What Lies Beneath

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What Lies Beneath

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Summary

Be careful of what's under the surface. It just might pull you down with it. -Damon/Bonnie- - Series of Interconnecting One Shots

Notes

Posting this here now. It's ~forever ongoing~ as long as the show is on or until I just decide to end it. It follows the episodes but with a Damon/Bonnie slant.
ETA: It has now been completed at chapter 65.
Bonnie Bennett placed her bag down onto the picnic table and sat, letting out a loud yawn. She rubbed at her dark green eyes and glanced around, waiting for her best friend Elena Gilbert to join her for lunch. The small courtyard of they school was quickly filling with other students, some who wanted to eat and some who were just happy they had a couple moments of freedom. She smiled and waved to Matt Donovan when he noticed her, who in turn waved back before heading in the direction he saw their mutual friend Caroline tread.

Absently she began to daydream, thinking about all of the school activities that were still to come. Dances and finals, she seriously hoped she could focus on the regular long enough to make it through. But things had changed this year so quickly, and Halloween had just passed. She shuddered to think what else might lie in store for the simple town of Mystic Falls and all of the people she cared about. If her scrambled visions were true…death would soon be knocking at their door.

Sighing, she pulled at the v-neck collar of her pretty blue blouse, feeling an invisible weight settle around her throat. Swallowing hard, she tried to shake it away but nothing would destroy the memories imbedded in her brain of that night. The night she'd been possessed by her great great grand whoever and forced to do her bidding. The night she'd nearly died at the hands of Damon Salvatore…the vampire.

_I should have just given him the damn necklace._ She thought, fingering her skin. Even though it was shattered—even though _she_ had exploded it in a ball of colorful fire, she could still detect it hanging from its long golden chain around her neck sometimes. It didn't make any sense but perhaps it all dealt with her witch-y powers and the séance they had done. If she could take it back she would tell herself to stay far away from ouja boards and psycho ghosts with a hidden agendas.

Pulling her leg up to her chest, she rested her chin to her knee and yawned again. Since that night, she hadn't exactly been getting a full eight hours of sleep. Her dreams revolved around the vampire brothers—especially Damon—and the power she'd felt coursing through her veins while Emily used her body to perform some weird ritual. It scared her to think that one day she'd be able to conjure up much more than fire or make feathers float.

What if she touched something dark? Scary? What if she crossed a line and was never able to come back?

She shivered at that line of consciousness and checked her watch; _where was Elena? Probably with Stefan_ her mind supplied in the same tick. While the idea of Stefan being a vampire totally freaked her out, she knew he wasn't like his brother. He was—well he was nice for lack of a better adjective. He'd saved her life and was making her friend happy so she had nothing but good things to say about him.

Running a hand through her long black, slightly curly hair, she decided to go ahead and start eating. Her stomach growled thankfully and she opened her bag, pulling out a sandwich and a small container of chips. The sound of a cawing bird drew her gaze up and to the right, and she stared at the black crow that seemingly watched her. _Probably after my food_. Tearing a tiny bit of bread off, she tossed it at the bottom of the tree and the bird dropped to get it, devouring it with its black beak before hopping onto the table before her.

Bonnie blinked, staring into its beady black eyes as it stared right back. Almost as if it were totally
aware of her…as if it had something to say to her. "Shoo! If I give you my entire sandwich, what am I gonna have to eat?"

The crow ruffled its feathers in response.

"Bonnie, hey!" Elena smiled as she walked over with Stefan in tow. "Are you making friends?"

She snorted teasingly. "I think it wants my food."

Stefan however did not look amused. "Leave. Now." The bird cocked its head at him before flying away, disappearing into the sky.

Bonnie tried to remain calm at the fact that A; vampires were real and B, she was going to be having lunch with one. After all Stefan was the nice person. From everything that Elena had told her, he appeared to have a firm grasp on what was right and wrong. He didn't even feed on people and hadn't in a very long time.

His dark, brooding gaze settled onto her a moment after her thoughts quieted. "If I make you uncomfortable I will leave."

"No it—it's okay." She smiled with a shrug. "Just taking in the whole vampire concept and everything. I shouldn't be surprised however; I mean I'm a witch. Odd things exist."

Stefan gave his charming smile and sat down across from his girlfriend. "How are you feeling by the way?"

"Alright." She admitted. "Still trying to come to terms with what I know now. But um, thank you for saving my life."

"You're welcome."

"Elena said you've been looking out for her and Jeremy—I think that's sweet. And if she can see past what you are to be with you, then I can see past what you are to be friends."

"Thank you, Bonnie. It means a lot to me that you are willing to accept me…especially after what Damon did to you."

"Yeah well, you're not like him."

"No he's not." Elena interrupted with a cute grin. She pushed long brown strands of hair off her shoulder.

The three fell into a random conversation next, leaving talk of Immortals behind them. They talked about the most arbitrary things, from class work to the oddness that was Matt handing out with Caroline. But it was nice to be normal for a change instead of dealing with death and blood. True it would probably only last as long as the lunch period, still it was better than nothing at all.

~*~

"See you guys later." Bonnie waved at her fellow cheerleaders, hiking her small duffel bag onto her shoulder. She hummed as she strolled towards her cute blue car, her ponytail bopping behind her. The cool night air wrapped around her, seeping through her red sports bra and tiny shorts, and she was thankful she'd remembered to pack her hoodie for a just in case situation like this.

Stopping at the first available flat surface, she fished it out and threaded her arms through the holes,
leaving it unzipped. Scattered voices sounded around her as more people either packed up to go home or headed out onto the field for more football practice. Obviously that is the reason Caroline was still hanging around, twirling her blonde locks as Matt and Tyler ran several different plays.

She would really have to ask Matt when the sudden turn around happened.

Smirking, she stepped through the long fence opening and headed to her car, her simple tennis shoes soundless on the pavement. As she walked, the overhead streetlight flickered and she frowned, feeling the hairs on the back of her neck stand up. She scowled at herself though and kept going, getting closer and closer to her vehicle, the tiny voice in her mind saying that once she reached it she would be safe. Safe from what, she had no idea. Probably just her paranoia getting the best of her now that she knew what went bump in the night.

Itching at her eyebrow, she rounded a little bend and jogged to her hybrid, fumbling with her keys, trying to get them into the lock. They fell to the ground with a clink and she cursed, yanking them up quickly. A dark figure to her left caught her eye and she jerked, pressing her back to the driver side door.

"Get away from me."

Damon Salvatore stared at her with ice blue eyes, his face devoid of emotion. His hands were tucked into the pockets of his dark jeans, but the silver of his family ring still managed to twinkle in the false light. "Hello Bonnie. It is Bonnie I'm speaking to right? Or is Emily still rattling around in there…"

"Get away from me." She repeated, her voice strong despite her nerves. "I'll scream."

"And I'll rip out your throat before you ever get the chance." He replied with a touch of boredom. "Now, why don't we just play nice for a moment? I mean if I wanted you dead I could have done it already."

*Unfortunately that was very true. "What do you want?"

"Hm. What do *I* want?" He made a face. "Good health. Riches beyond my wildest dreams. A 1968 Porsche with all the trimmings."

She rolled her eyes. "What do you want with *me*? I—the necklace is gone so—"

He lifted a finger. "Yeah I wouldn't bring that up if I were you. Seeing as how I've been holding a grudge against Stefan for more than a hundred years, I highly doubt a few days is enough time to mellow me out where that is concerned." He took a step closer. "Especially considering the fact that Emily reneged on our deal."

"I don't know anything about your deal." Bonnie said, pushing herself back against the car as much as she could. "I can't even remember what happened that night."

Damon smirked. "Right. Anyway, there is still a way for you and your witch-y powers to help me get what I want."

*Damn it. "No."*

"No?"

"I—I—I can't open the tomb. Those vampires would destroy the town."

"Thought you didn't remember?"
"It's fuzzy…comes and goes."

Suddenly he was right in front of her, the material of his jacket brushing her bare stomach. He leaned, placing a hand by her shoulder, crowding her space. "Who said getting into the tomb is what I want?"

She gulped noticeably. "Then what is you want?"

"I'm looking at it." His voice was soft, hypnotic. "I figure if Emily can change the terms of our agreement then so can I."

Her head swam as she made the mistake of looking into his eyes. The iris danced around the dark pupil, fluttering uncontrollably as if it were breathing. He's trying to entrance you! "St—stop…"

He could hear her heart thudding against her ribcage and he grinned, inhaling the smell of her fear. "So I have a question. Was Emily completely gone when I bit you?"

"Yes…" She whispered. She decided it was better to play along and hopefully live to tell the tale.

"Thought so. Have you thought about that night at all?" He tilted his head to the side.

She averted her gaze and wet her lips slowly. Truth be told she had. She wasn't sure why since it wasn't a pleasant memory, but it was as if his feeding on her had caused other sensations to stir up.

Sensations that made no sense. "Hard not to think about the time I almost died."

The vampire chuckled lightly and dragged his fingers down the side of her face, feeling the shudder that ripped through her entire body. She was so warm and blushing now, her heat radiating out of her pores to ghost over his knuckles. His stomach twitched and he looked her over appreciatively, his eyes lingering on her breasts and the way they lifted and fell do her heightened breathing. They weren't big but just enough for a handful.

"Mm…" He grunted.

Bonnie balked and jerked the sides of her hoodie together. It didn't take a genius to know what he was staring at. "Why are you here, Damon? To torment me because Emily didn't do what she promised?"

Was that why he was here? "No. Well maybe a little but not entirely. I just wanted another whiff of…" Trailing off, he pressed his face to her neck, smoothing his nose along her skin. "…this."

She just knew he was going to bite her and finish the job. She could feel it deep down in her bones. All she could think about was the pain of it and the sensation of her life slowly seeping out bit by bit. Drop by drop. Fear boiled up in her stomach like hot lava and she gasped as it leapt out of her body, slamming into Damon's chest without a single movement from her.

He staggered back, actually skidding a few yards on the concrete. "Ow."

"Go! Running on autopilot, she unlocked her door and dived into her car, willing her hands not to fumble as she jammed the key into the ignition and made the engine hum to life. Scared that he would rip the door off, she slammed her foot down onto the gas and roared out of her parking space, refusing to look back. The thought that he was running behind the car made her gasp aloud.

Damon Salvatore officially scared the living hell out of her.

Watching the road, she dug into her purse and pulled out her cell phone, hitting the speed dial.
"Hello? Elena?"

"Bonnie, hey." The brunette said cheerfully. "What's up?"

"He—I saw him." She stammered. "Damon. He just...he was waiting for me after cheerleading practice."

"Oh my god, are you okay?" Her friend asked, concerned. "Did he hurt you?"

A sigh. "No. My strange powers—thank God—pushed him away from me before he could bite me."

A beat. "Elena I'm scared."

Elena wet her lips slowly. "Don't worry. I'm gonna tell Stefan and he'll make sure that he leaves you alone. Just stay home and don't invite him in under any circumstances."

She nodded. "Okay. Okay..."

~*~

A strong, pale hand slid its way up her caramel colored thigh, pushing the lacy white gown with it as it went. Soft lips cascaded down her neck and she tipped her head to the side to give them more access, letting out an airy sigh. His body was pressed tight to her own, his skin cold but smooth where it touched her. The smell of his cologne made her head swim, and she was thankful that they were lying down on his large bed.

Even though her eyes were closed, she knew it was Damon's weight on top of her, pinning her to the mattress. She knew it was Damon tickling her leg and Damon slowly pulling down her soft cotton panties. His fingers were surprisingly gentle as they pushed inside of her, zeroing in on a pad of nerves that made her moan in pleasure. He stroked them with his fingertips until she was damp and trembling beneath him, his free hand ripping the bodice of her gown so that he could suck a hard nipple into his mouth.

"Damon..." She whimpered, arching to him. "I—I've never—"

"I know." He sounded amused. "Don't worry. I'll take care of you."

Her hips bucked when his thumb brushed her swollen clit. "Ah...Damon..." Swallowing, she finally allowed herself to look at him. To take in the splendor of his magnificently toned body. "Do—do it. I want you to...do it."

Nodding, he sucked in a breath and his eyes bled to black, the veins surrounding them pulsing dark as his mouth opened wide. Lowering his head, he sunk his sharp fangs in around her nipple deeply, his throat working as he began to drink. A stilted scream died within her vocal chords at the first initial strike, and then all she could feel was the erotic thrill of the bite itself. He had her life in his hands...took too much and she could be seriously injured. Knowing that she had to give up all of her trust to someone who terrified her sent a chill up her spine.

"Da—Damon..." She breathed, entwining her fingers into his soft hair. "Make love to me."

His lips were stained with her blood when his lifted his head and covered her like a blanket, his erection rubbing between the moist lips of her sex, making him hiss. "Say pretty please with sugar on top."

With a sharp gasp, Bonnie sat straight up and willed the air to flow into her lungs. She yelped when the heavy dresser in her room thudded back to the floor, along with all of the contents on top. Chest
heaving and skin glistening with a light layer of sweat, she blinked to keep the tears at bay. She didn't know what was more horrifying; making things float in her sleep or having another sex dream about Damon. Where in the world were they coming from?!

This one had been more graphic than the last, but with the same underlying theme. Her in his bed, begging him to make love to her. To take her. Except this time he'd bitten her. Idly her hand went to her breast and rubbed, just making sure there was no wound there. Honestly she was a little surprised to find nothing…it had been so vivid.

_Clink! Clink!_

Frowning at the noise of something against glass, she crawled out of bed and pulled back her curtains. Sitting on her windowsill was a crow, its beak tapping in a sort of Morris Code to the shiny panes. She thought about trying to make it leave, but what if she opened the window and it flew into her room? She'd have to call her father to get it out and she didn't want to disturb him at this hour.

_Maybe I could blow it away with my powers. That or accidentally blow it up._ Shivering, she slipped on her robe and continued to gaze out into the night, seeing streaks of moonlight dart from behind the clouds. Although she didn't know how she knew what was running through her mind, she was sure that he was out there. Watching her. Perhaps he'd caused the dream but why? To screw with her head because he could?

Sounded like something he would do.

And yet while Emily had possessed her, she had felt no fear that night in the woods. However Emily had been a powerful Salem witch, not some teenage girl who could put out candles without air. Magic was effectively ruining and enriching her life all at the same time.

_Come out, come out and play sweet Bonnie B. Deep into the woods you'll find me. Huddled against our special tree. Come out and play Bonnie B._

"Stop it!" She grabbed her head, gritting her teeth against the phantom voice. "Leave me alone!"

The bird cawed loudly and smacked the glass with its head, making a tiny crack. She jumped and closed her curtains, _willing_ it to go away. Instead it continued to bang against the window over and over again, tearing the splinter open wider and wider. Petrified, she sprinted out of her room and downstairs, nearly tripping on her own feet. She ran to the front door and threw it open, feeling the cool air lash across her face.

_I don't wanna go out. I don't wanna go out. I don't wanna go out! But I have to._

Bonnie didn't understand the strange influence forcing her out of her warm home in the middle of the night, but she also hadn't understood waking up in the freaking cemetery and not comprehending how she got there. And yes her magics were often off, she still had faith they _would_ protect her. They just _would_.

Exhaling deeply, she stepped across the threshold and ran. She ran with bare feet on the frosty ground, passing toasty houses where people were locked away safely inside. She ran like something was behind her, cutting through yards and then into the woods, batting bushes and long hanging branches out of her way. Before she realized it, she was standing in the midst of the charred earth where the burnt leaves still crunched underneath her foot.

The moon finally broke from its confines and she could barely make out a few spots of red on black. Red. Her blood. The blood that Damon had nearly drained out of her in his angry rage to punish
"Why am I here?" She asked aloud. "Emily? Did you do this? Did you make me come to this dreadful place?"

"Guess again." His voice cut through her like a knife. "Mighty late to be out alone isn't it? Never know who or…what could be lurking in the shadows."

Her big green eyes searched him out. "Are you going to kill me?"

Damon shrugged. "Eventually. Maybe. When I run out of games to play."

Trembling and unable to stop, she hugged her waist. "Well I wish you would just do it already."

He chuckled. "Yeah but what fun would that be?"

"Punishing me won't get you what you want."

"You're not a very good listener, are you? I have what I want. You."

"That doesn't make any sense. You never even knew I existed before the other night. You were too busy manipulating Caroline and…feeding on her."

"She was weak and easy—and why buy the milk when you can have the cow for free? Besides I gave Caroline what she wanted."

"Pain and severe brain trauma?"

"Attention. That's all a spoiled little brat like her wants and she didn't care how she got it. We had a nice arrangement going before Stefan rode into the situation like a knight from King Arthur's table. But then again he does love being the hero. Doesn't he?"

Her pulse skipped. "At least he hasn't lost his humanity."

The handsome vampire walked closer to stand in front of her. "Humanity is overrated. After all, humans burned your great grand witchy at the stake and humans tried to kill Stefan with wooden bullets. Who's the real monster, Bonnie? Least I show my real face."

Brows narrowed. "I've seen your real face. Trust me, you are the monster."

He tilted his head and watched her. "What are you doing out here?"

His question took her by surprise. "Yo—you called me out here."

"Uh yeah, no." He replied with a grin. "I was just fucking with you before. I can't summon people to me."

"Liar. "I…" Massaging her temples, she turned in a slow circle. "If you didn't call me out here, why are you here?"

Damon seemed to be weighing whether he wanted to answer or not. "I knew you'd be here."

"How?" She asked quietly, though she had a sinking suspicion she knew the answer.

He rubbed his chin. "Do you know it had been decades since I'd fed on a witch? Their blood tastes differently than your random jogger or soccer mom. Sweeter. You can literally feel their power
throbbing in each sip." He met her eyes, reaching out to touch her face. "I took a lot of your blood Bonnie. You were nearly dead. So now I guess we're kinda…connected."

It took all of her willpower not to flinch from his touch…or lean into it. "Lucky me." A twig broke in the not to far and her head whipped to its direction.

Obviously Damon heard it too, because he frowned deeply and faced where the trees threaded together at their tops. Seconds passed before a foreboding shape emerged, a man neither of them had seen before with pale blonde hair and light brown eyes.

He blinked at the sight of them. "Young lovers out for a midnight make out session in the woods? I guess it's good fortune for all of us then."

Damon was annoyed already. "Who are you?"

"Patrick. I'm just passing through." He remarked.

"Good answer. Keep walking." Damon motioned with his head.

However Patrick appeared to have other ideas. Bonnie suspected that he was a vampire—why else would he be wandering out in the woods at this hour? She also suspected he had no idea that Damon was also a vampire because he didn't seem threatened in the least. In fact he walked right up to him, looked him up and down, and then aimed his hungry stare at her, making her step back instinctively.

It all happened so fast that she hardly had time to react at all. Patrick lunged at her, teeth bared and eyes black, and she screamed; memories of her previous attack shocking her still. He didn't have time to touch her, to even graze her with his pinky. Damon grabbed him around the throat and hurled him into a tree, sending bark and branches flying.

Confused but not deterred, Patrick pulled himself up. "What the fuck? Well excuse me for invading your prey. How about I just take the last few drops, huh?"

"I never learned to share. No..." Damon smirked. "I did learn I just really don't like to do it. So if you don't want to be put down completely, you'll turn and run with your tail between your legs."

He won't do it. He wants to prove he's stronger. The pretty witch thought. I should run. But what if running just makes him want me more?

Sure enough, Patrick got his bearings and leapt at the other vampire with super speed, driving him back into a thick tree trunk. They snarled at each other, throwing rapid punches that echoed like thunder. Stumbled into left over pieces of foundation and fought like two wild animals over a fresh kill. The victor would get…

Bonnie wet her lips and focused as hard as she could, grasping the twisted ball of energy in her gut and dragging it higher and higher. As she did, a thick broken off root rose into the air, hovering, waiting for her to command it. Patrick pinned Damon to a large boulder, hands around his neck and squeezing forcefully. With a flick of her wrist, the root cut through the air and stabbed into his back where she prayed his heart was. Both men cried out, but it was Patrick who staggered back and fell to the ground, slowly shriveling in on himself.

"Oh my god." She gasped, staring at his mummified corpse. As if she needed more things to give her nightmares.

"Ugh, better aim next time would be great." Damon grunted sarcastically. He ripped open his button down shirt to reveal a grotesque hole in his mid-section. "I were any shorter and you'd have two
“dead vampires under your hat.”

She rolled her eyes. One could only wish. “Stay away from me. I mean it.”

“Oh you mean it?” He teased, wincing in pain. “Yeah, okay. I’ll stay away from you if you stop calling to me.”

“What are you talking about?”

“You think I was out here for a moonlit stroll?”

“I didn’t request you or summon you or anything else. Why would I wanna see you?”

“Even I…don’t have all the answers. All I know is that I knew you’d be here.”

“But why come?”

“Don’t know if I had much of a choice. Your blood is in my system and my bite was deep enough to cut through steel. Guess your kooky powers are having a laugh at our expense. Or maybe it’s Emily’s doing so I won’t kill you and be done with it.”

“I thought that was your whole purpose. To kill me.”

Watching the hole in his body mend, he sighed and crossed the space to her. “I’d love to slit your pretty little throat and hope that somewhere Emily is watching. But I need a witch to get into the tomb—at least that is how I see it. You happen to be a witch.” A pause. “And…”

She swallowed thickly. “And what?”

Suddenly he grabbed her and hauled her against him. “And if you’re dead, I can’t have anymore yummy witch blood, can I?”

Bonnie shivered, finding it difficult to think with him so near. “N—no. Never again.”

He grinned and slipped a hand into her robe, trailing his fingers up her back. “Once other vampires learn about how delectable you are, they’re gonna be gunning for you. Do you really think your little parlor tricks are gonna be able to keep them at bay?”

“S—to—stop.” She tried to pull away. He was too close. They were too close, and the fabric of her tank top was riding up, making their stomachs touch. He was cool…just like in her dream but firm.

Damon’s eyes flashed. “You know I’m right. You need me.”

Did she? She couldn’t think; everything was happening too fast and none of it made sense. Could that be the meaning of her intimate dreams? Had Emily linked her to Damon to keep her safe? For the time being anyway…

“I have to get home.” She said softly. “My dad might be worried about me…”

Smiling, he leaned down, his lips mere inches from hers. He heard her breath hitch but ignored it. “Hurry hurry.” He let her go.

She of course did not need to be told twice.

~*~
Damon climbed the stairs to his room and strolled inside, tossing his leather jacket onto a chair. He stretched and fell onto his bed, kicking off his shoes. Putting both hands behind his head, he slicked his tongue across his bottom lip. That Bonnie...she might be of some use to him yet. But why hadn't he figured that Emily would have something else up her sleeve? No way she would leave her descendents unprotected. While he could still kill Bonnie, the flavor of her blood was making him think twice. One hit was obviously not enough.

