's wall.

"One that they are free to refuse," He explained.

"In which case...."

"I send them back up to the surface. And they drown. They always drown."

Because they weren't allowed to remember that they spoke to Him, Bonnie figured. "The exchange: you turn them into...water people?"

"Yes."

"Mermaids?"

"And other water spirits. I like to store some of my power."

"In people?"

Bonnie looked at Him when He didn't answer. The look in His eyes was all it took for her to remember: not human. Best not to bring up morality.

But this was the second time she'd heard about magic being stored, first her mom, now Clermeil.

"La Sirène doesn't like it either," Clermeil said with a smile that told Bonnie that He really didn't care, because there wasn't much that La Sirène could do about it. She also realized then that the words that she was hearing did not match the movement of His mouth. He was speaking in Creole again.

"But I store my power in sea animals, too, if that makes you feel better. Some eels, orange roughy, stonefish, and so on. When your kind get a taste of my power, you call it poison, venom,.....mercury."

"That doesn't make me feel better."

"Please sit. This is your bathroom. I'm just a guess."

"I'm okay."

"I insist."

And there was the look. Like He'd never been capable of smiling. She came forward and sat on the edge of the tub. She forcibly relaxed her shoulders, her hands deliberately clasped loosely between her thighs.

Clermeil relaxed His features and brought the smile back. "I did not choose this...look. I was....existing. Underwater, swirling, surging, intangible. I've done so, oh, for such a long time.
Water has been around for such a long time. And then….people started….thinking. About me. Conceptualizing me. What is the thing that drowns the ships so close to Kiskeya's shores."

"Kis-keya? Is that Haiti?"

"Yes. They imagined me after the demons who were transporting the slaves. White. Blonde. Blue eyes. Their complete opposite."

"You were manifested by people's….thoughts. That sounds more God-like than Spirit-like. With all due respect."

"The Gods are imitations. I wasn't manifested by. I manifested myself after people's thoughts. Gods, the real Ones, are molded in their followers' minds. They do not insist. They do not correct. They are given attributes."

"So You lied. With all due respect. You did choose this look, which means You can change it."

He smiled. "I can change it. But there is power in thought, Bonnie. That is how you reached me in the classroom. That is how you did your spells even though you couldn't use your mouth. Mortals don't need to be eradicated for their energy to be of use."

Bonnie nodded, storing the information. "You don't consider Silas to be a real God. I mean, You just said that real Gods don't control Their followers' thoughts and opinions. Silas is controlling this girl, April, more or less, and He sold all of us a story about Himself when we first met Him, and….He just doesn't strike me as the type who would be okay with people worshipping Him as they pleased. More like as He pleases."

Clermeil turned His attention to the water, moving His hands beneath it.

Drip drip drip drip, one two three four.

Bonnie decided that her estimation was correct. "Why did You kill Him?"

"You killed Him."

"You helped. A lot."

He looked at her and smiled.

But He didn't answer.

Bonnie's left butt cheek was starting to fall asleep, pressed against the hardness of the tub as it was. Perhaps if she gave her own reason…."I killed Him because He wants to kill me. I killed Him because He's a bad guy, and I wanted to slow Him down."

"And you did. And I hope that He is...boiling angry about it. He is….so impotent," He sighed. "That's why I killed Him. I wanted Him to feel that impotence, the futility."

"Futility in regards to….."

"Us. Me and my kind. I didn't set out to kill Him, but once the water demolished all of His walls.....He wants revenge."

"Against….the Spirits?"

"Yes," He answered with a smile, as if He expected her to break down into a fit of giggles over the
absurd fact.

"Why would He….?" She gave it some thought and remembered what she'd told Tyler on the night that she'd established the connection with Clermeil. "Gods and Spirits. You Guys killed off His family line."

"Who knows?" He asked with an easy shrug of His shoulders.

She was sure that He knew. If He didn't, He could find out. "So, He wants revenge. Just not against Qetsiyah or her line. So my death is purely ceremonial."

That was good news for her mother and Lucy at least. Well,...it was good news for Lucy. Abby's future was currently a giant question mark, thanks to Damon's death.

"You're going to die?" Clermeil asked, way too intrigued for Bonnie's liking.

"Not if my family has anything to say about it," she said, and it felt incredibly good to say.

Clermeil's expression closed in disappointment, and Bonnie almost frowned in offense. "Well," He reasoned, "If you decide that you want to contribute….to the world….in death….I can always turn you into a water nymph."

"By drowning me first. No, thank you."

"It'll be less painful than what Silas will do."

She was positive that He didn't know that for sure, and she was positive that He didn't care to know it for sure. He just wanted a new storage container.

"What does Silas plan to do? How do you get revenge on a Spirit?"

"In His petulant mind? By killing their offspring."

She stared at Him for far too long. He resumed playing with the water. "Silas….wants to kill...every Spirit-blessed line."

"Every one."

"Like the Spirits did to the Gods."

Drip drip drip drip, one two three four.

She stood, her left butt cheek numb, and she paced away to contemplate what she'd learned.

"Bonnie."

She turned to face Him.

"Don't ever summon me again. Next time,…I will take you. But this was fun. Not enough people think of me anymore. Not even on the high seas."

Drip drip drip drip, one two three four.

And He was gone.

And He'd taken every drop of water in the tub with Him.
And, she was sure, Silas knew that she was descended from a Spirit.

He indeed planned for her death to be ceremonial.

Pastor Young had been very presumptuous. The sacrifices were not the beginning.

The beginning of the end of the Spirit lines would commence with her death.
The Church of Bonnie Bennett

After leaving the Salvatore property, the Hybrids split up again. Tyler instructed Kim and Adrian to go to the precinct and ride home with his mother. He ran to Founders Hall to pick up his car, and then he drove to Bonnie's house.

He pulled up in front of the house and cut the engine. He picked up his phone from the passenger seat and opened the Skype application. He'd received a text from Abby almost as soon as he'd left the boarding house, and they'd made plans to connect through Skype with Rudy. Abby had explained Lucy's condition in one of the texts.

He stepped out of the car and trained his nose on the neighborhood. Vampires didn't have heartbeats, so the tepid smell of decay would be the giveaway.

He wrote Abby and told her that he was ready, and she created a group conversation for the three of them. Her name took over the screen, and he picked up the incoming video call.

"Hi," he greeted, immediately noting how haggard she looked. The witches had done a number on her, which meant Lucy looked a lot worse.

"Hi," Abby responded. "Rudy, are you there?"

"I'm here. I just got off the phone with Bonnie. Oh my God, Abby-"

"How is Bonnie?" Abby asked.

"She's okay," Rudy replied. "She sounded kind of….closed off. Abby, she told me about Damon's death."

"That's not as important as saving her, and I've figured out how we're going to do that. All of this talk about Spirits, Gods, and Goddesses: we can make Bonnie a Goddess. We can elevate her. We can give her the same status as Silas."

Tyler leaned his weight against the car and dared hope that they'd actually hit on how to save Bonnie. Every time he replayed what Silas had done to her in the classroom, he felt powerless, which only made him afraid. They couldn't give Silas another chance to do that to her.

"How do we do this?" he asked, his voice light in his ears.

"Can we do this?" Rudy asked. "When was the last time a witch ascended to Goddesshood?"

"It's not in style anymore, the culture of magic has changed, but it's still possible. Especially for someone like Bonnie, someone who's so big on helping people. Tell me, if you could name her the Goddess of anything, what would it be?"

"Second chances," Tyler said immediately, thinking about how she'd helped free him and his pack from Klaus.

"Sacrifice," Rudy said. "Anger, Determination."

"Magic," Tyler continued.

"We can do this," Abby implored. "We need to structure it, give her attributes, realistic ones, otherwise it won't work. We have to make her Goddess of things that she already is, things that she"
already does and is passionate about, otherwise it won't work. I'll have to work with Lucy, because there will be a big spellcasting component to this, of course. The rest of us, as soon as we figure out her attributes, we have to pray to her. I'm already working out the ritual in my head. We have to be her first followers."

"Wait a second, wait a second," Tyler said, glancing at the house and lowering his voice. "The Spirits don't like this kind of stuff, remember? They killed the descendants of the old Gods and Goddesses. Bonnie doesn't have any descendants, but what if we end up making things worse for her? What if the Spirits do something to you or Lucy?"

Abby sighed, letting Tyler and Rudy know that she hadn't thought of that angle. "I'm hoping the fact that this hasn't been done in ages will appeal to Them. Besides, a huge problem with those witches was that they were declaring themselves Gods and Goddesses and then punishing people and each other left and right. This is completely different. This isn't Bonnie being arrogant or power-hungry. This is us praising her for what she already does.

And maybe we'll add a caveat, just to be safe and just to please the Spirits. We can say something like….if she dies, she'll rise again as a Goddess. Because this is supposed to be about saving her. If she happens to kill Silas before He can kill her, which I don't put past her, then we have nothing to worry about and the spell and our prayers are moot."

Abby knew that the last part wasn't true. Lucy and Tyler were supernatural entities grounded in Nature (half, in Tyler's case). If they make praying to Bonnie a habit, if they really believe in what they're saying about her, it will be akin to performing rituals to honor Nature: it will create magical energy, and that energy will have to go somewhere. It will have to do something. Sooner or later.

"So?" Abby asked her audience.

"I'm for it," Tyler decided.

"I'm all for it," Rudy concurred. "We just need to minimize any possible blowbacks as much as we can," Rudy said.

"Okay, great. So I need you two to think of her attributes, make a list, and then we'll reconvene for the next step."

Tyler nodded. Bonnie with followers. He could've never imagined it. And yet it made complete sense. Marked by a Goddess.

He, Abby, and Rudy ended the call after he promised Abby that they would find a way to save her, too. He put the phone in his pocket and decided then and there that the day had ended on a good note. It didn't matter what happened after this.

He went up to the front door and knocked.

"Who is it?" came Bonnie's flat voice seconds later.

A founding member of the Church of Bonnie Bennett. "Me."

The door opened and on the other side stood the future Goddess. He remembered naming her a Spirit-witch many moons ago, outside of the Witches' House the night that she'd cursed Rebekah. Before that, he'd called her a Spirit-witch-Goddess. She'd told him to stop all of that. Now he would get the last laugh. More important, however, she was going to live.

She was wearing a navy, long-sleeved, Henly sleep shirt that was covered with clouds, and he raised
his eyebrows.

"Apparently my embarrassment over you seeing my sleep clothes will never end, so look your fill," she said tiredly. She did smile, however.

"What exactly are you embarrassed about?" he asked, his eyes on the hemline of the shirt, just above her knees. He moved his eyes up, and there were buttons on the shirt. They began just under her breasts and stopped under her collarbones. The buttons were closed. That could be rectified.

"Can you please come in before the flies do?" Bonnie asked.

He stepped over the threshold and entered. Bonnie locked the door and then turned to him, putting her hands on his chest. They leaned into each other and kissed, Tyler settling his hands on her waist.

"You're a breath of fresh air, I swear," Bonnie sighed.

"So are you."

He lifted her up, and she split her legs to either side of his hips. He walked her to the couch, and she kicked her sandals off on the way. She tightened her hold on him when he settled them down on the couch and lied on top of her, one of his legs limp on the floor. He fixed himself and turned his head so that his breath fanned the spot under her ear when he spoke. "I see you took your shower."

Bonnie relaxed her hold on him into a hug. "I needed it. Pastor Young attacked me psychically. There were bugs all over me, and there was a snake."

She shuddered.

"The witches in Eden did the same thing to Lucy, only she wasn't as lucky as me," she continued.

"I know."

"Oh, my mom wants to talk to you."

"I know. We just talked."

Bonnie held her breath. "And?"

Tyler lifted onto his elbow and looked down at her. He couldn't tell her. He had no hope of stopping the relieved smile that bloomed on his face, however.

Bonnie's breath caught, and she blinked at how quickly she teared up. She closed her eyes, but they only got wetter. She felt his lips on her cheek, and she tightened her hold on him.

They'd done it. They had found a solution. It felt strange. Someone, a group of people, had come up with a solution for *her* and not the other way around.

She opened her eyes and laughed, and she kept laughing. She covered her mouth with both hands, and she laughed some more, tears rolling down the sides of her eyes, and Tyler wished that her parents and cousin could see this. Inspired by the thought, he lifted onto his knee and took his phone out and pulled the camera up.

"What are you doing?" Bonnie asked.

"Taking a video, keep laughing."
"I can't help it," she said as he recorded. "I can't-this is the best thing that could've happened to me." She covered her face and cried.

Tyler blinked through his forming tears and kept recording.

Bonnie wiped her eyes, looked at him and said, "I love all of you guys. All of you. You're the most important people in my life."

"We love you, too, Bon. We can't be without you."

She gave him a big smile and closed her eyes, draping her arm over them.

Tyler stopped the video. He found it in the media folder, hit Share and copied it into a message for Abby, Lucy, and Rudy.

He looked down at his beautiful girlfriend and felt like the luckiest guy on earth. "I love you," he said.

Bonnie removed her arm, and opened her eyes, and said, "I love you, too. You always had hope. You believed before I could."

"That's what 50-50 means. It doesn't mean I wasn't scared. I still kind of am. There's hoping, but we've all had our hopes dashed before."

Bonnie opened her arms, and he laid on top of her, kissing her cheek and putting his phone on the floor.

"I won't stop being scared until this is over," he shared.

"Me neither," she said. "But not tonight. Maybe not even tomorrow. Tonight, I'm saved. I'm not scared tonight. Not for me."

Tyler lifted his head and kissed her.

"Today was a good day," Bonnie decided when he laid his head down. "Two out of the three sacrificial sites are cleansed. The spirits are on the OtherSide. Silas died and is severely weakened because of it. More important, He's gotten the message that I'm not to be fooled with. At least not lightly. Clermeil ended up being a big help, and I know what Silas is after."

"Hold on, you do?" Tyler asked, raising onto his elbow.

"I do. Clermeil and I had a nice, if creepy, conversation in my bathroom. I summoned Him, for the last time because He's threatened to take me under the sea with Him the next time I do it. But He sat in the tub and told me what Silas wants. He wants to kill off all the Spirit lines, Ty."

"What?"

"All of them. The problem is that I don't know how many 'all of them' is."

"Wait a second, why does He want to do this?"

"Clermeil didn't tell me."

"Would've been too easy," he deadpanned.

Bonnie smiled. "But I think I've hit on how to find out. I'm gonna ask my mom first, of course, but if
she doesn't know: spirits talk. If I hold a séance and float the question out there, I should get something back. It's easier than calling a specific spirit for an answer. Weirdly, it's more reliable."

"When are you going to do this?"

"Probably tomorrow. I'm trying to figure some things out tonight."

"Bonnie, you're from a Spirit line."

"I think Silas knows that. I think He knows about all of the Spirit lines."

"So Him getting His powers back will allow Him to do this. But is that all it's going to take? I mean how powerful is this Guy? Qetsiyah had to bail Him out with the immortality spell. And if all of those lines are like yours, then they'll be powerful. And He's just gonna raze them all down? Not to mention the fact that He hasn't used His full powers in a millennium. Like you said, powers don't grow if you don't use them. Klaus was on the same level as me as an Alpha."

"What if," Bonnie pondered, "What if He won't be relying on His power? You're right, those lines will be strong. They might even be stronger than mine. They might have more living people than mine. Unless,...unless there aren't as many as we're thinking. What if it's just two lines? He would have no probably taking down two lines."

"You think Silas would do all of this for just two lines?"

"If He's pissed enough."

"The Spirits must've killed His line. That could be why He wanted to become immortal in the first place, to get revenge, and He just twisted the story and made it about love."

"What if with every witch He kills, He steals their powers, starting with me? If He takes the powers of every Spirit-blessed witch that He kills, then He'll have enough power to keep going after more Spirit lines. He wouldn't be relying on His stunted power."

"Jesus. I think you're right. That seems like the smartest thing to do."

"And don't forget that He has other witches working for Him."

"It's hard to believe a witch would condone the killing of other witches, but Dai reminded me that at the end of all of this, we're all human, or we were. We still have that human way of thinking: as long as the asshole in charge isn't targeting me, I'll do whatever."

Bonnie sighed. "It's survival, I guess, but look at us: we're not about to join Him."

Frowning about what the future might hold for her, Tyler laid his head back down.

"I like brainstorming like this," she said as she ran her hands over his back.

"Cause you get to objectify me in the process?"

"Yep."

"You owe me a blowjob."

"Oh, that's right. You never got to finish telling me how I would earn my way out of detention."

"Cause I was rudely interrupted."
"Tell me now."

He braced himself on his elbow and looked down at her. "Seriously?"

"Seriously. I'm saved, remember? This is what saved girls do."

Tyler chuckled.

"What?" Bonnie asked, getting the feeling that he wasn't just laughing at her.

"Uh, nothing, just…you said you're saved, and saved people are usually religious, and you're talking about giving a blowj-nevermind. Okay. If you were my captive in detention-"

"Your captive?"

"My captive in detention."

"Mmm-hmm. Continue," she allowed as she began to caress the Mark on his neck.

"If you were my captive in detention, I'd be sitting at the desk, minding my own business, doing my job when you'd ask me, can I leave now? 'cause you take my supervising position so seriously. I'd tell you no, period, point blank. You did the crime, broke the display case, and now you're doing the time-"

"But I swear it wasn't me!"

"That's none of my business."

"Come on, Ty, you know me. I'm not a troublemaker."

"That look says something different. You're here for the next two hours."

Bonnie rolled her eyes. "And there's nothing I can do or say to make you change your mind. You're not getting paid to do this, you know. You're not gonna get a grade. You're not getting anything."

Tyler considered her for a moment, and she raised her eyebrows in challenge. Tyler lifted himself off of her and got off the couch. He patted her legs to tell her to make room for him to sit. Bonnie sat up, and he sat down. The way he sat, legs splayed wide open, had Bonnie already pulling his dick out in her mind.

"I'm not getting a grade for this but if I mess around and let you go I'll end up in detention. So between the nothing I'm getting for watching you and the bad thing I'd be getting if I let you go, I'll stick with nothing."

Bonnie pressed her bare feet against the floor and sat back against the carpet that held the coffee table, her eyes forward. Tyler gave her a long and obvious once-over, and then he fixated his eyes on her breasts. Bonnie flapped her legs closed.

"You alright?" Tyler asked, affecting detachment.

"Uh, yeah. I'm fine. I'm just trying very very hard not to believe you're looking at me right now."

"What's wrong with believing that I'm looking at you?"

"You don't look at me."
"I'm looking now. Or at least….you're catching me now."

Bonnie looked at him, feigning mild surprise.

"You like that?"

"I'm just here to do my time, Tyler."

"Right. Right, you are." He let a beat pass, and she faced forward, and then he asked, "What if the scales were tipped? What if the reward I got for letting you go was worth more than the punishment I'd get for letting you go?"

"What do you mean?" Bonnie asked as she turned her eyes to him. "You're willing to strike a deal?"

"For your sake, I hope you're willing to strike a deal. Hell, for my sake, too."

"If it's homework-related, I don't have any of your classes, and I'd rather not do any more homework than I already have. I can do spells for you, though."

"I'm sorry, are you in the position to negotiate?"

Bonnie rolled her eyes.

"Guess I had it wrong: you don't mind spending two hours in here."

"No! I'm sorry, fine. You set up the terms. If it's homework, I'll do it. Whatever it is, I'll do it."

Tyler worked his mouth like he was annoyed by her attitude. Bonnie looked at him like she was hoping that he hadn't changed his mind about striking a deal.

"I think that...I think I'd like to keep looking at you. I think I'd like an even closer look." He dipped his eyes to her breasts, and then he gave her an expectant look.

Bonnie's stomach flipped. She touched her breasts, and looked down at them, and asked, "Are you serious? You can't be serious."

"I'm serious. I told you: I've been looking at you. And since you were talking to me like I owed you your freedom, we can say that this is just the beginning."

Bonnie looked ahead and scraped her teeth over her bottom lip like she was thinking about it. "You wanna see my boobs," she deadpanned.

"Just one, if you want. I wanna watch you play with it. Don't worry, it'll stay between the two of us."

"Unless someone walks in."

"I'll take care of it. I know a little trick. I should tell you that there's a window in this opportunity, and it's closing." When her mouth fell open, he responded, "You're acting like I'm not wasting my time supervising you. I didn't tell you to break the damn case."

"Okay, okay, okay," she said, standing up and facing him.

"There's that attitude again."

Bonnie swallowed for effect.
Tyler grinned and raised his eyebrows expectantly. "Don't worry, Bon, I know you've got a good body under there. I've seen you at my pool parties."

The summer before 9th grade, in particular, he'd thrown his first summer pool party to celebrate the end of school. He and Bonnie had made eyes at each other for half the party and had even gyrated together on the dance floor. He'd gyrated with other girls, too, but Bonnie hadn't cared because he'd kept coming back to dance with her. Besides, that had been her first time wearing a bikini (which she'd had to switch into after she'd arrived at the party because no way would her father have let her out of the house in a two-piece to go to a party being thrown by a boy), and how attractive she'd felt in her bikini had trumped who he'd chosen to dance with.

One thing had led to another, and they'd ended up alone in his kitchen after Elena had run out to rejoin the party (wearing her own bikini. It had been a pact between the three friends), and Tyler had drowned her in compliments, and she'd ended up flashing him her breasts. She'd asked to see something in return afterward, and he'd looked behind him and flashed her what he'd been working with.

Both of them had been ridiculously excited. And then Caroline had run in to drag her back to the party, breaking the spell the two had weaved over each other. And then Tyler had seen her preen while some guy dropped kisses on her cheek (and made a mental note not to invite the guy to his next party), and then he'd ended up finally kissing his crush of the year, and that had been it.

"Remember the flashing incident?" he asked now.

"This is why you and I have problems," Bonnie said as she positioned her fingers on the first button.

"If our problems lead us here going forward, then I welcome them. Lemme see your boobs."

Bonnie failed to hold her grin, breaking character. To make up for that, she undid the buttons fast, her movements rushed, like she wanted to get it over with. She reached inside, past her bra, and grabbed hold of her left breast. She moved the shirt aside as much as she could, and she brought her breast out.

"Happy?" Bonnie asked, drooping one of her knees and cocking one hip.

"Almost," Tyler responded. "Touch your nipple, play with it."

Her eyes on him, she gingerly massed the bud. He let it go on long enough that she started to do it for herself, too, not just for him. Her nipple peaked, and every brush from her thumb seemed to echo on her clit. She even looked down at a certain point to watch how she was touching herself, rolling her palm in a circle over the pampered nipple.

Tyler started to rub his erection, and he kept at it when she caught him. "That's enough," he said. "But keep it out."

Bonnie took her hands away and stood with one tit out. Biting the inside of his bottom lip, Tyler unbuttoned his pants. He lifted it away from his arousal and slid the zipper down.

"Um, we didn't say anything about this," Bonnie said hesitantly.

"We didn't say anything against it either. I didn't specify anything. The deal is still being worked out. Unless you don't want to," he said suddenly. He pulled his dick out, and Bonnie smiled uncontrollably, which made him smile uncontrollably, and they both tried to remember their role.

"You're free to go," he said, forcing his face to relax. "I got to see what I wanted. You can go. I can
finish this," he teased, giving his dick four solid strokes.

Bonnie inhaled through her nose. "And if you get detention for me leaving? It'll be worth it? Just seeing my one boob?"

"Yeah."

She bit her lip and looked at his dick. "It looks like you have a ways to go."

"The door is that way, Bonnie."

"What if I helped?" she asked, her eyes on his dick.

"Helped what?"

"You get off."

"How?"

She looked at him, and his lips were parted, expectant, waiting, knowing. "I can jerk you off."

"Is that really want you wanna do?"

"Yeah, I mean, it's something I can do," she shrugged.

"No, Bonnie," he admonished, giving his dick two more strokes. Bonnie swallowed. "I'd rather take my chances with detention. If you're gonna help, you need to take me in your mouth. You need to get me off, and when I do, you need to….swallow it."

"You've given this some thought."

"You haven't? The way you're staring like you're already doing it, the way your mouth hasn't closed since I pulled it out?"

Bonnie snapped her mouth shut.

"Come find out if my come tastes like you think it does, Bonnie."

Bonnie's stomach swirled down to her vagina, and she felt herself leak. "Okay."

"Okay?"

"I'll drink your come to get out of detention."

The mark on his neck tingled, and his hand squeezed his dick involuntarily. "Then drink."

The air trembled as it passed through Bonnie's vocal chords, and she stepped forward and kneeled. She took over the handling of his dick and used her mouth to bring him to peak hardness.

This was the first time that either of them was receiving or giving direct sexual pleasure as a Mate, and what was true before only strengthened with their deeper bond. Tyler was more sensitive to her touch and Bonnie was more desperate to please him, needing to hear him moan, needing to hear how good she made him feel.

He traced the mark on her neck, over and over, which only increased her arousal, and the ones on her lower back warmed, feeling more delicious than when she'd taken the light in her bedroom into
her body.

She couldn't touch Tyler's mark, but it was as if her sucking his dick was enough of a signal. It warmed up and became unbearable, and he had to touch it himself to take some of the pressure off.

"Ah yeah, do it like you're excited about it," he moaned as he watched her. "Ah, fuck."

"Slow down, slow down. Take it slow. Enjoy it. Make it last. Really earn it. Shit."

"Oh, damn it."

"Ah shit, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Oh geez, keep going."

"Fuck, Bonnie. God, you really want this. Shit."


"Hmmm. Mm! Shit."

"Ah shit, I'm gonna come. I'm coming. I'm coming. Ah! Ah! Aaaaah, shit! Ah fuh…Mmmm.

Bonnie swallowed for her freedom, his hand tight on her head as he lifted his hips off the couch. She savored the taste of his spunk as it traveled down her trachea, moaning to letting him know how much she enjoyed his taste.

She licked him clean and spotless while he sagged on the couch, and then she focused her attention on the juncture where his shaft met his balls. Wanting more, she wrestled his pants down and spread his legs and went for his balls, sucking as much skin into her mouth as she could.

Her eyes changed, and her heart beat faster as she became consumed with pleasing her Mate.

"Hold on," Tyler said. He wanted to give her more wiggle room, so he took off his shoes after she retreated, both of them missing the connection immediately, their Marks dulling uncomfortably in response.

Tyler took his pants and underwear off and laid down on the couch, propping one socked foot on the back of it. "Come here," he beckoned.

Bonnie followed after him and sucked, giving him the best she had. Tyler's hand rested heavily on her head. The sight was intoxicating, and he burned with the desire to have her show him more of
how she was his Mate, *his* and his alone.

"Oh, Bonnie," he murmured.

"Mmm, you love it."

"I hope you get detention again."

Bonnie chuckled and applied her tongue to the underside of his scrotum. She kept it up and wrung a curse out of him. Pride filled her.

"I'm gonna tell my dad that this is what you consider checking up on me," she said before continuing.

"Like hell you will," he returned lazily as he watched. He felt his dick getting hard again.

Bonnie kissed the thigh that was half propped on the back of the couch and then she returned to his balls. She bathed it with her tongue, most of her time spent on the underside of his scrotum, and she had him grabbing his stiff dick to stroke it, his other hand firm on her head.

She licked the corners of his thighs and sucked the sensitive skin there, and then she moved over to the thigh that was folded and hanging off the couch, and she kissed the strong width of it. He definitely had a runner's thighs, and she remembered how bulky and sinewy they'd looked when he'd been walking on two paws in his backyard after the fight.

She kissed up to his knee, and then she moved up and lowered to him, biting her lip and smiling at how aroused he was.

Tyler pulled her head down and kissed her, and her eyebrows flew up in surprise. She had unconsciously thought that he wouldn't be for the kissing since she was fresh off of being incredibly intimate with his balls. Which was ridiculous because he drank blood for survival, and he loved her menstrual blood, and….

He licked the roof of her mouth, and her thoughts melted. Tyler let go of his dick and used both hands to lift her sleep shirt, and he used one hand to play with the claw scars on her lower back while the other hand went back to his dick, and she sighed into his mouth.

"Play with yourself until you come," she instructed against his lips.

"I wanna watch you do that," he shared. He has wanted it since their first time in her bedroom.

She smiled. "You will. But right now, I watch you."

She captured his lips again. His stomach quivered, and he took the move as a challenge, so he rose to it, starting a fight for who got to control the pace of the kiss. He made her laugh, and the sound made him harder, his dick stretching to it's full length.

He won, but only because he overwhelmed her senses.

"You been holding back on how good of a kisser you are or something?" she asked, wrenching her lips away from his so that she could catch her breath.

"I want you," he growled, and it was a literal, animalistic growl from the depth of his chest.

"Keep stroking your dick, Tyler," she said arrogantly, for that was how she wanted him to come.
She got off of him and went to the kitchen for two cups filled with water, and he laughed at how unbothered by him wanting her the move made her seem. She didn't give him lingering looks, or leave him with a lingering touch. Or even a final kiss. Just up and left. It appealed to his wolf.

"You better still be stroking when I get back," she called behind her, her shirt falling halfway down as her small ass jiggled away.

He damn sure would be.

She came back drinking her cup. "Water?" she asked him.

"Not yet," he sighed as he stroke.

"You look so good. All open for me to see." She set the cups on the coffee table, and got back on top, and she kissed him.

He conquered her mouth again, setting a hungry pace for the kiss.

"I wanna bite your neck," he said, his fingers on her lower back, driving her crazy.

"When you're coming," she breathed as she dry-humped the air.

He nodded and took her mouth again, the kiss wet, her breathing loud, their bodies rutting, his outer leg propped around her waist now.

The pressure on his dick felt amazing, and he focused on the head, driving himself higher and higher. His fangs descended of their own accord, anticipation making his gums tingle.

She had gotten into two fights today and dominated both. She'd stumped down a God and sent a malevolent spirit careening to the OtherSide. She'd taken no prisoners when she'd boasted about their Mating. She'd conquered left and right today, and he wanted to come for her.

"Now, now, I'm coming now," he warned.

He roughly grabbed her ponytail at the base and sank his teeth into her, and he heard her surprised gasp, followed by a sharp moan. As soon as the rich essence of her blood hit his taste buds, he was reminded of why she was his equal.

"Come for me, Ty. Ugh, yeah, come for me, make it good. Make your dick feel good, make it feel amazing, just like I do. Feel how strong it is, and how hard it is, and how it jumps when you come."

He let go of her neck and exhaled loudly as he orgasmed under her.

"Don't stop stroking," she murmured. She kissed his forehead and was rewarded with a moan. "Keep going," she said as she kissed his left temple. "You know how I like it." Right temple. "You know where I want you."

"Fuck."

"You know how sadistic I am." She grinned deviously and kissed his nose.

"Fuck. Bonnie," he strained as he continued to stroke, the head of his dick becoming more sensitive. His eyes rolled to the back of his head, and he sagged on the couch, but he kept jacking off and licked his fangs to taste her blood.
"If you do it real good, I'll make you feel it in your ass again," she promised seductively.

"God, I think I'm gonna come again."

It came out as one jumbled word.

His mouth flopped open as he took himself to the brink, strained moans escaping his throat. Bonnie moved her hand down to lightly squeeze his balls, as if trying to move the come up to his shaft and out his dick. She gently tugged the sac, and he came again, rutting into her hand.

Tyler let go of his dick and grabbed her arms with both hands as he trembled from the expansive orgasm.

"Shit. Shit! Oh my God. Holy shit."

He dissolved into laughter, throwing an arm over his eyes, his cheeks warming.

Bonnie watched him fondly, proud of her handiwork.

"Shit," Tyler sighed, his body still quaking.

"Is my Alpha happy?"

"Oh yeah. Damn."

Grinning like the cheshire cat, Bonnie weaseled down his body to suckle on the skin between his shaft and scrotum.

Tyler sighed contentedly and caressed her head. He loved the way her tongue felt on him.

"Thank you," Bonnie said.

"Uh, I said that out loud?" he asked.

"No. I'm psychic. It's the remedy my mom and Lucy made. I've been blocked for a very long time, I think because of my own negative energy. And then Shane added to it. But now I'm happier, and the toxic magic is being pulled out of me."

"Nice. So, is this what we're doing for the rest of the night?" he asked when she resumed worshipping his balls. "'Cause I have no complaints."

"We have a date, remember?" Bonnie said, interrupting herself again.

"I assumed that with everything that happened that it was cancelled."

"It normally would be, but this is supposed to be a new normal. I'm supposed to be doing everything different, especially in my personal life, and I told myself this morning that we would go out. I'm saved, Ty. And I sucked some very good dick, and watched this hot ass guy come, so I deserve to go out with my boyfriend, the dick's owner and said hot ass guy."

"Wow," Tyler chuckled. "Well, I think you deserve to be taken out for how good you blowed. And how good your blood tastes."

"Thank you."

He laughed, thoroughly enjoying this side of her.
"You were right when you said that I can't go over my mom's head with this whole Damon thing. I still want to save her, but I'm not gonna build Rome in a day."

"Or one night."

"Right, exactly. So take me to your ancestral caves."

"Maybe I'll take you in them, too," he said as he caressed her cheek.

"Um, are we not gonna….are you not gonna do anything right now?"

"Oh, no. No."

Bonnie drooped her head, her eyes asking him if he was serious. She was so horny.

"I know," he said. "I can smell it. And it makes my skin feel all tingly, like there's another layer on top it. But you promised me a blowjob earlier, and I waited more than an hour to get it. Way too long."

"But look at how much you enjoyed it," she said with a winning smile.

"So just imagine how much you'll enjoy it," he returned.

Bonnie's smile disappeared. She wasn't disappointed, though. She knew that he would drive her right out of her skin when the time came. "Fine. I have to go freshen up, as you can imagine, and then we'll go to your house, or do you want to go there and come back here? That's a waste of gas, but..."

"I'll wait for you, and then we'll take my car to my house so I can get ready."

"Your car to your house….where your mom is…."

"She's not gonna be bad," he promised.

Bonnie pursed her lips, doubting it.

"She'll have to be nice, because Kim and Adrian will be there. They're watching over her."

Bonnie nodded. At least there was that.

"Besides, after what she went through today, she'd be crazy to still have the energy to lay into you. Or me."

"Don't doubt it," she deadpanned. "Did you get to give her the talisman?"

"I did, before I went to the Salvatores'."

"Speaking of which," Bonnie sighed as she stood.

Tyler at up, trying not to drip on the couch, his body blissfully heavy.

"What happened there after I left?" Bonnie asked as she went to the kitchen to grab several paper towels. Tyler drank his water while she was gone.

"Nothing much," he answered when she came back. He took the paper towels and stood to wipe himself. "Caroline wants us to let her know if there's anything she can do to help 'cause she's not trying to die. Her words. And Jeremy wants us to let him know, too. He and I are supposed to meet
to talk about how we're gonna save you. Probably tomorrow."

"Mmm, great," Bonnie deadpanned with a roll of her eyes.

Tyler raised his brows, curious. "Uh, Elena's pissed, and Matt's watching over her."

"Great. I'm gonna go get ready."

"Uh, Bonnie, wait," he said when she moved to walk past him. "You realize that the longer we wait to start working on a solution, the more danger they're in."

"I know. And I can dig in and start coming up with a solution now, but I got a lot of things working against me, and I need to tackle them all. And if I've learned anything from the past, it's that throwing myself into the problems like a good witch doesn't stop the tragedies. I can't stop everything. So I'm trying a different method. We're going on a date. I plan to have several things worked out before I go to sleep tonight."

"In other words, a part of you will be brainstorming during the date."

"Kind of, yes. I can't turn it off completely," she reasoned.

Tyler smiled. "How's your cheek?"

"Good. How's hers?"

"Pink," he answered, his smile growing. "I personally think you should've done more damage."

Bonnie grinned and kissed him on the cheek. She continued on toward the stairs.

"Your neck," he turned to call after her.

"I'll wear a gauze," she called back.

"Remember what happened the last time you didn't let me heal a wound?"

Bounding up the stairs, Bonnie responded through her smile, "I just want to wear it for a while."
After twenty minutes, Bonnie was dressed up, made up, and coming down the stairs. "This isn't fair. You get to see me in my outfit before I see you in yours."

Tyler opened his eyes and sat up. He smiled when he saw her.

"Were you just sleeping?" she asked.

"Yeah. You look….not that bad."

The dress was black with big red, mauve, sun-yellow, and green flowers. It had a V-neck that was wide instead of deep, so he was seeing more of her collarbones than her breasts. There were shoulder pads and two skirts: a shorter pleated one that ended above her thighs and a slightly longer straight one that ended in the middle of her thighs. And he almost missed the bow.

Bonnie spun to show off the monstrosity. Although, truth be told, now that she was actually wearing it with the intent to go somewhere, she kind of liked it. She wore large, shiny black boots that made her feel punk, a Lisa Bonet style headband was tied in the middle of her crown, and she kept the jewelry to a minimum: two brown leather bracelets on her right wrist.

She did a little dance, bending her right knee, then her left, and bending her forearms right, left, right, left, snapping her fingers, her hair bouncing on her back. She stopped dancing abruptly and said, "I'm horny."

"Good," Tyler returned. "Now let's go on our very long date."

"Are you sure?" She came over and sat next to him. Bringing his hand to her lap, she said, "You seem tired. You did a lot over the weekend, not to mention the stress of hiding it all from Klaus for months. We can go out tomorrow."

"No, we're not putting anything off, remember? You're not. I can sleep tomorrow."

She gave him a pitying but grateful look and a kiss on the lips. "You're my hero."

At the Grille, Caroline occupied a table that was pressed into a corner of the dining room. If she happened to catch on fire and die, she wouldn't take any of Mystic Falls' good people with her.

Sighing, she wished that she'd at least ordered water from the waiter. She wanted something to do with her hands and having a glass of water nearby would be of help if, again, fiery death came for her.

She'd been sitting in her car in front of her house when she'd received the phone call from Mrs. Lockwood. She'd looked at the ID and considered letting it go to voicemail. She definitely had enough to think about, impending death and all, but then she'd remembered that she'd let Tyler and Bonnie's cheating cat out of the bag in front of the woman. Mrs. Lockwood probably wanted to check up on her. Plus, she'd never been good at sitting and wallowing. She was better at distracting herself. Thus, accepting Carol's offer to meet at the Grille had seemed like a good idea. She'd detoured from her house and headed there right away.

The Mayor walked in, and Caroline straightened her posture. She watched Carol smile and wave at the people who made eye contact with her, because, Mystic Falls being a small-enough town, she
was sorta kinda always at work.

She smiled and stood when Carol was closer.

"Hi sweetheart," Carol greeted, and Caroline subtly raised eyebrows. Carol had never given her a nickname. The smile on her face fell away when Carol hugged her. The woman had only ever hugged her once before, and it had been stiff and more than a little awkward, and it had come about when she'd been thanking her for looking out for Tyler.

Still, she relaxed in the embrace and closed her eyes, now sad for a completely different reason. Why couldn't Carol be hugging her because she was happy that she and Tyler had decided to go to the same university? Why couldn't that be the current state of her life? Instead, she was man-less, probably down one friend, and about to die. And her own mother didn't have a clue about any of it.

She waited for Carol to take her seat, and then she sat.

"How are you doing?" Carol asked after she hooked her purse on the back of the chair.

"I'm good. Well, you know."

"Not to jump right into things, but I don't. That's kind of why I'm here. But let's-" she pressed her hands down in a slow down motion.

The waiter came over and greeted Carol. The two women placed their orders: water for Caroline, lemonade for Carol. As Caroline watched the waiter walk away, she spotted someone familiar near the exit. Her dark hair pulled into a ponytail and wearing a different set of clothes, she was occupying a table by herself, but she wasn't looking at them.

"Did you come with," she leaned forward and finished quietly, "reinforcements?"

"Yeah, just as a precaution in case Rebekah comes back to finish what she started. It was her idea. Tyler's put me under protection. Neither of us want the third time someone tries to kill me to be the charm."

Caroline smiled. She hoped the girl wasn't listening in. Kim. Kim, was her name.

"How are you doing in school?" Carol asked.

"Good. Uh, just fine. How are you feeling now that Klaus is gone for good?"

Making light conversation of Klaus' death caused something heavy to turn over in her stomach.

"Good," Carol answered, "Although I'm not feeling the difference yet. There's still Rebekah and her brother. I haven't seen Tyler long enough to see the difference in him yet, but I know that that's where the proof will be."

"He doesn't know you're here, does he." It was an assessment.

"He doesn't. And I've asked Kim and Adrian not to tell him."

Caroline spared a glance to Kim and wondered how well that would go.

"I tried talking to him about....what you said last night, but he was...defensive. Very defensive. He admitted to....cheating but implied that it was justified-"

"Justified?" she asked, as if this was the first time she was hearing the word used in a sentence.
"He told me that if I were to ask you why you two broke up, you wouldn't be able to answer."

Caroline closed her mouth and averted her gaze.

"I like you, Caroline. I like you for my son. You two are…a beautiful couple. And he loves you. He loved you. So why on earth would he think that cheating on you is justified? I'm just trying to figure it out, because I do care about you, too. You two were something serious, and suddenly you're not, and he's refusing to tell me why. He just wants me to accept the new order of things. So I thought I'd give you the chance to…." 

Caroline lowered her eyes and folded her lips. Telling Carol about Chris wasn't an option. Tyler hadn't told her, so she wasn't going to either. On the other hand, Carol didn't look ready to make Bonnie's life a living hell like she'd confidently promised Elena.

And on the off chance that Tyler eventually decided to tell his mother about Chris….

"He said you didn't cheat on him," Carol hedged.

"I didn't," she quickly assured her. "But...I did make a mistake."

She struggled to continue and because of the uncertainty of who she was at the moment, she managed to be more sincere about her faux-pas after Chris' death than she'd ever managed to be during the times when Tyler would bring him up. "I made a terrible mistake, one that I didn't realize I was making until it was too late. In this world of ours...we have to make alliances. It's how we survive, and our biggest alliances are each other. Tyler had a friend, and....I didn't know he was his friend. Elena was in danger. Her life was on the line. Someone was trying to get her to kill herself. And in trying to save her....Tyler's friend died."

She closed her eyes and forced herself not to edit. "In us trying to save her, in me doing everything that I could to help her, just like I've always done for Tyler,....Chris died. He was killed, and it was the only way to save Elena. Tyler went ballistic, and when he finally told me what Chris meant to him,"

Editing!

"I mean,.....when he told me what Chris meant to him,...I didn't immediately understand. I didn't immediately get it. I was just so relieved that we hadn't lost Elena,"

Editing!

She kept it. "I can't imagine losing any one of us. Tyler,.....I guess felt the same way about Chris. The situation was less complicated for him, and he's never given me a chance to make it right."

"I'm sorry, are you telling me that Tyler would've let Elena die?"

"No! Oh no, that's not what I meant at all! I have no idea what he would've done if he'd had to choose. See, that's the thing, we didn't have another option. And he never seems to care about that part. We were running out of time. If we'd had more time, we would've made sure that everyone made it."

Carol mulled it over.

"Mrs. Lockwood," Caroline said, grabbing her hand. "I care about Tyler. I would do....anything for him. It feels like we've had each other forever, and I can't see anyone else in my future. I even thought of us as soulmates once. I don't think that our issues are insurmountable. I feel like our past
together is stronger than…what happened." She needed Tyler to ground her identity. She couldn't lose him now when everything was in shambles.

Carol rubbed her hand. "Maybe he just needs time."

Caroline closed her eyes. "He might not have it. I might not have it."

"What do you mean?"

She dropped her shoulders. Of course Carol didn't know. She wondered if Tyler even planned to tell her. After all, it wasn't like his life was in danger. He was safe and so were all of his Hybrids. Did he care about what was going to happen to her? Did he want her dead because of what she'd done with Klaus? Had he stopped caring so completely and so quickly?

Bonnie herself didn't seem to care. Of course, she had to worry about her own longevity, but…still. She couldn't think of a time when Bonnie wouldn't have been conflicted between needing to go cleanse the house and supporting Elena. And it had continued after Damon had died. He was an ass that none of them except Elena and Stefan cared about, but, while not perfect, Elena was a different story. Nothing in Bonnie's tone had said that she cared about what the Salvatores' death meant to Elena. In fact, Bonnie had taken a jab at it.

And Tyler was spending more and more time with Bonnie. Who was feeding into who? Where were they right now? Trying to save Bonnie's mom? That would at least be good news for her and hopefully Elena, because it would mean that Bonnie would be able to think a little clearer with her mother safe and sound.

But between Bonnie's life being in danger and Abby's life being in danger, would she slip through the cracks? After all, the new couple had a habit of taking little breaks in the middle of crises. What if they were too late to save her? What if they weren't in a hurry to save her?

So just in case. Just in case things had gotten so bad that neither Tyler nor the girl whom she's called her best friend since before she could go see a PG-13 movie by herself cared that she might die for good at a moment's notice, she leaned on Carol and shaped the woman's view of what was going on based on her own fear of how seriously Bonnie was taking the situation on her and Elena's behalf.

"Something horrible happened today. There's this thing called the White Oak stake. Well, it's a Super White Oak stake now, thanks to Esther Mikaelson, but when a vampire is killed with it, every vampire that they made dies after them. It kills the whole line. Today…Damon Salvatore was killed with it. He made me, and he made Elena, and he made Bonnie's mom."

"I'm-sorry, did you say Bonnie's mom? Her mother? Abigail Bennett?"

"Yeah, it's a long story, a horrible one, and...while I'm sure Bonnie will do everything she can to save her mom,…I don't know what she'll do about the rest of us."

"What are you saying?"

"This whole Tyler thing, the cheating thing, it's really….split us. I swear, ever since they got together and started messing around, I haven't recognized her."

"You're not insinuating that Bonnie wants you dead," Carol tried to clarify.

"No, I don't think she wants it. I just...don't think she cares as much as she used to, and it's really freaking me out. Everything's so different now, everything's so freaking different. She fought me today, like a physical fight at school, and then...she threatened Elena. She told her that
she might save her from this. I don't think she meant it, but how can I be sure? I honestly can't be. Elena slapped her, and she slapped her back, and... when did we get like this? When did everything change? When did everything go to hell?"

To her surprise, she teared up. And once she did, she couldn't control it: more tears followed until Carol had to get out of her seat and hold her.

"I need help," she cried over Carol's shoulder. "I need help with this. I need help with... everything."

"I'm sorry, she went where?" Tyler begged to understand.

"The Grille to meet Caroline," Adrian said, seated at the kitchen island, his chip-eating paused.

Carol had told him that he was welcomed to what was in the house, and before that, when Tyler had informed him and Kim that they could stay in his house while they were in town, he'd told them to feel free to share in what was in the fridge. And he was starving. Not that he was going to freeload completely. After separating from Tyler, Kim had gone to Mrs. Lockwood while he'd ran to Klaus' house and broken into his safe. Literally. Smashed through the safe door. Kim had been looking forward to doing that since she'd agreed to Tyler's plan to kill Klaus. Why Klaus had kept a safe full of money, he had no idea, but they'd agreed to split the forty thousand between the two of them.

And then he'd taken the car that Klaus had given them and driven to the precinct.

"I'm not supposed to tell you, though, so, you know... don't let her know that I told you."

"Adrian, that's probably not gonna happen," Tyler deadpanned. He was still holding Bonnie's hand from when they'd walked in the house.

"That'll make things super awkward between me, her, and Kim. If you tell her, then she won't let us know the next time she goes to a secret meeting."

"I don't need spies on my mother. I need to know why she's meeting Caroline."

"Probably to make sure she's okay," Bonnie said, a little bored. She didn't care about Caroline having Carol's support. She could have it and keep it. If Caroline thought that support from Carol was what was going to help her get Tyler back-

Her expression darkened at the thought. Did Caroline want Tyler back? Was that what was happening? Was that what was happening? Was that why Caroline had outed her the night before? Nevermind what she'd done with Klaus, because that was just the icing on the cake. She and Tyler simply don't understand each other anymore. But she was plotting to get him back?

"Uh, are you okay?" Adrian asked her.

Bonnie realized that her mouth was twitching with the desire to laugh. "Yeah, I'm fine," she answered, smiling and shaking her head. The thought of Caroline, after everything that's happened, trying to take Tyler back was absurd. But if it turned out to be an absurdly correct thought, then Caroline had another thing coming.

"Come on," Tyler said to her. At the kitchen's exit, Tyler turned to Adrian, wanting to tell him to give his mother a message, or maybe he wanted to be alerted when his mother returned. He couldn't decide which so he left.
Bonnie lay on her right side while Tyler went to shower. She didn't want anything to flow down unless it was necessary. She was still horny, aided by the fact that Tyler had been rubbing her thighs on the drive over, bringing his fingers up far enough to touch her underwear.

She palmed the sheets when Tyler walked out of the bathroom with a light blue towel wrapped securely around his hips, water cascading down his hard body.

He gave her a nondescript look and continued on to his drawers and then the closet, unfairly unaware of what he looked like and what it was doing to her.

"Close your eyes," he suggested, not turning from the closet. "You can't see."

She closed them and smiled. She heard him retreat to the bathroom. She opened her eyes and listened to him brush his teeth, and then he dressed and, from the sound of it, did his hair.

"I forgot my shoes. Can you hand them to me?"

"Which ones?"

"Uh, nevermind. I'll choose them myself."

She rolled her eyes, completely unsurprised. He was serious about his shoes.

"Alright, you ready?"

"Yeah," she replied, sitting up on the bed.

Tyler opened the door and walked out.

"Are you serious?" she asked as she took in the white karate uniform and matching headband. "And you cut out the arms."

"Update," he explained with a big smile.

"I feel cheated."

"What do you mean? The Karate Kid's an okay movie."

"Okay? It's a good movie."

"Not if I can't watch it more than once."

"I expected you to be in an actual outfit like me. I like the arms, but…."

"This would've made more sense if we'd actually gone to the dance," he said, looking down at himself.

Bonnie pursed her mouth and grimaced. "This whole time I've been imagining you in baggy pants and an oversized shirt."

"Sorry to disappoint," he said with a smile, and he went to pick out his shoes. He decided to be trashy and chose his oldest pair of white sneakers.

Bonnie shook her head as she watched him put them on. "I'm gonna look like I don't belong with you."
"It's okay, babe. Your outfit could've been great, too, but you decided to look nice. I don't think it should count for the decade dance when you can easily be mistaken as someone who's into retro fashion."

He finished lacing the sneakers and stood. He spread his arms out as if to ask well?

"You overcome the outfit," she decided. She wasn't surprised that he'd cut out the arms. This was the same guy who'd dressed as a gladiator to show off his chest at the school's last Halloween party. "We would've been a hit at the dance."

"The karate kid falls in love with the….hot….eighties girl."

"Box office hit," she decided, and she stood.

"Of course we wouldn't exactly have been at the dance with each other, but...details. So I was thinking about tonight while I was in the shower."

Actually, he's been thinking about it since he'd told Kim and Adrian that they could stay with him.

"Kim and Adrian are going to be here with my mom, so she's all set, which leaves you. Silas is in bad shape right now, but if you don't want to sleep alone tonight,…I can sleep over."

Bonnie smiled. "That would be great. As long as your mom doesn't have a conniption."

"She won't. I'll call her. If she was here, I could've told her face to face," he complained.

He pulled a duffel from the top of his closet, different from the one he used for his workouts, and he packed. For three days. He felt Bonnie's eyes on him, but maybe that was just his embarrassment. His face was annoyingly hot when he finally made eye contact. Yep, it had all been in his head, because she didn't look like she was questioning his overpacking.

"Ready?" she asked.

"Oh crap, we need flashlights for the caves."

"Baby, I am the flashlight," Bonnie answered, sounding like she was coming onto him.

"Right," he remembered.

All of his essentials packed, they headed downstairs. They popped into the kitchen for a brief moment, and Tyler said, "We're off."

Adrian did a double take. "To where, the time machine?"

"It's a concept," Tyler said.

"Sure." He glanced at the duffel. "You're not sleeping here."

"I'm gonna be with Bonnie, just in case, but I'll be coming here everyday."

Adrian looked at Bonnie, focused on the tell-tale gauze on her neck, and his and Tyler's demeanors changed immediately, Tyler's change a response to his. "Right. Be careful. Uh, if you guys need anything, howl. Literally," he said to Tyler.

"Right." Tyler stared at him, and he didn't stop until he'd turned around completely to lead Bonnie out of the house.
Bonnie turned her head to look back at Adrian. "Bye," she said, perplexed.

Adrian waved apologetically.

"What in the world was that?" Bonnie asked after Tyler slid into the driver's seat.

"Nothing," he answered as he started the car and turned the headlights on. He drove around the circular lawn and left the property.

"Right. Well, I want you to talk to him and Kim again. They cannot be here during this Silas thing."

"I can't force them to leave unless I absolutely mean it. Pack rule."

"Is it me, or do you sound just a little disappointed by that. Is that nothing, too? Scare them if you have to. Let them know that what happened to Damon can easily happen to them."

"I think I'll press on the very real possibility of you dying. That should do the trick," Tyler said bitterly.

"Okay, you guys were thick as thieves, last I checked. Thick as a pack of wolves! Are you that upset about them coming back? Are you still freaked out by how close Silas was to Adrian?" she asked, placing a sympathetic hand on his thigh.