He loved Katherine, he wanted Katherine or her poor man's substitute Elena, but something about Bonnie's blood called to him.

He wouldn't be able to play this like anything else. He'd have to earn her trust and all that bullshit, which wasn't gonna be easy. But it was better than sulking, mourning Katherine or being consumed by wrath at what was done to her and the others. He'd see her again in time. He just had to practice patience.

His door opened and the bronze haired Stefan breezed in, eying him distrustfully. "What are you up to, Damon?"

"Hello to you too, brother." He sighed. "How was dinner with the fair Elena tonight?"

"What are you up to?" Stefan inquired again. "What happened in the woods had nothing to do with Bonnie. You can't chastise her for Emily's decision."

"On the contrary Stefan. I don't plan to punish her at all." He waved a hand, his expression devious yet pleased. "I like Bonnie. I think we're going to be...very close from here on out." An image of the pretty witch writhing half naked on his bed, begging him to take her flared through his mind. "Very close indeed."

~Fin~
Bonnie can't seem to escape Damon Salvatore. Of course the real question is, does she want to?

Small note, this takes place before The Turning Point if anyone is curious.

"I'm worried about Bonnie."

Stefan Salvatore dragged his dark, penetrating eyes up from the cute tennis shoes his girlfriend was wearing to her radiant face, noticing immediately the worry etched among her features. Since meeting up with her at her locker she hadn't said a word, just transferred book for book before glazing over in the midst of her own thoughts. "Why? What's wrong?"

She sighed, shaking her head. "I don't know. She just...she hasn't been the same since that night. And I ask her what's wrong but she won't talk to me."

"Perhaps she is still suffering from the effects of Emily's magic." He smiled, facing her. "Not to mention she was possessed by a spirit, and haunted before that. I'm sure she will be fine."

Elena Gilbert stared at him. "You—you don't know anything about it, do you?"

After years and years of practicing being human, he knew exactly how blank to keep his face so that she would believe him. He hated lying to her but it was necessary until he discovered what his brother was up to now that getting into the crypt was not possible. "If I did I would tell you." It came out so smooth that he almost bought it as well. "I have no knowledge of it on an intimate level—possession—but it seems natural that the effects would take a while to dissolve."

She nodded. "God, it must have been horrible for her. Being in there but unable to control her own body. Why Stefan? Why would Emily do something like that to her?"

"I'm not sure." Another lie. "But I am sure she had a good reason. Otherwise why put her through it?"

"Yeah..." Closing her locker door, she mirrored his pose. "At least one good thing has happened. I don't think Damon has bothered her since she called me."

That however he was not so sure of. "He was supposed to leave town. He said he was."

She rolled her big brown eyes. "Something tells me Damon never does what he's supposed to do. Seeing him attack Bonnie like that..." She was at a loss for words at the moment. "I—I thought he'd
killed her. Guess not for a lack of trying."

"Elena, you know I'll never let anything happen to you or those you care about." He vowed, running his fingers through her silky hair. "I may not be as strong as my brother, but there are other ways to keep him under control."

"The last time you tried to do that, Vicki was turned into a vampire."

"A mistake I won't make again."

"I just want him to stay away from Bonnie. If he hurts her…I don't know what I'll do."

"He won't hurt her. He's probably already lost interest in her…"

"I hope so. I know she has all of these powers now but they don't always work how they are supposed to. He could do to her what he did to Caroline."

"No. Bonnie's will is too strong for him to manipulate her that way…"

"Maybe." Glancing down to her locker, she blinked as a wonderful idea blossomed in her brain. "Stefan, could you give her some of that plant you gave me? What was it called, um, ver—vervain?"

Her adorable scrunched up face made him grin. "Damon destroyed everything that Zach had grown, but I might have another trinket with a few buds of it in my room. What do I tell her when she asks why I'm giving it to her?"

Elena thought for a minute, and then shrugged. "Tell her it's for her own good."

~*~

Chewing on the end of her pen, Bonnie Bennett stared at the words on the page before her, reading the same sentence for the tenth time. Sitting in the library at a table near the very back, she found herself to be unfocused and daze, her thoughts a random jumble of homework and the prospect of learning new spells. Her Grams wanted her to practice more so that she could reach her full potential, but she wasn't exactly sure it was a road she wanted to keep barreling down. So far it was mostly innocent stuff—certain terrifying aspects aside—but what if the more power she used, the more it used her as well?

She was torn; split right down the middle and teetering to either side when it benefited her. Man did she long for the days when her Grams was just an old lady who loved her alcohol and talked gibberish before she passed out for the night.

The shrill jingle of the bell sounded loudly and she jumped, chuckling at herself. Sighing, she packed up her bag and stood, pushing her chair back under the table. She'd accomplished nothing so homework would actually have to be done at home. Swinging her backpack into her shoulder, she exited the library and joined the other throng of students in the hallway. It was the end of another long day and all she wanted to do was go home, get a tub of ice cream and relax. Easier said than done though when she had crows flying into her window way more frequent than should ever be allowed.

Last night while enjoying dinner with her father, one managed to filter down the unlit chimney and stumble around inside until being shooed out the front door. First ghosts haunted her and now birds. What else? Mice?

Pulling at her dangly earrings, she made it to her car and tossed her books into the backseat. A shiver
rolled down her spine and she glanced around, biting her bottom lip. She felt as if she were being watched. It was a creepy experience, especially when it happened while she sat on her bed flipping through a magazine. Especially since she had a good idea who was doing the watching. She was trying her best to ignore everything related to Damon Salvatore but he was making it very difficult.

It was still stalking even if it weren't in the flesh as far as she was concerned.

His words hung heavily in her ears. Clunked around in her mind so loudly that she would often end up with a headache. She felt helpless but tried to portray otherwise. She didn't want him to see her sweat—to see that his sick games were in fact getting to her. After all, the dreams were bad enough. Though she knew he didn't have that kinda power, so it was probably their stupid link. Instead of worrying about the history of Mystic Falls, she needed to be researching a way to get him far away from her.

*Or closer.* Frowning at her weird thoughts, she shook out her shoulders, yelping when a hand touched her arm. "Ah!"

"Bonnie! It's me." Elena ducked her head, blushing. "I didn't mean to scare you. I called your name like three times but you weren't paying attention."

She chuckled and willed her heart to stop racing. "No—it's okay."

The brunette eyed her best friend with a troublesome expression. "Um, well are you busy?"

"Nope. Why?" She inquired lightly.

"I was just wondering if you wanted to come with me to the flower shop. Jenna is kinda depressed over the whole Logan business, so I wanted to get her a bouquet of her favorites to make her feel better."

"Oh. Yeah sure, get in."

Elena did so and they were off. It felt odd to be having such a normal conversation when she was absolute that *something* was up with Bonnie, but there were only so many times she could ask *what's wrong* and get the same answer before imploding. "You look…rested."

Bonnie kept her gaze on the road. "I do?"

"Well…you said you were having trouble sleeping but now you look…rested." She shrugged. "No more nightmares?"

*Depends on how you want to classify my sex dreams about the vampire who tried to kill me.* "N—no not since what happened in the woods."

"And Damon? He hasn't bothered you since you called in a panic?"

"No. I haven't…seen him."

"Good."

"Definitely."

Bonnie nibbled on the inside of her cheek, falling quiet as she maneuvered her vehicle down the cozy streets of the small town. She wanted to tell Elena all of the sordid details but she didn't know how. *And a part of you doesn't want to say anything at all.* Sadly that was true as well. But she didn't
understand why! Confiding in her best friend about the madness of images that she saw when she closed her eyes is what she should have done the second after her first dream. Instead she buried it deep, pretended it was a flute of the attack. One maybe but several? Each seemingly steamier than the last?

Just thinking about it made her flush. The things she let him do to her…

Honk!

Jerking, she slammed on brakes minutes before rear-ending a black Sedan, thankful when Elena didn't question the situation. Pulling into the park vacated by the Sedan, she turned off the engine and they exited, heading down the sidewalk and into the quaint flower boutique. The smell of fresh cut lilies and scented lilacs greeted her, and for a brief moment she felt a sense of peace. Maybe it was nature or whatever. Witches liked that didn't they?

Wandering to look around while Elena chatted with Mrs. Harris—the old owner—she found herself compelled to a basket of long stemmed red roses. They stood out in a sea of yellows and pinks, fragrant and beautiful. Smiling, she ran her fingers over the soft petals, leaning to let one tickle her nose. She touched at the thin green stalk, jolting slightly when a thorn pierced her flesh. A dollop of blood oozed out of the tiny hole and she stared at it, vaguely thinking that she should find a napkin or something so that she didn't bleed on her clothes.

A hand wrapping around hers however froze her in her spot, and she didn't need to look up to know whom it belonged to. It was pale and cold; the fingers long and slender like an artist's would be. Pink lips descended onto her pricked digit and she bit back a low moan, her lashes fluttering rapidly. She could feel the soft suction…the wetness of the tongue as it slowly licked over the metallic drop of liquid. It caused a rush of heat to bloom in her body, to yank at invisible strings that pulled her closer instead of farther away to one Damon Salvatore.

He had the most decadent expression as he suckled the tip of her finger, and it didn't take a scientist for her to know he was thinking of something else entirely. Something filthy. His eyes said it all and more, the things he could do to her. Force her to feel whether she really wanted to or not. And yet she was rooted, watching, holding to his waist with her free hand or running the risk of falling over.

Why am I letting this continue? I should scream. Scream, Bonnie scream! She opened her mouth to do just that but nothing but a quick rush of air came out. He'd stolen her voice away.

"Bonnie? Are you back here?"

"Elena!" One swift reminder was all she needed, and she spun around rapidly, feeling like a kid that had been caught with their hand in the cookie jar. If his mouth is the jar... "I—I can explain!"

The brunette arched a brow. "Explain what?"

Bonnie turned to see...no one. He was gone in an instant, yet her hand was still in its former position; slightly raised. "Um I uh—I thought I'd knocked something over."

"You're bleeding." Elena dug in her pocket and pulled out a tissue, pressing it to her wound. "Are you sure you're okay? You look all flustered."

"I'm fine." She lied, standing straighter. "It's warm in here and—and I didn't eat lunch today."

"Bonnie, you know you can tell me anything..." Her friend whispered. "We shouldn't have any secrets between us, especially not after what we've been through."
Tell her. Tell her the truth about it all. You'll be free of him if you do. "Elena, really, I'm okay. C'mon, let's get something to eat. I'm starving!" Trying to divert attention away from herself, she grabbed the other girl's arm and led her out of the store.

They found themselves across the street at the bar and grill, ordering two large cheeseburgers with fries and drinks. There was an awkward silence until their food arrived.

"Elena can I ask you something? About Stefan?" Bonnie asked softly.

The cute brunette nodded as she sprinkled salt on her fries. "Sure."

Taking a pickle off her burger, she gently laid it on a discarded piece of paper. "Does he scare you?"

Elena blinked, her eyes twice their normal size. "Um…well not really. I mean I was freaked out when I discovered what he truly was, but I never got the sense that he would hurt me. I just—I didn't want to deal with it. I didn't know how to deal with it." A pause. "Now it's easier. He's still Stefan."

The good one. "Sometimes I wonder if I'd be—if my powers would have manifested at all if he and Damon hadn't shown up in Mystic Falls. Doesn't it seem like an odd coincidence?"

"I guess…" There was doubt in her voice.

"Lately I haven't known who I am." She replied softly. "I keep hearing I should embrace it but I don't want to embrace it. I wanna be normal."

"Maybe you should ask your Grams if there is a way to—to block your powers until you're like, older and ready for the responsibility." Elena suggested. "A spell or something."

Dipping her fry into ketchup, she nodded. "Couldn't hurt I suppose…" Or could it?

~*~

Home was safe. Home was the one place that he couldn't reach her, which is why she really wanted to blow Caroline off when the blonde suggested they meet up and go shopping. But after the speech she'd given her about being one of her best friends, she knew it would be the wrong thing to do. So reluctantly she'd crawled off her bed, showered and dressed to meet her friend outside of the local café. While Caroline had been privy to about half of the Emily mess, she preferred to pretend like nothing had happened. Much like she did with her relationship with Damon. Not that Bonnie blamed her of course. Who wouldn't want to hold onto their normal life as long as they could?

It probably helped that there was much she couldn't remember thanks to Damon's powers. Though even they couldn't get rid of the physical evidence of their time together. The sporadic bite marks—how silly looking back now and thinking he was just being too rough on her. That would have been the simple answer.

Bonnie wanted to ask Caroline things but she felt it would be out of place. Who makes someone relive a horrible trauma for his or her own peace of mind? Besides, whatever Damon had in store for her, it wasn't to be a gopher and run errands. It probably wasn't even for a blood supply since he could get anywhere. Witch blood? Not so much but since when was a hungry vampire picky?

Standing off to the side as Caroline tried on a pair of jeans that made her butt look nice, Bonnie absentmindedly picked at the band-aid on her sore finger. I can still feel his lips wrapped around it. Really Emily, how is this helping me?

"Okay so I like these but I think the dark ones would be better. And maybe with a red top or maybe
yellow, and what should I do about jewelry?" Caroline rattled off, looking at herself in the mirror. "Maybe I should just get them both. Bonnie? Bonnie are you listening to me?"

"Red or maybe yellow, yes I heard you." She grinned softly. "I'd get the blue; yellow washes you out."

The blonde arched a brow. "Okay." A beat. "Where has your head been lately?"

"What do you mean?" She kicked at the swirls on the carpet.

"Look, I know you had a rough few days with all of the ooh stuff. But now it's like all you do is daydream." Caroline related with a fluff of her hair. "You stare off into space, and your eyes glaze over and sometimes you turn solid red. If I didn't know any better I'd think you had a secret boyfriend or something."

There was a snort. "I do not have a secret boyfriend."

"Maybe you should get one."

"Caroline."

"What? Elena has Stefan and I can have anyone I want. You should think about it, then we can all double date. Or... whatever a six person date would be."

"Between being psychic and my growing powers, I really don't have time for romance."

"When you meet the right guy, I bet you make time."

Slightly uncomfortable with the conversation, the witch plopped down into the nearest chair. "So what's up with you and Matt?"

"Nothing." The blonde continued to model. "He's a nice guy and we've been hanging out. That's all."

Bonnie smirked. "Are you sure?"

Caroline rolled her eyes playfully. "God, yes! I don't always have to be some kinda man-eater you know. Besides I've known Matt for like, ever. We're just good friends. And I think I need more good friends in my life."

_After what Damon put you through..._ Is what she felt like her friend wanted to add but didn't. "I agree and hey, if you like hanging out with Matt then that's cool."

The blonde smiled softly, and the conversation veered towards more clothes talk. By the time they were done shopping, Caroline had everything she needed for several new outfits, and _she_ felt like she had totally overspent by at least twenty dollars. Surprisingly no necklaces were in her purchases.

As she reached her car, she waved good-bye to Caroline and tossed her bags into her backseat with a yawn. She was just about to crawl behind the wheel when a lone character standing between two buildings caught her eye. _Damon..._ Even as she just thought his name, he smiled and tilted against the wall with his shoulder, lifting a hand to call her over. _Don't go. Don't go. Don't go._ However she couldn't resist and that left her shaken more than slowly moving towards him and places where the lights didn't fully reach.

"Good girl." He mused when she stood just footsteps away from him. "So, shopping huh? Hope you
bought something sexy for me."

She twitched. "A chastity belt for my neck."

He laughed. "Well properly motivated I'm sure I could get that off in no time."

Sighing, she folded her arms over her chest. "I know we're stuck with each other for whatever reason, but that doesn't mean—it doesn't mean you can just pop up around me whenever you want. What if Elena had caught that little stunt you pulled earlier in the flower shop?"

He grasped his heart as if it were aching. "Oh no! Not Elena! Why she'd tell Stefan and then him and his forehead would brood at me." Pause. "I don't care who sees what."

"Obviously. "I do. Elena would think I'm insane for even talking to you, and Caroline would never forgive me if she found out."

"Bonnie..." Kicking off from the wall, he took her hand and raked his fingers over her knuckles. "If it really means that much to you...I'll kill them both so it won't matter anymore."

Gasping, she jerked away and chastised herself for ever thinking a conventional conversation was possible with someone like him. "You're terrible." Shaking her head, she turned and began walking away.

"Am I this terrible in your dreams too?" He inquired rather aloof.

Her steps faltered, and she looked at him over her shoulder. "What?"

"You heard me." He smirked, suddenly in front of her, his very presence making her shiver.

"I..." It was all she could manage with his eyes locked on hers the way they were.

He started advancing on her, and even though she steeled herself not to budge, her feet unconsciously moved back until she felt the cold brick of the café building against her body. "Am I horrible when you're begging for me?" He leaned in, his lips so close to her ear that they brushed it as he spoke. "When you're begging me to make love to you? You pull me closer, and you whimper and moan and tremble until I'm deep inside of you."

It was getting hard to breathe. "I—I don't know what you're talking about."

Damon huffed, his fingers coming up to wrap some of her curls around them. "Oh, please. That I'm so innocent act won't fly with me. You might have other people fooled but I see the things you do to me in your head. The places you let me kiss and touch. If I were alive I'd blush."

Inhaling sharply, she commanded herself not to try to run. "Ho—stay out of my head."

"Gladly. Stop inviting me in and I will."

"Why would I ever invite someone like you into my head?"

"Oh c'mon. I've seen me. If I weren't dead I could be a model."

"The outside doesn't make up for what's lacking on the inside."

"Who needs compassion when you're pretty?"

"Why are you bothering me so much?"
Smiling, he smoothed a thumb over her slightly parted lips. "Simple, because I can. Since I can't kill you I have to get my entertainment somehow. And I was never a tv kinda guy. Besides you interest me."

His words made her scowl, his touches made her heartbeat accelerate. "In the same way Elena did?"

"Ooh don't wanna play seconds to your bestie?" He teased. She rolled her pretty green eyes and he chuckled. "No. It's not the same. What you and Elena have is very different."

Bonnie wondered what he meant but knew better than to ask. Not like she would get a straight answer anyway. Licking her lips, she stopped breathing when he pressed against her tightly, and she swore she could feel the amazing definition of his abs through the material of his shirt. She felt dizzy because of his proximity and grabbed his bicep, squeezing when his mouth descended to her pulse point and sucked. His tongue flicking in time with it's throbbing, the action making her knees weak. It's like she was back in the flower shop only this time Elena was not around to save her.

_Don't let him bite you! Push him away! Don't let him—ooh that feels good—no! Get a grip on yourself! Remember what he did to you!_

"N—no." Darting to the side, she stumbled away from him, her chest heaving up and down.

Releasing a rather aggravated puff of air, he ordered himself to remain calm. He was supposed to be following a plan…then again it wasn't his fault she was just so goddamn tantalizing. Not to mention this was the first time he had to _actually_ follow a set of silent rules. Could he really be blamed for wanting to screw her brains out as well as suck her dry when she was beaming porn into his brain at any given moment?

Maybe it would be easier to just take her now. Drag her into the alley, strip her naked and _take_ her. Feel all of that warm, soft skin sliding against his. Being able to bite anywhere he pleased—like the femoral artery on her no doubt silky thigh. It'd been ages since he'd done that. He really needed to start stopping and taste the blood a little.

"You know…” He began innocently, or as innocent as he could. "Our relationship would progress a lot faster if I could visit you at home. I mean since I doubt you'll show up at mine any time soon in nothing but a trench coat and a smile."

"What?" Letting the cool air calm her, she chuckled humorlessly. "Damon, we don't have a relationship. And even if we did I—there is no way I'd invite you in. Elena told me about that."

"Of course she did." Stoic. "But c'mon, don't tell me you don't like the sound of me creeping through your bedroom window and crawling into bed with you. Strictly wholesome, I swear."

Bonnie gave him a look that contained her shock and disapproval. "No. We're _connected_, not dating. I don't trust you."

"Ah, yes but if you invite me in and I don't kill you, _then_ you can trust me. We both know whatever this is between us, it's only gonna escalate. We might as well have some fun with it."

"Even if you didn't terrify me, it wouldn't just be about fun. I'm not that kinda girl."

Ending the discussion by walking away, she combed her fingers through her hair and headed for her car. She wouldn't lie in the safety of her mind; a part of her was curious as to what lay underneath his homicidal tendencies and snarky wit, but it wasn't strong enough to override her fear. At least not all the way.
He strutted behind her. "Honestly I'm a little hurt that you don't trust me. Have you forgotten how I saved you from that Patrick guy?"

She stopped once she reached the sidewalk. "I think we saved each other."

He shrugged. "Details? Unimportant. Fact is I could have left you there to die."

She scowled at him. "The only reason you lifted a finger to help me is because like you said, you don't share."

Smiling, he fiddled at the ring on his finger. "Mm. I guess that makes you mine."

"Or it makes you a stalker." Scratching at her head, she looked down to the ring. "We both know you have no right to harass me the way you are doing. And...if you think I'm stupid enough to think it's just about my blood, you're sadly mistaken. This probably has even less to do with me than I've figured out yet."

"You think too much." A beat. "Maybe I am what I am, and what I want from you is crystal clear. Perhaps you're just scared to admit it because you wanna give it to me. Badly. Especially if your dreams are any indication."

Rubbing her forehead, she exhaled. "Things don't just become true because you want them to be. You're not a God, Damon."

A look she had seen in the cemetery crossed his face, and for a moment she thought he would try to viciously bite her again. Her eyes flitted to her car and she wondered if she could reach the passenger door before he struck, but then he grinned. Widely as a matter of fact.

"You see that's where you are wrong. And I'm going to prove it to you. You're going to invite me in."

"I'm really not."

"Ah, yes you are." He glanced to a young brunette as she walked by, digging in her purse for her cell phone. Suddenly his hand was around her throat, squeezing so tightly that she couldn't scream. Her big round eyes were frightened and confused, no doubt wondering what was going on. "Or..." He looked to her white nametag. "Bethany here is going to have a very tragic accident."

Bonnie blinked at him. There was no way he was serious. "What are you doing?"

Damon stared at her, his brows furrowed. "Proving a point. Invite me in...or I kill her."

She sucked in a sharp breath. "Yo—you wouldn't."

"Um, have you met me?" He chuckled lowly. "I'll snap her neck—ask Vicki—oops. Nevermind. Or maybe just make her a quick snack."

"Let. Her. Go." She enunciated each word. "Now."

He smirked and dug his nails into Bethany's flesh, making tiny red tinged crescent shaped marks in her skin. "I could take her head right off if I really wanted to. And I will. You wanna know why?" He lowered his voice. "She is nothing to me. Just a toy in pretty paper for me to unwrap and play with. And throw away like all of the others. So I guess question is Bonnie, do you want her death on your hands?"
Tears blinded her vision and she looked away as a jagged pain flared to life in her temples. Her blood was running cold and the sound of her heart thudding against her rip cage rung loudly in her ears. All of the animal attacks around town had been his doing, even Mr. Tanner. She was almost added to the list as well. But letting him into her home was not only putting herself in danger but her father as well. Could she do that? Could she sacrifice her own well being for a complete stranger? And what if this happened to be the one time he was bluffing?

"Her life going once…” He began in an auctioneer voice.

"Damon…” She said pleadingly.

"Her life going twice…” He made Bethany's head wiggle from side to side.

"I—please just let her—" She whispered brokenly.

"Sold! To the grim reaper for zero dollars!” Baring his fangs, the fury in his eyes making them dark, he brought them down fast towards his captive's neck.

"No!” Bonnie screamed, her entire body trembling.

He cocked his head to the side. "Yeeees?"

Sniffling, she wiped at her face angrily. "I…invite you…in."

"To my home."

"To…my home."

Releasing Bethany—who looked like she was about to pass out—he met her startled gaze. "You don't remember anything. This never happened."

Blinking, she jerked slightly. "Okay." And then she was walking off, none the wiser.

Bonnie glowered at him. "You son of a bitch."

"Ooh I like it when you talk dirty." Damon stepped closer, stroking her neck with his index finger. "This is going to be interesting, you'll see. Sweet dreams."

She shivered but managed to hold together until he was gone and she was in the safety of her car. The sobs threatened to come but she held them at bay. She would not let Damon Salvatore control her life or ruin it. She was on her way to becoming a powerful witch—hopefully—and she was not going to just give up because he appeared to have the upper hand.

She controlled her life.

She controlled her destiny.

~Fin~
Heartbeat

Chapter Summary

There is something out there even more dangerous than Damon. For Bonnie, this doesn't bode well at all.

Chapter Notes

So here is another new ficlet and this one contains a slightly altered scene from The Turning Point. What happened at the very end of the episode didn't happen here.

Heartbeat

Damon Salvatore leaned against the threshold to the door of his brother's room, watching idly as he rummaged through his many drawers and books with false insides, apparently looking for something important. He shoved his hands into the pockets of his tight, dark denim jeans, his handsome face brandishing an amused expression as it usually did when it came to Stefan.

Stefan. Poor, poor trying to be something he'll never be again Stefan. He wasn't sure if by him being the good guy he had to be the bad guy or vice versa, but it seemed to work out for them. They were playing their roles to a tee, however he was the only one having fun with his. It was such a versatile part for him. Manipulating the little humans like pawns in a chess game that actually wasn't boring for once. Not to mention feeding on them for years had given him a set of very impressive powers. He couldn't wait to eat more and see where he ended up in a few decades time.

He kinda hoped for telekinesis. Floating the happy meals on legs to him rather than hunting them down could be entertaining. Though the hunt was gratifying in its own way. Hearing them scream or beg for their life while he sucked them dry…ah memories.

Meanwhile there was his younger brother with his judging eyebrows and steel jaw, denying the best part of him. The part that contained the power and the thrills, but he supposed once a wimp always a wimp.

"Looking for something in particular?" He inquired aloofly.

Stefan glanced to him. "As if I'd tell you."

Damon smirked. "That hurts me that you don't trust me brother. Well actually it doesn't. It doesn't even sting."

He was for the most part ignored. "I thought you were going to leave town..."

"I was but then I decided to hang around for a while. See what trouble I could get you into." The older man grinned. "Too bad I can't leave a trail of bodies anymore. You should be thanking me by the way for getting the ominous Council off our backs."
"Yes, thank you for using and killing my best friend in an attempt to save yourself as usual." Stefan rolled his eyes, clearly annoyed already by the exchange.

His brother pouted. "Wow. It almost sounds like you aren't being sincere."

A snort. "Your staying wouldn't have anything to do with Bonnie, would it?"

Ice blue eyes twinkled with mischief. "Maybe. Speaking of her, you can relax. I can't compel her or…bend her to my will as much as I regret it. Her nifty powers see to that."

Stefan sighed; he knew Damon was still sniffing around her. But the question was why? "Haven't you caused the people of this town enough pain?"

"No. I still fully intend to make them pay for what they did." Damon strolled into the room, smoothing his fingers over the many journals on his brother's desk. "I just have…other interests for now."

"So what, you're done with trying to free Katherine?"

"I didn't say that."

"You haven't said much of anything lately."

"Yeah well, we haven't been the confiding in each other type in over a century. Isn't it more fun when I just spring stuff on you?"

"I know what this is about. You're trying to harness her powers for yourself, aren't you? You think you can use them without the crystal to break open the tomb."

"Stefan, Stefan, Stefan…it's not always about power. Sometimes it's about pleasure—something you would realize if you got laid every once in a decade. I'd check down there if I were you…make sure it still works."

"Leave Bonnie alone."

"Or what? What are you gonna do?"

"I'll think of something."

"You know, I have to wonder why you care so much about what I do…or don't do with Bonnie. You have Elena…"

"And Bonnie is Elena's best friend, and I don't want you doing to her what you did to Caroline. Or worse."

Nodding, he bit his bottom lip. "Ah well I can assure you what I plan to do with Bonnie is nothing like what I did with Caroline."

Stefan glared at him, his jaw set. "I'm warning you Damon, stay away from her. I spared your life once but I can't promise to do it again." Finding whatever he was looking for, he shoved it into his pocket and stalked from the room.

Damon chuckled lowly and shook his head, closing his eyes. If his brother only knew… Even now he could feel her presence simmering softly under his skin, like an itch he just couldn't reach. A pleasurable itch of course. Sometimes he'd be just sitting in his car with the top down, watching random people go about their daily lives and it would hit him—her scent—and he'd have to grip the
steering wheel to retain some small semblance of control. But it was just so sweet and perfect, like succulent fruit he couldn’t wait to sink his teeth into.

He understood that in more ways than one that is what she was. This…supposedly forbidden fruit on a supposedly forbidden tree that he was not supposed to think about eating. Heh…oh how these thoughts were heading straight into the gutter. But he couldn’t exactly be blamed when she was so… he wasn’t sure there was a word to do justice to what he felt where she was concerned. Maybe just a sound. A throaty, guttural sound from deep inside that made your stomach tighten in the anticipation of what you knew was to come.

Mmm.

That kinda sound.

While he now had complete access to her house, he hadn't yet been inside. He wasn't content watching her through the window by any means, but the cat and mouse game was just too much fun to ruin at the moment. He liked knowing that he made her squirm; yet she couldn't do a damn thing about it. A part of him figured the dreams would stop because of his…less than chivalrous way of getting invited in, but they hadn't. They were still as filthy yet entertaining as ever. And usually of the same formula.

Long black hair fanning across his pillows. Big green eyes wide in surprise while slender fingers caught in the hair at the nape of his neck, holding and tugging in vain. Soft whimpers flowing from pouty lips, turning into high-pitched whines the harder he thrust…the deeper he drove…the faster he swirled his lithe hips. And her voice barely able to make a sentence, panting his name in broken whispers that begged him to stop and never stop at the same time.

He feared if he didn't hear Bonnie beg out loud soon, he'd lose his mind.

Twitching, he slicked his tongue across his bottom lip. Damn, he'd gone and made himself hungry again. It was so frustrating having to feed and then wipe his victims. He never felt full anymore and he flat out refused to try the rodent diet that Stefan had managed to stick to. There was such a difference between taking a few sips and draining someone. Not to mention while still delicious, blood didn't have the same flavor it used to, especially when compared to Bonnie's. It fulfilled him but it didn't satisfy him.

Though for years now he'd been perpetually unsatisfied so that was nothing new. But…it was nice to have something else on his brain besides Katherine. Or someone else as the case was. He didn't comprehend his entire fixation with the cute witch, and he wasn't ready to admit that perhaps it was more complex than sex and blood, but he could acknowledge it was there.

"Eh." Frowning, he left the room and jogged down the winding staircase, grabbing his car keys from the tray by the door. All this thinking was killing his buzz.

It was time for an early dinner.

~*~

Sighing deeply, Bonnie Bennett splashed cold water from the sink onto her face, staring at her reflection as droplets cascaded down towards her neck. She grabbed a few harsh brown paper towels and dabbed at her cheeks before balling them up and tossing them into the trash. The bathroom was cool and quiet with the usual sound of dripping coming from somewhere near the back stalls. She was totally alone with only her thoughts to comfort her, and so far they were not doing the job. Life was just—it was just hectic and yet nothing was really happening.
To be honest she'd expected Damon to barge into her room every night since being "invited", but that had not happened. It surprised her and un-nerved her in a way she couldn't explain. It was like she just wanted to get it over with, whatever it was. She'd sit on her bed and stare at her door with butterflies in her stomach, wondering when he'd appear. Wondering what he'd do to her once he was inside. And each morning she would wake up with the realization he hadn't shown, thankful and regretful of that fact.

He still watched her though, that she knew for sure. Why it had never occurred to her that he could control crows or become the crow, she wasn't certain but now she knew. Sometimes one would just sit on her windowsill and gaze in; its little head twitching like it was having a seizure. Needless to say she no longer undressed with her shades open.

At times she could feel herself being lulled into a false sense of normalcy but she figured that was part of his game. Make her think he'd moved on and then bam! Get the jump on her when she least expected it. It was hard however, being on guard twenty-four seven. Almost as hard as denying the emotions that had started to rise because of the dreams. Over and over the same basic scenario played out in her head while she slept, and each time she awoke craving the touch of a man who'd nearly killed her. Each time she awoke to things in her room scattered about from the power seeping out of her as Damon eased inside of her.

As frightening and nearly sickening it was to think, she was pretty sure she had a crush on Damon Salvatore. It didn't make sense but nothing else in her world did either. Why should romantic entanglements be any different?

Pulling a tube of soft pink lipstick from her pocket, she slowly smoothed it onto her lips. Damon was her dirty little secret. No one was any wiser about their…whatever though she thought her Grams was beginning to suspect something. She'd questioned her about the whereabouts of the necklace after she stopped wearing it—because Emily destroyed it—and mentioned feeling a rush of very powerful magic on the night it happened.

"There is a dark presence around you, Bonnie." She said, staring with a critical eye. "I see a black bird with shiny wings enfolding you. Is there anything you wish to tell me?"

Bonnie accepted that right then and there she should have explained the entire situation, but she had not. And part of that was because she didn't want her Grams telling her to stay away from the vampire. The little voice in her head was already whispering that particular sentence every day. Why couldn't she do it? Why were they being pulled together like magnets? Surely there was a greater purpose than—than—the physical.

It was stupid anyway. All of it. Damon had this major hard on for some vampire chick in a tomb. This one hundred and something year old hard on which didn't just go away because his plans were derailed or he drank some of her blood. Well, a lot of her blood but surely that was beside the point. He wanted this Katherine and anything he said or did to her was just a way to get what he wanted. Right?

She wouldn't give in. She couldn't give in, fear was not going to let her.

"I'm telling you..." Echoed the voice of a brunette as she entered the restroom with her friend in tow. "They said it was another animal attack. A wild dog or something. It's getting to the point where I don't even wanna walk to my car anymore."

"Someone really needs to do something." The friend responded. "Maybe there is a case of rabies or something going around."
Bonnie swallowed hard and capped her lipstick. Animal attacks a.k.a. vampire attacks. She remembered quite clearly when Elena told her the whole story; that it had in fact been Damon who killed all of those people and then set up some Lexi to take the fall. But why go to all of that trouble just to screw it up again? Or perhaps he wasn't the one doing the attacking. That thought freaked her out more than the first. Could another member of the undead society be in Mystic Falls, and if so, who was it?

Frowning, she hurried out of the door and jerked, nearly bumping into Stefan as he came around the corner. He smiled warmly at her, steadying her with both hands on her shoulders. "Sorry. I wasn't looking where I was going."

He continued to smile. "That's alright. Actually I was hoping to…run into you."

She chuckled lightly at his attempt at a joke. "What's up?"

Glancing around, he pulled her over to a semi private corner. "I wanted to give you this." Digging into his pocket, he pulled out a lovely silver bracelet made of different trinkets.

She blinked. "Um, why?"

He lowered his voice. "I know that Damon has been bothering you. I'm not sure why but…" He sighed, shaking his head. "I can't help but feel somewhat responsible. He came back to Mystic Falls because I did…and now you are on his radar."

"He—he hasn't…done anything." She whispered. It was nearly the truth. "Besides I can take care of myself. Mostly."

Stefan nodded slowly. "I know. I know that you are very powerful, but you haven't mastered everything yet and Damon adapts quickly. In this bracelet is an herb that will keep him from being able to compel you as long as you wear it. It's not much but it'll help."

Her eyes drifted down to it. "Does Elena know? About all of this I mean."

"No. She just wants you to be safe."

"You can't tell her, Stefan. I don't want to worry her."

"She's already worried."

"Well she shouldn't be. I can handle Damon."

"Do you know why he's so interested in you?"

"No. He said it has something to do with my blood…"

"Hm. And he hasn't tried to attack you since that night in the woods?"

"No."

"Well either way, you need to stay away from Damon."

"I know but he just…keeps showing up."

Opening her hand, he dropped the jewelry inside. "Don't take it off."

Exhaling, she popped a loose the clasp and slipped it on. "I won't."
Smiling, he glanced to the clock. "Make sure to tell Elena I gave it to you if you see her." And then he was walking off.

Bonnie leaned against the lockers, slouching her shoulders. She looked up to the large blue banner proclaiming something about a career fair and rubbed the bridge of her nose, feeling a headache coming on. She was wading through a sea of lies and only by telling someone the truth would she sink or swim. It was time to come clean to her best friend and make some head or tails to the situation. Yes, Elena would probably think she was insane but she wouldn't judge her. After all Stefan might be the angel to the devil on her shoulder, but he was still a vampire. He still craved blood and fought against his true nature.

She wouldn't really bash her for her dreams when she was doing it live and in color. Or would be eventually.

Pulling down the bottom of her gray shirt, she toughened herself against any and all repercussions and sought out her friend.

~*~

I chickened out. I can't believe I chickened out.

Standing in the expansive gym a few hours later, watching as students and parents milled about, checking out different booths, Bonnie scowled at herself furiously. She'd been so close to revealing the truth to Elena and then backed out at the last minute. God, why was she such a wimp when it came to Damon? He was like the guy you knew you couldn't bring home for dinner, but you kept seeing him anyway cause you had to. Cause anything else would be unacceptable.

I will tell her though. I just have to…drag up the nerve.

Smiling at Caroline's mother—the Sheriff—she rubbed the end of her nose to stop a sneeze. So far the career fair seemed to be going nicely, but she hadn't checked anything out yet. She had no real idea what she wanted to do after high school accept go to college. If she lived that long of course.

"Ooh dear. Bonnie!" Mrs. Lewis, the chubby English teacher hurried over to her. "Can you do me a favor please?"

"Um, sure." She shrugged. "What's wrong?"

"We are almost out of sign up sheets for the journalism table. Could you be a sweetheart and make us more copies?" Mrs. Lewis held up the white sheet of paper. "I know, I know we could use any old paper but this is special for that area."

Chuckling, she nodded. Mrs. Lewis was the kinda person who was just so nice, she didn't wanna say no to her. "Sure. I'll be right back." Taking the sample, she threaded her way through the crowd and down the hall. The office with the copier was on the other side of the school, but she didn't mind the trek. The lights were on but dim, and she could hear the voices of the people drifting through the walls.

She tried the knob and smiled to find it unlocked, pushing the door open with her palm. She hummed as she made her way to the large white machine, itching her neck before putting the paper into place. She wasn't sure how many copies to make, so she decided to just wing it. Maybe thirty would be enough. Punching in the number, she huffed and waited.

The device hummed and began to do its job, the sound turning into a repeating monotone of swishes and beeps. Bonnie nibbled on her bottom lip, her mind drifting when heavy footsteps began to
ricochet off the smooth tiled walls. They were slow and methodical, as if the person was taking their own sweet time to arrive at their destination and knew exactly where they were going. A shiver ran down her spine and she swallowed hard, feeling the thump thump of her heart come in faster drones. She was safe though. There were many people around and nothing could happen to her. It was probably the janitor anyway.

*Or Damon.*

Frowning, she rolled her eyes and focused on her task. Yes it had to be Damon because only he would pick this time to bother her once again. It was like his goal in life—get her alone and patronize her.

"Hello."

*That is not Damon's voice.* Turning, she blinked. "Logan Fell. Wh—what are you doing here?"

He smoothed a hand over his brown hair, his eyes traveling over her body in a way that troubled her.

"You're Bonnie, right? Elena's friend?"

"Yes." She said warily. "Why?"

He smiled. "I saw you come this way and…well I wanted to talk to you."

"Why?" She arched a brow. She couldn't ever in her life remember having a conversation with him before.

Logan folded his arms over his chest. "You know Damon Salvatore, don't you? You know what he is?"

*Be cool.* "What he is? I'm not sure I follow."

When he was suddenly in front of her, moving at a speed no human could possibly pull off, she felt the air twist into a knot in her lungs. "You know what I'm talking about. I've seen you two together. I've seen him staring at your house at night." A beat. "How do I become like him?"

She swallowed thickly. "Seems to me like you've already got that covered."

He chuckled and placed a hand on either side of her, trapping her between him and the copier. "How do I become a day walker?"

"I—I don't know." She whispered. "I don't know how he does it."

"Hm." He drawled. "You don't smell like the rest of them. Why is that?"

Silence.

"You know this whole vampire thing is tricky. There is no user manual. I just know I want blood all the time." He revealed slowly. "And something is telling me yours would be extra sweet." His eyes darkened around the sides and he leaned in closer to her neck.

Panicking, she screamed and ducked under his arm, shuddering as a rush of heat exploded out of her body. He lunged at her but the copier got to him first, slamming into his chest with brute force and pinning him to the wall. Bonnie didn't know who was more surprised by it really, Logan or her. She pulled herself up off the floor and watched as he grunted and pushed against the appliance, his face contorted into a mask of fury. Not waiting around to see what happened when he eventually got
loose, she took off running.

She skidded back into the gym and made a beeline for where Elena and Stefan stood. "He—I—oh god."

"Bonnie, what's wrong?" Elena asked concerned. "Is it Damon? Did he do something to you?"

She shook her head. "No. Logan Fell, he—"

"Wait. Logan Fell is here?" Stefan interrupted her, and she nodded. "Elena, I want you and Jenna to stay away from him, okay? Promise me."

"Yeah, yeah I promise." She said without hesitation. After he was out of earshot—not that it mattered though since he had super hearing—she turned to her friend. "What's wrong?"

"Logan's a vampire." Bonnie replied, still shaken. "He tried to attack me in the principle's office."

"Oh my god." Elena grabbed her wrists. "Are you okay? Ho—how did you get away?"

The witch squeezed her eyes closed. "I don't know. This is just getting too weird for me."

Sighing, the brunette did not release her grip. "C'mon. Let's go find Jenna before he does. I think I saw her talking to Alaric. Who would turn Logan Fell into a vampire?"

Good question.

~*~

It was one thing to shoot him several times with wooden bullets when he was just trying to get to the bottom of a few questions. However it was entirely another to flounce around afterwards in public like you had no cares in the world. While Damon gave Logan points for style and wanting to ruffling the Sheriff's feathers for tossing him aside like he were nothing after thinking he were dead, it didn't overwhelm his blinding urge for vengeance.

Revenge was his motive for helping save Caroline. Revenge was his motive for shooting Logan with his gun with those same bullets. Revenge and being pissed off were his motives for thinking about taking the tire iron in his grasp and bashing the young vampire's skull in.

"How can you side with them?"

Damon smirked down at Logan Fell, gently caressing the black rod in his hands. He frowned at his question, holding the iron like it was a bat. "I don't side with anyone. You piss me off, I want you dead." A beat. "Who turned you?"

Logan tilted his head back, cringing in pain from the wooden bullets in his body. "I don't know"

"Oh well." The other vampire said, lifting his arms back, ready to strike. "You're screwed."

"Wait!" Logan waved his arm frantically. "I do know!"

"You're lying."

"You think you're the only one who wants to get into that tomb? Underneath the old church…" Narrowing his brow, Damon leaned in closer. "If you are lying to me I will end you."
"I'm not lying. There is another way to break the spell and your little girlfriend is the key." He panted.

"What do you know about her?" Damon asked meticulously.

Logan shrugged. "I saw her at the school. I tried to bite her and she did something to me. I guess that's why the others call her special."

His fingers tightened around the pole, his face twitching. He hated it when people tried to play with his things. "Try again and one of those bullets is going into your skull. Got it?"

"Yeah yeah, okay. Look we can help you." Sirens sounded in the instance, getting closer and closer. "Meet me at the old church."

Intrigued and wanting to hear more, Damon wet his lips. "Take me down. Make it look real, make it look real."

Of course he didn't need to tell Logan that. As the police car roared nearer, Logan lashed out and slammed him hard into the back of the silver SUV before sprinting away. Damon grunted as he hit and fell to the ground, reminding himself to kick his ass later just cause.

"Where is she?!" Asked the sheriff in a panic, inquiring about her daughter Caroline.

"She's okay." He winced, slowly standing. "My brother's taking her home." As tears of relief came to the older woman's eyes, he managed to look quite distressed. "I'm sorry sheriff, I just wasn't strong enough."

Smoothing a hand across her nose, she nodded. "It's okay. You—you saved my daughter. I'm gonna go call this in."

Rubbing his arm through his black leather jacket, he nodded. "I'll have a look around, maybe I'll be able to find him again or something."

"Be careful." She warned.

*Always am.* Tilting his head, he climbed into the unmanned SUV and drove off. A few weeks ago if you had asked him what his reasons would be for letting someone like Logan go, he would have said without wavering that it was to free Katherine. Now? Now there were other mumbles in his mind and it was very disconcerting. He'd always known what he wanted throughout the years and that had been Katherine. Even now she was what he probably coveted the most. But a certain little dark haired witch kept popping up when he least expected her to.

The thought of Logan touching Bonnie—let alone feeding from her—made his blood boil. Maybe it was their link or maybe he was just the possessive type, either way he could begrudgingly say that he didn't want anything bad to happen to her…unless he was doing it of course. At least she was all right, however he wished he could have been there to save her. No doubt it would have given him major pointers towards getting into her bed. Later he'd check on her and make sure she was okay. For pointers.

So Fell had friends who wanted to get into the crypt, and they planned to use Bonnie to do it. But how? Without the pendant there was no way; it was magically sealed. Though he had a sneaking suspicion when it all came down to it, blood would be the answer. Her blood…probably all of it. Either way he'd get the information from Logan and then perhaps kill him. Decide what to do with it later.
"Where is Logan? He was supposed to meet us here." Asked a dignified black man in a gray suit.