"Remember all those times I said to you: taking care of you is not abandoning the pack? Well, apparently I was wrong. Or delusional. I abandoned them the moment I Marked you on Sunday."

Bonnie was shocked into silence. She found her voice and asked, "Are you not an Alpha anymore?"

She was pretty sure that a demotion such as that was something she would've felt as his Mate. And she'd been looking into his eyes on the couch earlier. They'd been Alpha Hybrid-colored.

"I'm still an Alpha. Still have a pack. For now. But as pack leader, my choice of a Mate is supposed to be beneficial to the entire pack. A witch who's involved in all manner of...stuff...isn't exactly a practical choice. If you die, it'll mess me up real bad. Which is exactly what you were saying when we went back to my house last night, but...still. Whatever."

Bonnie remembered what she'd told Jeremy those short years ago. *It never ends well for people like me.* If it wasn't Silas, it would have been someone else. It *will* be someone else, whether they'll specifically be trying to kill her or, more common, Elena.

"They still like you," he assured her. "They just don't think I should've Marked you, because it's not practical for the pack."

"It's not practical for you, Ty. We went over this."

"And I told you that I don't regret it. I still don't. I'd go back and do it the same way all over again."

She smiled and squeezed his thigh. "And that's what matters most to me. As long as you think it's worth it. Because no matter what they're saying, my death will impact you more than it'll ever impact them."

Tyler nodded, relieved by her answer.

"So what happens now?" she asked.
"It's up to them," he shrugged.

But he was way too stoic. Bonnie knew that he was feeling something deeper. "You're disappointed. You're hurt."

"It's whatever."

"I've seen how much you care about them, Ty. You freaked out when you thought Silas had hurt Adrian. When did they even tell you this? You guys looked fine at the boarding house."

"There were other things going on. They told me while we were on our way to the boarding house. Before that, they were calling our mating the change in Founders Hall. They saw that I was different when I went back to the mountain."

"You have a Mark on your forehead when you're a werewolf. I saw it."

"I know. I felt it. It's not like I know how to be a pack leader anyway-"

"Ty, you were doing just fine."

"That's because we needed to kill Klaus. But that's over. I don't know how to be an Alpha. I don't know what I'm supposed to do. Clearly. I can't lead eleven people. Lena has one foot out the door, if she's not gone already. I'm not a leader, remember?"

"Okay, I have since completely changed my mind about that," she said. "You are a leader. I've seen you. You're theirs. And I think it's a good sign that Kim and Adrian came back despite how they feel about us. I should talk to them."

"Bonnie, you don't have to do that."

"I should. I mean technically I'm their Alpha, too, right? It's your pack, but I'm like the co-Alpha, right? Even though they don't want me."

"There's no 'technically' about it. You are their Alpha. But there's a ceremony that's supposed to happen where they formally accept you. Remember how they kneeled in front of me when I transitioned to Alpha? They're supposed to do that for you, too."

"Oh great," she drawled. "So there'll be no kneeling, but-"

"No. See, that's non-negotiable. I don't know of a single pack that has two Alphas but one of them is not accepted. And if there is such a thing, I don't want it in my pack. That's just grounds for conflict. They don't have to accept you. And I don't have to be their Alpha."

The second option saddened Bonnie. The pack didn't have to accept her. They never needed to say a word to her. But she wanted them in Tyler's life. At the very least, she wanted Kim and Adrian. They were all supposed to be redefining what it meant to be a Hybrid. She didn't want Tyler to be alone.

"I'm still gonna talk to them," she decided.

Little by little, Tyler relaxed his shoulders. He wondered if Bonnie really could make a difference.

They made light conversation for the rest of the ride, with Bonnie doing her best to make him smile and succeeding. She even pulled a shoulder-shaking laugh out of him. She turned on the radio, and he learned what song she insisted on listening to no matter how many times it played across the
stations (and it played a lot) and which one she just had to change before the singer uttered the first word.

She learned his favorite song for the month (it was one that she liked, too), his favorite radio station and morning show, and she looked at him like he had two heads when she realized that he could recite pretty much every commercial that played on that station.

"Are you kidding me? You listen to it that much?"

"I clean my car every Sunday after church, okay? And while I'm doing it, I keep the radio on," he shrugged, mirth in his tone. "And after I'm done, I sit in there with the front doors open, chair all the way back, and I listen some more."

"Oh my God," Bonnie chuckled. "I didn't know you still cleaned your car on Sundays. I thought that would wear off once the car stopped being new."

"Nope. Okay, tell me something weird about you that I don't already know."

"That you don't already know? Are you trying to say something?"

"Yup."

She lightly smacked his thigh with the back of her hand. He'd called her weird so many times during 8th and 9th grade that she'd almost come to think it a nickname.

"Um," she drawled. "Let's see. Okay….so…..I went down to the caves every day for like two weeks after me and Jeremy broke up," she revealed, squinting in the darkness of the car.

"Wait. My caves?"

"Yeah," she answered slowly, closing her eyes. "After we found the stuff about the Mikaelsons, I just….I figured no one would go back. And they didn't. When me and Alaric had been working in there, there'd be these moments where I'd be hit with how quiet it is, even with us talking. It was like the quiet was bigger than us. It was the perfect backdrop for my horrible broken heart, so….I went back. I went far enough to be away from the entrance but not deep enough to be in the room with the drawings. I just sat on the floor, in the dark, and thought sad thoughts and cried. Especially after Jeremy was sent to Denver."

Tyler nodded. "That's pretty emo."

"Tell me about it," she cringed. "But hey, it was a dark time, and I wanted to be in the dark. Let's see, I haven't done anything fun in a very long time. Whatever fun I had always felt like, I don't know, like I was just passing the time until the next bad thing happened. I used to give myself a mani-pedi every two weeks. Like clockwork. And I was great at it. I even did some of the girls in school on the regular. And got paid."

"I remember always wore open-toed stuff in the summer."

Bonnie stared at him.

"What? Some of the colors were nice. Not to mention you had that weird habit,"

There was that word, Bonnie thought, rolling her eyes.

"Of rolling your feet. You'd like lift them in the air wherever you were sitting." He shook his head.
"Oh yeah, I remember that. I wanted to show off," she said, like it should have been obvious. "Now ask me when's the last time I looked at my polishes."

"You should take it up again after we kill Silas. I can see you putting on polish and preparing your nails while you're coming up with a spell. You'd be telekinetically going through the grimoires and only pausing to write something down."

Bonnie smiled. "Sounds nice."

"It's gonna happen," he promised.

They arrived to the woods and parked, and Tyler told her to stay in the car so that he could open the door for her.

"Are you the opening the door type?" she asked as she gave him her hand and stepped out.

"Sometimes. I definitely was for my first girlfriend. The relationship lasted like two weeks, so you know," he shrugged.

Bonnie smiled, and he went around to the driver's door to lock the car. She met him in front of the Buick, and he took her hand again. She gave him her phone to store in his pocket, and they set off toward the cave, relying on the moonlight and Tyler's olfactory sense.

"Is that something you want twenty-four-seven?" he asked.

"Well, I can tell by the way you asked that that's just not in the cards," she teased, swaying her body closer to his.

"No, I mean, I can definitely-"

"Not stick to opening the door for me every time we get in and out of a car."

"You wound me, Bennett. I'm your Alpha. You're supposed to believe I can do everything I say I'll do."

"Oh, is that how it's supposed to go?"

"I dunno," he mumbled, shrugging his shoulders.

Bonnie laughed and squeezed his hand.

It was surprisingly easy. It was surprisingly easy to give herself a break. All she had to do was do it. Only it wasn't really that simple or else she would've done it a long time ago. A couple of things had come together for her to be able to declare that she was going to put herself first for a night (or at least a couple of hours). Namely: watching other people put her first. That kind of support was catching. She knew that Abby, for one, would be glad that she had taken tonight for herself.

"So, how did things go at the house earlier?" Tyler asked. He took her hand out of his and put his arm around her, pulling her flush against him.

Bonnie slung her arm around his waist. "It went well. Well, you know. Scary, but then one of the spirits saved me from pastor Young's mind hold. It was creepy and disgusting in there, and Jeremy got possessed, but we made it. I don't need to go through something like that again for a long time."

He nodded. "And that was it?" he asked, placing a kiss on her hair.
"Uh, yeah. You know, we made it, and then we got out, and then..." She sighed. "Then Jeremy and I talked. We'd talked a little bit before we'd gone inside the house, too, and that had gone about as well as the talk after."

Tyler began to rub her arm.

"He's hurt. He doesn't want us to be happening. He thinks me and him would be better. He doesn't understand the whole Mate thing. It was a bunch of shit. I told him that I want him to move on, that I still care about him, he's still a friend, but our time has passed, but I feel like...he thinks we're temporary."

"He and Caroline can form a support group," Tyler said apathetically. "Are you okay?"

"No."

She didn't elaborate, so Tyler stopped walking turned her to face him. "Please tell me he didn't try to kiss you or something."

"No," Bonnie answered, shaking her head. "But he was using his mouth, though."

"And you don't wanna tell me?"

"He was just saying a lot of crap that really annoy me, and it wasn't the first time. While you were gone, before I realized the crystal's effects, he said you weren't good enough for me. I can do better. You suck for me."

"And he's better," Tyler said, more amused than anything else. "He can offer you something I can't?"

"He thinks so, despite the fact that that's a moot point," she said, referring to the Mating. "What's really annoying is that I don't think he's done. I told him today that I don't like it when he talks about you, but something tells me he's not done, especially if he doesn't take our Mating seriously."

"Yeah, he can be persistent," Tyler said. He put his arm around Bonnie's shoulder and resumed their walk. He remembered the back and forth over Vicky. Jeremy thinking that he sucked for Bonnie was amusing. It wasn't like Bonnie's father downplaying their love or Kim and Adrian questioning what they'd chosen to do with it, because Jeremy was literally old news. The ex.

Bonnie had summarily rejected the Hunter at the Festival when she'd told Tyler that he still had feelings for her and then proceeded to make out with him on the bench.

He didn't view Jeremy insulting him as a challenge. Not yet. If he kept it up, it would become a problem very fast, especially since his put downs left Bonnie in a less than stellar mood. Jeremy had no business airing his feelings about the relationship in Bonnie's face. There was a blonde vampire who would gladly listen to him trash it.

He and Jeremy were supposed to meet up to talk about Bonnie's fate, and he now wondered how that was going to go.

"I don't like him insulting you," Bonnie said.

Tyler kissed her head.

As they approached the cave's entrance, he asked her if she had the spell ready or if she was going to make it up on the spot.
"I have one," she answered. "It's one I've used when I've wanted to remind myself that my magic can do pretty things, too."

When they arrived, she cast the spell, the words unfurling over her tongue to transform the mundane energy in front of them into something extraordinary.

She repeated the spell until a veritable wall of gold baubles shimmered in front of them.

"How can you forget you can make stuff like this?" Tyler asked wonderously as he watched the dancing lights.

"You'd be surprised," Bonnie said with a demure smile. "Watch this," she said, her smile widening. She walked forward, into the lights, and broke through the wall to the other side. The lights reformed behind her.

Tyler smiled. He couldn't see her anymore, the lights were that numerous. He followed after her. As he passed, the moment he came into contact with lights, he was enveloped by magic. He didn't realize how thick the wall was until he was inside. Until he realized there was an inside. He could stand and literally be surrounded by her light.

Some of the baubles passed so close in front of his eyes that he winced away from them. Some of them touched his nose, the base of his neck, the inside of his neck, and some sparkled by his ear. They didn't actually give off warmth. They didn't give off anything but magic. They felt like her.

"Come here," he called to her as he looked up. He couldn't see the sky. The ceiling was a sheen of lights.

Bonnie spread the wall with her hands and stepped back in.

"This is….it's freaking amazing," he said to her.

She grinned and wrapped her arms around his neck. She kissed him deeply, and then she stepped back, spread her arms down and bent her knees. She straightened and swooped her hands up and moved the lights that made up the sides of the wall to the ceiling.

Tyler could now see the woods on either side of them. Lights shimmered behind him and behind her. He looked up, and the ceiling was thicker. "Holy crap."

Bonnie licked her lips when a fresh idea bloomed in her mind. She gave him her back and lifted the wall in front of her to the ceiling. She faced him again, looked up, and instructed him to do the same.

She closed her eyes, her hands stretched up.

"Oh my God," Tyler said quietly when the ceiling started to descend toward them. He closed his eyes when it was too close. When he opened his eyes, black and red dots swam in front of them.

"Are you okay?" Bonnie asked, squinting when he rubbed his eyes.

"Yeah. Uh. You know, I can't really see, but I'm fine. Are you?"

"Yeah, I'm fine. My eyesight's fine. I need to be better at this experimenting thing with you."

Tyler chuckled. "I'm fine." He opened his eyes and blinked hard several times to clear them.

Bonnie was illuminated from the bottom. When he looked down, he quietly exclaimed, "Oh my God. Wow."
Their feet were covered by golden lights. They stretched on either side, covering much of the ground.

Bonnie orchestrated the lights behind him down to ground.

"Bon, this is beautiful."

"It is," she agreed, her heart and mind light. "Thanks."

She mostly focused on him, eating up his wonder. Giving him her back again, she swept her hands in front of her, and the lights flew up and dove down the entrance of the cave, lighting their path.

"Ready?" she asked, not looking behind her.

Tyler could hear the smile in her voice, saw the confident cock of her hips and the coquettish dance in her shoulders. He came closer to her and kissed the wound-free side of her neck, not touching her with any other part of his body. "Ready," he said against her skin.

He went in before her and guided her down. He saw then that the lights had attached themselves on either side of the tunnel.

They made their way to the first chamber. Whenever they ran out of light, Bonnie swooped her hands forward, and the lights rushed from behind them to illuminate the way.

Tyler grabbed her hand once they were out of the tunnel. "You know, it pissed me off that y'all didn't tell me about this until after you'd done what you needed to do," he said, referring to the timing of him learning about the caves.

"Yeah. That was Damon's idea. He didn't want you interfering or telling Klaus. Alaric had agreed with him."

"Of course. I kept coming down here afterward, to make sure that none of you were in here. Apparently I always missed you."

"You would have kicked me out?" Bonnie asked, slightly scandalized.

"Maybe. Probably. Especially after the whole I almost got Jeremy killed thing."

"Huh."

"What, you would've refused to leave?" he asked as they walked to the drawings that had been left behind by the Originals.

"No, of course not. So, this is the Mikaelsons' literal mark on the world. According to what Elijah once told Elena, they have many more. Klaus loved to do stuff like this. And most of them are lies. This one might be the only truthful one."

"From their side, maybe. Once we get to the back, you'll see how some of the Native wolves and community members wanted the pack to come down here and tear them and their fellow villagers apart on the full moon. They knew they hid down here. This witch named Ayanna was one of the ones who told them not to tear anyone apart. Said there'd be consequences. They didn't trust her."

"Uh, I know Ayanna. I mean, not personally, obviously. But she's my ancestor."

Tyler looked down at her and smiled. "Of course."
"So werewolves not trusting witches goes back a long way, huh? Even before vampires existed."

"A witch created vampires. I'm sure you know that. The Natives called it a demonic plague."

Bonnie shook her head. "She wanted to save her family."

"And stole our gifts to do it," Tyler said bitterly. "But karma's a bitch."

"Is there something about Klaus' werewolf ancestry back there?"

"Yeah. And the Alpha was pissed about it. Come on."

"I'm glad I'm wearing the right shoes," Bonnie said as they walked on the hard and uneven ground.

"I like the way it smells here," Tyler shared.

"Does it smell supernatural?"

"No. Not unless I shift. When I do that, it's like I'm connected to the part of my DNA that came from these people. I looked it up one day, and it's a real thing. Or at least a lot of people think it's real: that we carry our ancestors' experiences in our DNA."

"I think my grams said something about that once. She thought it was an interesting theory. But...I think it does make sense for you. Werewolves are all about the pack. Your family would be your first pack. It makes sense to carry the pack's memory, even from way back then."

"It's nothing specific like knowing what they had for breakfast on this day, but sometimes I swear I've seen faces. It freaked me out so bad when it first happened. I told Caroline once and asked her not to tell anyone."

"Oh my God," Bonnie said loudly as they entered the next chamber, smaller than the one they'd left. "Oh my God. Holy crap," she whispered. "Are these real stalagmites?"

"Yep."

Her first thought was that this would be a great place to throw a small Halloween party.

"Can you imagine a Halloween party in here?" Tyler asked.

"I was thinking the same thing," she said, eyes wide as she let go of his hand to go exploring on her own. "Okay, did I know before that stalagmites grew from the ground, too, or did I just forget?"

"The ones on the floor are the stalagmites. The ones are the ceiling are stalactites."

"Oh. For some reason I thought they were interchangeable. Ty, this is beautiful."

Her lights gave the rocks a pale yellow-orange hue. Somehow, the ceiling in this chamber was much lower than the one they'd vacated, though they could still stand straight.

Tyler put his hands in his pockets and watched her. "I had to look up the difference when I was going through this place. It's actually really interesting. It's another thing when you're seeing the real thing rather than just learning about it in class."

"Look at this one," Bonnie said, standing in front of a tall grouping of rocks. "It almost looks like a castle from a fairytale."
"That's what I thought," he shared. "Something you'd see at Disney World."

"Right? Exactly." She slowly leaned forward and touched it. Nothing extraordinary happened. Oh well. Not her family history. She had the witches' house for that. But the rocks were smooth and polished under her palm, as if it was man-made.

Tyler took out his phone and turned on the camera. He snapped her picture and got her attention.

Bonnie smiled and gave him a real pose, moving behind the rock castle. She stood between an opening and held two columns that were on other side of her. Tyler took the picture.

She asked him to take a picture on her camera, too, and he did. She left the castle and moved across the room. She hiked her tight skirts up around her waist because she didn't have anything that Tyler hadn't seen before, and she started to quickly make her way up a hill of rocks.

"Be careful, Bonnie," Tyler warned, surprised by how she seemed to put no thought into climbing the hill. "You're still into climbing trees?"

"Yup, I do it when we visit family out of state. It sucks that Mystic Falls has like no climbable trees."

"Huh," Tyler said, tucking the information away. "You look hot," he commented as he watched her strong thighs flex to carry her high and higher, her navy polka dot underwear bringing to mind a ridiculous scenario: her climbing the hill wearing only the navy polka dot underwear and her bra.

"Enjoy," Bonnie said.

Tyler swapped her phone for his, walked as close to her as possible, and snapped a picture. Bonnie whipped her head around when she heard the sound. "Uh, you better save that in your deepest, darkest folder," she warned.

"Yeah," Tyler said as he looked at the frozen still of her climb, his eyes focusing, of course, on her butt. "Note to self: create a deep, dark folder."

Bonnie shook her head and heaved herself up the rest of the way and stood on the hill.

"I'm gonna name this: hot chick explores cave," he said.

"Hot 80s chick," she said helpfully.

"Even better."

"You better make sure no one sees that picture on your phone."

"Yeah, don't worry," he said absentmindedly. He shared the picture to his email. He'd make sure it arrived later and then delete it from the phone. Then he'd move it to his computer. Or maybe his iTouch. Make her ass his wallpaper. He liked that idea.

On the hill, Bonnie could touch the stalactites that hung from the ceiling. Here, she had to stoop, because the ceiling was even lower. "Ty, these are gorgeous," she said. "It's hard to believe these have been here for a thousand years. Even longer, I bet."

"Some of them are still forming. In the back, though. I've noticed that some of them are taller than when I first walked through."

"Ew, that means there's still water dripping from the ceiling somehow. That thought isn't so pretty."
"It might be the falls," Tyler suggested.

"It does have different end points. But the falls are kind of far from here."

Either way, she let it go. When she was ready to walk down, she had to hold on to some of the rocks to control her steps. They stopped at a certain point, however, and her steps sped up almost beyond her control as she hurried the rest of the way down.

Tyler caught her and slowed her down.

"Whew," she exhaled.

"Ready?"

"Mmm-hmm."

She swooped the lights forward, and they followed.

"I love this," Bonnie shared as they walked. "I'm glad I didn't see this until now."

"You're the first person I've shown this to," Tyler realized. "I never got a chance to bring Caroline down here."

Bonnie stepped in front of him, reached up and kissed his cheek.

"And here we begin to get the real story," he said as they entered a large tunnel with writings and drawings on either side of the walls.

"Anything interesting?" Bonnie asked.

"I can't understand all of it and shifting only tells me so much, but this section talks about life in the community. Werewolves lived with mortals, and I have no idea how that happened. The pack protected the community, so that might be why they weren't chased out. They also served as, like, the law keepers."

"Cool."

Bonnie walked up to one drawing and touched it, not to get a vision, but to connect with something that someone had drawn before she'd been a thought in anyone's mind. She touched as she went and listened as Tyler explained.

The tunnel stretched for so long that Bonnie wondered if they were still under the woods.

"We're coming up on the biggest chamber. You ready?" Tyler asked with a grin.

Bonnie nodded excitedly. It took what had to be another fifteen minutes to reach the chamber, but when they did Bonnie's mouth fell open and her feet stuck to the floor.

"Biggest" didn't do the room justice. It was massive and farther down it split into two more tunnels. The walls weren't overtaken with drawings, not even close.

"Please tell me this isn't the end," Bonnie said faintly.

"No," Tyler confirmed with a smile as he stepped in front of her to snap her picture.

"Good."
After that, she was speechless. Her feet moved and she tried to conceive how this room came about. She wondered what the community did down here. She wondered if the caves had only been for the werewolves' use.

"This is where you'll find the story about Klaus' ancestry. It was one of the first things I felt when I shifted in here, and it almost put me off the place for good. Like, can I have nothing that's not connected to that douche?"

Bonnie smirked.

"But one of the Betas fell in lust with Klaus' mom. She fell, too, and one thing led to another. No one suspected that the baby belonged to the pack, except maybe, maybe Klaus' mom. 'Cause he was so White, you know?"

"Yeah."

"Then Esther flipped everything upside down, and after Klaus shifted for the first time, someone had some explaining to do. The Beta was punished. I won't tell you how. Everyone was convinced that him mixing with one of the pale people was what created the monstrosity known as the vampires," Tyler explained, amused by how right they had been. Klaus sure as hell was a monstrosity.

"Ayanna explained everything," he continued, "And she almost lost her life for it, because my ancestor was convinced that she controlled the village. On these walls, Esther's referred to as the pale stranger, like all the others. Ayanna's the only one referred to as a witch. My ancestor and some of the Betas would spy on the village for proof that she was like the witch overlord, because they couldn't figure out why she was with them," he said with a side glance to Bonnie.

"What?" she asked.

"Nothing. Just sounds kind of familiar."

"Ha ha. Bennett witches: confounding Lockwood men for a thousand years. How did Ayanna escape with her life?"

"She fought back. Then my ancestor banished her. The vampires had attacked the community, and they'd lost some people. Ayanna had helped. She helped push them back, but....My ancestor told her she could never step foot near here," he said, moving his fingers over the immortalized images of the carnage.

"She refused to be banished," he continued with a frown.

Surprised, Bonnie said, "I'm sure that went over well."

"They were all furious. The mortals wanted the pack to kill her, but Ayanna drew a magical line in the sand and held them back. She threatened to shed more blood if they came for her."

"What is it?" Bonnie asked of his frown.

"Ayanna promised my ancestor that the lost ones would be avenged. That's him right here."

"And that's Ayanna," Bonnie marveled, delicately touching the image of her ancestor. The person who'd drawn the image, most likely Tyler's ancestor, had artistically placed blood on both parties.

"I've never thought anything of her promise," Tyler explained. "I figured she was just trying to save her neck, but now that I'm with you and I know all this stuff about prophecies,....I wonder if she
"really did do something."

"What, like….make sure you'd eventually kill Klaus?" Bonnie asked doubtfully.

"Or at least get the chance. What, is that a crazy idea? I did kill him, didn't I? And I'm a direct descendant of the Alpha. And I did it with your help. You're her direct descendant, and I even did it with a pack of my own. I avenged the lost ones: the Hybrids, the failed Hybrids, and….maybe my ancestors' people, too."

Bonnie looked at the drawing again, and it seemed more vibrant than before. It seemed to pop off of the walls. Suddenly, she and Tyler felt like they were intruding on the elders' tension-filled meeting.

Anxious, Bonnie took a step back. And she realized that she was holding Tyler's hand. She looked down, and she remembered.

"What?" Tyler asked, looking down at their hands.

"We fought. Me and you. That's how this all started. We fought, and you threatened to kill me."

"And you refused to back down," he remembered.

A full body shiver shook Bonnie, and she would've sworn that something swept through the large chamber in that moment.

"Uh, let's….go look at something else," she suggested.

"Yeah," Tyler agreed quietly.

They couldn't help looking back at the drawing, however, and it looked practically three-dimensional. Tyler wondered if he was right. He wondered if that was the real reason, or at least one of the reasons, why the pack stopped trying to attack Ayanna. Not because of her threat but because of her promise. Or had his ancestor been the only one made aware?

For her part, whether Tyler was right or not, Bonnie was humbled by how long her family has been wheeling and dealing in the supernatural world and on the land that they later called Mystic Falls.
Bonnie squealed in excitement when they entered a room peppered with stalagmites and stalactites. Tyler laughed, and she set to snapping pictures. The room was virtually unnavigable, because there were rocks everywhere.

After finding Emily in the massive chamber, they'd gone down the left corridor.

"Oh my God, Ty, look! These look like crystals," she whispered.

"Ever thought about being a cave explorer?" Tyler asked as he took a seat on a smooth patch of ground and leaned his back against a thick column of stalagmite.

"No, but I'd love to see more like this," she said as she explored with her hands.

"Maybe we can. The summer's pretty long."

Bonnie spun around to face him, her eyes lit up from more than just the lights. "Are you serious?"

"Why not?" he shrugged. "It'd be fun to explore more together. Maybe figure out the stories of the throwback people who walked in there before us. I think it'd be cool."

Bonnie smiled, one side of her mouth stretching wider than the other. "I think that sounds amazing," she said as she jaunted over to him.

Tyler took his arms off of his knees, a silent signal for her to sit between his legs. She took the signal and sat.

Bonnie sighed and bit her lip, now very excited for the summer. After all, tonight she was saved. "This was worth the wait," she said. "Wasn't it? I mean I know you suggested we come down here like three years ago, but."

Tyler chuckled. "It was worth the wait. I had no idea you'd be this excited about it."

"Me neither. But it's cool."

Tyler kissed her right ear. Bonnie lifted her phone and said, "Smile."

Tyler kissed her ear again, and Bonnie snapped the picture. They took more, with Tyler actually smiling this time, then kissing, her kissing his cheek, him kissing her cheek, her neck, her shoulder, and then she stood and took one of him sitting there looking too cute for his own good, and then she reclaimed her seat.

Tyler resumed kissing her ear until Bonnie turned her head around and claimed his mouth. She moaned in the kiss while he stroked her cheek with his knuckles, and there, they made out, surrounded by history.

They tried to set some music to their makeout session, but neither phone had any reception, so they did without. Afterwards, they sat in comfortable silence.

"It's hard to imagine there's a bustling town up there," Bonnie commented as she gazed at the ceiling.

"An infected town," Tyler said.
"The leftover Mikaelsons," she guessed.

"Yeah. We killed Klaus. We'll kill them, too."

"I'm gonna kill Silas before He can bring Klaus back, I promise you that," she said.

"I'm not worried about that. Though I guess Caroline should be. Or not."

"What she did...it doesn't make any sense to me. I know people change, but why like that?"

"I'm not gonna try to figure it out," Tyler said.

"Are you sure?" she asked curiously. "When I realized what was happening between Elena and Damon way back then, when I realized that that had to mean that my best friend had something in her that I couldn't identify with at all, it messed me up. It hurt. I denied it. And I didn't really accept it until my mom was killed. That's when I had to accept it. Her still sticking with Damon after that? There was no more point in denying. So if you're not okay, it's okay. I get it."

Tyler rested his chin on her shoulder and closed his eyes. "I don't get it," he admitted.

He felt her nod knowingly. "I'm not in denial, I'm just....I'm very, very surprised. I was in denial. I've been in denial since Chris died. I've been fighting the thought that she doesn't care about me, that what I was going through didn't matter to her anymore, that it was an inconvenience. I think I detached from her when she actually came to me during the Festival, trailing behind Stefan, and told me it would be best to put off killing Klaus until we found the cure."

I've been fighting feeling like I'm a burden to her. It just seemed like I was always causing her pain, like I was this thing, and I couldn't function correctly. I wanted to be wrong; I wanted it all to be in my head, because....I've been here before. My dad. Klaus. Those aren't the guys you wanna be lumped in with, you know?"

Bonnie grabbed the hand that was resting on his right knee and started to caress it, wanting to comfort him.

"Only three people have made me feel like there was something fundamentally wrong with me: my dad, Klaus, and now Caroline. I couldn't be what my dad wanted and for the longest time while he was alive I wondered why. Why couldn't I just do it? Why couldn't I just be this tough hardass? It seemed to come so easy for him. And then with Klaus,...I fell for his schtick. I thought he cared. And when I found out how much he didn't....holy crap. He had this way of looking right through me and being disgusted by everything I was at the same time. I was his first successful Hybrid, but I can't tell you how many times he looked at me like, well what did you expect from me?"

He chuckled then, and the disgust in it made Bonnie feel uneasy. She felt him shake his head.

"Klaus' selfishness surprised me for way too long. I should've caught on much sooner. It's like my dad, you know? I know you know he used to hit me."

Bonnie swallowed. "Matt used to defend you when I'd badmouth you because you were bullying or being mean to someone. He never said anything, but he came close enough times that I figured out that something was wrong at home."

"He slapped me. First time was when I was like twelve. And every time after that, I was always surprised. Always. It made no sense."
"Tyler, there's no reason why you should expect your dad to hit you."

"But he did," he insisted. "So some part of me should've been ready for it. At least once. But I never was, and every time his hand connected my vision shook. One time he did it in public at the Grille. I was so freaking embarrassed."

Bonnie grabbed his other hand and wrapped his arms around her. She was hugging him more than he was hugging her, but that was fine.

"While I was away, before I met Hayley, there was this one transition that wrecked me. It was like it was the first time I was shifting. It took forever and at one point I was on the floor crying, in pain, and this part of my mind was like: no one cares that you're here. No one's...thinking about the fact that you're here. This doesn't matter to anyone but you. And then I thought of my dad and how he probably would've breezed through the transition. This was what he'd been preparing me for, and I could never live up to his expectations, and now here I was: failing. Unable to complete a single transition. I was scared...."

He rolled his eyes and felt a tear fall. "I'll never be that person again."

"Sounds like you hate that person," Bonnie said, her own green eyes shining with unshed tears.

"There's not exactly much to admire there."

Bonnie unwrapped his arms and turned her body sideways so that she could see him. "Don't hate him. Don't be disgusted, don't....don't look down on him. Otherwise, you're right: no one will have cared about what he was going through. You can't be one of the people who lets him go, Ty. You can't be one of the disappointments, no matter how easy it is for you to transition now."

Tyler wiped his eyes and sniffed.

"Do you know why I always got mad when you'd talk down to me about saying yes to every magical request and helping everyone who asked? It's because....that girl...didn't know any better. She was trying to figure it out. Nothing was gonna rescue her, and it was impossible to fight anymore; Grams was dead, and no matter how many times she said it wasn't my fight, no matter that my mom said I should just let the coffin stay sealed,.....I didn't know who to be if I wasn't doing what I was doing. I knew how to exist....like that. It's the only way that I knew. At a certain point, it became familiar. The alternative? I didn't know what it was. The alternative was an idea that no one could stick around long enough to help me follow through on. Grams was dead. Jeremy and I were broken up, and he wasn't a constant. Mom was gone. Dad was dealing with his own pain. Everyone had an idea about how I could be doing better, but they had more important things to follow through on.

Tyler, I love you, but I'm not that far away from being that girl. Who knows, if something happened to you or mom, dad and Lucy, I could easily fall back into that pattern. I can't look down on the fact that I was Yes Girl. It hurt so much, and I was so alone. But if I turn my nose up, then that means.....that means that that hurt didn't matter. And that's the saddest thing to me.

You can't hate who you were. You can't hate yourself for flinching away from your transitions. Transitioning is painful, right? You can't hate yourself for being surprised every time your dad hit you or for having hope in Klaus. All of that is okay. It wasn't your fault. They failed you. Caroline failed."

Tyler sniffed and wiped his eyes. More tears came, so he kept his fingers planted against his eyes. "I just wanted her to be different. People can break up, that's fine, but feeling like she didn't care," he
said, his voice trembling badly, his throat closing up, "I couldn't do strike three. But I did. And….and I can't help but wonder what it is about me-

"Mmm-mmm, no," Bonnie said, shaking her head, stopping him before he could go down that road.

But down that road he went, his voice hitching on every other word. "She told me she slept with him, and even though I wasn't completely thinking it in that moment, I still wondered what it is about me that makes it so easy for people to stop caring."

He broke down, and Bonnie turned around completely. She stretched her legs over his and scooted forward. She pulled him in and hugged him close, and he held on to her and cried into her neck.

"It's not you," she insisted, her voice distorted by her tears. "Klaus was a monster. Your dad had issues. Caroline is disturbed."

"I know; I know. I know they all suck," he struggled around his sobs.

"You have two people who support you so much that they came back to fight for you despite their reservations. That's a lot, Ty. It's a lot. It's you. That's what you inspire. You wanna know what it is about you? Look at the fact that Kim and Adrian came back and now refuse to leave. That's the only answer to that question. The only one. What is it about you that inspired eleven people, strangers, to follow you? What is it about you that made Chris trust and believe in you so much that he agreed to help strangers. You inspire people. They see how hard you fight: all those times you went off by yourself to transition to try and get away from Klaus? They saw your fight; they saw your spirit. And they knew you'd fight for them just like that."

"I couldn't break up with her because I couldn't bring myself to say you don't care about me anymore," he revealed, sniffing, his voice a little more even. "Not after how we started. Not after she cared so much in the beginning. I mean she's Caroline. If she can care about someone like Stefan, then she must care about me, right?"

"Not in the way you need. Not in the way you deserve," Bonnie said.

"That's what I didn't want to deal with at first," he said, lifting his head from her neck. She wiped his eyes with the back of her hands as he spoke. "I was giving her a chance. I was giving myself a chance. You and Jeremy are broken up, have been broken up for a while, but he's still trying to help you. He'd never sell you out to Silas."

"No, he wouldn't," Bonnie said.

"He still has your back. He's annoying right now, but he still has your back. You told him about us in front of everyone, and he still called to find out how he could help you afterward. That boat has sailed for me and Caroline. It doesn't hurt much. It's just sad and unbelievable. We went downhill so weirdly and so completely."

"She did," Bonnie said. "You got stronger."

Tyler smiled and nodded. "Kim and Adrian are cool. And you're cool. And my mom and I are supposed to be starting this new honesty chapter, though she's sucking at it so far," he said, rolling his eyes.

Bonnie smiled. "I love you," she said.

"I love you, too."
'I admire you, and I'm proud of you. I wasn't kidding earlier: you're my hero.'

Touched and speechless, Tyler hugged her again. "Sorry I drenched your neck," he said.

Bonnie smiled. "It's okay," she promised, rubbing his back. "It's okay."
The "Random" Vampire

They stayed in the cave until their tears dried, and then they decided to go home and eat, agreeing to explore the right wing on another day.

"We should go to the Grille; that's what we should do," Tyler said as they stepped out into the late night air. "I'd love to see the look on my mom's face," he continued, turning around to watch her come out of the tunnel.

"I'd love to see the look on Caroline's face," Bonnie said. "But it's too late to get anything good from the kitchen."

Bonnie maestro'ed the lights out of the tunnel and reversed the spell, throwing the surrounding area into darkness.

They walked most of the way back to the car in silence, snuggled up to each other and occasionally looking up at the sparse grey clouds. The temperature was dropping; the second reason why Bonnie did not want to venture to the Grille. She'd forgotten to bring a jacket.

"Oh, there's something I want to show you," she suddenly said to Tyler. "I wanna show you what I did with the water symbol for my Grimoire. Maybe tomorrow."

"Okay. Have you-?

"Handsome couple, out for a starry stroll in the woods," a male southern drawl cut him off.

Bonnie and Tyler stopped walking and disengaged from their snuggling. They didn't look around, however. They did not want to give the newcomer the satisfaction.

"Peek-a-boo," the southern drawl teased, and a dark brown man who had to be in his mid-twenties appeared some distance to Bonnie's right.

"How y'all doing?" he asked as he approached them.

"Very good," Tyler answered. "You?"

"I'm not doing too well."

"I can kinda see that," Tyler said.

Bonnie gave the guy a once-over. His back was hunched and his shoulders were drawn in like he was cold, but, truly, he looked sick. Despite his athletic build, he looked gaunt.

"Imma fix that, though," the newcomer said.

"You sure?" Tyler said. "Maybe you should turn around and go back where you came from."

"Nah, I think I'm good right here with you two. Maybe we can walk out together."

"Where did you come from?" Bonnie asked.

He stopped walking and chuckled as if she'd cracked a joke.

"Listen," Bonnie began.
"No, you listen," he cut her off. He turned into a blur and attacked Tyler.

Tyler was knocked off his feet, the vampire landing on top of him. Bonnie spun around and ran after them, letting the sound of the vampire's hiss guide her.

"Hey!" she shouted when she found them. She waved her arm and sent the man colliding into the nearest tree.

Tyler got up and sped over to him. He dragged him up off the ground and bared his fangs.

"Woah, woah, woah! Woah! Hey, woah. I didn't know she was yours, man. I didn't know. I couldn't tell."

"Mine?" Tyler asked.

"I think he means a meal," Bonnie offered helpfully. She brought her hand to the gauze on her neck. The man attempted to fight Tyler off, but he held strong. "Hey, I'm sorry, alright? She's all yours."

"Excuse me," Bonnie said. "I think you're missing a tiny detail. Maybe you hit that tree too hard? I'm the one who sent you into it. I'm also the one who can easily set you on fire and kill you on the spot. I'm not a meal. I'm a witch."

The guy looked like he didn't know what to say next.

"So let's backtrack a little bit," Tyler picked up. "Where'd you come from?"

"I'm just looking for some food."

"No, you were looking for some kills," Tyler corrected.

"What the hell's the difference? What are you? You don't look like any vampire I've ever seen."

"Who made you?" Bonnie asked. "We haven't had random vampire attacks here in a long time."

The man struggled to break free.

"Was it Elijah? Rebekah?" Bonnie guessed. "Did someone send you to find us, to scare us?"

The man struggled against Tyler.

"I'll take that as a huge maybe," Tyler said. "And that's not good for you, buddy."

"Don't kill him," Bonnie said.

Tyler shoved him against the tree and got in his face. "If someone sent you after us, run as far away from them as you can. Because we're gonna find them, and we're gonna kill them. We're already looking for them. If you really came here on your own, walk away and don't look back. Mystic Falls isn't a buffet. It's claimed."

Tyler threw him aside, and the vampire scrambled to his feet and sped off.

"You sure that was a good idea?" Tyler asked. "He could kill someone in town."

"Yeah, but him attacking us isn't reason to kill him. We can defend ourselves. He looked kind of scared once he realized you weren't human. Could you tell how old he was?"
"Definitely not Salvatore old, but I can't tell beyond that. I'm still young, too," he said. "He said I'm not like any vampire he's ever seen, so he's not Elena new."

"If he was made by Elijah or Rebekah, and I'd bet money that he was, then they're definitely in town or close by."

"If they did send him, they didn't tell him what we are. He was surprised when you told him you're a witch."

Bonnie sighed and walked up to Tyler and took her phone from his pocket. She drafted a text to the group, telling them to be on the look out for a newbie vampire in town. She described the man, told them about the attack, mentioned the possible connection to the Mikaelsons, and hit send.

"Let's get out of here," she said afterward.

They reached the car without another incident, although both expected someone else to jump out at them.

"You really believe he was a straggler?" Tyler asked once they were inside the car.

"If memory serves me right, and it does, there's never been a straggler vampire in this town. They're always connected to someone."

Tyler turned the car on, backed out, and set course to her house.

"I was kind of thinking about it while I was hunting Rebekah earlier, and after meeting that guy I'm set on it: I wanna mark the town as my territory," he shared.

"Think you'll have better luck than Benjamin did?" Bonnie asked.

According to the cave walls, after Emily was burned at the stake, the then mayor of Mystic Falls, Benjamin Lockwood, not an Alpha, tried to rally his family to push the other Founding families as well as the remaining vampires out of Mystic Falls and mark the town against any more supernaturals.

He'd found no support from his family, especially when it had come to pushing the other Founding families out. They'd viewed Emily's murder as an acceptable loss, and although they'd kept a wary eye over the rest of the Council, they'd been content to simply hide their own secret. Without his family's support, Benjamin had let things stand as they'd been.

"The supernatural divide isn't as severe now," Tyler said as he drove. "Although,…maybe it's heading in that direction. Elena and Caroline aren't gonna say anything, I don't think. The Salvatores are dead, and hopefully there isn't a way back for them. But let's say they do come back, and they kick up a fuss. Then there will be a problem. I don't want vampires just sliding into town, and, out of all of us, they cause the most problems."

"Well, I'm for the idea, though it won't help me much. Unless I touch them, I can't tell if they're undead. But if the others aren't for it, then we have to let it be. I don't want a turf war."

She looked at him, and the set of his face told her that he still wasn't ruling the idea out. She'd said no, and he was saying maybe. That should be interesting, she thought with a private smile.

"When Silas gets back to perfect health, we're going to Capernaum," she announced.

"I was gonna ask you if you'd come up with anything before that jackass interrupted me. I wasn't
"It's the only thing that makes sense. It's the only smart move that avoids any more bloodshed. Elena was right. I shouldn't have killed Him. But I did and played my most intense hand in the process. The only thing He can do when He comes back is kill more people. And like He said, I can't afford that. The only way to appease Him is to give Him what He wants."

"Giving Him what He wants means giving Him the other Spirit lines."

"I know, but it's not gonna play out like that. He just needs to know that I'm giving in."

"He'll be suspicious."

"Doesn't matter, as long as He sees both of my feet heading to Capernaum. You know, part of me wonders if we shouldn't go so far as to beat Him there. Book a couple of flights, go, and see how we can get in His way on His home turf."

She worked her bottom lip as she turned the idea over in her head. "Klaus was gonna give us a private jet. That's now out of the question, because he's dead, although maybe Elijah can give it to us. He wants his brothers back. We can make him the same bullshit promise we made Klaus about Silas bringing his family back."

Tyler licked his lips. Bullshit promise. Working with Elijah would have to entail a betrayal on their part, because there was no way that Klaus was going to come back to life. The idea didn't sound half bad. Bringing Elijah and Rebekah closer under the spirit of working together would make it easier to kill them.

"Why do you think Silas couldn't see the future?" Tyler asked, switching topics. "He seemed to think we had something to do with it. He thinks it's because of the earthquake AKA our sex."

"I have no idea, and I'm not gonna spend any energy on that. He admitted that He was only telling me in hopes that I'd do something, or not do anything, to throw things back in His favor. He wants to mess with my head. The best course of action is no action in this case."

"But still, do you think maybe you shifted something when you rocked the earth? Is that possible?"

"Maybe. I don't know. But like you said, there aren't many stories about witches and Alpha Hybrids Marking each other. Maybe it's not me rocking the earth. Maybe it's you Marking me and vice versa. Maybe we changed something," she considered thoughtfully as she slid her eyes in his direction.

Tyler eased to a stop at a red light and looked at her. Bonnie quickly averted her gaze. She didn't know where her thoughts were going, but the direction loomed intimidatingly ahead of her, so she chose to abandon course. What was it her mother had tried to tell her happens to a witch's powers when they have sex?

"Hey," Tyler said, sliding a gentle finger under her chin to make her look at him.

Bonnie grabbed his wrist, his touch somehow too delicate for her to handle.

"You okay?" Tyler asked.

"I'm fine," she said, warmth spreading in her belly.

Her breath shook when she inhaled. Tyler heard it, but he didn't say anything. The light turned green, and the impatient driver behind them honked, so he returned his attention to the road.
"I'm making a grab for the headstone tomorrow," she said, trying to feel balanced again. "And I'm thinking about going to Eden to heal Lucy. I know the distance isn't practical, but if I'm going to give in to Silas, then she needs to be back on her feet as soon as possible."

She sighed. "The only answer I don't have is how to slow down the effects of Damon's death. And rather than wasting time trying to think of-Wait a second. Silas' witch. She has to be super powerful to be working with Him. I bet she's healing Him right now. I can get in contact with her and ask her to slow down the effects of Damon's death."

"That's a lot of upper hand we're giving Him," Tyler said, shaking his head.

"Yeah, but we have the ultimate one," she pointed out.

Tyler nodded. Silas' plan now had a huge flaw, because His sacrifice was going to live. "You need to play it well," he said. "Not that I expect anything less, but the witch might ask, will ask, why she should bother stopping the deaths if you're gonna do what they want anyway."

"I know. I need to think of a leverage. Maybe I can just mix the whole going to Capernaum thing with that."

"How are you gonna contact her?"

"Silas' apartment," she answered without missing a beat. "I'd bet anything that she's been in there."

"I'll ask Kim to be with you. You're skipping school, right?"

"Yeah. If Hill gives me trouble about graduating, we'll just compel him. It's not my fault this crap is happening."

"After I wake up, Adrian and I can do another sweep for Rebekah and Elijah," Tyler said.

Bonnie nodded. She wished both Kim and Adrian would be with her tomorrow. She had a bone to pick with them.
When they arrived at Bonnie's house, they were surprised to find Elena sitting on the swing bed. Her feet were propped on the bed, dirty sneakers and all.

Her hand in Tyler's, Bonnie stopped a short distance from the doppelganger. "Can we help you?"

"We? That's so cute. Where the heck are you guys coming from?" Elena asked slowly as her eyes narrowed in acute confusion.

"The 80s," Tyler commented lightly, three-day duffel bag in his other hand. "We decided to take a jaunt through time."

"You do realize the dance was last week," Elena said, unimpressed. She lowered dark brown eyes to their loosely clasped hands. Then she lifted them back to the couple. "Please tell me I'm not catching you guys at the end of a date."

Incredulous, she got off of the bed and advanced on Bonnie who let go of Tyler's hand and squared her shoulders. The doppelganger's cheek was purple-pink from Bonnie's slap. "Damon and Stefan are dead; your mom's about to die, not to mention me and Caroline, and oh yeah! You've pissed off a God! And you went on a date?"

"I needed to clear my head," Bonnie said evenly.

"Are you crazy?" Elena asked, eyes narrowing on the witch. "But okay, fine," she said lightly, switching moods. "Fine, fine. I'll play along. You needed to clear your head," she said, bobbing her head from side to side to match the six words. "Your head's all clear now, I assume. So tell me what's next. How do we save ourselves? Oh, I'm sorry," she said, cocking her head at Tyler, "How do you save us? Your boyfriend says we never do anything to help you."

"Mmm, you kind of don't," Bonnie replied.

"Is that why you've been going behind our backs? Level with me, Bonnie. Something has been going on, something more than keeping secrets, and I only wish I could've caught on before today. But stupid me was focused on my drama with Stefan, and the cure, and just, well, kind of enjoying the trouble in Caroline's relationship, before I realized how serious it was, of course. I mean she's just been so into my business ever since Stefan and I broke up."

"Did you take something before you came here?" Tyler asked.

"Me? Uh, no. Well...if you talk to Dr. Caroline, I'm sure she'll tell you it has something to do with the sire bond, since she's such an expert. I'm feeling a little off."

"You turned your switch off," Bonnie realized.

"Me? I didn't. Who can say what happens to a siree when their sire dies? I've never done this before," she shrugged, lifting her shoulders higher than necessary. "But my boyfriend is dead, and it does hurt like hell. Well, I mean it did. And no one seems to care. Except for my brother. A little. Which actually brings me back to you, Bonnie."

"Level with me. I guess my switch cutting off has given me clarity, because I now feel like you've been playing us all for idiots this entire time. And I think Jeremy knew."
"The sire bond meant that Damon could control her emotions," Tyler said. "With him gone, it'll either be like nothing's there, or it'll be like a reset button's been pushed and she's rebooting, and her real, not connected to Damon emotions will be back."

"Thank you, Dr. Lockwood," the older Gilbert returned sarcastically. "Both possibilities sound like pure hell."

"Because you're damaged either way," Bonnie reasoned. "Your sire's gone."

"We are so off topic," Elena said, shaking her head as she gently cupped Bonnie's chin.

Tyler snatched her hand away at the same time that Bonnie used her hand to swipe her feet out from under her and send her back to land on her stomach.

"Oof! Jesus," Elena said after her stomach landed hard on the porch.

"I'm not in the mood, Elena," Bonnie warned.

"I wasn't gonna do anything," Elena protested as she jumped to her feet and flipped her long hair back.

"Don't make the mistake of thinking this whole switch off thing gives you a free pass to raise hell in town. It didn't work for Damon, and it won't work for you. I will lock you up."

"And we're still off topic," Elena complained. "What does my brother know that I don't? Because I can't help but remember that he was the only person besides your boy Tyler and his posse who wasn't completely thrown off by what happened at the boarding house. Be a woman about it, Bonnie. Be a big girl."

Mildly amused now, Bonnie asked Tyler for privacy and gave him her keys. Tyler fixed Elena with a long look and then he went inside.

Elena watched him go and then she turned to Bonnie. "I didn't figure you the type to get imprinted."

"Marked."

"Same thing."

"You dirtied my bed."

"Interesting choice of words. Considering what you did to Caroline, I'd say your bed was already dirty," she said, throwing a look to where Tyler had disappeared.

"Hey, Elena, do you wanna make it off this porch?" Tyler's voice asked through the door.

"No, I think she wants her entire head to match her cheek," Bonnie said tightly, her Alpha eyes flashing as she brought fire to her palms.

Elena sped to the farthest corner of the porch. "I don't even have a dog in this fight," she said, her eyes on Bonnie's flaming palms. "I don't give a damn what you do. Love him all you want. Don't touch me."

"Or what?" Bonnie heckled, taking two steps forward. "What are you gonna do?"

"I'll give you a fight if that's what you want."
"You'll die. There is no fight between us, Elena. We're not matched. There's only death. For you."

"Damon's had his luck with more than a handful of witches," Elena returned.

"Element of surprise."

"And you're immune to that?"

Bonnie threw a thick ribbon of fire at her, and Elena yelled and barely scuttled out of the way before the fire hit her bullseye in the chest.

"Stop it! You're not gonna kill me," Elena said, though her voice trembled from the sudden adrenaline, much to her annoyance. "And I'm not gonna kill you, so stop. Or do you wanna take your chance right now?" she asked, stepping forward. "You said you might save me earlier. Do you wanna kill me, Bonnie? Take the shot."

Bonnie briefly wondered what expression Elena would die with if she really did light her up and leave her for death right here, right now. But she wasn't interested in killing her.

Bonnie forced herself to relax, and the fire slowly lowered in intensity before it fizzled out completely.

"You were really feeling that one, huh?" Elena asked, noting how long it took for her to get rid of the flames.

Bonnie chuckled and shook her head. "That's what I love about you guys. Vampires. As soon as the danger disappears, you're back to being cocky like it never existed."

"Have you been stalling this whole time?" Elena asked, eyes narrowed.

Officially bored, Bonnie sighed and crossed to the bed and sat down, resting her elbow on the arm rest. "What do you want, Elena?"

"The truth. I know that might be a foreign concept to you nowadays-"

"You're shit out of luck on the cure."

Elena's silence stretched for seconds. "You mean since you're not getting it anymore."

"No, hon, I mean since before."

"You were never gonna get it?" she tried.

"I was gonna get it for my mom."

Elena's lips curled. Then she forced them into an acidic smile. "See. I was trying not to go there. Like I said, not having to deal with the switch gives me clarity, because I thought it was so odd how fast you dialed mommy dearest after Damon died. You haven't said a word about the woman since she ran off."

"As if you would've been around to hear a word I said," Bonnie countered.

"And Jeremy knew. This is rich. This is so...perfect. My brother and my best friend-"

"Oh please, you can barely play the sister card, don't even try the best friend card."
"But this is all such illuminating news to me, Bonnie. I've been a bad friend to you all this time, and you, what, stuck around? Why would you do that? Why in the world would you do that?"

Elena looked the perfect mix of perplexed and resentful. It was the perplexion that gave Bonnie heartburn. Elena was genuinely stumped as to why Bonnie had stuck around in a sucky situation. Sure, she was operating with absolutely no filter and giving in to every worst thing she could say, but it didn't matter. To have the person for whom she'd suffered so much blankly look at her like well why? was insulting on the deepest level. No wonder she'd come to feel like an apparition in her own life.

"You wouldn't understand," she finally answered, the words barely reaching her own ears.