Damon eyed the man from his place on the broken shard of foundation. "One, Logan was staked by someone who wasn't me. Two, who the hell are you and how did you know I'd be here?"

The man smiled. "My name is Nicholas and I am a or was a friend of Logan. He contacted me after you showed interest in meeting with us."

"So you turned him?" Damon questioned.

A pause. "No, but I am affiliated with the one who did."

"Why do you want to get into the tomb?"

"We have family inside."

"So you want to stage a family reunion? That's what this is all about?"

"In a matter of speaking. We wish to return this town to its former glory, and there are people in the crypt who can help."

"Hm, I do like the sound of these people getting what they deserve. How do you plan to release them?"

"The witch, Bonnie. She is a descendant of the one who confined them."

Ah. Right. "So what? There is another spell that I don't know about?"

Nicholas regarded him with a smirk. "While I don't question your commitment to the woman who turned you that lies in suspension in the mystical hold, I do wonder if your heart is in the right place."

A snort. "What is that supposed to mean?"

"We know you are growing fonder of the witch each and every day. You've become protective of her." He said matter of factly. "There are those that question whether you will be able to do what is required when the time comes."

Damon rolled his head on his shoulders, listening as his neck cracked. "Yeah, who are you to question me? Do you know who you are talking to here?"

Nicholas grinned. "Do you?"

"I don't really much care right now. Your nice suit doesn't scare me. Fact is I do what I want, when I want." The younger vampire snapped. "And I don't need some stock broker coming into town and acting like my father. Me and authority figures never end well."

Nicholas sighed and unclasped his hands from behind his back. "I told them you were going to be difficult."

He pouted. "Ooh, so what do you want a cookie?"

"No." The black vampire mused. "But I can't have you interrupting my plans either so..."
Without warning, he leapt high into the air and came down hard, punching Damon in the face and knocking him to the ground. Before he had time to recover or react, Nicholas was on him, hitting him repeatedly about the chest and face, his ring causing tears in the skin that healed minutes later. It's obvious that he was older and there by stronger, and not shy about using it to his advantage. Clamping down on a jagged tree root that shot up half out of the ground, he yanked it free with a grunt.

"Shame. We could have used a man like you on our side. You would have enjoyed the massacre that's to come." Nicholas laughed evilly. "Good-bye Mr. Salvatore." He brought the root down hard, stabbing it directly into Damon's heart, making him scream violently.

"Damon!" Bonnie shrieked and jolted into a sitting position on the couch, her chest heaving up and down. She ran both hands through her silky black hair but she couldn't stop them from shaking. So real. It had all seemed so damn real!

Oh God. She thought. What if it was?

Without wasting any time, she jammed her feet into her shoes and sprinted out of the front door, heading into the woods. Lacking the light of the full moon, she stumbled into bushes and felt low branches scratch her cheek but she soldiered on, running as fast as she could. She came to a sudden stop, nearly tripping at the sight from her dream. At the sight of Nicholas straddling Damon, the tree root in his hands and raised high, preparing to strike.

Reacting first and thinking later, she lashed out at the older vampire with her powers, sending a large rock into the back of his head.

Nicholas fell over with a grunt, whirling around angrily to see what had happened. "You!"

"Bonnie, get outta here!" Damon commanded, trying to get his wits about him. "Run! Now!"

She took a step back but it was too late, Nicholas was already diving for her. He sailed through the air like an arrow, his hands aimed at her throat. And then something odd occurred; it was as if a door in her mind unlocked and suddenly she just knew what to do.

"Incendia!" She yelled.

A diagram of fire roared to life, drowning out the sounds of Nicholas' screaming, as he was burned alive. Suspended in the flames, he flailed and tried to free himself but there was no use. In minutes time he was nothing more than a black pile of ashes on the forest floor.

Light headed, Bonnie collapsed to the ground like a dead weight, taking the beautiful orange and yellow flames with her. She groaned and slowly looked up, coughing as smoke filtered into the air from the smoldering pentagram. Apparently whatever Emily had drawn could still be invoked if one knew what they were doing.

The next series of moments were acted out robotically and in silence. Bonnie gathered her strength and helped Damon up, walking with him back to the manor. They entered and she followed him soundlessly up the stairs, marveling at the beauty of the furniture and vintage paintings on the wall.

Rubbing at her chilly upper arms, she glanced around his room, alarmed by how accurate she'd gotten it in her dreams. Considering the fact she'd never been in this house before let alone his bedroom, she wondered if it was some part of his mind transferring onto her own.

In the background she vaguely noticed that he'd ripped off his shirt and was checking himself out in the mirror for damage. His jeans were so low on his hips, struggling to cling to his narrow hipbones.
He was pale and gorgeous, eternally so, and it caused a flare of heat to bloom in her stomach. It wasn't fair that she wanted him so badly. It wasn't fair and it didn't make sense, but it was just a fact. She wanted him and although she was scared, she wasn't sure she would be able to keep denying him forever.

"How did you know I was there?"

His voice broke through her thoughts. "I just did."

Damon faced her, quite amused. "And you came? You like me. Admit it. You like me."

She couldn't stop the smile that twitched on her lips. "Shut up." A sigh. "Anyway you look like you can take it from here so, I'm gonna go."

He shook his head and stepped closer. "No I think you need to come and check my wounds."

"You heal fast." She snorted lowly. "You probably don't even have any wounds."

Grinning, he nodded. "You should check anyway, just to make sure." Before she could respond, he grabbed her hand and pressed it to his chest.

Bonnie wet her lips slowly, feeling as his flesh began to steal the heat of her palm. She wasn't sure what she had expected; perhaps overly cold or even hard, but he was soft and slightly warm. Normal. Her fingertips slid slowly down the slight indent to his stomach, figure eight-ing around his navel. They trembled as they shifted to his arm, crawling over his elbow to his bicep where she squeezed. She knew her cheeks were probably crimson but there was nothing she could do about that. It just felt so right to be touching him. Like something inside of her had finally found what it'd been looking for.

God that was a terrifying thought.

"What's happening to us?" She asked softly, holding to his shoulder for support. Her knees were suddenly very weak.

"I don't know, but I like it." He wiggled his brows at her. "And something tells me you do too."

"I'm scared." She whispered honestly. "Of you. Of what I'm feeling. Of all of it."

He shrugged lightly. "Maybe you should be. Though I doubt that will stop anything."

"He's more than likely right. "Just because we feel a certain way doesn't mean we have to...give in. Be slaves to our...urges."

Damon chuckled and pulled her closer, molding her body to his. His hands traveled down her back to her behind, cupping it. "Are you kidding me? Giving into our urges is the best part. We gotta give in to our urges."

Her eyes flitted up to his face; always with the damn smirking. "I kinda hate you."

"Mm yeah, I often cause that reaction in people." Yanking her hair to the side, he flicked his tongue across her thudding pulse, making her give a stifled moan. "That one too."

I have got to get out of this room and now. "I have to go." Summoning up all of her willpower, she wrenched herself free and made a beeline for the door, her heartbeat so loud in her ears that it drowned out all other sound. It was one of the reasons she didn't hear him move until she was
pressed against the wall, until she felt his hands under her shirt, touching the burning skin of her back. "Damon…"

"You want me." His voice was almost menacing. "It's like a craving, isn't it? That's why you dream about it so much. When we're apart it's low, just a gentle hum in the back of your mind. But when we're near each other it's roaring. It's all consuming heat—the yearning to have me close—to have me touching every single part of you that I possibly can. Every whimper and every moan is for me only. You're already mine, Bonnie, we should just make it official."

Staring at an invisible spot on his arm as she trembled and forced air into her lungs, she knew he was right. The more she was around him, the stronger the dreams would come at night. She wanted him, god did she want him. However she also wanted the reason why she wanted him so badly. Was it simply lust or something deeper? Something that would actually benefit them both in the end?

Swallowing hard, she cleared her throat. "And what do you want? What do you feel when I'm near you?"

He tipped up her chin. "I feel…possessed. Overwhelming thirst for not just your blood, but your body as well. It's a little alarming considering it evolved from trying to kill you. I'm going with it though."

"Until it wanes away and you try to kill me again?"

"Just until it wanes away…"

Bonnie didn't believe him as far as she could throw him. "I have to go."

He pouted, not releasing her. "I'm not getting in your pants tonight, am I?"

A laugh bubbled out before she could stop it. "No Damon." *Shouldn't you be adding "you never are" to that sentence?*

Sighing dramatically, he nodded as if in defeat. "Okay. Guess I'll have to settle for this for now…" She was about to ask what he meant, but he didn't give her time. Instead he swooped down and captured her lips with his, kissing her passionately.

Not fighting her instinct, she wrapped her arms around his neck, threading her fingers into the air at the nape of his neck. His mouth was surprisingly gentle but demanding as well, asking for everything that it wanted without a hint of shame or apprehension. His tongue swirled and rolled, coaxing hers to do the same and she was helpless to do anything but comply. It was as if he was sucking the very breath from her, making her love every minute of it.

Which she was. Of course he had years and years of practice under his belt so why wouldn't he be an amazingly awesome kisser? Why wouldn't he know that sucking on her tongue the way he was doing now made tiny little shivers dance along her spine? Why wouldn't he understand that arching her against him, grinding just so would make her whimper and claw at the back of his shoulders?

*It would be so easy to just…give in. But maybe it's not supposed to be easy. Maybe that's the whole point. "Da…"* He swallowed the rest of her words, and she let him for a few minutes more before trying again. "Da—Damon…"

Grunting, he lifted his head, wondering why he was actually listening to her. He'd have to think about that later. Why he didn't just throw her over his shoulder and toss her onto the bed. "Yeah yeah, whatever."
She smiled softly and left with a small wave that was so innocent, he was sure it turned his balls blue. Damon Salvatore had no problems getting girls into his bed, whether by natural means or un-natural, so he was at a loss as to why he wasn't doing the same with Bonnie. Yes he couldn't compel her, but he had an inkling that if pressed, she would have cracked. So, why wasn't he pressing? Why was he being…nice?

Frowning, he moved over to his window and glanced down just in time to see her heading off down the street. "I don't know what you and your old great grand witch did to me, but believe me when I say I intend to find out…"

~Fin~
Dear Agony

Chapter Summary

Bonnie learns some startling truths about herself and misery loving company.

Dear Agony

On a scale of wrong things to do, Bonnie Bennett was sure that being in Damon Salvatore's room, lounging across his bed was probably a glaring ten. It was stupid and reckless, but they had important things to discuss, and they couldn't just meet in public for conversation. Everyone who knew the situation would wonder what the hell was up, and ask a lot of questions. She wasn't ready to try to explain any of it yet since it still didn't make sense to her either. She just knew she wanted him and wanted to be around him. Getting her fix appeared smarter than denying it and letting it grow bigger and bigger.

Sighing, she sat up and smoothed a hand across his sheets, gazing at his profile where he stood staring out of the window. He looked deep in thought, his lips forming a tight line as his eyes stared off into the twilight of the evening. It was almost a shame for someone so gorgeous to be evil. In an age when beauty mattered so much to people, she could see how he'd manage to charm his way into their lives. They'd never suspect someone so beautiful to house a heart so dark. And yet she had a feeling Damon was posturing more than he wanted to let on. He could feel...he just chose to bury it deep where no one would ever see it. Perhaps that had more to do with Katherine than being the so-called wicked vampire.

Folding his arms over his chest, he rubbed the bridge of his nose. "Have you ever heard of the Council?"

She tilted her head to the side. "Just the Founders Council. Why?"

He turned and strolled over, sitting on the edge of the bed. "Apparently they are the ones who want to kill all vampires."

A brow arched. "And you wanna find out who they are and kill them first?"

"In less words, yes." He grinned at her expression. "Or torture them for a while. Whichever happy accident happens first."

She shook her head. "Damon, did it ever occur to you that you could lay low? Blend in?"

"Ooh sounds boring." His face scrunched up. "Does laying low include not feeding on humans?"

"Yes."

"Yeaaah, not gonna happen. See without human blood I will start to get weak—if I had a different forehead I'd be like Stefan. And if I'm weak, how will I protect you?"

She picked at his bedspread idly, not meeting his penetrating eyes. Even though he was probably being facetious, it just sounded nice when he said it. "Protect me from what? You're the only one that I know of that has actively tried to kill me."
The handsome vampire smirked and tucked strands of her hair behind her ear. "Mmm yes, that you *know* of."

Bonnie snorted lightly. "Haven't I saved your life twice now? I think I can look after myself."

He shrugged and fell sideways, propping his head up with his hand. "Against one vampire, probably. What would you do if there were more of them? Not sure your little parlor tricks will work."

"And you could take on two vampires older than you?" She asked, admiring the length of his body. "Nicholas was close to staking you."

A frown creased his forehead. "Small set back. Besides you know why he turned on me…"

That she did. The accuracy of her dream scared and comforted her. She was thankful that he didn't just hand her over to Nicholas in an attempt get the tomb open, but it also meant their bond was stronger than ever. And neither knew where it was going or what it would eventually become. But it was more than that for her. Deep down while she did—maybe enjoy was the wrong word since it was more of a necessity really—deep down while she recognized that she needed to be around Damon at times, she just couldn't trust him. He could turn on her at any moment so her guard had to be marginally up.

No matter how badly she wanted to close her eyes and let the tide take her where it would.

Rubbing her cheek, she shifted and lay down, her legs hanging off the side of the bed. "Is Stefan coming back any time soon?"

Damon smirked as he slid closer, resting his chin to her upper arm. "Why? Scared he might catch us necking or something? I could lock the door if you want."

"And prevent my only means of escape? No thank you." She teased. "It's just—no one would understand us hanging out. Not even for pow wow reasons. *I* don't even understand to be honest. Do you?"

"No. But I stopped trying to." He said, though he wasn't exactly convincing. "Wanting to eat and do you has no affect on my life besides making me hungry and horny. I was mostly like that already but for more than one particular person."

*It doesn't get anymore romantic than that, folks.* "Glad to see our connection has no influence on you what so ever."

"I didn't say that. I just mean it doesn't interrupt my existence."

"So what *does* it do?"

"Besides keep you alive?"

"Great, you don't kill me for selfish reasons. That's awesome."

"For me it's a lot."

Frowning, she had to admit that was true. Damon had probably killed people for less—probably for looking at him wrong. Still it would be nice to know she meant… *something* to him, even if it was so small that anyone else would be appalled by it. That made her frown at herself. She was beginning to sound like some stupid lovesick teenager and why? Because some spell was giving her heightened
emotions? How did she even know that was really the case? What if the entire situation was just in
their heads?

Maybe I should try to contact Emily again. Ask for some real answers.

The reality of the situation came crashing down onto her a second later when she felt Damon's soft
lips nibbling along her neck. She shivered and closed her eyes, her fingers wrapping around the
sheets. She was conscious that she should be stopping this but it just felt so good. His mouth was
such a chilly contrast to her quickly warming skin, not to mention he seemed to know all of the spots
that made her squirm like crazy.

Swallowing hard, she bit her lip. "Da—Damon we—we shouldn't get…carried away…"

He purred, slicking his tongue across her pulse point. "Don't worry. I'm in total control of myself at
all times."

Whimpering, she sat up quickly. "You won't be surprised if I don't believe you, right?"

He chuckled and dragged his knuckles on her face, admiring the beautiful color of her skin. "What
do I have to do to get you to trust me?"

Become someone else. "I honestly don't know. You scare me. I never know which Damon I'm
gonna end up with. The one who wants to make out or the one who uses an innocent girl's live to get
me to invite him into my house."

Damon rolled his pale blue eyes slowly. "That was just for shits and giggles. It's not like I've
actually been inside your house…"

True. "But you can come and go whenever you please."

"Just like you can do here." He pointed out. "Look Bonnie, I made a promise to Emily that I would
protect her family line. Granted I…forgot that detail when she screwed me over and I bit you, but
I've remembered now. I guess you could say you're my twelve step program to killing less people."

She stared at him, her mouth moving but no sound coming out. It took a moment but she finally
found her voice. "You are so—"

He cut her off with a petal soft kiss, his hands coming up to caress either side of her face. Sighing
deeper, she said fuck it and pressed close, shutting her brain down for the time being. Things went
smoother with him when she focused on the pleasant sensations and not the heaps and heaps of
turmoil he caused her daily. Though it was weird—she was making out with a vampire and an evil
one at that. The mouth that was currently sliding against her own, coaxing out little whimpers was
also the mouth that sucked the life out of people. The hands that were slinking down her arms were
the hands that tightened around some poor person to keep them from getting away. It just seemed
wrong that he could be bloodthirsty one minute and then smolderingly sexy the next.

"Ow!" Jerking back, she touched her lip and frowned at the spot of red on her fingertip. "You bit
me!"

"It was an accident." He looked innocent enough. "Your lips are just so…succulent." He leaned and
just barely sucked at the already closing wound, shuddering at the metallic taste that made his head
swim.

Bonnie gazed at him and his other face, reaching up to gently touch the pulsing veins around his
changing eyes. "Why do they do that?"
Inhaling to calm himself, he smiled. "It's the blood lust coursing underneath, preparing the fangs to emerge."

"Why don't your fangs just...stay out?"

"It's easier to blend in if they don't."

"You're dying to feed from me again, aren't you?"

"Seeing as how the whole life ship sailed a long time ago, I wouldn't say dying is the right word."

"Then what is the right word?"

"Pining."

Running a hand through her hair, she got up and walked over to the window, pushing the curtain back so she could look out. If he wanted her blood—and that was the reason he kept seeing her—what did she want from him?

You know what you want from him. Stop over thinking.

Strong arms wrapped around her mid-section and she exhaled, leaning back into the cold comfort of Damon's embrace. She glanced down to his ring, tracing the intricate carvings that blended into one another. Logan had wanted to know how the Salvatores were able to walk around in the day, but he hadn't figured out it was a simple piece of jewelry that did the trick. She wondered if it would have worked for him had he got his hands on it. Not to mention who'd killed him anyway?

"I'm not going to drain you if that is what you are thinking." Damon related softly. "Like I said, that wouldn't bode well for either of us. You'd be dead and I'd be outta blood. Lose-lose."

She nodded. "Maybe if—maybe if I get over how intimidating the whole process is I'll let you..."

"Mm." He nuzzled her throat, making her tremble. "I got nothing but time..."

~*~

"Would you like to tell me what's going on between you and Damon Salvatore?"

Bonnie nearly choked on her mashed potatoes at her Grams sudden change in conversation. One minute they were talking about random spells to give you a greener thumb and then she just brings him up without warning what so ever. No prompt just here it is, now what do you plan to do with it? It un-nerved her and made her wonder if her grandmother had more powers than she was letting on. Like being able to tell the future or read minds. She really hoped it wasn't the latter because ever since that kiss, all she could think about was Damon and his tongue. And all of those other kisses they'd since shared.

If she hadn't been strong and resisted what she really wanted who knew where they would be? Probably camping out in his bedroom, using the sheets as a tent.

"Grams, I don't know what you are talking about." She decided to play it careful. "Damon is just Stefan's brother and Stefan is dating Elena."

Tituba Bennett studied her granddaughter with amused brown eyes, her thumb dragging back and forth across her chin. "Are you gonna pretend like you haven't been seeing him?"

Ugh oh. "Seeing him? I—I mean I see him around town but it is a small town."
"Bonnie Bennett don't you lie to me." The older woman smirked. "I may not get out much but I know a few things."

"Such as?" She inquired cautiously.

Tituba shook her head slightly. "Why don't you tell me? I'm not judging you I'm just…Damon doesn't really seem your type."

How would she know my type? "I—I'm not dating Damon Salvatore."

A nod. "Of course not. But you're spending time with him."

Groaning, she put down her fork. "It's complicated, okay?"

"Because he's a vampire?" Her Grams questioned. "Don't look so surprised, honey. I know all about this town's history and the part that the Salvatore brothers played. I saw them once before when I was a young girl, years ago."

"I—it—we…" Stammering, Bonnie took a sip of her lemonade. "To be honest I don't know what's going on between us. Emily…did something and now we're drawn to each other."

Tituba blinked. "Emily? You've seen her?"

"In a dream." She lied. "She made me destroy her necklace, and Damon got very upset when he found out. But he said she did something to him so that he can't hurt me."

"Hm. Well if Emily managed to perform a spell from the dead, I'd pay close attention." Her grandmother said gravely. "I'd also be very careful around Damon Salvatore. He's not as level headed as his brother."

_Tell me about it._ "Grams, are you on the Founder's Council?"

She shook her head no. "No. I don't have time for any of that. Why?"

Sighing with relief, Bonnie smiled a little. "No reason. Don't worry; I won't let my guard down around Damon. I'm just surprised you're not telling me to stay away from him."

"You're a smart girl. I think you know the dangers of being friends with a vampire. Besides…" Getting up, she went to get dessert. "If Emily wants you two together, nothing I say will change that. I'm sure she has her reasons."

"Yeah…" A pause. "Would be nice to know what they are though…"

~*~

_The ground was cold and hard beneath Bonnie's feet, freezing as a matter of fact. It was confusing because she didn't remember leaving the comfortable warmth of her home. She didn't remember walking aimlessly down the road and into the woods near the falls, but here she was just the same. She could hear the rushing of the water a few yards away, creating bubbling mist as it barreled over the small banks. Gazing around, staring at the gnarled leafless trees, she shivered and looked down at her attire. Her hands pulled at the fabric of the long white cotton gown, ghosting over the ruffle straps and along the v-neck of the bodice. She knew this gown. She didn't own this gown but she knew it and had worn it quite a few times before._
Always in her dreams with Damon Salvatore, it was this or nothing else. Idly she wondered why. Was it her mind dressing her so innocently or his? Probably his if she was being honest. It just seemed like something he would do.

Shaking her head, she figured she was dreaming or at least hoped she was. She'd hate to be this far from home in a nightie in the middle of the night for real. Sleepwalking while wearing the charm had been scary enough, doing it without it was down right petrifying.

"Hello Bonnie."

Gasping, she whirled around to see Emily staring at her with her hands clasped together. "E—Emily. What—um what's going on? Is this a dream?"

Her ancestor nodded slowly. "I don't have much time. Without the talisman I can't communicate with you the way I wish to."

Guess that means we're skipping pleasantries. "Okay. Why am I here?"

Emily took a step closer. "I come with a warning. There are dark forces in Mystic Falls that wish to harm you..."

"Yeah I—I kinda get that." She nibbled on her bottom lip. "They want to get into the tomb."

"It's more than that." The other girl whispered. "They want to steal your powers and use them for great evil."

Bonnie's brows narrowed. Was that even possible? "How would they do that?"

"By turning you...into one of them." The ghost revealed. "One some level, you would be bound to do what your sire requests of you. Just like Logan Fell was bound to make contact with Damon Salvatore."

An image of herself as a vampire flashed through her mind, and she shuddered. "I'm careful, and my powers are growing. I—I won't let anything happen to myself or this town."