"You mean it fed into your martyr complex," Elena said. "But Bonnie shouldn't martyrs at least influence change?" she asked, piling on the confused expression. She realized that she'd hit a nerve in Bonnie, so she barreled on. It felt so good. "Martyrs accomplish things. I'm a vampire. Alaric's dead. My brother still hasn't beaten this whole want to kill vampires thing, I mean what the hell is he gonna do when you go away to college? And the temporary fix—it came from Shane, not you. Scores of people have died in town, and my life still sucks! How can you be sacrificing yourself for me when my .sucks? That doesn't make sense, does it? Caroline once told me you're always the one who gets hurt. Well, it looks like you're hurtin for nothin', Bon. You're not doing anything."

"I never tried to fix Alaric," Bonnie said calmly, although her face was absolutely rigid. Her lips did relax into the semblance of a smile when the condescension visibly disappeared from Elena's posture. That felt good. "Your one remaining guardian and role model?" she asked, standing up. "My mom showed me the recipe, and it hit me that I was not going to do it. But Caroline was there. She'd asked for the favor on your behalf. So I poured some random plants into tap water; I never actually read the recipe out loud, so Caroline didn't know what was needed in the mix. I chanted a nature spell to summon the winds, and voila: bullshit remedy. When mommy dearest smiled at me, I knew I'd done the right thing."

Elena was stunned. "You came to his vigil."

"I know. The whole time I just kept thinking about how much your heart must be tearing apart. And it felt great. My mother had just been murdered, and you had the nerve—"

"It was your idea to go find her," Elena bit off. "Not for a special family reunion but so she could help. And when you saw the woman, you got right down to business. That was your decision, Bonnie, not mine."

"Right."

"But Alaric got his revenge, didn't he. He almost sucked you dry."

"Pay attention. Alaric is dead, gone, one more in the list of people you've so tragically lost. I got my revenge. And speaking of not doing the work, I told Stefan that I did everything I could to stop your transition….."

She trailed off and let Elena figure the rest out.

Horrified, Elena took a step back. "You're lying."

"I was in the middle of trying when I stopped. I just stopped," she shrugged, embellishing the truth. "I was exhausted. I wanted to wallow on the tragedy of my own life, not sap myself dry trying to ease yours. I stopped, Elena."
"You….you let me turn."

"And I want you to stay. Why shouldn't you be a vampire? It's been good enough for so many others, my mom included. It was good enough for Caroline, good enough for Vicky, remember what Damon did to her? And when you think about it, it takes care of one major problem: the magic in your blood is cancelled out, your doppelganger-dom is rendered null and void, so no vampires will come after you, which means a lot less work for me," she finished with a smile.

Elena felt sick, a very human sickness. She felt like she was going to wretch. She stumbled away from Bonnie and ran off the porch at normal speed.

"Now I can really do nothing," Bonnie needled after her as she came to the edge of the porch.

Elena broke into a sprint and sped off.

"Now I can kick my feet up!" Bonnie yelled after her, a huge grin on her face.

She watched the direction in which Elena had disappeared, and then she looked across the street and down the street on her left to make sure that no one had seen any of the supernatural display, and then she went inside.

"Damn," Tyler commented from his seat on the chair.

Bonnie turned to him with a grin he could only describe as cruel.

"I think you chewed her heart up and spat it back out," he said.

"She deserved it. Did you hear what she said to me? If everything sucked, why did I stay? Screw her. As if she didn't grace me with her presence now and again just to keep me wrapped around her finger. Any other time, she was focused on Stefan, Damon, and maybe her brother. And oh yeah: herself. She wants to talk about me feeding into martyrdom? Like she's not in love with being tragic. I'm gonna lock her up. I'm gonna call Jeremy tonight to find out where she's sleeping, probably the boarding house, and then I'm locking her behind a seal first thing tomorrow morning."

"You can't have her running around, especially not after that threat," Tyler agreed.

"I have enough reasons to look over my shoulder. I don't need another."

She sighed, letting the ugly confrontation float away from her.

"Are you okay?" Tyler asked.

"More or less. There used to be a time when I thought: if only she knew how much it hurt, if only she knew the problem, we would have a crying session, and a sleepover, and pig out, and everything would be okay. There was a time when I thought me keeping my mouth shut was the problem, and maybe it was at one point, but it's not the case now. Now I know the truth. I know her switch is off, but....whatever."

"Our date isn't over," Tyler said as he stood.

Bonnie closed her eyes and breathed in, then breathed out. She resolved to bring herself back to the good mood from earlier, from before the vampire attacked. She opened her eyes and said, "No, it isn't."

Tyler smiled and headed to the kitchen, and she followed.
Caroline was lying on her bed, despondent, when her phone chimed with a message. Because Bonnie had sent an alert about a newbie vampire, she figured it would behoove her to read this message. Maybe it was an update and Bonnie had killed the vampire. She tapped the message, and her eyes followed the words.

Elena's switch is off. Be on the lookout! She showed up to my house and threatened me. Threatened her back. She's taking Damon's death hard, and I think the sire bond has forced her switch off.

"Shit," Caroline said as she sat up. She fired off a text to Bonnie:

Thank God Damon's dead, but if it's going to make Elena dangerous, then we'll need to bring him back. If you can figure out a way. Told Tyler I would help.

Then she called Elena.

Elena stopped in front of an antique store. She didn't know where she was going, and she suddenly felt like the only person in town. People were still out. It wasn't too late. Plenty of cars were on the street. People still ambled on the sidewalks, but Bonnie's words rang in her ears.

She wasn't thinking about Damon's death right now so much as she was thinking about restoring order to her life. She felt horrible yet good at the same time. She had so much energy that she had no idea how she was going to sleep tonight.

Damon was dead; Stefan was dead. Other than some pleasant words, such as what Matt had provided earlier, she wasn't sure that anyone cared. She wasn't even sure how much Caroline cared about Stefan being dead now that she was on the chopping block. Bonnie had other priorities, and Tyler was right behind her.

She wanted to do something. That was what she'd been struggling to do since she'd found out that vampires were in her life: something. She wanted to stand her ground. She wanted to be a player. She wanted to be a mover and shaker. She didn't do well with waiting around. She wanted to know that something was in motion and that that something was in her best interest.

And she knew how to make it happen. Bonnie was right. Her doppelganger blood was officially useless. Her supernatural value had plummeted with her death. There wasn't anything that she could offer Silas. But she still had connections. She still had strings.

She pulled out her phone, and a part of her told her not to do it. A part of her told her to run to Caroline instead. And as if the universe was in agreement, Caroline's name popped up on the screen with an incoming call. She rejected it and pulled up her contacts.

She called Elijah.

"Hello, Elena."

He sounded like….he wasn't missing two siblings. Like he was on a social call.

"Elijah," she said, trying to sound nonchalant. "If I knew where you lived, I'd drop by unexpectedly like you're fond of doing."
"Well, you kind of are. You don't call me."

"Only on the days when Damon's dead, I guess."

Elijah's shocked silence actually helped her gain back some of the bravado that Bonnie had verbally slapped off of her.

"I'm sorry, repeat that?" Elijah asked slowly.

"Damon's dead. Went up in flames. Stefan's dead, too. He died earlier today. Ashes to ashes."

"And this was done by…"

"Our boy Silas."

"Our boy?"

"Well, you do have a vested interest in Him whether you know it or not. Tyler and Bonnie may have killed your siblings, but Silas is the one who can bring them back."

"Elena, forgive my confusion, but you don't sound…well, you don't sound bereaved at all. Completely atypical, considering your affection for the Salvatore brothers."

"Not so atypical when my switch is off. See, Damon was my sire, and now he's dead, and, well, I'm sure you know what that means. Oh yeah, I'm a vampire now. Not by choice. There was an accident, but….we can always catch up later. When you come to Mystic Falls."

"And why would I do that?"

"You mean if you're not here already? Rumor has it there's a newbie vampire in town. Have you and Rebekah been making babies? I know you're planning to get your siblings back. I know there's a great chance that you will succeed. You always succeed. I want you to bring Damon and Stefan back. Damon was killed with the steroid-laced White Oak stake your mom made. Me, Caroline, and Bonnie's mother could be goners at any minute."

She knew he was shocked. He didn't exclaim it, because that was not his way, but she knew that he was stunned.

"That's an interesting detail: Bonnie's mother," he finally said. "That would mean that Bonnie herself has a vested interest in Damon's survival. I imagine she'll do everything in her power to rescue him. And I imagine she'll succeed."

"No, Elijah. Bonnie has a vested interest in saving her mother. And Caroline. And maybe me. Her words. But definitely not Damon and Stefan. Her words."

"That's foolish. She'll waste time indulging her pettiness and lose all of you in the process."

"This is why I'm calling you. I mean, you wouldn't leave it up to her to save your brothers, would you?"

"Bonnie's a Bennett. She comes from a very prestigious magical line. She's a very capable witch."

"Yet you've stopped her from being capable twice now, first when you saved Klaus and second when you killed her mother and stopped her from helping your mom wipe all of you out. You haven't seemed to give a damn about her prestige, Elijah."
"Elena, you will learn that sometimes a person realizing and living up to their potential can be….bad news for you," he said, amused. "I thought Bonnie was growing into her potential when I first met her, but then I saw the influence you had on her, and I realized that that was not the case. I have since become thankful for that."

"Yeah, well, my influence has waned. She's back on track to growing into her potential. As you can see by the deaths of your two brothers. I want in on what you're planning, Elijah, or I promise I will help Bonnie take care of you and Rebekah, too. Oh. You should know that I have some leverage type of information about Silas."

The line was silent for a moment.

And then Elijah hung up.

She wasn't phased. He was going to call back. She was confident. He'd hung up because he needed to think. Maybe break the idea of working with her to Rebekah if they were together, because she was positive that Elijah didn't run anything by anyone for approval unless that person was Klaus.

What she didn't know was whether or not she was really going to share her information. She'd brought it to Elijah's attention, which meant that her chance of backing out was officially slim to nonexistent.

She closed her eyes and leaned against the store. She couldn't be rash or irrational and blabbing about her important information was both.

The phone rang again, Caroline again, and she picked it up with a roll of her eyes. "Yes, Caroline?"

"Hey. Where are you right now?"

"Uh." She got off of the building and walked to the edge of the sidewalk so that she could see the name of the store. "Antique Glass."

"What are you doing there?"

"Taking in the chilly Monday night air," she said as she retook her leaning spot and propped one foot against the building.

"Elena, come over. Come spend the night, and we can go to school together tomorrow. Better yet, I'll come over. We can sleep at the boarding house."

"Kind of morbid," Elena commented. "Damon's ashes are still on the floor."

"You know you're gonna sleep at the house. And why didn't Matt scoop up the ashes?"

"Cause I asked him not to."

Caroline fell silent, and she smiled at what she imagined was the blonde's horror.

"Elena, I know about your switch."

"Surprised Bon Bon shared that information."

"Well, she thinks you're dangerous. She told us to beware."

"And you agree."
"Vampires with their switch off aren't exactly known for being warm and fluffy. I know from personal experience, remember?"

Elena rolled her eyes.

"So we need to get you off the street and home."

Despite having rolled her eyes, Elena did smile a genuine smile. Despite everything going on, Caroline was truly worried about her. "You're a good friend, Care."

"So we're meeting at the Salvatore mansion?"

"Sure. You should also know that while Bonnie's worried about me being dangerous, Tyler's right there to calm her fears. I waited for her at her house, and she and Tyler were fresh from a hot date. That must've been when she ran into that random vampire. I guess she forgot to mention that Tyler was with her in the text. See you in a bit," Elena said cheerfully, and she ended the call.

In her bedroom, Caroline took the phone off of her ear and looked at it just as Elena's contact information disappeared from the screen.

"We're so dead," she murmured.
Bonnie responded to Caroline's text during her and Tyler's light dinner, saying *I'm thinking about offering Silas a deal. I'm thinking about it.*

While she didn't feel comfortable giving Caroline the details, she couldn't have not responded to her text.

She and Tyler ate, talked, and then he went to prepare for her upstairs while she called Jeremy at the table.

"Hey, what's up?" he answered.

"Hey. How are you?"

"I'm good. Pretty good. I just talked to Elena, and she's gonna sleep at the boarding house with Caroline."

"That's good. At least she'll be under supervision."

"Are you okay? Like, she didn't try anything, did she?"

"She pretty much told me that Damon's managed to kill a couple of witches thanks to the element of surprise, and it could work in her favor, too. I did scare her. And I told her the truth about the cure. That's what she wanted. I told her that I haven't wanted the cure for her for a while now. She was definitely shocked. She knows you were in on it, so get ready for some questions."

Jeremy sighed. "That's fine. I'm ready for them. This is going to be the closest we've come to having an honest conversation."

Bonnie smiled. "Jeremy, I wanna seal her in the boarding house. As early as tomorrow morning. I can't have her running around, not with that threat standing against me."

"Uh, wait a second."

She imagined him rubbing his forehead as he thought. She gave him time.

"I don't....I don't think that's a good idea. I heard you, but she's grieving, and with her switch off, plus in the boarding house? She wouldn't let Matt sweep up the ashes."

"You said she's gonna sleep there tonight," Bonnie said, confused about why Elena would want to sleep in a place where Damon's ashes were still scattered. "We can wait until she leaves. You can lure her home-"

"Bonnie. No. Her switch is off, and she's a danger *maybe*, but....something about locking her up right now doesn't feel right. Actually, it feels kind of familiar. I kind of got locked up after Vicky died when I was compelled, remember? Whether it's the boarding house or my house, emotionally or physically, I can't lock her up and leave her by herself. *Especially* not in my house. She'd probably tear me apart when I got home. And don't suggest the lakehouse, please. Look, what she did was wrong, but she never asked for this sire bond thing. And maybe she'll hurt someone who's not you, but...."

He sighed, a little frustrated. "I don't have the answer, but locking her up doesn't feel right. Not while
she's going through this."

"I'm gonna ask Silas's witch to slow down the effects of Damon's death."

After a momentary silence, Jeremy asked, "In exchange for giving yourself up?"

"Yeah."

"Bonnie, you can't do that"

"I can't let my mom die. Or Elena and Caroline. It's the only answer, and I won't necessarily have to live up to my end of the deal until Silas is back to normal."

"The witch can still keep you prisoner until Silas is back. And what about Stefan? You can't have one Salvatore without the other. Damon will kick up a storm until Stefan comes back."

Bonnie sighed. "I don't know about that part yet. But it's the only permanent fix to the problem. I can't waste time experimenting with my own solution."

"Okay," he said on an exhale. "I need to see Tyler as soon as possible."

"Uh, he's not gonna be at school tomorrow. He'll be here resting."

"Okay. How are you gonna contact the witch?"

"In Silas' apartment."

"Do you need...someone to go with you?"

Bonnie smiled. This was it. This was the first step. He'd hesitated. Eventually, he would stop asking. She wondered if them not talking at all was an eventuality. In light of Tyler comparing her post-relationship relationship with Jeremy to his with Caroline, the thought of her and Jeremy eventually ceasing all communication made her sad.

"Someone's going with me," she said quietly.

She was sure that he thought she was talking about Tyler.

"Great," he said, but she heard the truth: it wasn't great at all.

Bonnie closed her eyes. "Bye."

"I'll come see Tyler after school. Bye."

After hanging up, she washed the dishes like she'd told Tyler she would and turned off the kitchen light as well as the one in the living room.

When she opened her bedroom door, she was greeted by a tightly packaged, naked Hybrid lying on carefully arranged towels on her bed. She slowly closed the door. She was grinning, because what else could she do at the sight of Tyler in all of his glory?

"Hey," Tyler said, turning his attention from the ceiling to look at her.

"Hey," she answered, unable to help dragging out the word. "So the seal idea is a bust," she said as she approached the bed. She set her phone on the nightstand closest to her.
"Jeremy's not into it?"

"Nope, and I get why. He doesn't want her holding all of that repressed grief in a prison. But if she ends up killing someone, then we'll be stuck ignoring the solution to the problem."

"We can always knock her out with a sleeping spell or something. I get her sadness in like the general sense. Anything more than that, and I hit that brick wall of: Damon and Stefan were dicks."

Bonnie smiled. She climbed the bed and half lay on top of him, her feet dangling off the bed.

"I called Kim and asked her to be with you tomorrow. She'll be waiting for you to text her directions, or call her, or whichever."

"Okay."

"My mom's back at the house, but I wasn't in the mood to talk to her. Kim said she wasn't happy to hear I was sleeping outside of the house. I think she's just mad I didn't tell her. Anyways," he hesitated, "I was thinking about what you said earlier. In the cave?" he clarified as he began to rub her back. "I was kind of thinking about it during dinner. You're right. I can't hate who I was. I can't resent him. I was a fighter."

"You still are," she said fondly. "You still are. And you deserve all the best."

"Does that include the best ass?"

"The best in Mystic Falls," she answered.

"Bring it over here, then."

Grinning, she got off of him and went to the bathroom to get naked. "The best in Virginia," she amended as she went. "And anywhere else you might go."

"Hurry up so we can do it in front of the mirror," he said.

Bonnie bit her lip, and hurry she did. She undressed and wiped herself, and then she stepped back out in all of her glory. She had considered a quick wash, but she would be taking away all of the lube she'd accumulated since Tyler had left her pining. Plus, she figured that he would like her like this: ready to drip, as opposed to the wash drying her up.

"Come here," Tyler beckoned as he got on his knees and faced the full-body mirror.

"I love it when you say that," Bonnie said.

He rearranged the towel in front of him to make it face the same direction that he was facing.

Bonnie climbed on the bed and swung in front so that her ass and pussy were aimed at him, whichever he wanted first. Tyler kissed the apples of her ass, her thighs, and the length of her spine. He kissed one of her ears and a cheek, a shoulder blade.

At that moment, she took off the gauze on her neck, just in case he wanted a bite.

He returned behind her and held her still with one hand while he used the other to pat her pussy. He did it harder and harder, until the sound took over the bedroom. Bonnie moaned and rolled her hips, angling her clit toward the pats.

He gathered her wetness and rubbed her generously, the circles tighter and tighter, faster and faster,
closing in on her need. He watched her in the mirror, and she watched him. She played with her lips for his benefit, biting it, puckering it, licking it. He grinned and fixed himself at an angle so that she would feel his dick getting harder and harder.

His fingers made her moan and no matter if her eyes fluttered closed, she always reopened them to watch him watch her. He watched her like he was studying her pleasure, like he was fascinated by the sight of pure bliss on her face.

When she orgasmed, she tried and failed to keep her eyes opened. Her eyes shifted behind her lids, which spiked the intensity of the orgasm to a degree that she wasn't prepared to handle.

Tyler bent over and lavished her ass with kisses while she floated down from the high. He widened the circles on her pussy, but she reached between her legs and took his hand away, because she really needed a moment.

As he kissed her ass, he used his power to increase her arousal. As her desire rose, Bonnie lowered her upper half to the bed. He straightened and positioned his dick at her entrance.

"Ready?" he asked.

"Yeah," she answered.

He entered her slowly, wanting to feel every bit of her slickness. She let out a long moan when the head of his dick made it through. He pulled out a couple of times, though not completely, because he wanted to see her blood on his dick. He kept at it, slowly entering then pulling back to see how much she'd soaked him, until he was outright humping her.

Every facet of slow went out of the window then. He went at her with gusto, and she held on to the bed and straightened so that she could watch in the mirror, her tits swinging with every thrust. She cursed, not ready for him to feel this good, this fulfilling. With her eyes turned, she fell completely into the mating state. With her Marks warm and insistent, responding to his closeness, the fact that he was touching her, and the fact that he was influencing her so intimately, she was completely at her body's mercy.

Tyler's Mark warmed in response to hers; his eyes turned in response to hers, and her heightened pheromones seduced him into the mating state. He saw her and her only, smelled her and her only, felt her and her only. The desire to dominate her pleasure consumed him, and he wasn't prepared for it.

He fucked her until she was senseless and incoherent, and she wasn't ready for it. He wasn't ready for how much he would make up for making her wait.

After she came on her hands and knees, he flipped her onto her back and entered her again.

She came until her words made no sense. She came until she couldn't say his whole name anymore, just Ty. She came until she spoke in breaths and gasps, nodded at anything and everything he said, offered anything he wanted.

When he cursed, and he cursed a lot from how good fucking her felt, she felt herself become even more wet. She spread her legs as wide as she could, and she squeezed her thighs shut as tightly as she could, all to wring more curses out of him.

She wasn't ready for how good Mate sex was, wasn't ready to be fucked until close to four in the morning. By then, she was seeing him through a thick haze of desire. He fucked her while she was on top, fucked her while she was on the bottom, fucked her on her right side and fucked her on her
left side. Her legs were up, down, around his waist, in the crook of his elbows, and around his neck.

He never ate her out, because he kissed her too much. She only succumbed to the potent powers of his dick and fingers.

"How the hell are you doing this?" she slurred, laying on her stomach, her legs closed tight while he speared his dick in and out and grunted above her. She wanted to know how he was lasting so long, where his stamina had come from, completely oblivious to the fact that her own stamina was something to write home about, but the stimulation on her G-spot became overwhelming at that moment, and she succumbed, fisting the sheets and coiling as she lost her mind.

He laughed at her.

He cursed at her between clenched fangs and canines to "stop fucking moving" when she was on top and threatening to finish him off with her powerful hips, riding him like she was the most skilled jockey and he the motherfucking horse.

"Ah, shit!" he yelled, and he used his speed to flip their position, quickly manipulating her so that she was on her back at the foot of the bed and he was on top of her.

"You're a bitch for that," Bonnie panted after she realized what had happened, a licentious grin on her face.

Tyler was surprised by her smack talking but very, very delighted. "I'll show you a bitch," he said as he entered her.

"Should I be offended?" she moaned as she adjusted her shoulders and licked her lips at the feel of him.

"You're not even gonna be worried about that," he promised.

Or maybe she preferred to think of it as a threat. He wasn't smiling; he looked dead serious, and he grabbed the edge of the bed to anchor himself.

To anchor himself to fuck her.

Yes, she decided as she bit her lip, it was a threat. She held on to his firm ass and lifted her legs in the air, prepared for him to drive her. And she of course egged him on, talking smack about how he just couldn't let her finish him off, how he just had to play dirty and steal the upper hand. He hit her back with facts on facts, asking her to remind him what number orgasm she was about to hit.

Reminded of how much of a blubering mass of erotic nerves she had become, Bonnie laughed at all of his comebacks, although she didn't let up with her shit talking.

It paid off for both, because the shit talking turned him on, and she was turned on by his strong long strokes. She gave in first, once again losing control of her speech, trembling, high-pitched moans shaking her vocal chords.

Tyler pulled out and looked at his dick when she had calmed down. "Shit, look at you. Look."

Bonnie lifted her head to look at his dick. She grinned and dropped her head down. "Fuck me." She was very turned from hearing him talk smack, and it showed.

Tyler licked his fangs and got back into position, gripping the edge of the bed with one hand. He fed her his dick with the other, and she planted her hands on his back and lifted her legs.
This time, he didn't stop. She squirmed and her short nails dug in his skin, and her legs climbed up as high as they could on his back, which only helped him sink deeper, and he didn't stop. She cried out baby! then ba! when the former proved too taxing, and he didn't stop. His eyes were fastened on her, every cell in his body vibrating with sensitivity, and he didn't stop.

He started to come, and he drove into her harder, and her heart tripped when she felt herself start to go over the edge of the bed.

Tyler crawled along the bed, crawled her off of it, and brought them to the floor, and then he continued. He shut his eyes and yelled, his face rigid as hours of build up spewed out of him. His back curved, and the muscles in his arms bulged as everything he had left him in the pre-dawn hour.

The muscles in Bonnie's legs spasmed so hard when she came that somewhere in her mind she feared that she was going to cramp up. But she could do nothing about it. But her gripping his thighs was less about a potential cramp and more about the toe-curling, eye-rolling orgasm she was going through.

"So?" he asked, long after he'd rolled off of her and flopped on his back, the longest they'd gone without touching since she'd climbed on the bed and faced the mirror the day before. His eyes on the ceiling, he asked, "Did I show you?"

Having caught her breath and her pussy flooded with his come, Bonnie admitted defeat. She loved admitting defeat. Admitting defeat felt like hours of orgasms. "You know you did. Consider me shown. What the hell was that, Tyler? What did we do?"

"Have amazing sex. Mate sex. My Mark is so...insistent," he said as he reached under his neck to rub it. "But not so much right now, though."

"Mine, too," she said. "Holy crap," she breathed. "I think we beat the time in the woods."

"I think we should create separate categories," Tyler said with a small frown. "I don't want to put the woods in competition with anything else. I don't think I want to put tonight in competition with anything else, either."

Bonnie laughed. "You're right. I was desperate to have sex while we were having sex."

"Me too!" Tyler exclaimed, eyes wide as he lifted his head to look at her. She laughed, and he laid his head back down. "This, this whole Mate thing, it's gonna be great," he said. "Jules told me that every werewolf has their own individual mating season. Mine happens at like the tail end of summer. I'm horny all the damn time. But I only got to experience that once before I was turned. It didn't happen the last two summers. I think the whole Hybrid promise of not being ruled by the moon took it away. But I'm an Alpha now. And I'm Mated. I wonder if mating season for couples happens every time they have sex."

He looked very happy at the possibility. Bonnie, on the other hand, raised her brows. "Babe, tonight was amazing. Like, amazing. And I kept up, no problem. But I don't think I want Mate sex all the time. Unless, we like go months without having sex first."

Tyler showed his teeth when he smiled this time.

"That's not an option," Bonnie frowned. "I'm not going months without sex just so you can....freakin'....blow my back out."

Tyler laughed heartily. "Tapping out already, huh?"
"Hush your mouth, no I'm not. I just want dick regularly. The best dick in Mystic Falls," she flirted.

"Just so you know, you were a beast, too."

"I know," she purred as she stretched. "I was amazing. Probably a little embarrassing, but who cares? This is going in my personal record book."

"You're so freaking beautiful," Tyler observed as he watched her bask in her sexual prowess.

"Thank you," she said with a dazzling smile.

Tyler licked his lips and heaved himself to his knees, his body suddenly heavy with something akin to exhaustion. Still, he moved to her legs and lifted her hips onto his thighs, and he opened her legs. He watched. His hands rested softly on her thighs, dried blood on some of his fingers, and he watched.

Bonnie looked at him, and he was transfixed. He had fallen into a zone, and he was the most adorable that she had ever seen him. But it was the softness of his hands on her thighs that made her heart dip.

And she remembered then that he had thing about body fluid, specifically the kind that came from exactly where he was looking. He was probably getting a lot out of seeing the mixture of them on her pussy, probably a huge ego boost. Territory. His territory.

Biting her lip, she fastened her hands under her knees and pulled them to her chest. She commenced flexing her pussy. If someone's eyes could spark with excitement, she would've sworn that his did just then, his lips parting excitedly as his come flowed out of her.