Emily sighed and glanced off towards the falls. "They will use those you love against you, my granddaughter. You must be strong enough for what's to come." Pause. "That is why I have fused you to Damon."

The young witch itched at her cheek. "To protect me?"

A nod. "Yes. Don't be fooled by his way, he cannot harm you. I have seen to that."

That's comforting. "Are you sure your spell didn't—that it didn't backfire? I mean getting him to protect me is one thing but what we feel is—it's bordering on hunger."

"That is the nature of a blood spell. It works on all levels, even physical."

"What happens if—if I give in?"

"Your connection becomes more potent."

"And if I try to ignore it?"

"There is no ignoring it, Bonnie. The magic will find Damon wherever he is and bring him to you."
"For how long?"

"Forever."

Wincing as a sharp pain bloomed behind her ear, she rubbed at it gingerly. Forever with Damon Salvatore—could she really do that? Did she wanna do that? It sounded like she didn't have a choice either way. "I—how did you know this wouldn't turn into a horrible mistake? What if he just killed me or whatever?"

Emily smiled a little. "I know the man you know now is a frightening monster that kills without cause or control, but he wasn't always blinded by rage and sorrow. He used to be a good man. Those qualities can be suppressed but they never go away entirely." Her eyes drifted to the right. "Isn't that right, Damon?"

Bonnie glanced behind her, shocked to see Damon leaning against a crooked tree. His expression was hard to read and she was surprised he'd been quiet for so long. Usually he was swarming with swagger and cockiness, but tonight he was almost…reserved. Although she hadn't known him long, she had seen just a few shows of emotions that didn't deal with sex or murder. This apparently was another.

"Hello Emily." He replied nonchalantly. "Come for a threesome? I don't think Bonnie is into incest but maybe when she leaves we can work something out."

"You always did have a way with words." She mused, so poised. "I knew you wouldn't be able to resist coming here."

He shrugged, walking up to stand beside Bonnie. "Of course not seeing as how it was you who worked the mojo so I could play peeper to your great blah blah blah granddaughter's dreams in the first place."

"Hm. But you're not here because I am. You're here because you thought she was in danger."

"In her own head?"

"You can get into Stefan's mind without trouble. Why wouldn't a more talented vampire be able to do the same with her?"

His jaw twitched. "Let me guess, you're divulging your master plan because there is no way it can be foiled? I've got four words for you, James Bond villain syndrome. Look it up when you're perched on a cloud or whatever."

Emily continued to grin. "The only plan I have is keeping my family safe and alive for generations to come."

He snorted. "And what makes you think I won't rip their throats out? You betrayed me, so our deal is basically null and void."

She gestured to Bonnie. "Go ahead then. The myth goes if you die in your dreams you die in real life. So kill her."

Bonnie blinked, her green eyes stretching as wide as they could. She really wanted to wake up now. "Um how about no?" She yelped when Damon grabbed her around the throat, his nails digging into her skin moderately. "Da—Damon, please..."

He drew in a shuddering breath and brandished his fangs. "You think I won't? Never test me, Emily.
Stefan made that mistake and it cost him a football coach."

"Your need to punish Stefan has nothing to do with Bonnie. Just like your reasons don't either. You need her." She said softly. "Perhaps just as much as she needs you."

"I don't need anyone." He snapped, clearly angry by her assumption.

Pressing her lips together, Emily nodded and began to fade into the darkness. "We shall see..." And then she was gone.

Bonnie yanked herself away from Damon and rubbed at her neck, totally prepared to rip him a new one when a stark white hand shot out of the ground, wrapping around her ankle. It was cold and hard with pieces of gray decayed skin tattering off in big clumps. She screamed and tried to pull back, horrified when a second appeared to help the first start dragging her down.

This is just a dream! Wake up! Wake up right now! But it wasn't happening. Instead she was being tugged down into the cold, brown dirt by unknown phantoms that scratched her flesh and would no doubt leave bruises. Yelping as she fell over onto her knees, she kicked out and clawed at the rocks and roots, trying to gain some type of leverage. A third hand slapped over her nose and mouth, effectively cutting off her air, making her lungs burn as they fought to work.

Apparently Emily's plan to keep the town safe was to make sure no one ever got control of her powers. Ever.

She could feel herself blacking out when suddenly she was lifted and cradled close. Her vision was blurry but she tried to push through it. "Damon?"

"Shut up." He scowled. "I can't believe Emily would go this far to make a point. Some grandmother she is. Whatever happened to peppermints in the candy dish and trying on her wig?"

"Ai..." Groaning, she blinked slowly. "Ar—are we flying? Can you fly?"

"This is a dream, I can do whatever I want." Was his cryptic reply before perching on a high tree limb. He sat with his back to the sturdiest part and righted her, still scowling. "Your family sure has a knack for ruining perfectly good afternoons."

She rubbed at her sore ankle, wincing at the redden flesh. "What?"

He watched her; how could she be hurt if this wasn't real? "This was going to be the first sex dream where we could interact. And then the buzz kill cock block shows up and things get all horror movie."

Sighing with exhaustion, she flopped against him. "Are you at the manor?"

He nodded.

"Come see me."

Next her eyes were opening and she swallowed hard, thankful to be in her own bed in her own pajamas. She allowed herself a few moments to wallow under the covers before getting up and moving into the bathroom, splashing cold water onto her face. She was freaked out but every encounter with Emily seemed to leave her feeling that way. And now she had all this new information in her brain as well as sore spots on her legs. Why was all of this happening to her? Why couldn't she just go back to being Bonnie Bennett, cheerleader and student with the wacky drunk grandma?
Oddly enough however, even in the midst of the crazy that she was drowning in, she still managed to feel guilty for the secrets she was keeping from Elena. She'd once told her that they were best friends and that she could never keep a secret from her, yet here she was, hiding this relationship that she knew she wouldn't approve of. If danger was coming to hunt those she cared about, Elena needed to know the whole truth now more than ever.

Turning off the light, she strolled back into her room and just managed to curb her scream at the sight of a dark figure sitting on her bed. "Jesus, Damon. You do know fear can cause heart attacks, right?"

That crooked grin that always started on the right side of his mouth appeared, and he leaned back on his elbows. "I thought you were expecting me. I mean you did tell me to come over."

That she had. "I thought you'd knock or tap the window." She sat down beside him. "Not poof like a shadow."

"It's more fun this way." He tugged at her tank top, slipping a strap off her shoulder. "At least for me. So, shouldn't you be getting naked now?"

A beat. "Damon, I didn't ask you over for sex. I just I—I don't wanna be alone right now."

Tilting his head to the side, he was up in a flash, looking at the random things in her room. "I'm not a babysitter. If you're in the mood for a slumber party maybe you should call Elena. Or I could have Caroline over here in a jiffy…"

Wetting her lips, she decided to be honest. "I don't want them, I want you. As much as you freak me out, you're the only one who understands what I'm going through. You're the only one who can help me."

Frowning, he picked up one of her rings. "You're betting on the wrong horse, sweetheart. Just cause Emily put certain ideas in your head, doesn't mean they are true."

"So you don't care about me? At all?" She inquired softly. "You don't care that I'm just…waiting for the next bad guy to try to rip my throat out?"

Silence.

"Damon? Do you care if I live or die, my blood aside?"

Silence.

Annoyed, she balled her hands into fists. "Then leave."

He huffed at her. "And if I don't?"

Glaring at him, she felt a flick of power seep out and next thing he knew, he was pinned to her wall. "I'll keep you there all night. Immobile."

Damon grunted and tried to move, but it was useless. Fear was a compelling urge; of course it would make her stronger. "Fine. I'll go."

Bonnie crawled back into bed with her back to him, not caring one way or the other. She didn't hear him leave, but when she glanced over she realized she was alone. Tears threatened to spill over her cheeks but she forced them down. There was no way she was going to cry—it would be stupid. She'd been stupid to reach out to him in the first place. It was useless. They were nothing more than their magic induced link.
Reaching down to pull the red covers up, she fingered the odd material on her blanket. "What the…?" Turning on the lamp on the table, she picked up the black leather jacket and brought it closer, inhaling its smell. It wasn't much but it was…something. A gesture of some kind she was sure.

*Maybe Damon was doing the best that he could with what he had for now.* With those thoughts swirling in her head, she clicked off her light and closed her eyes, trying to drift off.

Damon—from his place by her windowsill—leaned his head back, staring up at the dark sky. If only he could... *no.* That wasn't who he was anymore. "Fuck you, Emily Bennett. Fuck you."

~Fin~
Truth Hurts

Chapter Summary

You can't outrun or hide from the truth. It has ways of finding you, especially when you least expect it.

Truth Hurts

Elena Gilbert's adorable face was scrunched into a frown as she pulled her coat tighter around her mid-section. She slumped in her wooden desk and sighed, yawning slowly into her open palm. Her big round eyes were focused on the blackboard but she wasn't exactly paying attention. It was hard to concentrate on dates and names when you were so cold. Or when your handsome boyfriend sat just across the aisle, smiling in your direction every so often. It was all she could do not to giggle out loud.

Returning his smile, she turned her gaze to her best friend and arched a brow. Bonnie sat staring out of the window, her long black curls framing her pretty face. She was nibbling furiously on her bottom lip, her fingers idly dragging back and forth over the material of her shiny black leather jacket. Since when did Bonnie own a shiny black leather jacket?

Wetting her lips, she leaned to the side and just hoped Alaric didn't bust her for talking during a lecture. "Bonnie? Are you okay?"

The other girl jerked at the sound of her whispered voice. "Yeah. Why?"

Elena shrugged. "No reason. Did you just buy that?"

She looked down to the jacket and fought off a smile. "Um…not really. It—I guess you could say it belongs to a friend."

"Ooh a guy friend?" The brunette teased. "It does look kinda too big for you."

She grinned, rolling her eyes playfully. "Maybe. But it's not what you think. In fact the only reason I'm wearing it is because the heat is on the fritz today."

"Uh huh. I'm beginning to think Caroline was right about you."

"What do you mean?"

"She said you have a secret lover."

"Heh, well I don't."

"It's okay if you do, Bonnie. I know that when you're comfortable, you'll introduce me to him."

"I don't have a secret lover or out in the open lover. I have no lover—period."

"Okay…"

"But let's say I did."
"You do!"

"Elena…"

"Alright, alright. Let's say you do. What are we saying about him?"

"Let's say I had a secret lover and—and—well it's about sex."

"You're having sex?"

"No. No, no, no."

"But you're thinking about it."

"No I'm not."

"Then why bring it up?"

Bonnie frowned; that was a very good question. In all honestly she was having some fleeting thoughts about sleeping with Damon. It was odd because he wasn't the type of person she ever saw herself with. And she knew if it weren't for the spell she wouldn't be concerning herself with him at all. She'd be avoiding him like a disease because of what he tried to do to her. But now that her thoughts and dreams often revolved around him, she realized she had to evaluate the part he was going to play in her life. There was no denying it anymore—she and him were stuck together for a very long while.

Forever if Emily was being truthful…and why wouldn't she be?

_She really gets on my last nerve. First she possesses me and then she binds me to someone without my permission. What's next? Artificial insemination with baby Salvatore?_

Getting back to the root of her thoughts however, she acknowledged that Damon wasn't going anywhere. Perhaps he even _couldn't_ go anywhere, which wasn't fair to him either. Yes he put on a good front of being evil and yes within his core maybe it wasn't an act, but if Emily said there was a good man locked inside—probably chained to a wall screaming to be set free—she could believe her. While her descendant was crazy and controlling, she hadn't lied about anything. The only problem was that he had no plans to let _that_ man out any time soon if ever. Though she didn't believe for a second he was happy being how he was.

It was just comfortable.

Still she couldn't trust him because the fear he instilled wasn't gone. She knew he would lash out just to prove that he was the villain of the story...like he did that night of her nightmare. Leaving the jacket had been a gesture and she understood that. She couldn't knock him for at least _trying_ to be civil with _her_ if no one else. While she wished he could be nicer all around, she would take what she could get if it made the situation easier on all parties involved.

And maybe if she tried hard enough, she could get him to at least _think_ before hurting someone. It wouldn't be this monumental thing, but even a small step in the right direction was something when it came to Damon Salvatore.

"Bonnie?" Elena whispered.

Sighing, she tapped her pen on her college-ruled notebook. "It's complicated. Can't I just ask you a few questions and not get ribbed for it?"
Her best friend nodded slowly. "Okay." Pause. "But I mean, if you're thinking about sleeping with someone and I haven't even met him, I have to wonder what's wrong with him? Do you think I wouldn't like him?"

More like know. "Elena, I wanna tell you everything but I don't know how you'll react. No… I do know and that's what scares me. I—I just need a little time to get the courage to open up."

Elena frowned, but relented. She couldn't exactly be angry that she was keeping a secret since she'd kept Stefan's for quite a while. "Okay. Either way though, I'm here for you and I'll answer your questions the best I can."

The witch smiled and turned back to her blank sheet of paper, vaguely aware that she should be taking notes. She drew a few random circles; feeling like someone was watching her. Cutting her eyes to the left, she met Stefan's piercing gaze. Her brow shot up questioningly, wondering what his deal was, and then she noticed that he wasn't looking at her so much as what she was wearing. He was practically staring a hole in the material of her jacket.

Oh, crap!

The ringing of the bell startled her and she jumped before tossing her books into her bag. She swung it onto her shoulder, gave Elena a quick reply that she'd talk to her later and darted out of the classroom. She tried to blend into the thick of the crowd, walking rapidly towards her next class, not looking back.

"Bonnie!"

Damn it. Forcing her feet to stop moving, she huffed and turned. "Stefan, hey."

He nodded. "Can I talk to you for a second?"

"Actually I'm gonna be late for English so…" She thumbed behind her. "And we're having a quiz in there so I should really get going but—"

"Why are you wearing my brother's jacket?" He interrupted her rambling.

She blinked. "What? This isn't Damon's jacket."

He studied her silently before speaking again. "I can smell him on it. And considering that he usually wears it all the time, I would know it from memory."

Itching her wrist, she tried to judge his expression but he was excellent at playing things close to the vest. "Fine, he gave it to me."

Stefan's long lashes fluttered in disbelief. "He gave it to you? The only thing Damon ever gives to anyone is pain and misery."

"Well he's given me those already so maybe he's trying something new now." A beat. "I know you're trying to look out for me, but everything is fine. It's just a jacket."

"I think we both know that's not true." He said lowly. "Be careful, Bonnie. I don't know what Damon has done to make you think he is someone to be trusted, but he can't be. There isn't a single human thing left within him, and in the end he will try to finish what he started that night in the woods."

Frowning, she clutched her bag's strap tighter. It felt a little stupid to get offended by his words,
especially since he knew Damon better and had for years, but she couldn't help herself. "For what it's worth, Damon hasn't even tried to hurt me since that night. In fact he literally can't."

"You can't believe a word he says. He can't be trusted."

"What makes you think I'm trusting him or believing him? It's a jacket, not a marriage proposal."

"I just wonder why you are hanging out with him in the first place? He did try to kill you…"

"Look it's complicated, okay? Emily did something to the both of us and—and we can't stay away from each other."

"I suggest you try."

"I suggest you worry less about me and more about your relationship with Damon. Hormones aside, I'm okay."

Shaking her head, she hurried in the opposite direction and left him standing where he was. She didn't know Damon that well and she didn't know all of the things that he were really capable of, but she had a feeling he wasn't the lost cause that Stefan assumed he was. If his meager examples were any indication, he could be a decent man when he wanted to be. So she was going to trust in Emily's words that the good man he used to be hadn't evaporated and hope she wasn't making the wrong decision.

If her life didn't depend on it, her sanity did.

~*~

Flopping down onto her Grams' couch, Bonnie leaned back and sighed, rubbing her tired eyes. She hadn't appreciated the major staring from Stefan whenever she was in his eye line. She was thankful that he didn't want her to get hurt, but it was a little annoying that he also didn't trust her judgment. Before the necklace crap, she had just known that something was off about Damon. Of course she'd thought he was just a jerk in relationships until the charm burned him at the Halloween party, and then those fleeting thoughts of other worldliness had disappeared when the same thing happened to Caroline.

Anyway the point was she realized she had to be on guard. It was never far from her mind, even when they were kissing. Even when he was holding her close and his chilly fingertips were cascading down the side of her neck. If anything she was even more aware of the situation in those moments. But didn't it make sense to be on guard with a vampire anyway?

Tituba Bennett removed her glasses as she walked into the living room, arching a brow at her granddaughter. "You look like you have a lot on your mind."

She nodded almost pitifully. "Remember the stuff I told you about Emily and Damon and the talisman?" A beat. "It's—I don't know. Stefan doesn't want me around Damon and Elena doesn't even know about me and Damon. I feel like I'm drowning but I don't know what to do."

"Why not tell Elena the truth?" Grams suggested. "I think she'll understand considering…"

"Yeah but Damon isn't like Stefan. He's did such horrible things—I don't think she'll be able to get over that." She groaned in distress. "I shouldn't be able to get over it but the spell…I'm confused."

"Are you sure?" The older woman inquired. "Seems to me like you know what you want, you just keep trying to talk yourself out of it."
Ugh! Does she always have to be so insightful? "I—shouldn't I? He's a crazed vampire who would kill you just as soon as look at you. Besides, what I'm feeling isn't real. Emily conjured it up."

"Bonnie..." Tituba sat down beside her. "Magic is very powerful and it can do some very great things, but fabricating emotions between a witch and a vampire? The two would cancel each other out. A vampire cannot compel a witch and a witch cannot force a vampire to do her will." Pause. "Damon protected Emily's family line of his own accord, not because she made him. Whatever this spell is, it's more nudging than forcing."

She shook her head. "No believe me it's forcing. If it weren't for the blood spell, I wouldn't be within one hundred feet of Damon Salvatore."

A nod. "I see. Well she was one of the most powerful witches of our line. I'm sure she has some tricks even I don't know about. Still..." She gave a gentle smile. "If it wasn't a protection spell yet you find him protecting you, that's all on him honey."

Bonnie pursed her lips together in thought. Was not being able to harm her the same as keeping her safe? "I wanna say that I know exactly what he's feeling on his end, but I don't. He lies or whatever so..."

"When things get too intense, back off. That's all you have to do."

"Easier said than done. I don't want to back off. Man this would be so much easier if he were normal! If he were just a regular guy."

"Mm, though if he were a regular guy you probably wouldn't feel as strongly for him."

Makes sense. "I just don't wanna lose myself or my friends over this. He was awful to Caroline and I don't know if she'd understand even if I explained it to her."

"Bonnie, I hope you haven't been telling everyone about your powers. That could be very dangerous for you. Vampires and witches weren't thought of too kindly in this town once upon a time." Grams warned, patting her thigh.

"I've mentioned it but they think I'm joking anyway." She shrugged, idly remembering the day she floated feathers for Elena. "And—and Elena was there when Emily destroyed the crystal so it's not like I can tell her it was all in her mind."

"Well don't tell anyone else." Tituba said cautiously. "Let them think you're just kidding or whatever. Like I am sure they presume I am."

Bonnie grinned a little. "I'm sure the wine helps..."

Grams smirked. "Doesn't hurt."

Running a hand through her hair, she chuckled and stood. "I'm gonna raid your fridge and then—and then go talk to Damon. I'm sure Stefan has mentioned the whole jacket incident already."

Her grandmother smiled. "Tell Damon Salvatore to come see me some time. I'm sure we have much to discuss."

With thoughts of wondering just what they'd talk about swimming around in her mind, Bonnie headed into the kitchen, dreading the conversation she was going to have with the elder Salvatore.

~*~
Damon Salvatore tossed coat after coat out of his large closet, stopping a few times to marvel at how fashion had changed throughout the years. He didn't miss neckerchiefs or pocket watches at all. He felt like a complete idiot for leaving his precious leather jacket at Bonnie's. What—seriously—what had compelled him to do that? Because she was upset? Because he was sure there were tears involved? Who cares! He'd killed people while they prayed to whatever God they worshipped to save them, why should a few stupid ass tears make a difference?

It was all Emily's fault. She was making him soft when all he wanted to do was continue on. Continue killing and continue being hot and continue toying with the lives of those around him. He didn't want a conscious in the back of his head whispering that it was wrong to rip out someone's throat or wrong to dangle them off the ground just to see them squirm.

He had to get back to his roots or his brain was going to ooze out of his ears.

Actually he needed to decide what did he want more; to murder or to have access to more witch blood. It was kinda a hard decision because he liked both of those things. Draining people gave him awesome powers that he found he couldn't be without now. Drinking Bonnie's blood however made him feel like he could scale up to the moon and claim it as Damonville or whatever. That would come in handy if he ever did want to have his own kingdom.

Why couldn't he just have both! Man life was so unfair to the popular.

And then there were the other feelings he was currently trying damn hard not to feel. Sure the lust was fun and he enjoyed the sex dreams, but he knew there was a fine line between being possessive and genuine caring. And Damon Salvatore didn't care about anyone. Been there, done that, didn't want a repeat. Love and all that other bullshit only screwed with your head. He'd created situations for heartbreak and feelings of loss, and he'd spent almost one hundred and forty odd years feeling the loss of Katherine. He did not want anything else even remotely close to love.

So he was going to deal with desiring Bonnie and hope nothing else reared its ugly head. If it did… well he didn't know how he would react. What he would do to maintain that he was evil to the core and nothing else.

"Looking for something in particular?"

He smirked, glancing to the doorway. "Ah Stefan, here for our daily war of words? I hate to upset you but you know this will just end with me making your face do that thing it does when you scowl. Man you're lucky we don't age or you'd have wrinkles the size of the Grand Canyon."

His brother just stared at him. "I think this game with Bonnie has gone on long enough."

"Didn't know you were the referee." He mused, frowning at the sight of a tatter cummerbund. "Where are your snazzy shorts and little whistle?"

"I'm serious." Stefan stressed. "If this is some sick plan to get close to her again just so that you can kill her…"

"Aren't you always serious?" Damon teased. "I mean I've only seen you smile once and even then it looked like the upper part of your face was trying to figure out what was happening with the bottom. I expected everything above your nose to like, explode."

Suddenly Stefan was right beside him, his dark eyes aflame with anger. "I am tired of you trying to destroy anything that is connected to me. It's old, Damon. It's old and juvenile and I won't stand for it anymore."
Damon chuckled and folded his arms over his chest. "I understand that you've spent years and years with your giant head in the sand, so I'm gonna talk very slowly in the hopes that what I have to say isn't blocked by any miscellaneous dirt. This has nothing to do with you. I know it hurts but it's the truth."

"You're lying. Everything you do has a way of coming back to damage my life."

"Well that's just cause you are such an easy target, and I do despise you. But this time I'm totally telling the truth."

"Why should I believe you? Why is this time any different than the last?"