Tyler was touched. He gently stroked her thighs as she pandered to his desire. "You really get this," he said quietly, almost shyly, and her heart melted.

"I couldn't be your Mate if I didn't," she returned.

He smiled and looked up at her, right into the truth. Her eyes. Reflections of his since they'd started their marathon sex. They were proof of her understanding. "Come here," he said.

Like he expected, she grinned at his choice of words. He shook his head and took her hips off of his thighs and settled her back on the floor. He extended his body over her and licked the length of her throat up to her chin, picking up her sweat. His wolfette.

He stood and stretched his hand down to help her up. Once she was on her feet, he lifted her off the floor and carried her to the bathroom.

After they wiped themselves, he carried her to the bed. The towels had helped a lot, but the bed had not escaped unscathed, especially since two of the towels had ended up on the floor because Bonnie had thrown them in two separate moments of passion.

He climbed on the bed and laid her down, and then he stretched next to her. He licked his teeth and said, "I wanna bite you."

"I've been waiting," she said.

Suave was not how he would have ever thought to describe Bonnie Bennett, but it sure fit now. He moved over her and switched sides so that when he bit her, he went for the other side of her neck. He didn't want to reopen the other wound.
The taste of her blood after hours of fucking, after hours of satisfaction, the taste of *satiated* Bonnie blood: divine. It was sparkling and vibrant; smooth and rich. Curiously, though, her magic was less pronounced. He paused to acknowledge it. And then he resumed drinking and moaned in satisfaction.

He drank leisurely as he massaged her breast, and she sighed, the dull suction on her neck gently nudging her toward sleep.

They should clean up, use their last bit of energy to change the sheets, put the towels in the hamper, something.

Instead, he fell asleep first, out like a light on his back when he was only supposed to be taking a small break from drinking. She looked on fondly and caressed his cheek, her Hybrid finally spent after days of soldiering. She was impressed by his lasting power, specifically because of the marathon sex he'd managed to have despite the woefully inadequate hours of sleep. But he would have it now and it was well deserved.

She refused to look at her phone. Surely it couldn't be that late. Still, she hoped that it was on vibrate. She wasn't going to school, but her alarm was still on. She hoped she wouldn't hear it when it rang.

With a mental *screw it* to the mess that was them, her bed, and her room, she went to sleep.
"So, are we gonna talk like at all?" Caroline asked as she and Elena descended the stairs of the Salvatore boarding house early the next morning.

Elena adjusted her backpack and headed to the living room. She stopped in front of Damon's ashes like it was a ritual.

"Okay, I really think you should….store him some place," Caroline said quietly as she came to stand next to her. "This isn't healthy."

"If you touch it, I'll make you regret it," Elena promised. "My switch is off, Care. Healthy isn't the operative word."

"Yeah, I don't understand how you can know your switch is off and yet not be able to turn it on."

"Are you ready to go?" Elena asked, turning to her suddenly and switching the inflection of her voice to something lighter. "I'm ready to go."

"Yeah. I mean I guess it's great that you're talking to me now. After what you said over the phone last night, I expected something more than a locked bedroom when I got here."

"By the time you got here, I was over girl talk."

"The one person who can save us is going out on dates with her-boyfriend instead. I consider that information worth exploring, not girl talk. And if you had bothered to open your door, I could've told you that she told me she's gonna offer Silas a deal. To bring Damon back."

Elena was skeptical. "To bring Damon back? My Damon? She must not have a way to save her mom," she said to herself, a small smile appearing on her face.

"She said she was thinking about it. The only question is when she's gonna do this, especially since going on dates with Tyler is of utmost importance to her. But I suggest you stop threatening her so she doesn't change her mind."

"If she's only thinking about it, then that means you and I are closer to death than not. And she didn't say anything about Stefan?"

Caroline slumped her shoulders. "No, she didn't. But you know what? Us being alive means we can actually worry about Stefan."

"I'm surprised at you, Care. I thought he was your best friend," Elena mocked.

"Don't do this right now," Caroline warned.

"Okay, number one: Damon can't live without Stefan. They're like a packaged deal. Number two: do you even trust her? Like you said, she went on a date last night. This isn't the Bonnie we know."

"I know," Caroline said, frustrated. "But I'm desperate and without options, so if she says she's gonna save us, then I have to believe it. Do you think we should have an intervention with her?"

"And that would get us where?" Elena asked. "She's all mate-y mates with Tyler. Unless his life is threatened, she'll move slow as molasses."
"Then maybe we should ask Silas to drive a stake through his heart."

Elena raised her eyebrows in amused shock.

"I said I was desperate! I'm gonna die if Bonnie doesn't move. I talked to Mrs. Lockwood last night, but who knows how far that's gonna get me, because at the end of the day she can't force Bonnie to do anything. To think that on my eighteenth birthday I was feeling depressed about being seventeen forever. I've given two ideas while all you've done is snark. Badly, by the way."

"I placed a very important phone call last night, something a lot more tangible than an idea," Elena said as she left the living room to head to the hallway.

"What'd you do?" Caroline asked, daring to hope. "Who did you call?"

Elena stopped walking and faced her with a stern look. "I'm swearing you to secrecy."

"Sworn."

"I mean it. It'd be nice to go into this with someone I completely trust, but if you get in my way or sabotage me, I'll-"

Caroline slowly dropped her head towards Elena. "You'll what?"

"I'd rather not find out," Elena answered sincerely.

Caroline quietly told herself to be careful. Her instinct was to comfort Elena and speak to her in soft tones during her time of grief. But Elena was a self-serving livewire with her switch off.

"My life is on the line," she said evenly. "I'll keep your secret."

"I called Elijah."

Caroline's mouth fell open. "Elijah who? Mikaelson?"

"What we need is this situation out of Bonnie's hands. We can't-We can't let her go to Silas with any kind of deal," she realized. "If she does, then she gets to decide who comes back and who doesn't. We have to stop her."

"Stop her?" Caroline asked, her heart at her feet. "Did you hear what you just said? You want to take this out of Bonnie's hands and give it to Elijah. Elijah! Double crosser extraordinaire! I'd rather take my chances with Bonnie!"

"Elijah will have clout with Silas. Clout that I don't have. He's old-"

"Elijah will walk up to Silas, ask Him to bring back Klaus, and Kol, and turn his ass around and walk right back out. He doesn't give a crap about Stefan and Damon! You didn't think this through!"

"Stop yelling!" Elena shouted as she grabbed Caroline's arms.

"No!" Caroline yelled, breaking Elena's hold on her, "Because you're forgetting that Silas killed Stefan just for asking questions! What makes you think He won't do the same to Elijah?!"

"Because," Elena answered, grasping for patience. "Elijah is more cultured."

"Cultured?" Caroline enunciated slowly. "That's what you're banking this on? Holy shit, I'm dead."
"Listen to me," Elena said. "You interact with these people as long as I have, like intimately, up close and personal, and you notice a couple of things. They will hear you out. They will negotiate. They will plot behind you and try to betray you, but their willingness to listen gives you a little wiggle room. I've been attacked and kidnapped by more vampires than I can count. I've talked to a lot more of them than you have. They will listen. Why should Silas be any different?"

"Uh, because He's a crazy God?"

"They're all crazy. Every single last one of them. Give them power for more than a hundred years, and they're crazy. They're especially crazy when you piss them off. That's the only reason Silas killed Damon. Bonnie pissed Him off. And He walked into that classroom with major attitude, which means that Bonnie did something to piss Him off before then, and that's why Stefan is dead. Because I bet you He would have entertained Stefan otherwise. Look at the ruse He pulled just get close to us. I mean to get close to Bonnie. A college professor? I mean He started this whole thing when Bonnie's grandma was alive, maybe even way before that. He was her teaching assistant before she died. He waited. Which means He appreciates finesse. Elijah has that."

Caroline was a little moved by Elena's proselytizing. She wanted to believe her. But. "What if He doesn't give a damn about Elijah's finesse?"

"He will," Elena promised.

"Okay, let's pretend He will. You still haven't guaranteed Elijah will so much as remember Stefan and Damon's names when he gets a chance with Silas. Which means we're still dead."

"Oh, I'm so gonna-"

"Shhh!" Caroline whispered suddenly, pinching Elena's lips closed. "Someone's listening," she said slowly as she focused her ears.

She heard a shuffle of feet and then someone saying knock.

Sure enough, three knocks sounded at the door.

Blood drained from Caroline's face, and she turned to Elena. Who is that? she mouthed.

Elijah? Elena shrugged. Although, she wasn't completely sure if Elijah was the eavesdropping type. Regardless, she dropped her backpack and went to the door. Caroline dropped hers and followed.

"Jeremy," Elena exclaimed softly when she opened the door.

Standing behind him with a smirk on her face was Rebekah, dressed in all black with a leather jacket that had too many buckles.

"Let him go," Elena commanded.

Rebekah let go of the arm she'd twisted behind Jeremy's back, and Elena pulled her brother inside the house. Elena noticed that Jeremy's car was in the driveway and his backpack was close to it on the floor. "What do you want?" she asked the millennial sternly.

"The location of the White Oak stake," Rebekah answered with a polite smile. Her eyes were anything but polite. Sure, they shown with amusement. But they were also empty.

"We don't have it," Elena said rudely.
Upping her speed, Rebekah bent down and took something from her pant leg and sped inside the house.

"No!" Elena screamed, and she rushed to block Rebekah from knifing Jeremy.

Jeremy took off immediately. His destination: the Salvatores' stash of weapons.

Rebekah struck Elena down. When she turned for Jeremy, Caroline was at her neck, her bite fierce and ferocious. Rebekah yelled and grabbed Caroline's hair. Her hold on the knife tight, she drove it between Caroline's ribs.

Caroline yelled, and Rebekah took the knife out and jammed it between another set of ribs. "I! Just! Want! An! Answer!" Rebekah yelled, punctuating each word with a fresh stab.

She drove the knife forward again, but Caroline ran to a corner by the door. Rebekah heard the sound of a latch go off, followed by a whiz.

Without looking to see where it had come from, she spun away from the wall, and the stake lodged itself at the height where her heart had been. She ran to Jeremy at normal speed, giving him enough time to fire off another stake. Jubilant, Rebekah switched the knife to her dormant hand, caught the stake with her dominant hand, and turned on her speed toward Jeremy.

She heard Elena coming fast behind her, so she quickly reversed direction and jabbed the stake above Elena's belly button, stopping the vampire in her tracks.

"Elena!" Jeremy panicked as his sister doubled over with a pained cry.

He didn't regain his composure in time. Keeping her speed up, Rebekah quickly sheathed the knife, grabbed the crossbow, and smacked him across the head with it. She quickly dropped the weapon, took the knife, and stabbed Jeremy in the abdomen.

"Stop! Stop it!" Elena yelled on her knees.

"I alway get my man," Rebekah said, grinning. "I could've done worse. Still can. I can shove my blood down his throat and snap his neck."

"Elijah told you to do this?" Elena demanded. She pulled the stake out of her abdomen with a heavy grunt. "Let my brother go," she said, squeezing the stake, "Or I swear to God you and I will go at it until you end up dead."

"So confident, so delusional," Rebekah said. She yanked the knife out of Jeremy, and Caroline rushed over despite her bad ribs and took him away. She fell on the floor with him, but she pushed through her pain, bit herself, and fed him her blood.

"You do realize this makes him insurance either way," Rebekah pointed out. "Caroline's blood, my blood, it's all gooey vampire blood in his system. I can now turn him any time I want."

"Tyler's the one who bit you, why the hell are you attacking us?!" Caroline yelled. "Bonnie's the one who cursed you!"

"And you two are the ones who tried to bullshit me when I asked where the White Oak stake was," Rebekah said.

"We don't have it," Elena said, her lips curling with hatred.
"But you know where it is. Or do you think Caroline's blood is somehow making your brother invincible and I can't stab him again."

When Elena only glared at her, Rebekah tightened her hold on the knife's handle.

"Matt's house!" Elena hurried. "It's in Matt's house."

"You gave your most dangerous weapon to the mortal," Rebekah said slowly.

"Evil Gods don't make a habit of stopping by his house," Elena said sarcastically.

"Huh. Well, I trust you'll want to tend to your brother. Caroline, dear, let's go get the stake."

"You know where Matt lives," Elena bit off.

"I also know I don't have an invitation. And either the stake's really there and Caroline finds it, or it isn't, and I have a convenient target on whom to express my disappointment. Caroline?" she asked, cocking her head. "Shall we?"

Deciding that she'd fed Jeremy enough of her blood, Caroline turned him on his side and stood, wincing. "After you," she said to the Original, her face tense with anger and pain.

"I'm on foot. We're taking your car."

There was no point in taking her backpack, so Caroline grabbed her keys and wallet and headed out.

At the living room's threshold, Rebekah turned and looked at the ashes on the floor. "Oh my, is that Damon?"

She then turned and left.

Of course Rebekah let Caroline take the driver's seat, with her injured side, and easily slid into the passenger seat. She patted her neck to feel the wound from Caroline's bite. It was healed.

Caroline was rolling away from the house when she heard Elena yell, "Hey!"

Looking in the rearview mirror, she eased her foot onto the break.

Elena walked to the car, unable to speed yet. She got to the passenger's window and said, "I want to speak to your brother. Now."

"You have his number," Rebekah said in dismissal, her eyes on the pavement ahead.

"No. I wanna know where he is. And I wanna know before you leave here."

Rebekah looked at her and blinked once. "Klaus' house."

Elena slowly backed away from the car.

"So I guess Caroline knows about your proposal?" Rebekah asked suddenly. "But Jeremy doesn't. So I still did good, right? Very good performance. I mean I doubt you want your brother to know you've been in contact with my brother."

Shock eroded both Elena's and Caroline's anger. Rebekah faced forward in the seat again, a steady smile on her face, and calmly waited for the car to move.
"Be careful," Elena warned Caroline gravelly. There was no way Rebekah had done what she'd done just to fool Jeremy. No way.

Caroline nodded at Elena's warning, more than a little apprehensive about the drive.

"If anything happens to her, it will be your ass," Elena warned Rebekah. "We'll see how delusional I am. You're in a mood because your brothers are dead, Rebekah? Damon is dead. I'm in a mood. I will rip your throat out."

Elena's intonation peaked Rebekah's interest, and she slid her eyes to the last Petrova. "Let's go, Caroline," she said amiably.

Steeling herself for whatever might come, Caroline drove off with a bomb by her side.

That morning, Bonnie was supposed to be over the moon. She and Tyler had had a magnificent date the previous night; she felt closer to him; and she had some solid decisions to carry out today.

Instead, her chest was heavy, and her stomach was unsettled.

She opened her eyes ten minutes before her alarm was supposed to ring for school. She took the phone off the nightstand and turned the alarm off so that it wouldn't get a chance to wake Tyler. And then she stared at the boy next to her, appreciating how peaceful he looked, thankful for him, thankful that he was in her bed.

And then it crossed her mind that this might be the last time. She swallowed the feeling down.

She snuggled closer to Tyler and drifted off to sleep again, frowning. She slept for twenty minutes more, and then her eyes were thrown open by….something. Something was wrong, very wrong.

She lifted her head and looked at the jar that Lucy had prepared for her. The water was a light black. Poisonous magic, poisonous to her. The ingredients had lowered to spin in the middle of the jar.

She got off the bed, but her eyes connected with the mirror, and she didn't take another step. Forgetting her sense of foreboding for a moment, her eyebrows rose high on her forehead at what was in front of her eyes.

In the full length mirror, she and Tyler were having sex: doggystyle, facing the mirror, and….all of the styles that they'd used the night before. The image jumped from this bit of fucking to that bit of fucking, from her orgasming that time to her orgasming that other time. There was no sound, just a silent replay of their nocturnal passions.

She folded her lips and smiled. Here she'd thought her powers had been dormant while they'd been making love. Apparently she'd been bouncing everything against the mirror.

Tyler would definitely enjoy that when he woke up.

She left the replay, silently acknowledging that she looked great having sex, facial expressions very embarrassing but she looked like she was enjoying herself, and she went to shower.

The discomfort was still in her chest and stomach after the shower.

The negativity clogging her third eye was clearing up. And she was sensing something bad.

Or maybe it was her protection spells warning her.
Either way.

Something bad was coming.

She lingered when she kissed Tyler goodbye. She wrote a note asking him to please wash all of the dirty towels and the bedsheets for her, but she lingered when she kissed his forehead, and the hesitation to separate from him, to end something as simple as a kiss, filled her with fresh dread.

She'd taken the previous night off in order to better deal with all of her responsibilities today, but the longer she was up with the sun, the more she felt like…..she'd woken up to a whole new….present.

Oddly, very oddly, after she did take her lips off of Tyler's forehead, she remembered Mr. Tanner. And she had an epiphany that that was the last time she'd felt so very uncomfortable. Mr. Tanner had ended up dead. She hadn't known enough back then to try to decode what the cosmos had been whispering to her. But she knew now.

Something bad was coming, and she needed to do something.

Walking to her desk, she grabbed her Grimoire, and then she stooped and went inside of her closet. In one of the corners, where she kept a lot of the books she'd taken from Jonas Martin's collection, she grabbed Jonas' Grimoire. She then went to the nightstand that held the jar, opened one of the drawers, and grabbed Emily's book.

She stuffed the Grimoires into her go-to spellcasting messenger bag, and then she grabbed three candles. Just in case. She looked around the room and tried to think of anything else she might end up needing.

Remembering that Kim was supposed to be her shadow today since Tyler would be recuperating, she grabbed her number off of his phone and texted Kim to meet her at the Witches' House.

Unable to think of anything else, she slung the bag over her shoulder, stopped at the door to look at Tyler, which increased her uneasiness another notch, and then she left.

On the drive to the final resting place of her ancestors, she was so consumed with figuring out just where her horrible feeling was coming from that she didn't notice she was being followed.
An Audience With Elijah

Caroline gradually relaxed during the drive. Relaxing came easier after her ribs finished healing.

She remembered Elena's lesson learned: powerful people like to talk.

Also, it wasn't as if she hasn't tangled with Rebekah before. She needed to act like they were on the same level, no matter if Rebekah sneered at that.

"So this is a stark difference to the always rejected, lovesick Original who trailed behind her brother," she began. "You're full on sadist now."

"Now?" Rebekah asked. "You don't know me. Hell, maybe I don't know me. I've never come so close to losing all of my family before. But trust me, Caroline, you don't want to be part of my journey of self-discovery. It won't end well for you. So just do as I say."

"I am so far, aren't I?"

"Well, I'm definitely glad you're in a gabby mood, because I want answers," she said, turning in her seat to face the child vampire. "I tried this the first time, and it failed miserably, thanks to your boyfriend and that….Kim. I tried a second time with Damon before I snapped his neck, but I feel like I didn't get the complete story, the complete lay of the land, if you will. So,"

She reached down and pulled the bloody knife from its holster. "Start from the beginning."

"You stick that thing in me again, and I swear I'll….I'll crash this car and make a run for it."

"Then you better be the fastest girl alive."

"I have more luck in getting out of sticky situations than you do. Like when we were both kidnapped, and Klaus saved me and not you?"

She'd never really gotten the chance to exploit it, had never really needed to, but she knew that insecurity was Rebekah's greatest weakness.

"It's funny you're doing all of this to bring him back," she continued. "I honestly don't know if he'd be-"

"Doing the same for me?" Rebekah picked up. "Shut up, Caroline. Or you'll be making a run for it sooner than you think. Maybe Nik wouldn't be doing the same for me, but it's a little late to be weighing the scales, don't you think? He left me with that crazed pastor. He was the biggest bastard you could dream up. But I don't remember him ever letting me die. He's left me in danger, yes, he's abandoned me; he's threatened me. But I have never been in the position he's in right now. He has never let me die.

I don't even know if he'd be doing this for Elijah, to be quite honest. Elijah, who has stood by him longer than any of us. Well, whom he's allowed to stand by him for longer than any of us. That's Niklaus. And he's been like that since he got a taste of power after we were turned. That's our family. And it's fucking pathetic.

This is insurance," she said, waving the bloody knife. "And you're gonna tell me everything I need to know to figure out how to get the hell out of that pathetic mess. Because if we're getting picked off, then it's definitely time for me to distance myself from the mighty Mikaelsons."
Jeremy insisted on going to see Elijah with Elena, of course, but she succeeded in getting him to stay behind. She told him to go to school and tell Bonnie that Elijah and Rebekah were in town. She figured that he was going to tell her anyway, so there was no harm in suggesting it. At the same time that he left, she set off for Klaus' mansion in her car.

When she arrived at the residence, she was greeted at the front door by a woman whom she's never seen before. She asked for Elijah and was made to wait, and then she was led to the sitting room. She passed many more people on the way.

She was let into the sitting room, and the door was closed behind her.

"You came with an army," she remarked as she walked to him.

"War has been declared," Elijah said, dressed in his trademark luxury suit.

Elena suddenly picked up her speed, pulled out the knife she'd tucked into the waistband of her pants, and stabbed him in the heart.

She counted on the fact that he was used to her as a human. One bombshell reveal that she was a vampire wouldn't change what he'd been hardwired to think. She was the fragile human whom his brother had sacrificed.

He would at last need to see her in action as a vampire first before his perception changed.

And he just did.

Elijah yelled in shock and pain when she forced the knife past flesh and bone and into his heart.

"That's for Jeremy and Caroline."

The door burst open and two vampires were on her in seconds, dragging her back and slamming her on the floor.

"Get off me," she gritted. "He said hello, so I said hello back."

"Leave her," Elijah struggled after he pulled the knife out and dropped it on the floor, annoyed at the pain that he was feeling. "Leave us," he said.

"Are you sure?" the woman who'd answered the door asked.

"Yes," he strained, bended on one knee. "Leave us."

The pain ebbed as the wound closed.

The vampires unhanded Elena but not without a nasty look. They left and closed the door behind them.

"Rebekah was unruly," he guessed.

"You think? She stabbed Caroline and Jeremy."

"I told her to use force only if necessary."

"And you didn't think she'd just decide it was necessary? She tried to sell this bullshit of wanting to trick Jeremy, but I know better."
"I did consider that she might go rogue. I accepted the possibility of unnecessary damages," he said as he slowly stood and tucked his hands in his pockets.

"Of course," Elena sneered. "You're lucky it was us and not Bonnie, or else she might be ash."

"No one will talk to Bonnie except me."

"And what will you say?" she asked warily.

"Sit," he said, extending his hand toward the chair closest to him "There is a lot that I don't know. A lot that only you can tell me. But first I needed to apprehend the weapon that can be used against me."

Elena walked to the chair that was offered and sat. Crossing her long, slender legs, she changed moods. It would do her no good to deal with Elijah Mikaelson while angry. Leaning on the armchair, she casually said, "You're on the clock, you know."

"How so?" Elijah asked as he sat on the couch opposite her.

"Bonnie's gonna ask Silas to bring Damon back to life. Caroline's intel. So my problem is pretty much worked out. Yours, on the other hand,.....Silas doesn't strike me as magnanimous. He'll give Bonnie what she wants, if He gives her what she wants, because she has something He wants: life."

"Start from the beginning," Elijah directed calmly. "Why does He want her?"

"So any ideas about how you plan to get away from your dysfunctional family?" Caroline asked as she exited the car.

She noted that Matt's car was gone and was thankful.

"No ideas yet," Rebekah lied. One was kind of forming, especially after what Caroline had told her. She'd woken up to one giant mess.

"I can't imagine your declaration of independence will go over well, especially if Klaus comes back."

"When Klaus comes back. And that's why I need the perfect plan."

"Well, if it's a matter of when and not if, then you're already running out of time."

They arrived in front of Matt's door.

"Well?" Rebekah asked, her tone bordering on impatience.

Caroline wanted to say that she didn't have a key but of course that was stupid. She turned the door handle until she broke it. Then she pushed the lock through the hole. She pushed the door open, but only got so far. She looked up at the second lock. She'd expected it. She shoved her body against the door and broke the chain.

"Happy trails," Rebekah wished.

"It'll be easier to just text him," Caroline said as she pulled out her phone.

"No, Caroline, just look for it."

"Are you serious?" she asked, her fingers paused on the phone. "That's an order?"
"It is."

Caroline sighed and put the phone away. "Efficiency is not in your arsenal of evil."

Rebekah looked on as Caroline began to speed around the house, bored of the latter's insolence.

"Tell me you didn't tell Caroline of our alliance," Elijah said after Elena finished.

"I did. She's very freaked out about dying, and you have people, so why can't I have people, too? But no one else knows."

"I'm not familiar with Caroline."

"She's loyal."

"To Bonnie. And you. And Bonnie."

"Bonnie stole her boyfriend."

Elijah, for all of the centuries under his belt, failed to get what that had to do with his point.

"Bonnie ruined her relationship, so she's pissed at her," Elena explained when Elijah opened his hand in confusion.

"She's pissed at her," he repeated, like he was trying out a foreign language. "Pissed. Anger doesn't beget disloyalty, Elena," he said, allowing the irritation he felt to color his voice. "Niklaus stuck Rebekah in a box for 90 years, and she's-"

"You don't know our dynamic. We may not be on Mikaelson level, I doubt many people are, even the supernatural ones, but we have dysfunction, too. Wow, I can't believe I just said that out loud. Bonnie's different. She's changed. And Caroline was the first to get a taste of it. And it's left her bitter. Bonnie's….more confident. She takes up more room. She's arrogant and not like before when she was scared arrogant, but like….legitimately arrogant."

"And?" Elijah asked as he observed her.

"I don't know what that means. Damon's ego has been center stage for so many years now. I can't imagine Bonnie's being in the spotlight, too. They're not gonna get along. It's not gonna work. Damon doesn't share. And I don't know if Bonnie does anymore either. That's why I'm here: because she only plans to save Damon. Again, that won't work. Damon needs Stefan and vice versa. I need Stefan. He has so many things to work out. He doesn't deserve to be dead.

We need numbers, Elijah. If Bonnie's gonna be...like this, then we need numbers. Allies."

"You against Bonnie Bennett," Elijah commented. "I never thought I'd see the day."

"She killed Kol, and then she and Tyler killed Klaus. I doubt they want to stop there, especially knowing you might retaliate. She doesn't care about Damon or Stefan. I'm positive Tyler wants to kill Rebekah. You do realize his poison would've killed her if she wasn't an Original? You have an army, but Bonnie just needs to reach you. And then what's your army gonna do?"

"So I'll be safe in an alliance with you?" Elijah asked, amused.

"I live in Mystic Falls. This isn't just her town; it's my town, too. She can't do whatever she wants. And our memories together will make sure of that. She's known me too long, knew my family, was
in love with my brother. My brother: another ace in the hole. Aren't memories what holds your family together, Elijah? Memories of how things were before you became vampires? Before the dysfunction started? I think that's it, more than fear of loneliness: memories. We're our own kind of family. There's love there."

"Well," Elijah said as he got up, "Then we have a problem." He tucked his hands into his pockets and left her to go stand at the fireplace. Placing his arm on the mantle, he looked at her and said, "If Bonnie's plan is to trade her life for Damon's for the sake of her mother, and Caroline, and you, then our plan needs to be to trade Bonnie's life for the same, plus Niklaus and Kol. Take the choice out of her hands."

"That's exactly what I'm thinking," Elena said with a smug smile.

"Really," Elijah said, unimpressed. "And what happens when Damon comes back to life and your feelings along with him? Because maybe Bonnie manages to escape with her life, I can only hope that she has a plan to escape and that's why she plans to turn herself in, that's what anyone worth their mettle would do. You've impressed upon me that she's a veritable threat, one who will stop at nothing to eradicate me and my family. Which means she needs to be dealt with. One way or another. I won't agree to an impasse or any other kind of agreement, because any agreement leaves room for minds to be changed. I won't put myself at a disadvantage. Never have. Never will. Niklaus won't, either, not after what's happened. Kol will be off to parts unknown, and maybe the same can be said for Rebekah. But I will not be looking over my shoulder."

Elena's smug smile had long disappeared. Gathering herself, she said as calmly as she could, "Silas isn't going to let you kill her, if that's what you're thinking."

Elijah smiled sympathetically and tucked the elongated arm back into his pocket. "Elena, you seem to….want to have your cake and eat it, too. And I understand. Like you said: there's love there. Damon has always taken care of the nasty things. Stefan, too, by my estimation. You've never had to see, never had to touch. As far as you've been concerned, all of the bad things happen in the dark. But now Stefan and Damon are gone. You are staring at the dark. What are you willing to do? You're saying all the right things and yet desperately hoping Silas will save Bonnie from me. And that she will in turn, I'm guessing, save herself from Silas."

"I'm not hoping."

"Don't insult me," he said, brown eyes hardening.

"Jeremy told me that the reason he was at the boarding house this morning is because Bonnie threatened to seal me in so I wouldn't go off murdering people in town, or murdering her," Elena said as she unfolded her lithe body from the chair and stood.

"And?" Elijah asked. "A magical seal is not a death sentence. You have many hopes, Elena, hope that Damon and Stefan will come back, hope that you'll have my family's support, and hope that Bonnie will survive. One of these does not belong. You said yourself the situation won't be sustainable: Damon and Bonnie won't get along, and Bonnie and Tyler aren't going to stop. So you need to either dash one of your hopes or two of your hopes."

Elena held herself still, knowing that she needed to say something soon.

"Or I can keep you here," Elijah threatened. "You can't leave this house unless I allow it. After everything you've told me, especially the very pertinent information about Bonnie wanting to strike a deal with Silas, I don't need you to make this work. I never needed you, just what you knew. You've given me the lay of the land.
But I *would* like to do you the favor. I *am* fond of you, Elena."

"Right. That's why you promised me you'd try to be a better man after you killed Bonnie's mother. A noble man."

"I can only be as noble as circumstances allow me to be and once again,. . . . My skewed nobility is why you reached out to me. There you go again with you wanting to have your cake and eat it, too: you want my. . . . savagery. But you also want to judge me for my actions. I didn't kill Bonnie's mother. I asked for a solution to a problem. The Salvatore brothers estimated that her death was it."

"Would you *like* a chance to kill her?" Elena asked, rising to Elijah's challenge.

Surprised, Elijah nevertheless kept his composure and inquired, "What are you talking about?"

"Bonnie's mom. You're right, Elijah. I do want to have my cake and eat it, too," she said, her voice taking on a sultry bent. "I want Bonnie to live. I could live with an indefinite impasse. I can't sanction Bonnie's death," she said, returning her voice to normal. "I just can't. I can't plan it, I don't care how far off my switch is. Maybe if it was spur of the moment. But, *I can* knock her down a peg or three," she said as she sauntered three steps forward. She crossed her arms, a smile on her face.

"You want to kill her mother," Elijah said, openly surprised. "For good."

"Bonnie still holds a grudge. I only recently found out about it. Like, last night recent," she said, remembering Bonnie's cruel words. She chose not to tell Elijah about the cure, estimating that Rebekah wouldn't have told him about it either, though she wasn't sure if Klaus had or not.

She decided that Klaus was too paranoid to have done such a thing.

But she did tell Elijah, "She let me turn into a vampire on purpose in revenge for what was done to her mother. She let Alaric die because of what happened to her mother. Because according to Caroline, any time I need to be saved, Bonnie ends up getting hurt. Bonnie never commented one way or another, but based on what she said last night, it's clear that she agrees."


He was impressed by Bonnie. She'd displayed a finesse that his entire family lacked. If any of them did something, including him, everyone knew about it. They were loud with their deceptions. But Bonnie had in one way or another taken care of Elena, Alaric, Kol, and Klaus, all while letting everyone think that she was a team player.

"I found out yesterday that she's in contact with her mother," Elena continued. "I know where she lives. Kill her, deliver the body to Bonnie's doorstep, literally, and there goes the wind beneath her wings," she said lightly.

"And Tyler? How much wind does he put under Bonnie's wings? I do believe your smile has disappeared again, Elena," he said as he took one step toward her. "What's the problem this time? Tyler's closeness to you, Tyler's closeness to Bonnie, or Tyler's closeness to Caroline?"

"Caroline," she answered. "If Tyler ends up dead, she'll know it was done to hurt Bonnie, and she'll know it was you. She'll never forgive me. Unless," she considered, cocking her head. "Unless it looked like Silas did it. It was crystal clear in the classroom that He wants to kill Tyler."

Elijah smiled the barest of smiles. "So you're willing to kill Tyler."

"I'd rather he not die. But if that's what's needed to shape Bonnie up and avoid an impasse and her
death, then yes. If it'll cripple her, he can die, too. And there's a huge detail about them that you'll find very interesting."

"Tell me."

"One thing first: when you meet with Silas, I want to be there."

"That won't be possible. I plan to be with Bonnie when I speak to Silas, and I take it you want your part in all of this to remain a secret."

"Then I'll be in the vicinity. Just to make sure you uphold your end of the deal."

"You are welcome to be my shadow. I had planned to meet her at the school, but now things have changed. I have a couple of decisions to make."

"You should know that I told Jeremy to tell her that you and Rebekah are here. He was gonna tell her anyway."

He gritted his teeth hard, a tic that signaled his frustration. "Another change," he said. "What is the information about Bonnie and Tyler?" he asked, his voice hard.

"Shit hit the fan yesterday at school-"

"Give me your phone."

"What?"

"Your phone," he repeated, holding his hand out.

"Why?"

"Because I want a picture of your brother."

"Why?"

"Because I want to give it to one of my people so that they will intercept him before he reaches Bonnie. Bonnie will not know I'm here until she sees me."

Elena took out her phone, found the most recent picture of Jeremy, one from Christmas, and gave it to Elijah. "Not a hair on his head will be touched," she said as she glared at the other vampire.

"You have my word."

Elijah walked to the door and opened it. "I'm sending a picture to your phone," he told the person on the other side. "Find this boy before he steps foot inside of Mystic Falls High School. And to make sure you don't get lost along the way, Elena will accompany you," he said, turning to the girl in question.

Elena was then able to see that he was talking to the woman who'd answered the front door.

"Fine," Elena said. "Better for me to supervise."

"Exactly," Elijah said. Turning to the woman, he said, "She won't be any trouble."

"And if she is? She stabbed you," the woman reminded him.
"She won't be," Elijah reiterated.

"I won't be," Elena said.

After a moment's silence, the woman said, "We'll need chloroform."

Elena steeled herself and experienced déjà vu to the time when she'd been chloroformed and kidnapped by Elijah's henchmen: Rose and......she didn't remember the guy's name anymore.

She followed after the woman when the latter left. She'd just walked past Elijah when he said to her, "Keep your voice down or don't talk at all. We don't want Matthew to know you're here."

Elena almost tripped on her own feet. Turning to Elijah, she couldn't keep the surprise out of her voice when she asked, "What? Matthe-You mean Matt?"

"Matt," he confirmed flatly. He hated the nickname. How base.

"Wait a second, wai-You can't do anything to him."

"That might depend on Bonnie. We'll talk when you get back."

He closed the door in her face and started thinking about the merits of his current plan and the gains and losses of amending it to fit with everything he'd learned from Elena.
Elijah stood with his feet shoulder-width apart and one hand in his pocket as he listened to Elena's phone ring. He did not pace. No matter how perturbed he was, he never paced. Pacing was not in his arsenal of self-expression.

He had to dial Elena a second time before she answered.

"Yes?" Elena greeted.

"Any ideas as to why Bonnie isn't on her way to school?"

"No?"

"I had someone drive to her house at dawn. They were supposed to follow her today and perhaps bring her in at the end of the school day, but although she did leave her house, she doesn't seem to be heading to the school."

"Bonnie doesn't share her plans with us anymore, so I have no idea where she could be going."

"To speak with Silas, perhaps?"

"We can't let that happen," Elena said gravelly.

"We can't be hasty, either. Has Jeremy been taken cared of?"

"Don't talk about him like that. He's sedated, although he put up a good fight. Your henchlady's bringing him back to Klaus' place."

"Why? Take him to your house or back to the boarding house."

"That'll be harder to explain than you kidnapping him and taking him to your place. Elijah, what are we doing about Bonnie?"

"Have Maxine take Jeremy either to your house or to the boarding house. Make sure to confiscate his cell phone. He will come out of his sedation, Elena, and I will not censor myself to placate your desire for secrecy. Speaking of, I'm bringing Bonnie in. Get here as soon as you can. You can't have your cake and eat it, too, Elena. As it turns out, there's no need to kill Bonnie's mother and Tyler just yet. There is a far easier way to break her."

Bonnie sat in her car at the entrance to the woods and waited for Kim. The road ended here, and the rest of the way to the house needed to be made on foot.

In the meantime, she called her mother and filled her in on her conversation with Clermeil, what she and Tyler thought Silas' masterplan was, and her solution to Damon's death. What she didn't share with Abby was her bad feeling.

Abby didn't put up a fight over her plan to appeal to Silas, seeming to have something heavy on her mind, too.

"I love you," Bonnie said pensively and for the first time.

"I love you, too," Abby responded softly, touched. "Bonnie, are you okay? You sound off. I got
Tyler's video, and...you looked so beautiful."

"I'm okay. I'm not sure," she then answered honestly. "But I promise to fill you in when I figure it out."

"Okay. Good luck with the spirits. I love you," Abby said, nervous about what Bonnie's reaction to her saying the words first might be.

"I love you, too," Bonnie responded with a small smile.

They hung up, and Bonnie blinked slowly as she thought. Lucy was doing marginally better. She'd made a magic jar for herself late last night, per Abby's suggestion, so the psychic poison was being pulled out of her.

Three knocks sounded on the left backseat window, and Bonnie turned in her seat to see who it was.

"I figure it was better to stop and knock than risk being, I don't know, flung against a tree or something," Kim said as she walked up to Bonnie's window.

Bonnie smiled, reserved. "I'm glad you learned your lesson," she said, opening the door.

"Looking for an address while running is not easy."

"Why didn't you drive?" she asked while exiting the car. She walked around to the passenger seat and grabbed her bag, and then she locked the car.

"Because that's not inconspicuous," Kim said. "I figured I'd just ride with you."

"Kim," she hesitated, retracing her steps and stopping at the front of the car. "I'm actually not sure you should be here," she said, one of her hands fisted around the messenger bag's strap.

"What do you mean?" Kim asked, frowning.

"Exactly what I said. Something's....wrong," she exhaled. "Something bad. I feel like something bad's gonna happen, and that feeling hasn't gone away, and I'm gonna do a spell to divine what it is, but no matter what it turns out to be I know it's not gonna be good news. The last time I felt like this, someone died. My teacher died, and....I don't want that to be you. That can't be you."

Her frown still in place, Kim slowly said, "Tyler told me to watch you."

"I know, but I'm saying you should go. If anything happens to me, if the something bad is all about me, which.....there's enough reason for it to be, I mean Elena threatened me yesterday, Silas wants to kill me, and Elijah and Rebekah, well, they want to kill me, too. So it could be all about me. In which case, I don't want you to get caught in the crossfire."

"The air stinks," Kim said.

"Meaning....?" Bonnie asked, shaking her head.

"Meaning it stinks, like literally. And not like stinks like rotten eggs or anything like that, but it's like....there's something in the air. I actually stopped a couple of times on my way here to try to figure out what it is, but I can't put my finger on it. No surprise, this has only happened once before. The last time the air smelled this....oppressive....some guy named Klaus killed me and turned me into a Hybrid."

"Oh," Bonnie said, her voice a pitch higher. "Great. Thanks for telling me that, then, I'll be going the
rest of the way by myself," she said, and she turned to head into the woods.

"Bonnie, I'm not going anywhere," Kim insisted.

Bonnie stopped walking and tightened her lips in frustration. Facing the Beta, she said, "Kim? I promise that I'm gonna do whatever necessary to make sure I live so that Tyler doesn't become a bad Alpha. Okay?" she asked with a sudden plastic smile.

"Oh," Kim said. "Wow. Uh. Okay. Great. Not only is this gonna be a dangerous….day, …..probably,…..but it's gonna be an awkward one, too."

"Go join Adrian," Bonnie said sincerely, and then she resumed her way to the house. When she heard Kim following behind her, she blinked and continued walking.

Kim caught up to her, and they walked side by side. Kim moved her dark brown eyes up, down, to the left without looking specifically at the witch beside her, and to the right, all while trying to figure out something to say. She didn't feel caught, per se, or sorry, even. Because was there something to be sorry about? Her and Adrian's concerns were legitimate. But she didn't want this to be a silent day. She also didn't want Bonnie to feel….bad.

"Tyler said you're not good at accepting help," she said to break the silence.

"I've never really had it, but I'm realizing that one of the upsides is that I never had to worry about people dying. They did anyway, die, I mean, but….they didn't hand themselves over to death. Which is exactly what you're doing by sticking with me."

"And if I happen to save you?" Kim asked. "Not for Tyler, but just….to save you? Then what?"

Bonnie gave her a sidelong glance. She wasn't going to entertain her obvious attempt at being difficult.

They walked in silence for a while more, and then Kim felt the need to break the silence again. "It's not personal. What we said? It's not personal."

Bonnie stopped walking, and Kim, having gotten a little ahead of her, turned to face her.

"Tyler and I went through….an amazing ritual to be mated. Before that we had a bond. I'm his Mate. But you guys saying that I shouldn't be isn't personal?"

Kim dropped her shoulders and sighed, conceding to her point. "I wish we could have it both ways. I wish Tyler marking you was just like him marking a human or another werewolf, but it isn't. It's dangerous."

"I know that," Bonnie said. "I realized after it happened that we made a mistake. I'm supposed to die. I was so….in the moment with him, and so happy to see him, and so in love with him that I forgot I was a dead girl. I reminded him afterward, and he didn't care. He's hopeful. He knows the risk, and he thinks it's worth it for me. If I make it through this, there will be something else. That's my world. That's my place in this whole thing. I like being a witch, and after a very long time it's actually starting to feel good again, despite what's coming."

Tyler thinks it's worth it. He thinks I'm worth it. He thinks his happiness is worth it. And I wanted to talk to you and Adrian at the same time, but I think it's completely unfair for you guys to be so….demanding of someone that up until a couple of months ago you didn't give a crap about. Right? Up until he promised to free you from Klaus, you didn't care about him. But now you want to dictate his happiness?"
"Not dictate," Kim said, barely moving her mouth. "Just….I don't even really know what we want. Obviously what's done can't be undone."

"But you wish it could be," Bonnie guessed.

"I wish….that we could have it all, like I said before."

"What you're asking isn't fair. You haven't known Tyler nearly long enough to be dictating how he should be living his life or to be making him feel bad about a choice he made. He is a good Alpha. And I'm not gonna let you guys make him feel like he isn't or that he's failing."

Kim moved her mouth, but she couldn't say anything. She was surprised by Bonnie's revelation that Tyler felt like a failure.

"He's not just an Alpha, Kim," Bonnie said softly. "He's a whole person. He doesn't just belong to you guys, he's a whole person. Treat him like one?"

Bonnie readjusted her bag and walked around Kim to continue towards the house.

Kim stood with her shoulders slumped, wishing the situation was easier.

"What exactly are we doing here?" Kim asked when they came out of the woods. "Tyler said we'd be going after a headstone."

"We're gonna do that but first I need to give the spirits a message, one that I hope they'll spread. Uh," Bonnie began as they commenced walking toward the old colonial house. "I waited for you outside the woods for a reason. One time I walked in there with a vampire, and one of my ancestors cancelled his daylight ring and made him burn in the sun. It was Damon Salvatore, the guy who just died, so….it was understandable. Then another time, they let Stefan Salvatore hole in there without touching him, but that's probably because they wanted Esther out so she could kill Klaus and his siblings. I know as a Hybrid you don't need a ring, but…."

"Are you telling me I might get hurt in there?" Kim asked as she stopped walking.

Bonnie folded her lips and lifted her shoulders. "Maybe? That's why I want you to walk in with me, just in case."

"Walking in with you didn't help Damon Salvatore."

"Damon Salvatore was a bad person."

Kim half turned to the house and eyed it warily. "Uh. Maybe I'll just wait for you outside."

Bonnie sighed. "I don't want you to be scared."

"Except I am. You couldn't be one of Klaus' Hybrids without doing a couple of bad things, so. I'm probably primed to get burned by the sun, Hybrid or not," she said quietly as she turned fully to contemplate the house.

Bonnie thought of Tyler and the times he'd bitten Caroline and almost gotten Jeremy killed. And maybe there were other incidents he hadn't told her about yet. Klaus had been all about forcing the Hybrids to do what he wanted, and he hadn't wanted anything that could be called good.

"I'll be in the basement," Bonnie said. "You might hear some scary stuff in there, but….you decide if you wanna come in or not. Most of the time it's fine. The spirits aren't a fluffy bunch, so scary is
expected."

Kim raised her brows, though her attention stayed on the house.

With a parting sympathetic look at the contemplative Hybrid, Bonnie continued on.

The house was dark as usual when she walked in. "Incendia," she commanded quietly, and all of the torches from where she stood to the ones down in the basement lit up.

Outside, Kim sat on the grass, closed her eyes, and listened to Bonnie's footsteps.

Bonnie arrived in the basement, took off her messenger bag and set it aside. She then gracefully slid to her knees. The house was very quiet, though not creepily so. It's been that way since she'd closed the door to the OtherSide the night she'd seen Sheila for the first time since her death.

She chose to believe the spirits were off contemplating why they'd let Damon kill her mother without laying a single hand on him before, during, or after.

Closing her eyes, she brought her hands together in supplication.

She was conscious of the fact that she's never connected to the spirit world like this before. She has never reached out just to talk, just to get a word out.

"I seek an audience with the spirit world," she announced.

The house stayed quiet. She didn't let that deter her. There was energy here, energy from the witches' massacre. Here, she didn't need candles, spells, or a ouija board to connect with the spirit world. In this house, the spirit world merged with the living world, and separated itself, and merged again, a marker of the witches' sacrifice.

She just needed to say the right words to merge the worlds.

"I have a message. A very important message. The Spirit-blessed lines are in danger, and a God walks the earth again. The God Silas wants to kill all of the Spirit lines."

The flames on the torches flared, but before she could feel relief at establishing contact, the temperature in the house dropped very dramatically, very fast.

She opened her eyes in surprise, and when she exhaled, she saw her breath escape. "Oh my God," she croaked, hugging herself as she shivered.

Outside, Kim stood and listened.

Inside, an icy specter brushed Bonnie's cheek, making her flinch in surprise. Another, or perhaps the same, brushed over her knuckles. The room filled with questioning whispers. They pressed against the walls, the windows, the floorboard, the ceiling. They pressed against the cracks, nooks, and crannies. They pressed against her ears.

She couldn't understand what was being said, but they were excited, and they were flooding the house with their excitement.

She'd brought juicy gossip.

Shaking, she wished the torches weren't completely useless at the moment.

"I want to stop Him," she said, half successful at keeping the tremor out of her voice. "I want to stop
Silas. I want to save the Spirit lines. I want to warn them. I want to know how many there are. I-I want to get the word out. Where are they? Who are they?"

She looked at the dusty windows that usually let slivers of light in and saw that they were iced over. "Oh my God," she groaned, squeezing her fingers into fists to get the blood flowing through them. "Help me….save them. That's it, that's all I've got," she said quickly, wanting to get away from the cold, almost begging with the words.

Instead of the spirits retreating and taking their world with them, she was suddenly pushed onto her back and dragged along the dusty floor and up the wall behind her.

She yelled and cursed in surprise. She kicked, but she was held firm. The whispers intensified, almost outraged at first and then definitely outraged.

Outside, Kim ran to the door, first at normal speed, and then she ramped it up. She hesitated at the threshold, hesitated a second more in confusion when the cold hit her face, and then she ran in.

There was being told that Bonnie would be in the basement and then there was finding the basement. She turned hallway after hallway, looking for the stairs to the basement, using Bonnie's screams to guide her, and then she found them, ran down, and burst into the room.

When she saw the scene, she wondered how the hell she was going to get Bonnie down. Bonnie was damn near on the ceiling.

And suddenly she wasn't. Bonnie was falling. Whoever or whatever had held her had let go. Kim gasped and sped forward to catch her.

Bonnie was, of course, falling straight down, legs first. Cursing and thinking quickly, Kim tapped into her wolf and shifted. She sped to the wall on her right and once she was near Bonnie, she ran up the wall and used her dominant leg to propel herself off and super leap toward Bonnie to catch her at an angle. She snatched her off course and aimed to be the one to land on the hardwood floor instead of Bonnie.

Bonnie was jostled as she landed on top of Kim, and then rolled onto the floor, and then rolled on top of Kim again, her arms caught at an awkward angle.

Kim let her go, and Bonnie stayed on top, eyes wide, trying to figure out what the hell just happened.

Bonnie planted both of her hands one by one on the dirty floor and lifted herself to look down at Kim. "Are you crazy? That was so…."

"Dangerous? Jesus Christ, I could've broken your neck. I didn't even hold your head."

"We're all learning," Bonnie reasoned amiably.

Kim cocked her head on the floor, looking at her like she'd lost her mind.

Bonnie folded her lips to keep from smiling, and she got off of her and sat. "Oh my God," she said, holding her head as the blood rushed down.

"Is this the scary you were talking about?" Kim asked.

"Uh, kind of. Now that I can actually think,….I think that was pastor Young."

"Who?"
"Long story. No other spirit has issues with me. No spirit has ever had issues with me. He must be bitter. He's the father of this girl who's working for Silas. She hopes He'll kill me so that He can have the power to resurrect her father."

"And we're just letting her walk around?" Kim asked.  

"A couple of people have talked about killing her, Tyler and my mom included. She's protected by Silas. Besides, I made her a promise, and I intend to keep it."

Kim heaved herself off the floor and sat.

Bonnie noticed then that the room wasn't freezing anymore. "The spirits were definitely interested in what I had to say. I just hope they actually tell the Spirit lines. Silas wants to kill them all."

"I heard," Kim said, even though she didn't know the whole story.

"On to the next thing," Bonnie said, switching gears. "I want to do a divination," she reminded Kim as she stood and walked to her bag. "I want to ask for a sign, or otherwise find out what exactly is coming. There are too many options. Last night Tyler and I came across a random vampire, or...a random vampire found us," she explained as she took out the three candles. "Except in Mystic Falls, no vampire is ever random. We're thinking he's connected to Elijah."

"Great," Kim said dryly. "I wish there were more of us. I'm with you; Adrian's with Carol; Tyler's recuperating. There should be some of us scouring town for signs of Rebekah and Elijah. We're stretched too thin."

Bonnie knew Kim was right. Lucy was mostly out of commission, which meant she couldn't contact Qetsiyah or summon the other Hunters.

"Let's try to find out what's coming," she said as she lined the three candles in front of her. Striking on an idea, she retrieved Emily's Grimoire.

She kneeled and placed it in front of her. She swiped her hand over the candle wicks and three flames blinked into existence.

"We're gonna do a revealing spell," she explained to Kim. "You can come closer if you want."

Kim got up and came over. She kneeled and rested her butt on her calves.

"You're in the house and nothing's happened to you," Bonnie noticed with a small smile. Kim smiled. The possibility of being judged as a bad apple by a bunch of spirits hadn't exactly made her feel great. But apparently she was just fine. She'd gone through enough with Klaus without then being punished for it.

Bonnie ran her left hand over the front cover of the Grimoire, and then she lifted the hand and let it hover over the book.


She felt magic seep out of her and envelop the book. The front cover opened, and the pages turned and turned, turned and turned, until the end of the book was reached and the back cover flipped closed.
Bonnie lowered her hand to pick up the book. She opened the front cover, and the first page, usually inscribed with Emily's name, was empty. She flipped and flipped, and the pages were empty.

Relieved, she put the book down and held both hands above it. Using her innate locator power, she searched for what had been created as a result of her spell. She searched for the letters that were now arranged to divine the source of her ominous feeling.

Her magic waned, and the pages stopped flipping, and she lowered her hands.

Emily's narrow cursive had been rearranged to tell her quite a bit. But her eyes automatically went to the two words that were most familiar.

Elena

Caroline

The words were arranged in a list, and Elena and Caroline's names were on it, and she didn't know why. Well, she had a feeling where Elena was concerned. The girl had threatened her the night before.

"I knew you were gonna be trouble," she murmured about Elena. "Elijah and Rebekah are on here."

"Of course," Kim said. "Tyler needs to know this. He needs to know about your bad feeling and the air reeking."

"My friends are on here, too," Bonnie continued. "Elena and Caroline. I guess this thing's telling me about all the signs. Caroline hates me for being with Tyler. Silas isn't on here. Capernaum is. I have no idea who Aja is."

She picked up the book to read the words that were above the list, the title, in a way. The theme.

"Convergence of bad energies."

She exhaled slowly and set the book down. "Bad energies, plural. The i-e-s are even written bigger than the other letters. All of these people have something against me or want something from me. They're all coming for me."

"Except for Aja," Kim said. "You don't know who she is."

Bonnie switched from sitting on her calves to sitting on her butt. "One of Elijah's vampires?" she posited quietly while staring at the book.

"You're not okay," Kim stated.