"That's for me to know and you for to—do I really need to dot dot dot you?"

"If you hurt Bonnie I will kill you."

"Ooh careful Stefan, you know I like a challenge. Man, this obsession you have with Bonnie is starting to worry me. What would Elena think?"

"My obsession? You gave her your jacket. You've been basically stalking her."

"How do you know I'm stalking her unless you're stalking me?"

Stefan glared at him. "Damon, listen to me, what you are doing is wrong. You need to—"

His words were cut off as Damon grasped him around the throat and rushed him into the wall, slamming him hard against it. His fingers tightened, his face oddly calm even as his eyes were cruel. "One, you don't tell me what I need to do. You never tell me what I need to do. I don't want your advice or your gentle prodding. Two, Bonnie is my concern and I will do whatever I want with her or to her. You should be happy I'm not focusing all of this time and energy on Elena."

His brother managed to shove him away. "I locked you up once, I can do it again."

"Without the vervain, I doubt it." Damon taunted. "Try it and I'll go on a killing spree and make sure it leads right back to your door. I got it in with the Sheriff remember."

"You're a monster and one day she will realize it." Stefan coughed. "Just like Bonnie."

Damon shook his head. "You think I care what anyone in this town thinks about me? They are just a means to an end, brother. However you will stay out of my way if you wanna keep your tongue. Now if you'd excuse me…" Smiling, he grabbed his cell phone from his desk. "I have a leather jacket to find."

~*~

Sitting against the trunk of a large tree that was nestled near the back of the park, Bonnie sighed and stared up at the starry night sky. Draped across her bent knees was the infamous leather jacket. She'd went by the Salvatore home to return it but Damon had not been there, and Stefan hadn't known where he'd went. Before he could get into another lecture on the dangers of his brother, she'd quickly hopped back into her car and drove away. Now she sat trying to clear her mind and figure out if being linked to Damon for the rest of her life was something she could deal with.

Why it had never occurred to her to look for an anti spell or reversal spell she didn't know, but it was possible that one existed. And if she actually managed to get her hands on it, all of her current problems would be solved. Of course then he could probably kill her—she really just couldn't win.
In a situation where the odds were stacked against her, she knew it was better to just let things go how they were going. Sure she’d most likely end up in bed with Damon, but at least he’d keep her safe from the other monsters.

Smoothing her fingers over his jacket, she brought it to her nose and inhaled. She loved how bits of his cologne still clung to the fabric and transferred to the skin of her neck while she’d been wearing it. It was so soft and yet bad ass, and it shocked her even now that he had left it. But she tried to think that it meant more than he wanted her to be warm. He wanted her to feel…safe. He could never tell her that but deep down she expected that’s what he wanted.

Perhaps if she just didn't give up—eventually—he'd open up. Though she was not going to hold her breath.

"Until I can tell which way this crap is going to go, I'll occupy my time by looking for a reversal spell." She whispered aloud. "It'll be like a security blanket."

Sighing, Bonnie blinked and looked around slowly as rolls of thick fog crept silently across the ground, wrapping around bushes and the bottom of picnic table legs. It covered her tennis shoes and she wet her lips, standing carefully in case something tried to yank her down to her doom. Thanks to Emily that was now a fear of hers.

"Boo!"

She yelped as a hand grabbed her upper arm from out of nowhere. "Damn it, Damon! I am now convinced your new plot to kill me is by fear."

Damon smirked. "I'm gonna go out on a limb here and say I scared you."

"And I'm gonna go out on a limb and say you're a jerk." She snapped, her heart thudding against her ribcage. "Why do you have to torment me?"

He shrugged. "I gotta do something until you fuck me."

"Keep that up and I'll stop kissing you." She replied, dead serious. "Maybe I should stop anyway. Obviously it's going to your head and not the one on your shoulders."

The handsome vampire grinned. "Ooh dirty jokes—my favorite kind. Did you hear the one about the priest and the spatula?"

Shaking her head, she looked back to the fog. "Are you doing this?"

He nodded. "Just something I use to toy with people."

"You look all…rosy. Did you just kill someone?"

"Does putting them in a coma count?"

Grumbling, she kicked off from the tree and started for her car, jerking when he suddenly appeared in front of her. Her heel dipped into a small gopher hole and she felt herself falling backwards, probably to sprain her ankle as well. But instead of hitting the cold ground, she found her eyes staring up into amused icy blue ones.

"You know I kinda like the look of you from this angle. " He wiggled his brows. "Reminds me of that one dream when we had sex on the floor of my room, and you kicked the table and knocked everything off of it because it felt so good."
She blushed, biting her lip. That was one of the first she'd ever experienced. It had made her so hot she'd awoke with tingling skin and panties that needed to be changed. "Whatever."

Damon gently eased her to the grass and continued to hover, invading her personal space. "Do you think it'll be as good when we finally do it? Or better? I vote for better since I'm sexy and a vampire. And I've been doing it for like, a really long time."

She snorted. "Girls don't really like to hear about all the other girls a guy has banged."

He feigned innocence. "Really? Well now I know why Elena likes Stefan so much. His pecker has so much dust on it, Antiques Roadshow would be interested in it."

Bonnie laughed before she could stop herself. "Nice."

"I thought so." Smiling, he lowered his mouth to hers and kissed her.

Closing her eyes and going with it, she wrapped her arms around her neck. He shifted, laying on her fully as his lips caressed hers, his tongue flicking before gaining access. Kissing him never got old and it never got normal. It seemed like it should be because they had been doing it for a while now, but the sheer fact of everything made it unable to be this regular thing like she'd do with other guys.

Hell, they needed mystical fog for cover so of course it wasn't common.

"Damon…wait..." She gasped as his teeth nipped at her throat. "This is…too o—open."

"A little public indecency never hurt anyone." He murmured, dragging his fingers over her clothed breast before squeezing lightly.

She arched and gripped the hair at base of his hairline. "God you drive me crazy sometimes." She swallowed hard, the swirling fog making her flesh slightly dewy. "It's…not fair."

He continued nibbling. "Sometimes the best things aren't."

She opened her mouth to reply when the quiet was broken by three rapid pop, pop, pop sounds. Damon looked up with a frown and was on his feet in seconds, his eyes scanning the area. She got the feeling he was thinking the same thing she was; those had sounded like gunshots. Slipping on his jacket, she stood and pulled a few blades of grass out of her hair. The tree leaves rustled above and the bushes swayed though there was no wind, which she was sure they both found strange.

His voice was low as he spoke. "Leave. Now."

Bonnie shook her head. "I—why?"

"Just do it." He growled.

Wanting to argue but knowing it was futile, she fished her keys out of her pocket and hurried to her vehicle. She didn't fully understand what was going on, but there had to be danger around. She could feel it in her bones and that fact alone made her not wanna leave Damon. What if he got in over his head again like with Nicholas? Yes he annoyed her but she didn't want anything horrible to happen to him. Especially death.

No matter how she dressed it up, it was obvious she cared about Damon Salvatore. Probably more than she even realized.

Damon's rough grunt cut through her thoughts and she looked across the park just in time to see him
be hurled by an invisible force into a picnic table, crushing it on impact. The power coursing through her veins prickled her skin and made it hot, and she willed him to get up. Willed him to be strong and fight whatever was trying to defeat him. It almost felt like she was transferring her energy to him, but whatever it was it had him on his feet and snarling, charging towards the thick overgrowth.

*Pop! Pop! Pop!*

Glass shattered behind her and she screamed, covering her head with her arms. Suddenly a sharp pain pierced her abdomen and she glanced down, frowning at the quickly forming stain of red blotting her white blouse. Lifting the shirt, she began to tremble at the sight of the oozing hole in her flesh before doubling over in agony. She fell to her knees panting, each breath hurting more than the last.

Hazy images blurred her vision, but she could make out boots stomping her way. "Damon?"

"Guess again." The pretty blonde vampire smirked, aiming the silver pistol in her hand at the witch. "You didn't think you could kill one of our elders and get away with it, did you?"

"I—I…" She stammered as the world spun around her. "Wh—where's Damon?"

"He's dead." Blondie gloated. "As you will be soon. The only difference is that you get to come back as my bitch." She went to taunt more when a thick tree limb stabbed through her chest violently, almost slicing her in half.

"You talk too much." Damon peered around at her face, watching the blood and color drain from it. "You should also learn where the heart is."

Dead, she tumbled to the cement with an unceremonious thud. Damon grabbed her gun and tucked it into the band of his jeans, then surveyed Bonnie's wound. "Fuck! It's wooden and in deep. I'm gonna need something to dig it out."

"Ta—take me to the hospital." She gritted her teeth.

He scooped her up into his arms. "And when they ask what happened and why you have a wooden bullet in your gut? No…I have an idea."

He was moving so fast that she could feel the wind on her cheek, but she felt weightless. The lights of the park disappeared and she wondered if she was slowly losing consciousness. She kind of hoped so if he was actually going to be digging inside of her in any fashion. Yet here he was trying to save her life, though being sarcastic about it as usual. But at least he hadn't just walked away to let her bleed too death.

*Speaking of blood… "Damon my—my blood…” Pause. "It's—you—"*

Everything went black.

~*~

"Oh my God! Bonnie!" Elena brought a hand to her mouth at the sight of her friend. "What did you do to her?!

Damon laid the cataleptic witch down onto the hardwood floor and ripped open her shirt. The last thing he'd wanted to do was ask for help in any shape or form, but it was evident Bonnie wouldn't make it to the manor and he needed something to get the bullet out now. Hence barging into Elena's home. Apparently he was willing to listen to her *blah blah blah* if it meant he got to have hot sex
with Bonnie.

There he was again, thinking with dick. Yeah right.

"I need a knife." He looked up at the hysterical brunette. "Now."

She shook her head. "No. Get away from her right now or I swear to God--"

"Look, you can stand there and make idle threats all you want, I don't really give a fuck. Any other time I'd find them cute or adorable." His face was like stone. "However if you don't want your friend to die, you will find me a goddamn knife sometime in the near future. Then you can yell and ask what's going on and hit me with more judgy eyes. Okay?"

Enraged yet the fear of losing her best friend noticeable in her expressions, she sniffled and ran into the kitchen, grabbing a knife out of the drawer and thrusting it into his hand a moment later. Next she was on her cell phone calling Stefan.

Even though his hands were steady, he could feel the craving crawling up into his stomach. His fingers were stained with Bonnie's blood and it was steadily oozing from her wound, the smell like ambrosia to his senses. Any other time he'd jerk her close and drain her dry. He wanted to but something was holding him back. Stupid spell.

Slicing at the hole and making it a little deeper, he dug in with the tips of his fingers as much as he could until he felt the bullet. He yanked it out and tossed it to the floor, then bit his wrist and pressed it to Bonnie's mouth. She whimpered and resisted but he forced her to drink, watching as the gash healed itself.

"Ugh…" Bonnie made a face as she slowly came around.

"Bonnie?" Elena tucked her hair back, kneeling beside her. "Are—are you okay? Did Damon do this to you?"

He snorted, but the witch shook her head. "No it—it wasn't Damon." Groaning, she sat up and gazed at him. "Thanks…"

Her best friend was completely confused. "What's going on here? Who shot you and—and why are you with him?"

Bonnie was tired but the inevitable had finally happened. She was finally against a rock and a hard place when it came to the role Damon Salvatore was going to play in her life where her friends were concerned. She knew that she had to tell the truth now or never be forgiven. She just hoped Elena understood and didn't judge her too much.

After all—if the getting shot was any indication—she had bigger problems heading her way.

~Fin~
Bonnie can't seem to help herself anymore. There are just some things she needs.

Standing in front of the mirror in Elena Gilbert's bathroom, Bonnie Bennett sighed and slowly scrubbed at her caramel colored skin with a damp cloth, watching as the streaks of crusted blood faded away. She smoothed her finger where the gunshot wound should be, marveling at the sight of nothing but silky flesh. Not even a scar. For as scary as vampires were, their blood could be the missing link in curing disease if it could ever be used that way.

However she didn't have time to think about being a scientist and saving the world. First she had to save herself…and her relationship with her best friend.

Elena was currently downstairs with Damon and Stefan, probably badgering them both for answers that only Damon had. And he was no doubt keeping things close to the vest because he could or because he actually figured it was her job to break the news. He would be right of course but she was terrified of how Elena would react.

What if she rejected her? What if she thought she was insane? What if she was right?

Sighing, she rinsed the cloth and folded it into a neat square when she was done, laying it off to the side. She glanced to her ripped shirt, and then the simple long sleeved t-shirt Elena had gotten out for her to wear, opting to put that on instead. She grabbed up the tattered pieces of her blouse and yanked until it was even more so, stuffing it down into the trash so that no one would see it.

Wetting her lips and taking a deep breath, she exited the bathroom and slowly headed down the stairs. Just as she'd suspected, the vampires and her best friend were sitting in the living room, quietly staring at each other. All heads turned when she entered, and she felt like she was about to be on trial for a serious crime. As long as it didn't end with her tied to a stake!

"How are you feeling?" Stefan inquired, breaking the silence.

"Um, good." She cleared her throat. "A little tired."

He nodded. "Damon. Perhaps we should go and…let them talk."

Damon's brows quirked up in amusement. "And miss the show? What if one of us is needed in the phone a friend kinda way?"

"Haven't you already caused enough trouble?" His brother asked. "You did get her shot."

Bonnie rubbed her forehead. "It—it wasn't his fault."

Elena grumbled loudly. "I can't believe you are taking up for him! He tried to kill you!"

This is not going to go well. Taking the brunette's arm, she pulled her upstairs and into her room,
closing the door afterwards. "Okay so this is not going to be easy for me, so please just sit and here me out."

The other teen scrunched up her cute face, but plopped onto her bed with an expectant expression. "Alright. I'm listening."

"I know this is—that it's crazy. You probably think I've lost my mind or that he's controlling me, and hey, you might be right on the first part. I could be completely insane." A beat. "When Emily possessed me it was painful and unbearable. I was trapped inside my own body but I couldn't move or speak, I could just watch. And I watched myself throw Damon into a tree and destroy the necklace. When he attacked me, I thought I was going to die."

"So then you go out for drinks with him?" Elena tilted her head to the side.

The young witch started to pace. "No. I had full plans to stay away from him forever if it was at all possible. But Emily she—she did something to the both of us. In the final moments of her spell, she linked me to Damon so that he wouldn't be able to hurt me after she left."

"Linked how?"

"That's the thing, it's so confusing to explain!"

"Try, Bonnie. Please."

"It's some kinda...blood spell. In theory he can't hurt me—he's actually protected me a few times. Tonight being one of those times. But it—it's more than that. It makes me dream about him. Vividly. It makes me...want him."

Big brown eyes widened. "Want him? As in...wait. Is Damon this mystery guy you've been daydreaming about? Are you sleeping with Damon!!"

Bonnie blushed. "No! Yes. Yes to the first and no to the second." She sighed, pulling her sleeves over her knuckles. "I know how it sounds. It's irrational but it's not something I can help. I've tried to stay away from him but it's like it's not possible. And he keeps showing up either way so..."

Her friend frowned slightly. "So this spell makes you wanna hang out with him?"

*If only it were that simple.* "Yes. It makes me want to be with him in ways I've never wanted to be with a guy before. And the dreams—do you really want me to get TMI on you with them because I can."

"Um, no I think I can fill in the blanks." She smiled softly. "It's just hard to wrap my head around everything. You were a mess after the attack, and now you're sneaking around with him? Does your Grams know?"

A nod. "She figured it out—smart lady. It doesn't mean that I'm not scared cause I am. I don't know what's gonna happen or if any of this means anything to him. I could give in and he could ditch me. Or kill me. Or kill me and then ditch me. But I kinda need him."

Elena blinked. "Why? Bonnie, he—he's not like Stefan. He hurts people and he doesn't even care. You saw what he did to Caroline, and I told you all about Vicki. He can't be trusted."

Bonnie glanced down to the floor, lowering her voice. "I've thought about all of this, I swear. It's all I think about sometimes. And yet when he kisses me or actually manages to be nice, it's like it doesn't matter. It does but you know what I mean." Pause. "In a way that doesn't make any sense what so
ever, Damon can make me feel safe and annoyed at the same time. This thing between us—it's growing bigger, Elena. Especially the more we are around each other."

"Then stop being around him."

"Could you stop being around Stefan?"

Sighing, her friend tucked her long hair back, knowing the other girl had a point. "So what are you going to do?"

*Good question.* "I wish that was the only thing I had to worry about, but it's not. Apparently there are other vampires in Mystic Falls and they are not nice people. It was one of them that shot me."

"Why?" The brunette questioned. "Do you think it was the same vampire who turned Logan Fell?"

"No. This was some blonde who was upset that…Damon killed her friend to help me." She fudged the details a bit. "Grams said I should be careful because a vampire witch could be just what they are looking for."

Elena rubbed her cheek. "Wow. Why didn't you come to me before now?"

"I was scared." Bonnie whispered. "I didn't know how you would react, and I didn't wanna lose your friendship. I need you in my life now more than ever."

"Bonnie…" She pulled the other girl in for a big hug. "There is *nothing* you can't tell me that I won't understand. Granted you and Damon is like—it's a little—no it's a lot hard to wrap my head around, but if you say it's some kinda over the top protection spell then I believe you. I know you wouldn't be with him otherwise."

Relief flooded the little witch and she smiled, hugging her friend again. She felt a little silly for hiding everything, like she should have known that the girl she once made mud pies with would understand. However the situation wasn't exactly *I spilled soda on your favorite shirt* or *I saw your boyfriend kissing another girl*. But having Elena's support renewed her faith in their friendship.

"So…" The brunette eyed her. "You've been *making out* with Damon."

She flushed red. "It—it's happened once or twice."

"Uh huh. What's it like? When I think of Damon kissing anyone, they don't have lips afterwards."

"Heh, it's nice. He's very—I can't believe we're actually talking about this—but he's very passionate. Sometimes too passionate."

"And you're not scared he could…you know…"

"In those moments, no. It's the other moments that worry me."

"And these dreams. How dirty are we talking here?"

"If they were movies, they'd be NC 17 with full frontal nudity."

"Oh my God. What was Emily thinking doing this to you?"

"I ask myself the same question quite often. But maybe there was no other way for her to be sure he wouldn't kill me."
"Yeah but now you're having lusty feelings for Damon, which makes no sense. You can not sleep with Damon."

"You slept with Stefan."

"I also trusted he wasn't gonna rip my throat out or dump me right after. Not to mention, I wasn't a virgin."

Bonnie groaned and hid her face. "I knew that was going to come up eventually."

Elena giggled with a shrug. "Oh c'mon. Like you haven't been dying to have some real girl talk with everything that has been going on in your life. I might think this whole thing is..." She threw her hands up into the air. "...dangerous and confusing, but you're my best friend. So I'm gonna be best friend girl while warning you on the dangers of Damon Salvatore. Especially having sex with Damon Salvatore."

"Maybe we should talk about this when they aren't downstairs listening." She mused.

"Good idea." Her friend chuckled. "I think we should focus on who is after you and why."

She knew why of course, but she wasn't sure if the Salvatore brothers wanted Elena to know about the vampires in the tomb. Or that Katherine was one of those vampires. "Yeah that—that sounds like a good idea. To be honest I'm kinda scared and not just for me. I'd hate for anything to happen to you or anyone else in my life."

The brunette rubbed her shoulder. "Don't worry. We're gonna help each other through this."

Bonnie smiled and embraced her, glad that she was able to finally get everything out in the open. At least now she had someone to talk to when things got too rough or too hot and heavy with Damon. Because there was a storm coming to Mystic Falls and they were all going to be stuck in the middle of it.

~*~

After a nice hot shower in the privacy of her own bathroom, Bonnie crawled up onto her bed and let her head rest to the pillows. She exhaled and stared at the ceiling, counting the swirls made by the paint. Now that she was alone, she had time to think about being shot and how frightening it had been. The feeling of the bullet embedded in her flesh, ripping apart her insides the deeper it burrowed. The fact that it had been wooden is probably what made it hurt even worse. Whoever this Council was, they sure had some interesting ideas. Who needed a stake when you could propel one out of one of the most modern weapons ever made?

And how had blondie ended up with one?

A shadow flowed past her window and she gasped, bolting upright in bed. When she realized who it was, she growled deep in her throat. "Damon."

The handsome vampire smirked. "Surely you were expecting me."

She shrugged. "Yes and no. I figured we had some things to talk about."

He sat down on her bed, smoothing a hand along the soft comforter. "Just thought I would check up on you."

She arched a brow. "Wow. What is that? Your like good deed for the century?"
"For the millennium." He countered with a smile. "Besides you know the drill. If you're dead who am I gonna eat?"

"Everyone else."

"Yeah but what's dinner without dessert?"

"Well I'm fine. Better now that Elena knows everything."

"Everything?"

Bonnie picked at the bracelet she'd received from Stefan. "I didn't tell her why vampires have been so interested in me lately. You included. But she's probably gonna find out sooner or later."

Damon leaned back on his elbows, showing off the smooth lines of his body underneath his black t-shirt. "How much do you know about the tomb?"

Biting her bottom lip, she sighed. "I know there are vampires in there, and that you want them out. You want this Katherine out."

He nodded. "Emily was Katherine's hand maid you know…"

"I don't remember any of that. Just the brief conversation in the woods." She explained slowly. "But if Elena knew there was a chance Katherine could come back, I'm sure she'd be less likely to be around Stefan. Which is why I hope she never finds out."

"Yeah, me too. Anyway…" He was up and moving around. "You're gonna need to be more careful. No more acting like a stupid girl in a horror movie, and hanging out in the woods alone with six inch heels on."

She snorted. "I was waiting for you. I knew you'd find me…you always do."

"It's a small town." He walked over to where his jacket hung on the back of her door. "You didn't bleed on it, did you? Blood is a bitch to get out of leather."

A beat. "No. Your superhero cape is safe."

He stared at it, giving it a flick. "I'm probably gonna get another so you can keep this one."

How close was I to death if he's being nice to me? "Thanks." Running a hand through her hair, she pulled a pillow into her lap. "Damon, I know this isn't easy for you either. Being linked to me or whatever. So thanks for having my back so many times."

His light blue eyes rolled her way. "O…kay."

Bonnie chuckled softly; it's like he was incapable of showing genuine emotion that wasn't rage. But then she reasoned it was just how he protected himself from getting hurt. "Oh, um so my Grams wants to talk to you."

Damon's brows shot higher. "Why?"

"I don't know." She admitted.

"Meeting the family—this isn't a prom date you know? If it was I'd be getting laid at the end of the night." Sighing, he was suddenly lounging beside her, hands behind his head. "I know you think I'm a great kisser. You should take me for a test drive and see what else I can do."
She turned a little to face him. "Is sleeping with me like your Mount Everest?"