"I can't be. The bad feeling is about me. The stinky air is about me. My cousin had a vision of me dying, and now....maybe I'm finally feeling it. Maybe the bad feeling is me finally predicting my own death," she said, the edges of her eyes blurring.

"We're not gonna let that happen," Kim assured her. "Not me. Not Adrian. Not Tyler. Not your family."

"I don't know if I can escape all these people."

"You're not alone," Kim reminded her. She reached over the burning candles and covered Bonnie's hand and squeezed it. She did her best to give her an encouraging smile.
Bonnie smiled, appreciating the gesture. She looked up at the ceiling and blinked the tears away. She took a steadying breath.

"Okay, next thing. We need to go to Whitmore. That's where we're gonna get the headstone."

She blew out each of the candles and closed the book. It should be back to normal the next time she opened it.

She stuffed it in her bag and happened to look at the row of small windows. They were still iced over. More than that, however, one of them had a very clear handprint on it.

Bonnie stood to see it better and winced in surprise when she did so.

"What?" Kim asked.

"Nothing," she answered. Soreness from the previous night was starting to set in her thighs as well as her vulva. It felt kind of great. Unfortunately, it wasn't the right time to enjoy the feeling.

She looked at the windows, and all were frozen blank except for the one that had a very clear indentation.

She lowered her eyes, wondering if it was a remnant of pastor Young's anger or something else.

"What is that?" Kim asked as she stood and focused on the handprint.

"Five," Bonnie said suddenly. She turned to Kim and smiled, excited. "Five. I asked the spirits how many lines there are. There are five; that has to be it. It's an answer."

A small frown appeared on her forehead as she mulled the revelation over. "Five Spirit lines, five swords, five Hunters. I wonder if it's all related."

She packed up the candles and slung the bag over her shoulder. "Let's go. I'll call my mom on the way."

They went upstairs, and Bonnie chanted a spell to snuff the fires.

And they stepped out into the morning sun.
"It's like this is a brand new day but in the worst way," Bonnie said as she and Kim approached the car. "Last night was something completely different. Last night felt like things were looking up, which is probably weird. But I was completely in the moment. I was happy. I was hopeful. I knew it couldn't last, but I hadn't expected to wake up feeling like this."

She pressed the button to unlock the vehicle.

"Speaking of Tyler, I'm calling him to let him know what's happening," Kim said as she pulled out her phone. "He's not gonna smell the air until he steps outside. I didn't."

Before Kim could dial Tyler and find out that her phone couldn't make any outgoing calls, the device was stolen from her hand.

She turned in the direction of the theft, and Bonnie followed her lead.

Standing in front of them was a White woman, brunette, who looked like she could bench press another full-grown human being.

She was as old as Caroline's mother and was deceptively carefree when she spoke. "I was so looking forward to you finding out that all the tires are slashed and slashed badly," she tsked.

Neither Kim nor Bonnie looked at the car for confirmation. Bonnie dropped her bag.

"But you ruined it," the woman said to Kim.

"Are you Aja?" Bonnie asked, the corners of her mouth tight.

"No."

Alert now, Kim picked up on something coming to her left. Bonnie was on her left. And the something was coming fast. She ran behind Bonnie and shifted, heading to her left, and she collided with the oncoming vampire.

The sudden move temporarily distracted Bonnie, and the woman seized the opportunity, dropped Kim's phone, and ran at her.

Bonnie fixed her attention in time to raise her hand and push her back.

"Bonnie, it's an ambush!" Kim yelled.

Bonnie turned in time to catch a man coming behind her, and she lashed her arm out and arched it over her head to send him in a heap next to the woman. Better for her to pile them where she could see them.

It was an ambush, but she had no idea how many there were or where they were, and it now sounded like Kim was fighting two vampires.

The two she was dealing with were up and coming at her, and she was using two hands to hold them back and trying to remember a spell, any spell.

She heard Kim scream in agony and although her heart sank, she didn't let it distract her. It was then that she remembered the spell she'd once casted on two Hybrids.
"Liga, alligat, nisul!" she commanded.

The running vampires collided into each other then. Face to face, they pushed at each to disengage, unaware that they were bound to become one.

Bonnie ran for Kim, but she didn't make it far before she was tackled from the side by a third vampire and landed hard on her left shoulder. She cried out but kept her concentration.

The woman got off of her, same age as the other; they all looked the same human age. She yanked Bonnie to a sitting position and put something over her nose and mouth, squeezing hard enough to threaten to break Bonnie's nose.

Bonnie brought fire to her hands and grabbed the hand covering her nose. The vampire groaned but held strong. Bonnie smacked her other fiery hand on the vampire's head while she struggled against her. The cloth over her nose had a strange smell, and she realized what it was meant to do.

She upped the ante and intensified her power, her eyes turning in the process.

Her vision was starting to fade, but she didn't mistake the newcomer who was calmly walking toward her.

Her eyes widened in surprise, and she struggled harder. The vampire behind her was screaming, but they weren't letting go, ready to undergo gross bodily harm to do what needed to be done, and that pissed Bonnie off. But she was losing the strength to do anything about it, which meant her fires were going down in intensity.

Before her, Elijah smiled.

Everything went pitch black, and she was ignorant to the world. Her hearing gave out last, and she was comforted by the sound of a powerful werewolf. Kim, at least, was standing her ground.

Elijah searched through Bonnie's bag, then slung it across his suit. He bent down and scooped Bonnie up. "Capture the wolf," he told the former amateur bodybuilder. "I'll be taking your car."

The woman nodded. Elijah turned his attention down to the man who had chloroformed Bonnie, the one whom a majority of his white, squishy scalp could be seen through his burned hair, the one who was still screaming as he willed his body to heal.

"Heal him first," Elijah said to the bodybuilder, although he had a strong feeling that it wouldn't work, if Elena's cheek was any indication. "Thank you," he said to the injured vampire. "You will be handsomely compensated."

Finished, he took the bodybuilder's keys and headed to her car.

Bonnie slowly came to. The reverse happened this time: she could hear before she had enough wherewithal to open her eyes. She became aware of other people in the room.

When she opened her eyes and lifted her head, there was Elijah, seated on the chair across from the coffee table that separated them, and there was another vampire standing by the fireplace, one who had not been a part of the ambush.

"You're awake," Elijah observed.

As soon as the words were out of his mouth, an agonized scream filled the room. Bonnie's heart
seized, and she looked down at the coffee table. A vampire was feeding on Matt.

She lunged for the laptop, falling from the chair to her knees, her movements clumsy, her body groggy from the chloroform.

Angry, she fixed hard green eyes on Elijah.

"This is two-way," he explained. "They can hear us. Do anything to me or to her," he explained, referring to Maxine, the vampire who'd drugged Jeremy, "and Matt Donovan dies."

"We don't want that, Bonnie," said a very familiar voice behind her.

Bonnie turned to the familiar voice. And she couldn't understand why she was looking at Elena.

"We really don't want that," Elena said worriedly as she came around to stand next to Elijah.

"What are you—what are you doing? What—what?"

Elena blinked, worry steadily etched on her face.

Matt screamed again, and Bonnie tightened her hands on the laptop. "Stop it, stop, leave him alone. Leave him alone."

"Bonnie?" Matt asked groggily.

"Matt, it's gonna be okay," she promised, her heart heavy as a boulder. She looked up at Elena, and she tried to understand. "What are you doing?"

"I want Damon and Stefan back. He's gonna give them to me."

Bonnie stared at her. "I'm gonna give them to you," she said, confused.

"You were going to talk to Silas, yes. That's what Caroline told us," Elijah said calmly.

Bonnie slowly turned her eyes to him, dumbfounded. "Caroline…” And then she shook her head. "No. She didn't."

"She told me," Elena said. "I relayed the information."

"No," Bonnie said, shock numbing her fingers. "No. No. You didn't do this. You didn't do this."

"I can't trust you anymore," Elena said.

Bonnie tried to breathe as the numbness spread from her fingers to her whole body. "You," she tried as her eyes teared up. "You gave me to him? You-"

Her throat tightened painfully.

"You sold me out? You sold me out?"

Elena stared, her eyes a blend of sympathy and ice.

Bonnie shook her head in denial, but her face started to crumble the more she stared at Elena, the more Elena failed to defend herself against the accusation. "Elena," she tried.

"You've been doing what's best for you, and I'm doing what's best for me."
"What's best," she tried. Her throat hurt so much. "You didn't do this. You guys….You didn't do this," she said, her voice trembling. "You didn't do this to me. You guys....."

"I want Damon and Stefan back, and I want Matt to live, and you can make all of that happen," Elena said.

"You gave them Matt," Bonnie breathed, her forehead tight, her body's temperature rising.

"I didn't," Elena said. "As you can imagine, Elijah isn't exactly the perfect partner. I didn't know he'd taken Matt. But I did call him here to help, and he's going to."

Bonnie squeezed her eyes closed, and a stream of tears fell down her cheeks. "He killed my mom, Elena," she whispered, her voice shaking. She opened her eyes and looked at Elena, wondering if that meant anything to her.

"Damon killed your mom," Elena said. "Remember? I thought that was your battle cry. Damon and Stefan killed your mom."

"You sold me out, you-"

She couldn't finish.

"I didn't want to, Bonnie," Elena said.

Bonnie shook her head, rejecting the inevitability in Elena's tone.

"I really didn't want to," Elena continued. "But I felt like you couldn't help me, and I felt like it wasn't important to you-"

"So you gave me to him," Bonnie said, a sob jolting her.

"After what you said to me last night? I was never gonna get you to bring both Damon and Stefan."

"I can kill your mother, if you want," Elijah said. "Elena told me you've been in contact with her. She also told me where she lives."

Fear gripped Bonnie, and she trembled uncontrollably.

"You took things too far, Bon," Elena said sympathetically. "You shut all of us out."

Bonnie closed her eyes and shook her head. "Is this the switch? Hmm? Am I supposed to believe this is the switch, too?"

"If you'd made better choices, Damon would still be here," Elena said.

"Better choices? Like the ones I've made for you time and time again?"

"That's not what's happening now," Elena said.

Bonnie's mouth hung open as she absorbed the blow, her body still shaking. She tried to say something, but she couldn't emit a sound.

Elijah leaned forward on the chair. "I want you to summon Silas, just like you'd planned. You are going to summon Silas. And you're going to ask Him to bring Niklaus, Kol, Damon, and Stefan back."
She heard the collision of fangs and skin and the skin giving way as the vampire bit Matt again. She closed her eyes and flinched against the noise.

"Silas can't bring anyone back," she spat as she lifted her head and opened her eyes. She tried not to look at Matt, and she failed. "They're gonna kill him," she said to the screen. "Do you care?" she asked Elena.

"I do. And I want you to save him by doing exactly what he's asking," Elena said, indicating Elijah with her head.

"You betrayed me for Damon," she said, her voice and her face breaking again. "He can hear us, you know," she said of Matt. "He can hear you. Elena. What is he gonna think when he gets out of here?" she asked.

"He's been compelled to think my voice is Rebekah's," Elena explained calmly.

Bonnie was speechless.

"Summon Silas," Elijah said.

"He can't bring anyone back until He has His full powers," Bonnie said slowly, shaking. "He is useless right now."

"So how were you gonna barter for Damon's life?" Elijah asked, cocking his head.

Bonnie closed her mouth.

"I hear you're the key to Silas' release," Elijah said. "That must mean that you were going to turn yourself in to Him. To save your mother."

Bonnie's shaking ratcheted up at the mention of Abby. "You don't have my mother."

"We won't harm her for now," Elena said. "But you were willing to sacrifice Damon and Stefan, and I'm willing to sacrifice her."

Bonnie stared at her, hurt etching into her pores, forcing its way in and threatening to suffocate her. "You betrayed me for Damon after all I've-"

Her voice was painfully small. "I'm...I'm going to kill you," she said. She said it before she could even fully think it. It was as if her mind had shut down to any other possibility. "I'm going to kill you, Elena," she trembled.

"Not if you hope to save your mother, Matt, and Tyler," Elijah said. "I examined the Mark on your neck while you were unconscious. I'm a little familiar with werewolf lore. If you make any attempt to contact Tyler, he will die in the same manner as his Beta."

Just like that, Bonnie's shaking stopped.

Matt screamed again, and Bonnie slammed the laptop shut. She moved it closer to her, unconsciously trying to find something to hold on to, something to anchor her, something to comfort her. She stared at the laptop's cover but didn't focus on anything.

Kim was dead.

It was just her and Elijah now. Elena had told her to summon Silas, save Matt, and she'd left.
This was all her fault. That was what she was supposed to believe. That was what she mulled over as she sat cross-legged on Klaus' couch. She'd turned from the others, dared to keep them at arm's length, dared to tell them they didn't matter, and now she was no good. She was no good, which was why Elena was so willing to kill her mother, and hurt Matt, and sell her out.

She was no good. She was no good. She was no good.

She was more useful….in Elijah's hands.

She was worthless. As….she wasn't really sure what she was….but as she was now, as she'd been since she'd made the decision to find the cure for her mother and not Elena, as she was now, she had no value to them. Not to Elena, not to Caroline. So they'd sold her out. Given her to Elijah. Given her to Silas. Given her to whoever could get them what they wanted.

The reality suffocated her spirit. She couldn't believe it from Caroline. Despite the words they'd exchanged over Tyler, and the blows they'd exchanged, she couldn't believe it.

She'd changed things. She had. She'd changed the group's status quo, dared to flip it.

What she'd done-

She hadn't done anything. She's only been trying to survive after so long of making sure others survived. She'd only started to live.

She'd promised her father that she would fight. She'd promised before he'd left. He'd only left because she'd promised.

But she found it so hard to keep the promise now. How was she supposed to fight? How was she supposed to get out? Her spirit laid dead on the carpet in front of her.

Kim was dead.

Tyler would never come back from it.

She's supposed to be better than she was before, a brand new Bonnie, someone who had hope, someone who fought, like she'd promised her dad, like she'd promised Tyler.

But Elijah was staring at her, and she couldn't bring herself to look him in the eyes.

Her childhood best friend had decided that she was worth more dead. She was worth more as a commodity to be traded for four serial killers.

She wanted to be better right now. She wanted to be stronger. But she couldn't bring herself to be.

She was failing completely and that fact only disheartened her more. A fraud. She was a fraud. All of her words to Tyler, the way she'd been with her family, all of it. It had all been a lie.

Here she was again. The same girl who'd begun a spell to stop her own heart.

For Elena.

Here she was, broken.

"Silas may be hurt, but you need to contact Him before He contacts you," Elijah said. "You need to contact the witch."
"Here?" she asked, her eyes on the expensive rug, her eyes on the girl she'd tried to be.

Elijah didn't say anything, but then neither did she, so he leaned forward and said, "There is nowhere else, Bonnie."

"I don't know who this witch is. I have nothing that belongs to her. My plan was to-was to summon her inside of Silas' apartment, because I'm sure she's been in there," she said, her voice teary.

"Silas lives in Whittmore."

"He does. He might even be in the apartment getting healed right now. If he isn't all patched up already."

"Where is Whittmore?" Elijah asked.

Bonnie lifted her head to look at him now, face slack, eyes red and dead. "Two hours away." She blinked, and her eyes drifted down again.

Elijah kept his gaze on her and tried to make a decision. He'd judged correctly. Why wait to find Abby and why rely only on Matt? Presenting Bonnie with an Elena who had aligned herself to tear her down would be a much more succinct and powerful blow.

And it was.

The witch was defeated.

So did he trust that it would be the same two hours from now, or did he keep her here, in the room where her heart had been shattered?

Fresh air might do her some good, distance might give her some fight, and he couldn't have that.

He made a decision.

"I trust you'll come up with an alternative." When she looked at him in surprise, he said, "You have two hours to do it, or Matt is dead."

"It might take days."

"One hour," he said.

Bonnie's breath caught. "I don't have your word that you'll let him go."

"You have my word."

"I can't fucking trust you," she realized suddenly.

"Then there's no need to waste your time bargaining. But I did make Elena a promise. And as soon as you do what you're asked, I will live up to it."

He sat back and waited, staring at her.

Bonnie looked over at her bag. It was on the floor. She found it so difficult to get up. She didn't want to get up.

"Where is Kim? What did you do to her?" she asked, her nose tickling her.
"Her body is still in tact," Elijah answered.

Bonnie closed her eyes and tried to keep her face together. "I want it. Tyler needs it."

"He'll have it when the four departed are guaranteed a future."

She dragged herself to the bag.

She bent down to pick it up and as soon as her hand connected to the strap, the large windows in the living room blew in.

She yelled in surprise and threw herself on the floor. Just in time, as some of the shards flew into the wall in front of her and broke.

She heard Elijah's heavy footsteps, and then she was being dragged to her feet.

"Stop it," he seethed in her face.

"It wasn't me," she defended.

On the other side of the door, a commotion broke out.

On the second floor, Elena was texting Caroline the drastic change made in the plan to save their lives when she heard shouting downstairs.

She put the phone in her pocket and ran out of the bedroom that she had chosen for privacy.

She slowed as she approached the round balcony that allowed her a full view of the large foyer. She crouched and got closer. When she was close enough to hold on to the railing, she saw a Black woman whom she'd never seen before light a vampire on fire.

She considered the possibility that the woman was a friend of Bonnie's mother.

"Shit," she cursed under her breath. The woman was on too much of a rampage for her to run down there and do anything. If these centuries old vampires couldn't hold their own, then she definitely didn't stand a chance. She wasn't going to challenge a witch she didn't know.

She crab-walked away from the banister and went back to the room she'd been occupying. She locked the door and fixed her eyes on the window.

Downstairs, Elijah tightened his punishing hold on Bonnie. "I am going to personally kill him, and you are going to watch," he boiled.

"It's not me!" Bonnie yelled when he started to drag her towards the door. She tried to stay back, but his grip was strong. "I said it's not me!" she yelled.

She was growing angry at the fact that he wasn't believing her. And she was not going to watch Matt die.

She pulled her trick from the woods, set her free hand aflame, and smacked him in the face with it. He grunted and let her arm go. She climbed him like a tree and set his head on fire, her hands squeezing like she was going to pop it.

Elijah pushed her off with all of his strength, and she went flying into the door.
But she was a dog with a bone, and it was coming back to her now: she hated Elijah. She'd wanted Elijah, been aching for Elijah. She wanted to kill him. She's wanted the opportunity to kill him. She's spent nights agonizing over the desire to kill him. Elijah Mikaelson had grown into the boogeyman who hid in shadow and ruined her life with the power of his will. She'd spent days and weeks feeling powerless against this man who had orchestrated the death of her mother, because she was surrounded by people who would have never let her kill him, because he was too useful as an ally.

But she didn't have those people anymore. Stefan and Damon were dead. Elena was dead. Caroline was dead. Her old life was dead. Dead, dead, dead.

And she was in a room alone with Elijah. Finally. And she was going to kill him.

She didn't have the White Oak stake. She didn't have a sword. She didn't give a damn. She would kill him with her own pure magic if she had to. She could die here killing Elijah, and she'd consider it magic well spent.

Someone was thrown against the other side of the door, but she didn't care.

Head a ball of fire, Elijah charged for her, but she threw him into the fireplace.

"Kill him!" Elijah yelled to whoever was listening. "Kill the Donovan boy!"

He ran at her again, and Bonnie smacked him into the corner on her right. Keeping her telekinetic hold on him, she threw him into the opposite corner. She envisioned bringing the whole house down by slamming Elijah Mikaelson into every single wood, plaster, and brick until they broke under his weight, under her strength.

He was her rag doll, and she slammed him into the ceiling, dragged him across the floor, slapped him into this wall, that wall, that wall, her anger growing, her anger boiling, her anger consuming.

She was going to kill him, but first she was going to beat him to a pulp.

The door burst open, and she threw him over the threshold, knocking whoever had thrown the door open onto their ass.

It had looked like a woman.

Bonnie ran to the door.

It was indeed a woman. And throughout the foyer, what was left of Elijah's army of vampires were either struggling to get up, or they were passed out, or they were burning but not dying.

The woman cursed and cradled her head, having hit it on the floor when Elijah was thrown into her.

She could get to the front door if she ran fast enough, so Bonnie looked back into the living room for her bag, magically pulled it to her, slung it across her body, and made a run for it.

She wrenched the door open and ran smack into a seal.

She didn't let that stop her; she was too wired; her adrenaline too strong. She barely registered the seal. That wasn't the way out, and that was that.

She magically swept the woman into the living room, closed the door with her power, and locked it with a spell. She didn't know who the woman was, but her gut told her that she hadn't come to
She needed to find Matt. He was either alive or dead. She had been about to leave him, having completely forgotten about him at the height of her anger, but she was apparently stuck in the house, and she remembered now.

She had to check on him. She had to see. Her instinct told her to run, find a way out, but her instinct wasn't taking Matt into consideration. If she ran and Matt was still alive, Elijah, after all of his severe skull fractures healed and his head stopped burning, would kill Matt.

She didn't know anything about the layout of Klaus' house aside from the same living room in which Klaus had once held her hostage until she'd undone Esther's linking spell, but Matt had to be on the first floor, so she ran into every room, trying to find him.

And she did. He was screaming for help when she burst into the torture room, the vampire who'd been with him having left to help the others fight when the commotion had started.

"Matt!" she exclaimed as relief flooded and made her body hot.

He was crying and bloody and strung up by his hands. She ran up to him and cast a spell to destroy the chains. He fell in a heap and took her down with him.

Matt cried out from his wounds.

"It's okay; it's okay," she whispered. She eyed the door. The witch, she had to be a witch, could be out of the locked room and in her face any second.

"I have to get you out of here," she said. "I can't heal you, that would take too long; I'm sorry."

Healing him would waste precious time. She was sealed in, the vampires, too, the whole house, most likely.

But a way out. Her instincts had been pushing her to find a way out.

She looked at the walls around them and tried to think.

And she got it.

Lucy had traveled through air. Perhaps she could travel through walls. Or at least make Matt travel through walls.

If the witch was after her, then Matt would be at risk by her side. He would be a target, her weak spot. And he was too injured to make it alongside her.

So she resolved to get him out and stay behind.

She dragged him to the nearest wall, using her power to help her, wincing every time he groaned in pain.

She put her hand on the wall and chanted. "Phasmatos salvis. Ex hac domo mitti mortale ambulacris omnis murus ostium. Transeat. Matt, you have to push against the wall and say transeat, okay? Trans-yat, just like that. It's the only way you'll get out. Push against the wall and say transeat until you make it out into the street. And when you do," she said, her voice wavering as she teared up, "Find help. For yourself or for me, it doesn't matter. And please tell Tyler that Elena is the enemy. Tell him to be careful of Caroline. Transeat. Go, now."
"What about you?" Matt murmured, mostly out of it.

"Don't worry about me. Go."

Matt pushed against the wall, using what little strength he had. "Transeat," he said, doing his best to mimic Bonnie's accent. His hand went through the wall and he fell through.

His lower half was still with Bonnie. "Go, Matt, go," she urged, pushing his legs. "Go, go, go."

He crawled through the wall, and she couldn't hear him anymore.

"Habeat corpus," began a voice at the door.

Bonnie hopped to her feet and threw a ribbon of fire at the source of the sound.

Aja dove to the floor but immediately threw her own ream of fire at Bonnie.

Bonnie tensed as she stretched her hand in a grab for Aja's fire and very quickly yelled her spell at the same time that Aja restarted hers.

"Iniquitatem ponam eam, et accersi glacies!"

"Habeat corpus et animum suum misit-!"

Hexing a witch's offensive power to claim it as one's own was a dangerous gamble. The hex might not work in time or the witch on defense might be so busy casting that they fail to deflect another move by the witch on offense. The end result could be grave injury, which usually seals the defensive witch's disadvantage.

But Bonnie's gamble worked. Her spell was shorter than Aja's; she yelled it faster. Aja's fire morphed into Bonnie's water, then into thick, sharp icicles. The icicles stopped above her clawed hand, hovering, a close call when it had been fire.

She threw her hand and telekinetically lobbed the icicles at Aja before the latter could complete her spell.

Aja cut herself off and instinctively threw her hand out to reverse the icicles' trajectory, but it was a hex, Bonnie hadn't made the icicles corporeal, thus physical magic had no effect. Aja screamed and covered her face, but instead of impaling her as expected, the icicles broke into small pieces around her body, and sank into her bloodstream, and froze her numb.

Bonnie staggered back against the wall and trembled in her shoes. "Shit," she exhaled, placing a hand over her racing heart.

The blood rushing in her head turned into a headache. She took it as a sign that she was out of danger, because she hadn't been able to feel a thing before.

Kim.

She hadn't given Matt a message to relay to Tyler about Kim.

She turned to the wall at her back and touched it. She could get out now. She could follow Matt. Or maybe walk out the front door.

She looked back at Aja. There was frost on the woman's face. Bonnie relaxed her mouth. She was pleased. She'd been inspired by what had happened to her at the Witches' House.
She caressed the wall and pushed away from it.

She couldn't leave yet. She had to find Kim. Her subconscious had glossed over relaying anything about Kim, because she had to be the one who found her. She was in the best strategic position.

Except Elijah couldn't talk in his current state.

Bonnie walked past Aja to the door's threshold. Flecks of snow were on Aja's hair now. Maybe she would shatter the hex or maybe Elijah would recover first and deal with her.

Neither possibility was her problem.

She made her way to the foyer and surveyed the vampires. While she hadn't been able to see any of them on her way in, there was one missing. Elena.

She didn't know if she'd left, or…..She swiveled her neck to look up the large staircase.

She could go up there. Find her. Or locate her and pull her down here.

Her shoulders slowly slumped. She wasn't in the right mindset to deal with Elena. She wouldn't know what to say to her. She'd made the threat to kill her, and the threat was still good, but she wasn't ready to do it. She needed more time to live with what had happened.

Besides, she liked the idea of Elena dealing with an Elijah who'd failed. She liked the idea a lot. So she'd leave her to it.

She walked to the kitchen and grabbed a butcher knife and a cereal bowl. There was a bloody knife in the sink, but she ignored it.

She crouched next to Elijah and sliced off a nice chunk of burnt cheek. His face was unrecognizable.

She dropped it in the bowl and wiped her bloody fingers on his suit. She thought about it a second longer and decided to give herself more ammo. She opened his suit jacket and unbuttoned his dress shirt from the bottom. She pushed the knife down above his belly button until it penetrated. Elijah twitched.

Bonnie pulled the bloody knife out with both hands and gave Elijah a hard look. The blood would come in handy for a nasty spell.

She stood with her ingredients and went to the island. She put the bowl and knife down and called for her cell phone. To her surprise, it came out of Elijah's pocket. She put her phone away and called for Elijah's. She was pleased when it floated to her.

Grabbing her bowl and knife, she went in search of Matt.

She walked out the front door.

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