"Bonnie..." He reached up and twirled strands of her hair around his slender finger. "Being with you like this is the Summit. All I have to do now is stick in my flag to show people you've been claimed."

_God he is such a cocky bastard. Worse is that I'm kinda into it. "And if I never let you do that?"

Smirking, he yanked her closer, making her fall across his chest. "We both know it's only a matter of time before you do. Not to mention our lives might depend on it."

A tingle rolled down Bonnie's back and she shivered, glancing away from him. In the mix of being shot and coming clean to Elena, she'd forgotten all of the simmering sensations that were just laying in wait for him to stir up. One simple touch or one simple kiss, and she was back to fighting what seemed almost natural. Wanting Damon. Craving Damon. Needing Damon. Resting against him now and feeling his penetrating eyes on her made her cheeks turn crimson. The thoughts that were swirling in her mind about giving in to what he wanted made her heart thud against her ribcage.

Engaging into anything with Damon Salvatore was a huge mistake. And she'd never wanted to make a mistake so badly before.

Smiling, Damon sat up and pulled her into his lap so that she straddled him. He smoothed his hands along her thighs and up her sides, taking her white tank top with them. He tossed it aside, finding her pink lacy bra to be quite adorable. He flicked the straps down but didn't remove it, just got it out of the way so that he could kiss softly along her trembling shoulders.

A breathless sigh escaped her lips and she held tight to his biceps, the material of his silk shirt annoying her. Very slowly, she swallowed hard and began to undo the buttons, having trouble with a few when her nerves got the best of her. Soon however his garment was open and she was pushing it down his arms. Damon's skin was cold to the touch, colder than usual and she figured it must be due to getting staked and sharing his blood with her.

"I could be dead right now if not for you..." She whispered, gripping the hair at the nape of his neck.

"Less talking, more kissing." He pulled on her chin, sealing his mouth over hers.

Damon's hands were everywhere, chilling her flesh, causing goosebumps to break out. They slid up under the back of her bra and with a flip of his knuckles the metal clasp was broken. She was so tiny; he could literally toss her around if he wanted to. Yet he found that he enjoyed the moments when she was being sassy and standing up to him. Not many people did—or lived afterwards—but when she did it was interesting. Feisty.

She whimpered against his lips, giving his tongue just enough room to slip past. He was feeding off her sounds and especially her heat, wondering how he was controlling himself. The veins at the crinkle of his eyes were protruding and just as he was about to question himself whether his fangs were showing, he felt her tongue swipe delicately across one. A grunt sounded deep in his chest—that grumble she always caused him to make whenever she invaded his thoughts—and although he didn't have much blood, what he had raced southward.

In minutes he was hard and throbbing, his hands plastered to her waist so that he could rock her back and forth over his erection. He pictured what it would be like if he tossed her onto her back and ripped off the rest of her clothes. Stretched her legs wide and eased inside of her, letting her damp warmth surround and cover him. It didn't make sense; the passion his body was experiencing from just touching and kissing. He liked to skip the minor leagues and head straight for the major, and yet...
with Bonnie he could get hot in 2.5 seconds.

For that reason alone he wanted to consume her. To feel her tighten around him as she came—as he sunk his fangs into her throat and drank the sensations from her.

"Ai, Damon…” Bonnie didn't know whether to blush or melt at the strokes of him against the seat of her pajama bottoms. It was so dirty but also thrilling and exciting. It made her want to claw at him but she was already doing that, so instead she bit down on his shoulder, having no real idea where the action came from. It was just something she needed to do."

"Fuck!” He yelled, his hands accidentally ripping the fabric of her pjs.

Footsteps sounded in the hallway, and before Bonnie could collect herself, she was under the covers and her father was barging into her room. "Bonnie! Are you okay? I thought I heard…” He looked around. "A noise."

"I'm fine." She panted, praying she looked as much. "Wh—I thought you were asleep?"

He nodded. "I was but I went to the kitchen for a glass of water." Once again he looked around, even going so far as to turn on the lights. "You sure you are okay?"

"Yup." She kept the covers to her chin. "Night."

"Night." Eying the area one last time, he turned off the lights and left.

Bonnie pressed her face into her pillow, mortified. What is happening to my life? "Ugh."

Exasperated, she held her arm over her breasts and crawled to the edge of her bed, retrieving her tank top.

Damon stuck the top half of his body through her window. "Now, where were we?"

With her back to him she put it on. "You were just leaving."

He pouted cutely. "You want my balls to be blue don't you? You want them to shrivel up and fall off. If I leave I'll have to…take matters into my own hands so to speak."

Snickering, she strolled to the window and pecked his lips without much thought. "Goodnight Damon." Pushing him out, she closed the sill and locked it, then drew the curtains.

Amused, she fell into bed and closed her eyes, content to let images of Damon relieving his own tension lull her to sleep.

~*~

Stefan Salvatore could remember a day when he and his brother were best friends. When they could talk about anything and solve disagreements like normal human beings. Of course they had been normal human beings at the time. And then came Katherine. If she had been anyone else, they probably would have been able to eventually get over the injustices they did to each other to win her hand. But when death and romance mingled, there were no easy solutions. At least not where Damon was concerned.

Even after all of the horrible things his brother had did to him, he felt that one day he could perhaps forgive him. But that is not what Damon wanted. Damon wanted them to circle the drain of anger and hurt for the rest of their un-natural lives. He wanted to punish him for several lifetimes and all because they had loved the same woman. Though Stefan wondered if he'd ever really loved
Katherine or had it always been mind control. He remembered thinking she was beautiful, and he remembered wanting to get to know her better. But after that it all became a fuzzy mess of watercolor declarations of love and devotion. And as the years passed and he was able to think on everything, the fog lifted and he could see clearly.

His love for Katherine had been superficial at best. A tool she'd used to keep him in check, especially when she decided she wanted him and Damon. She had never been the gentle, sweet soul he considered her to be. Just a selfish brat who wanted her cake and ice cream too.

So now Damon wanted to free her because he honestly loved her. He honestly needed her. It made sense in an odd way. Damon and Katherine had the same lust for destruction—for treating people like playthings to discard when the fun was over. Knowing that, it made him question why she'd ever chosen him in the first place? As a vampire he didn't liked needless suffering anymore than he had as a human.

Folding his arms over his chest, he sighed and watched as the students milled out of the high school and towards their vehicles. Absently he thought about going back but things were too hectic at the moment. Maybe if they calmed down. A figure in black caught his eye and he hurried to catch up to it, shoving his hands into his pockets. "Bonnie. Hey."

"Hey Stefan." She smiled but continued walking.

Deciding to be blunt for a change, he stepped in front of her. "Bonnie I—I overheard what you said to Elena last night."

She nodded. "I know. So?"

He shook his head. "I know that you can't control your urges for Damon, but it would be a bad idea to get anymore involved with him."

"Stefan…" She began. "I appreciate that you're looking out for me but I'm handling it."

He watched her; she was so young and naïve in a way. And Damon—for all of his faults—had charm on his side. "I just want you to think about what might happen if that tomb over opens."

She arched a brow. "What do you mean? I thought Emily's crystal was the only way to open it."

The vampire shrugged. "Damon has ways of making the things he wants a reality, even when the odds are against him. If he gets into that crypt, what do you think is going to happen?"

She'd honestly ever thought of that before. "Feral vampires will attack the town."

"Yes. And Katherine will be one of them. All Damon has wanted for nearly one hundred and forty five years is to have Katherine back by his side." A beat. "If that ever happens, he won't be concerned about anything else."

Bonnie stared at him, knowing exactly what he was hinting at. That in the grand scheme of things, she was expendable the moment that tomb was opened. She supposed she'd just have to keep it from opening then. "I won't let that happen, and neither will you. None of those vampires can be set free."

"I agree." He said. "I just don't want you to become entangled with Damon so tightly that you can't break free."

"Relax Stefan, it's not like I'm in love with him or anything." She replied truthfully. "What I feel for
Damon is intense, but it can't be love.

"Right. Damon doesn't know how to love. He doesn't have a heart."

"Actually, I think he does. I think he's encased it in cement walls, but he has one."

"How can you be so sure after everything you now know about him?"

"Because I saw it breaking when Emily told him she wasn't releasing Katherine."

The look in Stefan's dark eyes was passive, but his thoughts were in turmoil. No one had ever been able to read his brother so well, not even him. And yet the young witch was quite right. Katherine seemed to be the only thing Damon was still capable of loving. "Even if he doesn't turn on you if she's released, she will. Katherine hates competition in any form and she will see your connection as a direct threat to her happiness. She will kill you."

The witch exhaled. "And Elena? Something tells me your old girlfriend would not be happy to see her either."

He turned his head to the female in question where she stood talking to Caroline. "You're right. Be careful, Bonnie. Damon has made a business out of lying to get what he wants. No matter what he feels for you, I'm sure it all revolves around somehow getting into that burial chamber."

And then he was walking away.

Bonnie's brows narrowed as he did, but she couldn't deny her thoughts on the matter. She thought with the crystal gone there was no way to release the other vampires, but there was always a way. If such creatures as vampires existed and she could have magical powers, then opening a mystic door was probably no problem if one knew what they were doing. She was just glad she had no idea how to get inside. She was happy the idea had never popped into her mind one night while lazily reading over her family history.

Stefan could be right. Damon could turn on me the second that door creaks open if it ever happens. I have to make sure it doesn't. And not just for my sake.

Rubbing the back of her neck, she snapped back to attention and strolled towards her car. A case of déjà vu washed over her at the sight of Damon leaning against the driver side door, arms crossed over his gray shirt. Silently she prayed he'd arrived late, not catching her conversation with Stefan.

"What are you doing here?"

He toyed with his ring. "Annoying you."

She tried to judge his expression, but he appeared normal. "Did you go by and see my Grams?"

"Yeah, no." He smirked. "I'm not doing that."

Of course. "We'll see." Looking a few cars over, she waved. "Bye Alaric."

Her history teacher turned, waved back and cast his eyes to Damon before climbing into his car.

"Who is that?" Damon inquired.

"Alaric Saltzman, our new history teacher." She responded. "Why?"

A shrug. "No reason. Anyway I've been thinking about all of the vamps that have been after you
lately, and I have an idea. You do a spell to bring one of those bad boys to us, I'll tie him down and torture him until he gives us answers."

She blinked. "What? I—I don't even know if that's possible. Wouldn't I have to have something that belongs to the vampire?"

Digging in his pocket, he pulled out a gold ring in the curve of a snake, with the animal swallowing it's own body. "I went back and took this off the blonde one before burning her body. You can't call her but maybe whoever else has handled it will come out to play."

Taking it from him, she shuddered at the cold feeling that shot down her arm. She couldn't explain how she knew, but there was evil surrounding the small piece of jewelry. "I don't know. What if we bite off more than we can chew?"

"I'll protect you, Bonnie." He caressed her face. "Besides, don't you want answers?"

"I do." She whispered softly. "I just don't know if I want them this badly…"

Unbeknownst to the witch or the vampire, a young girl stood over near a large oak tree watching them intensely. She clutched the silver pendant around her neck so hard that her fingers were cramping and the metal was leaving an indentation into her palm. Her big round eyes squinted and glared, her lips up turned into a deep scowl. She swallowed thickly at the way the vampire touched the girl, and felt a sweltering rage boil up into her chest. It snapped around her heart and she nearly winced, but managed to continue to hold herself in a dignified manner.

"You'll pay for what you did, Damon Salvatore." She mouthed the words to herself. "Mark my words, you will burn."

~Fin~
Damon Salvatore sat behind the wheel of his vintage car, his face turned up to the sun. Black sunglasses covered his magnetic blue eyes even though they were closed. He just liked to look good and the new fashion of the era really helped bring out his already amazingly gorgeous features. Parked on the street in the quiet local area, he sighed and glanced to the upscale house with the wide square porch. A large oak tree sat in the front yard; a tree he'd seen when it had been nothing more than a sapling trying to grow. Time passed quickly when you weren't paying attention.

He didn't know why he was here. Why he was bothering with such a stupid request that didn't make any sense in the first place. He wasn't the type that wanted to meet parents or friends or siblings. That was something a boyfriend did and he could only be a boyfriend to one woman. He wanted to remain a shadowy figure from dark nightmares that swooped in, killed you and moved on. Yet Tituba Bennett wanted to talk to him, and for a week he'd directly avoided anything that would drive him to that particular conversation. However certain…developments were now making it necessary to pay her a little visit.

The main development of course would be finding the whereabouts of Emily's grimoire aka spell book.

He was well aware that he was an evil son of a bitch that lived by his own set of rules. It made life fun. But when useful information fell into his lap, he decided he'd be a fool not to use it to his advantage. Okay so saving Elena from some mystery vampire and trying to befriend her had no bearing on anything other than annoying Stefan—he could admit that. In fact he freely admitted it because it gave him a good down low tickle. Running into Bree and learning about Emily's cook book-o-magic was well worth the tank of gas to Georgia. He could even get over being attacked by Lexi's intended…as long as the asshole didn't show up again.

Poor Bree. Her death was meaningless but then again most deaths were. He could still feel the squish of her blood between his fingers. It'd been ages since he'd ripped out a heart, far too long. It was what she deserved though for trying to get him killed. Blah blah Lexi was my friend boo hoo. Cry him a freaken river why didn't they?

Seriously was it so hard for people to get it through their thick skulls that he was evil? Or at least evil-ish. A man on a mission who would not let anyone stand in his way.
There was just one little problem. Bonnie Bennett.

Everything Emily had forced on him was there even now, churning in his stomach and clouding in his brain when he needed to be focused now more than ever. Staying away from the hot little piece of witch was almost impossible but he'd managed. Running off with Elena helped matters…while complicating them as well. He knew that she'd have questions for him, and a part of him actually wanted to explain. Though he had a feeling Elena had already filled her in on the whole accident aspect of the situation. He couldn't see the cute brunette confiding the part about finding her doppelganger's picture in Stefan's room and bolting like a bat out of hell.

Point; he didn't wanna be that guy. He didn't wanna clarify anything to Bonnie because it would mean that he possibly cared about her. That he saw her as more than blood and body parts, which was retarded. The only person he truly cared about was Katherine. If it weren't for the magic coursing through his veins, he would have finished her off a while ago and scattered her ashes to the wind.

He also chose to ignore the tiny voice in the back of his mind that whispered otherwise. The voice that reminded him of how sweet Bonnie tasted and how fucken awesome it would be when he finally got inside of her. It said other things too—dumb ass voice—things that he didn't dwell on if he could help himself. Murmurings about actually being concerned and possessive or wanting to always make sure she was fine.

Sighing, he frowned and shrugged at his new leather jacket, not liking the way it fit under the arms. He could just go back and get his old one but—but what? What in the hell was really stopping him? Big green eyes and pouty lips? As if he couldn't find that a dime a dozen anywhere else in the world.

Damon despised what was happening to him. He wished that he could tear it from his body and return to the way things were before that night. Not being able to kill someone and lusting for them, secretly wanting to take care of them were two very different things. Then again thinking back, it all fit with Emily's personality. He remembered wondering why she'd work for Katherine, especially after finding out that she was a vampire. It made sense though—the witch had a dark streak in her that totally matched her Mistress' to a tee.

This whole deal with Bonnie was more than likely a punishment for him than a way to keep her safe. If the bitch weren't dead he'd dig her up and kill her all over again for what she was putting him through. Needless emotions that had no place in his life now. Maybe once upon a time but he wasn't that guy anymore where standing when a woman came into the room meant something. Where whispering sweet nothings or taking the time to be concerned and polite actually got you pointers. That would just make him appear weak.

And he detested the thought of being weak.

Cracking his neck, he opened the door and exited the vehicle, strolling across the street onto the porch of the home. Staring at the simple white door, he tapped on it with his knuckles and waited. Might as well get this over with.

The entrance opened slowly and Tituba Bennett looked up at him with intense dark brown eyes. She folded her arms over her chest, seemingly sizing him up. "Hello Damon."

"Hello Tituba." He smirked at her frown. "Oh right, you go by Shelia now. Doesn't sound very witchy to me though, but I guess middle names don't."

"I'm not inviting you in, but you knew that." She leaned against the doorframe. "Kinda surprised you're here."
No more so than I. "Yeah well, you know how it was done in the old days. A man couldn't come a courtin' unless he got permission from an elder."

She smiled wryly. "You think I'd give you permission to do anything with my granddaughter?"

"Not like I'd need it." He removed his sunglasses. "I suppose she's told you all about the Emily drama. You witches, always got something up your sleeve."

"If Emily's spell keeps you from hurting Bonnie, I'm all for it." She replied with a shrug. "My grandbaby knows to be wary of you either way."

He mirrored her stance. "Why did you wanna see me? To tell me about her curfew or to threaten me to not get her pregnant?"

Tituba snorted lightly. "I just wanted to look you in the eye. Bonnie is very important to me, and from what she's been saying, her feelings for you are changing as well."

"That's out of both of our control." The handsome vampire said.

"Hm." A beat. "You've did gruesome things; I don't need to touch you to know that. But..." She held out her hand. "I'd like to know what your plans are for Bonnie."

Damon looked down to her hand, his brow raising. Flexing his fingers, he allowed his hand to fit into hers, hoping that it wasn't a trick to turn him into a toad or whatever. "What's the verdict?"

She scowled at the coldness of his skin, her thin lips pursing together. It was amazing how one simple act of contact could allow her to read a person so well. "I don't trust you, but I can see that you won't hurt Bonnie. You literally can't, though it wouldn't hurt you to behave yourself around her." Releasing him, her body appeared to sigh with relief. "However you're wasting your time, she has no idea where the grimoire is and neither do I."

Fuck. "The what now?"

"Boy, do I look stupid to you? Don't even try to play me for a fool. You might be older than me but you can't pull the wool over my eyes that easily."

"I'm not sure I know what you are talking about."

"Okay."

"Well this has been educational in a nineties teen movie sort of way, but I have to be going. Vampire things to do."

"Say you get that tomb open, then what?"

"Every man, woman and child for themselves?"

"And Bonnie?"

"What about her? She'll be fine...she'll have you to protect her."

"True. We both know she'll need all the protecting she can get too..."

Letting the sentence trail off, she nodded and slowly shut the door. Damon huffed and turned, looking off across the yard. All right so he didn't exactly want anything to happen to Bonnie, but he couldn't let that get in the way of what he wanted more, and that was Katherine. Wasn't it?
Liberating her meant they could finally be together. So what if she'd no doubt wanna go on a killing spree? Wouldn't having her in his arms completely negate everything swirling in his brain for the witch?

Man he really, really hoped so because if it didn't? He was gonna be in a shit load of trouble. Unless of course he could talk them both into a very hot and dirty threesome.

~*~

Sitting by herself at a small table in the Grille, Bonnie Bennett idly swirlled her red straw around and around in her glass of Coke. She could hear the chatter of everyone around her and the music from the speakers, but it was all white noise really. Just another way for her to look busy with a daydream instead of totally perplexed by recent events. Such as being jealous that Damon had spent time with Elena and hadn't shown his face to her in at least a week. Okay so spending time wasn't exactly what they'd did. He saved her life—and for that she was grateful. It was the drinking alcohol and talking parts that got under her skin. Which was stupid because Elena was madly in love with Stefan, and didn't trust Damon as far as she could toss him.

Nevertheless the little green-eyed monster was rearing its ugly head. Why was he avoiding her? Was he off trying to break their bond or had it already weakened on its own? No. The dreams are still here and that has to mean something.

It was weird however, missing him. Wondering what he was doing and why he wasn't actively trying to annoy her as usual. It also brought up several points Stefan had made while trying to convince her to be wary of his brother. The main point obviously being Katherine and what should occur if she were freed.

Why did I have to fall for a guy who has a psycho ex girlfriend?

According to the saner Salvatore, if she managed to get out Damon would toss her to the side like an old pair of boots. It was depressing to contemplate but it made sense, even though she didn't wish to admit it. A few days and weeks could not compete with over one hundred years of unrequited love. So not only would she be in danger of being gutted, she'd also be in danger of a broken heart. She wondered which would hurt more.

Shaking her head, she forced herself to focus on something else. Anything else! Damon's plan to find out why vampires were suddenly attacking her was a good place to start. Beckoning one to them made her stomach fill with butterflies. She didn't question Damon's lack of being able to keep her from being a happy meal, but if whoever showed up was stronger than him, it could turn into a giant mess.

Besides they already knew the plot of the story, which was to get into the crypt. She could care less about their reasons for wanting it. And suddenly a new thought came to mind, what if Damon only wanted to make contact so that he could compare notes with them? It sounded like some diabolical master plan he might have. Get their answers in the hopes of cracking open the vault.

Although she didn't know anything about Katherine, she was scared too death of her. Any girl who would turn two brothers against each other for shits and giggles couldn't be a very nice person. Also, she trusted that Stefan was telling the truth and not just trying to frighten her. The love of Damon's life would blow through their town like a hurricane and destroy everything in her path if given the chance, probably starting with her.

Tucking her silky black hair behind her ear, she closed her eyes and idly tried to seek out the vampire in question. A tingle shot down her spine and she gasped; he was close. Digging in her pocket, she
tossed a few dollars onto the table to pay for her food and stood, grabbing up the jacket on the back of her chair. She strolled towards the door, colliding with a body that wasn't looking where it was going.

"Oh! I'm so sorry." It was a young girl with golden blonde hair. "I—I wasn't looking where I was going."

"It's okay." Bonnie smiled. "I had other things on my mind too."

She nodded. "You're Bonnie, right? I've seen you around school. I'm new…sophomore." A pause. "My name is Clarissa."

"Nice to meet you." The witch replied. "Um I'm sorry to just rush off but I'm kinda in a hurry."

Clarissa stepped to the side and out of her way. "Okay. But when you have time I'd love to talk to you."

Bonnie tilted her head to the side. "About what?"

The blonde lowered her voice. "Being a witch."

Silence.

"It's okay." She whispered smiling. "I know you're a witch. I'm one too." She lifted the silver pendant from under her shirt, showing off the intricate designs. "This has been in my family for generations. It helps me focus my power."

"I…" Trailing off, Bonnie glanced around slowly. She didn't know if she should believe this random girl or discuss something so private with her. "I can't talk about this right now…"

Clarissa wet her lips and yanked a napkin off a nearby table. She scribbled her phone number onto it and handed it to the other girl. "Here. Please call me when you get a chance. It's very important that we talk."

Taking the napkin, she sighed. "Okay." Without waiting for a reply, she hurried out of the restaurant and towards her car.

One minute everything in her life made sense and now, everything seemed to be turning itself upside down. How did things go from normal to weird so quickly? Or were they always creepy and she just wasn't noticing? Was she that self-centered? No. She cared about the people around her and she paid attention because being aware was important. Especially for young women. Elena could deny it all she wanted but it was clear; the Salvatores brought danger to their small town.

She was driving around next with no obvious destination in mind. It was completely possible that Clarissa was a witch, though she had no idea why she'd want to talk to her. It wasn't like she was casting spells left and right. So far she could barely manage to float things sometimes, and she wasn't sure the fire spell worked without the pentagram.

Bonnie frowned and pulled over onto the side of the road, rubbing her suddenly aching head. She gazed out of the windshield and at the beautiful red hue streaking the sky. The sun was setting and it would be night soon, which meant she'd wanna stay camped in her room to make sure nothing bad tried to get in. With all the things that were going on, she was wary of her father inviting strangers in. And it's what he would do unfortunately. Anyone who claimed to be selling something or lost, he'd shuffle him or her inside and offer them a drink because he was a nice guy. She loved him but she couldn't seem to drive it into his head that people they didn't know could be dangerous.
He still thought they lived in a time when you could leave your doors unlocked.

_Bon-eeeeee…_

"I didn't hear anything." She whispered, gripping the wheel.

_Bon-eeeeee…_

Swallowing hard, she slowly exited the car and looked towards the woods. Vividly she remembered where the overgrown area would lead her to, the ruins of the old Fells' Church. The first place she'd ever saw Emily in her dreams. Wetting her lips, she pulled righter at her dark cardigan and forced one foot in front of the other. Yes she was aware that it was foolish to be traipsing off into the forest but it was daylight, and thankfully the only vampires that could roam around when the sun was up were two that didn't want her dead.

Besides she couldn't spend the rest of her life living in fear. Having answers was going to be the only way to stop what was happening.

As she walked along, she let the sounds of the birds calm her nerves. Anything was better than total silence, even chirping and squawking. _What am I doing out here? This is so stupid._ She nibbled on her bottom lip, listening to the sound of the leaves crunching under her feet until the sight of twisted, dirty stones came into view. The hair on the back of her neck stood up and she rubbed at it, stepping carefully over to the blocks of cement.

_Why does everything take place here? Is it the hallowed ground or something? And does that mean witches aren't spawns of Satan? Funny how that never occurred to me before now considering…_

"I still have so many questions for Grams." A beat. "Hello? Is anyone there?"

Nothingness greeted her and she found herself happy for it, glad whatever voice that'd been calling out was now quiet. Briefly she thought perhaps it was Emily, wanting to bestow more information or to just be annoying again. Shaking her head, she turned sharply and headed for her car, screaming suddenly when the ground under her sneakers gave way and sent her crashing into the hidden cavern beneath the vestiges of the dilapidated building. Her hear cracked into a series of rocks that jutted out of the dirt and she rolled off to the side, unconscious.

Indifferent as ever to whatever was going on, the birds continued with their happy songs as the sun sunk lower towards the horizon.

~*~

"Where's Bonnie?"

Elena cut her eyes to where Damon stood, leaning against his desk with his arms folded over his chest. She watched him for a moment, then shrugged. "I don't know."

"You wouldn't be lying to me, would you?" He inquired. "You _do_ know that Bonnie and I are basically engaged or something right?"

She laughed lightly. "I know that a spell has you bothering her 24/7."

"Hm. You left out the part where she's lusting after me. The best part if you ask me." He winked at her.

She snorted, closing the book in her lap. "You should just leave her alone, Damon. I don't like that
you're stringing her along or doing whatever it is you are doing to her."

The handsome vampire arched a brow. "I'm not doing anything to her." Yet. "Besides I'm her protector which means I need to know where she is. I haven't seen her in a week…"

"You're worried about her?" She tilted her head to the side, slightly shocked.

His face became like stone. "I just wanna know where she is."

Biting the inside of her cheek, Elena exhaled slowly. Her day with Damon a while ago had given her a bit of insight into his mind, though not a lot. She didn't know how he could hurt people and not give a damn, or how he could play with Stefan's life like it was a toy. But she'd discovered a sort of soft spot in him, one he never wanted people to see. One that he was trying to hide right now.

"I honestly don't know." She said softly. "I've been kinda pre-occupied with finding out that I was adopted."

A grunt was his response.

Draping over the back of the couch, she itched at her cheek. "I'm worried about her. If a vampire can shoot her, who knows what else might happen?"

Damon frowned. "She's a powerful witch. She can take care of herself."

The brunette nodded. "Maybe. Though under all of the powers is still just a young girl who has no idea why things are going the way they are. I can relate. But I'm lucky." She smiled a little. "I have Stefan to help me and to look out for me."

Cracking his knuckles, he yanked up his jacket and walked in long strides towards the stairs. Elena grinned and returned to reading as Damon exited his house, making a beeline for his vehicle. He knew exactly what she had been getting at—subtly wasn't her strong point. But the thing was, he never signed on to be Bonnie's white knight or anything else for that matter. If he kept her alive it was because he was being forced to and nothing else.

What's the difference between a spell doing it and compulsion?

Ah. Yes but Katherine had never compelled him. Or had she? Not like he'd remember if she actually had or not. Caroline didn't remember all the times he'd did it to her—that was the whole point. Making someone forget. In the very beginning she could have used it to put him at ease, and then decided there was no more need for it once he was on her side. He'd say it was something she would never do but this was Katherine. What wouldn't she do?

He grumbled the entire time as he went through the motions of starting up and driving off. In truth he had no idea where he was going. He knew that Bonnie wasn't at home or at her grandmother's and he didn't have the patience to try every single place she might hang out. So how would he find her?

Tapping his fingers on the steering wheel, he slowed for a red light and inhaled deeply. He weeded out all of the different smells; children playing in their backyards, young lovers kissing on a park bench, jocks tossing the football around because they had nothing better to do. And then a faint odor slowly began to stand out from the rest. It was hard to describe—smoky sweet with a hint of chemical perfume—but all Bonnie Bennett. Irritated that he was even searching for her, he made a left and followed it anyway.

~*~
Green eyes fluttered opened, heavy with the urge to go back to sleep. However they quickly stretched and jerked from side to side when nothing but darkness came into view. With a deep groan, Bonnie slowly sat up and touched her head. It throbbed angrily in time with her heart, and she cringed when she felt wetness against her right temple. For a brief minute she had no idea where she was or what had happened. It all seemed like a bad dream, one that she would wake up from as soon as she pinched herself.

Unfortunately after doing so for a second, that didn't transpire and panic set in. She made herself stand on wobbly legs and pushed down the nausea that arose, taking a few deep breaths to get composed. "Oh god…" Digging in her pocket with shaking hands, she yanked out her cell phone and dialed Elena, frowning when the battery dead signal beeped back at her. "Great."

Sniffling, she glanced around and then up, wondering if she could hold onto the roots and climb out. Probably not though. Besides it was pitch back and if she fell again she could break her neck or something. "Hello! Is anyone out there?"

Of course silence answered back.

Feeling along the decaying walls, she blinked when an odd symbol came into view. It was etched into the thick stone of what looked like a door. She wet her lips and hobbled up to it, using her cell phone for light. Carefully she pressed her ear to it and listened, holding her breath as shuffling and faint moans were heard. Terrified, she backed away one step at a time, her entire body trembling with fear. They were back there. They were really locked away back there.

Without warning, hands latched onto her upper arms and she shrieked, whirling around to strike out the best she could. Her wrists were captured in a tight grip and she winced, but was forced to look up to see who was probably going to murder her. "Damon…"

"What the hell are you doing down here?" His voice was clipped, his eyes cold and severe.

She wrapped her fingers around the collar of his coat the best she could. "I—I fell. The ground gave way and I fell."

Aggravated for whatever reason, he noticed the cut on her forehead. Gently his pressed his thumb to it, then sucked it into his mouth with a low hum of appreciation. He met her soft gaze with a stern one of his own before scooping her up into his arms. Effortlessly he leapt out of the hole and off to the side, putting her feet onto solid earth.

She swayed dizzily in his arms. "How di—did you know where I was?"

A shrug. "How do you know where I am sometimes?"

Bonnie studied him, not sure if she should bring it up. "I…heard them. Behind the door. Are they in pain?"

He picked leaves out of her hair idly. Anything to keep his mind from what was in that cavity. "Not anymore, lucky them. If a vampire goes too long without blood, they become seriously dehydrated. Basically like a zombie wandering around aimlessly." Pause. "The lights are on but nobody's able to come to the door."

She gulped. "And…if they were able to get blood?"

"They'd return to their former selves." Was his reply.

She's back there. Katherine. "Kinda surprised you're the one helping me seeing as how I haven't
seen you around lately."

"Been busy."

"Avoiding me?"

"That too."

Scowling, she yanked away from him. "Yeah well, don't do me any favors now."

Damon rolled his eyes. "And don't go all jilted girlfriend on me. I don't have to check in with you or anything. We're not together."

She nodded sadly. "And you don't give a damn about me, right?"

He watched her but said nothing. Oh the words were there—on the very edge of his tongue—but they wouldn't pass his lips. It was like something was holding them in, keeping them down against his will. Maybe it was that fucken spell…or maybe he was giving her a freebie for once. After all she was hurt a little and obviously still shaken up over her whole ordeal. Why kick her while she was down?

*Because that is what you do! That is who you are!*

And yet…”Look do you wanna get out of here or not? You could have a concussion and I hear too many of those and you start to forget what comes after three."

Tired and in no mood to argue, she nodded again. "I wanna go home."

Wrapping his arm around her shoulder, he steered her towards the road. He managed to surprise himself by not looking back, though a part of him wanted to. A part of him wanted everything and anything. Bonnie, Elena, Katherine; the world on a silver platter with his name on a little card that said *its yours. Enjoy!*

And the closer he got to obtaining one thing, the more he coveted another. He didn't wanna believe it but he had a suspicion that if he ever got Katherine back, it wouldn't stop his craving for Bonnie. Most likely that would grow, especially if they left Mystic Falls. Magic or no magic, he had to have her now and that wasn't something that could be changed, only controlled.

Maybe he could use it all to his advantage though. Have Bonnie free Katherine and be the happiest little boy on the planet. After all some people were content with what they had, but not Damon Salvatore.

Damon Salvatore had to one up everyone else.

He had to have it all.

~Fin~
Self Made Barriers

Chapter Summary

When communications break down, the barriers go up.

Chapter Notes

This ficlet takes place during the episode 1.12 Unpleasantville.

Self Made Barriers

"Damon...please...more..."

Bonnie's back arched off the large bed, her heels digging into the soft downy mattress beneath her. She licked her lips slowly and gazed up at the ceiling, one hand clutching her pillow while the other was buried in nearly black strands of soft hair. Her hips were unable to keep still, bucking into the air with each gentle swipe of Damon Salvatore's skilled tongue. He was only giving her feather light touches however; just enough to make her squirm underneath him like a worm on a hook.

He really liked it when she squirmed.

"What's the magic word?" He inquired, nicking her inner thigh with his fang and sliding his tongue over the tiny wound.

She shuddered, giving his hair a firm yank. "Now."

"Ooh demanding I see." Amused, he placed butterfly kisses up to her breast. "You give me what I want and I'll give you what you want. Eventually."

Whimpering, she wiggled. "Uhn don't torture me!"

He shrugged. "I could leave you know."

"N—no!" Swallowing hard, she met his intense gaze. "Do it."

Damon smiled triumphantly and inhaled, making the veins at the corners of his eyes squiggle to life. As his sharp teeth appeared, he surged up and sunk them into her tender neck, drinking forcefully. Bonnie cried out with an odd mix of pain and pleasure, her nails raking angry marks on his otherwise flawless back. She wrapped her legs around his lithe waist, hissing when a simple jerk of his hips made him thrust inside of her, sliding deep. She was warm and wet, with pliant muscles that fit snug around his throbbing shaft.

"Fuck!" He groaned; his mouth stained with blood. "You feel amazing."

The pretty witch's ears were roaring, but she managed to nuzzle at him and pull him closer, giving herself over to him completely. It felt wonderful to have him inside of her. To feel him driving in over
and over, harder and faster until they were in a frantic rhythm that shook the bed. His chest grazed her nipples that were already overly sensitive from his teasing nibbling and sucking. He had fed recently before her, so his usually chilly skin was warm and rosy. Their motions had her flesh sizzling on her bones—soon she would be glistening with a light sheen of sweat. But none of it mattered. Nothing mattered but him and her…and the moment.

Even if it was just one dream out of many.

Even if she was beginning to lose count of all the times or things Damon had done to her in her mind, where she just couldn't resist him. Life outside of her head always faded away the moment she dozed off and he appeared ready to take her again.

"God...do—don't stop..." She gasped, breathless. "Don't ever sto—" A figure moving out of the corner of her eye made her trail off, and she forced herself to regain a bit of focus.

A beautiful and elegant blonde stood at the edge of the bed, watching them with harsh bright blue eyes. She was dressed in a fitted green corset gown that slipped off her shoulders, her cornflower hair twisted and bound into several lovely curls. Her hands were clasped in front of her but she didn't look happy at all. In fact she looked downright vengeful.

Alarmed, Bonnie pushed at Damon's shoulder. "Damon! The—there's someone here."

"Ignore them." He grunted, never breaking a step. "It's not real."

"I..." She watched the new arrival warily, feeling herself succumbing once again to his skilled lovemaking.

And then the woman spoke. "You think you can take him from me?"

"What?" She frowned. She wasn't sure what was going on.

"He's mine." She growled. "I made him and I'll kill you both before I see you together!"

Bonnie blinked. "Ka—Katherine?"

"What?" Damon glanced back, his chest heaving. "Baby there's no one here. I'm good but I doubt I can make you hallucinate."

"She's there." Pointing, she screamed as the blonde lunged at her, moving into the bed with superhuman speed and gripping her around the neck.

"Die you little whore!" Katherine shouted. "He's mine! Mine! Mine! Mine!"

"NO!" With a stilted shriek, Bonnie sat straight up in bed, her hands at her throat. She was relieved when she felt nothing there, not even Damon's bite. What the hell was that? Trudging up, she stumbled into her bathroom and searched the cabinet for aspirin, hoping that it would dull her suddenly raging headache. Never in the entire time that she'd been fantasizing about the elder Salvatore had a guest shown up. Unwanted or otherwise. Though since she had no idea what Katherine looked like, she decided it was her subconscious giving her a form. Any form. She could have looked like a muffin most likely.

Snorting to herself, she pushed those thoughts away and concentrated more on the fact that Katherine had jacked her dream and tried to kill her. It wasn't really her though—it couldn't be because they weren't linked at all and had never met. But obviously something inside of her was
sending a type of subliminal message that probably stemmed from her fears on the female vampire ever escaping her current prison. It could also be Stefan's warning that Katherine would violently murder her for being close to Damon.

If she didn't need an extra incentive to make sure that tomb was never opened, tonight would have put the icing on the proverbial cake.

*Why did I have to get involved in any of this? I should have never kept the necklace in the first place. I should have just given it back to Caroline and went about my merry way. At least then Damon would have it and Emily wouldn't have possessed me.*

She'd come such a long way since finding out that her ancestors dated back to the Salem witch trials. What started as a funny antidote to make her friends laugh was now a shocking reality that frightened her more and more each day. Enter vampires and her supernatural cup of tea was overflowing with weirdness. And unfortunately it wasn't like it was in the movies. She wasn't always going to be okay or automatically win because she was a good guy. This was real life and people were going to get hurt. Hell, they already were.

Looking on the bright side however, at least she wasn't being told she was just a feeble girl who couldn't take care of herself. She had power and although the thought of going dark side was never far from her mind, she'd use said power if she had to.

Taking the bottle of pills in hand, she made her way downstairs and into the kitchen. She turned on the light over the stove and got a glass from the cabinet, filling it with tap water. Slowly she shook two little white caplets into her palm and resealed the small container, then placed each on her tongue before following with liquid. They went down easy and she sighed, leaning against the counter.

*Damon no doubt thinks I'm insane now. Of course it wouldn't kill him to come make sure I'm okay, but he won't. That would mean he actually gives a damn about someone besides himself.*

And Bonnie Bennett had accepted that would never be the case with Damon Salvatore.

~*~

Sitting near a large stained glass window in the *Grille*, Elena Gilbert angrily munched on a delicious French fry. She looked across the table to her best friend, thinking that she'd taken all of the new information that she'd just laid on her with a surprisingly calm demeanor. But that was one of the things she loved about Bonnie. She always had an open mind, especially where their relationship was concerned.

"I can't believe you're adopted." Bonnie shook her head. "I never saw that coming."

The pretty brunette frowned, dipping her fry into more ketchup. "And it gets weirder." She gestured with her food. "On my birth certificate it lists Miranda and Grayson Gilbert as my birth parents. None of it makes any sense."

Her friend nodded and folded her green long sleeve shirt clad arms onto the table. "Which is why you should ask Jenna." Elena pouted with a small groan and she continued. "First of all the Elena I know would always wanna know the truth, good or bad."

She rolled her eyes. "And second of all?"

"You just found out your boyfriend is a…" Bonnie lowered her voice "Vampire. So unless your birth parents are aliens how bad could it be?"
The other girl chuckled, feeling a little better. "I suppose you're right." Pause. "So what's this I hear about you having trouble with your lovah?"

"Shut up." The witch grinned. "He's not my lover therefore there is no trouble. Where did you hear that from anyway?"

"Stefan. He said Damon's been crankier than usual." She wiggled her brows suggestively. "Sexual frustration or something else?"

Bonnie laughed. "Well… Should I be honest here or not? "Actually it—it's because of Georgia."

Elena arched a brow. "What do you mean? Bonnie you're not upset about that, are you? Because I didn't consent to going to Georgia. He basically kidnapped me and I had to go along for the ride."

*That was before the drinking and sharing of secrets.* "I know and I'm not upset. I'm just—it seems so easy for him to tell you things and it's like he doesn't wanna tell me anything. He gets all defensive whenever I ask and accuses me of behaving like a jealous girlfriend. Like it's my fault I want to know these things in the first place."

"Damon is—he's complicated." She said, even though she was aware she didn't know much of anything about him. "He doesn't like to show weakness."

"Is it weakness though saying *hey I rescued your best friend from a car accident and took her to Georgia*?"

"Not weakness, but to him it's giving up information and even *that* is too close for comfort."

"Apparently he was comfortable talking to you."

"*Bonnie…""

"I'm not mad I'm just irritated. Everything about this situation irritates me because I—I can't do anything about it. I can't stop wanting him and I can't make him be less of a jerk."

"Give him a little time. He'll come around."

"How do you know? And what does coming around mean for Damon Salvatore anyway?"

"I'm not sure. But I know when you were shot; he wasn't the aloof person that he might seem. He *honestly* wanted to help you."

Bonnie nibbled on her bottom lip, her hands tearing up a tiny napkin just to have something to do. Yes there were times when Damon barely let his humanity show, but it always seemed to cause him physical pain afterwards. Perhaps he was so used to being a heartless bastard that it *did* actually hurt him when he was otherwise. One minute he would give her his jacket to make her feel better, and the next he was disappearing with her friend for drinks and burgers like it was an everyday occurrence.

It appeared to her that there was a scale within him that needed constant balancing. He couldn't be good without showing how bad he was as well.

"We'll see I guess." She yawned.

"Next time he acts like a dick, make him jealous." The brunette shrugged idly. "If it works on living guys, it should work on dead ones too. Besides, he strikes me as the possessive type."
That is one thing I know about him that is one hundred percent true. "Hah, yeah I'll try that. Not like it'll mess up our grand romance or anything."

Elena smiled at her thoughtfully. "Too bad he's not like Stefan. Then we could double date or something."

The witch snickered but nodded. That would make things so much easier. "I wouldn't hold your breath for that anytime soon."

"God no." Sighing, she brushed salt off her fingers and reached for her coat. "Uh okay, look I have to go to the store. My outfit for the dance is severely lacking accessories."

"Alright I'll pay the bill." A beat. "See you there."

"Alright, bye."

"Bye."

Standing, she stretched her arms high over her head and dug into her pocket, laying a few dollars onto the table. She swung her purse onto her shoulder and turned, jerking when a very familiar physique was suddenly in front of her. "Look who it is."

Damon smirked. He was perpetually amused and annoyed at the same time. "Is that anyway to talk to the man of your dreams?"

A brow shot up. "Could you be cornier?"

He shrugged nonchalantly. "I thought my dazzling wit is one of the reasons you liked me…"

Folding her arms over her chest, she mirrored his shrug. "What do you want?"

"What's with the attitude? Is this still because I didn't alert you through Facebook status about Georgia?" He tilted his head to the side.

God he's infuriating. "Maybe I'm just not in the mood for your bullshit right now. Contrary to what you think, I'm not here to amuse you."

But everyone was here to amuse him. "Fine. What do you want? Something expensive and sparkly? Or crotch-less and edible?"

"What?" Her forehead wrinkled in confusion. "Are you offering to buy me something to make me feel better?"

Damon lifted a finger. "Not to make you feel better, but to get us back to at least being able to tolerate each other so that we can shed more clothes. I really miss your breasts…and I think they miss me too."

For a brief moment she was speechless. "I…" A beat. "Do you ever think before you speak?"

He seemed to think about it, then stepped closer, invading her space. "Depends on who I'm talking to. We were interrupted this morning when you woke up. Why don't we go back to the manor and make our dreams come true? I'll finish what my tongue started if you want."

She shivered, biting down onto her tongue hard to keep from saying anything. Gazing up into his beautiful blue eyes and admiring the stone contours of his chiseled features always made her want to fall into his arms, not matter how irksome he was being. It was like a small tug in the pit of her
stomach, luring her closer to him, shutting out all rational thought. Her fingers twitched and she grasped the strap of her purse tight to keep from looping her thumb through the hole of his belt loop. She just wanted to yank him to her, mold his body to hers and let him devour her lips before moving onto the rest of her.

However a new voice managed to break the ever-mounting sexual tension. "Everything okay over here?"

Damon did not even spare the new arrival a glance. He was still staring at the young woman before him, delighting in the way she looked as if she were mesmerized by his presence. "Yeah we're fine."

The owner of the voice—a young man with slightly spiky black hair and a broad build came nearer, unperturbed. "I wasn't talking to you."

Bonnie blinked, the spell broken by the boldness of one Ben McKittrick. She remembered him as the football star hottie all the girls wanted to date back in the day, before he graduated of course. And now here he was actually standing up for her like a super nice guy...like a freaken Disney prince. Things like this did not happen to Bonnie Bennett.

Prince charming didn't exist and if he did, she'd decided a long time ago that she would never meet him.

Boys were complicated, especially the ones close to her age or a little older. They didn't know what they wanted, and by the time they figured it out, they were with someone else entirely. At least that's the way all of her crushes went. Caroline had been right of course...about Elena. Guys liked Elena, though that wasn't her fault. She just had this way about her that drew people in. Sometimes it was as if she was the witch.

However she realized that she was still young and that she had her whole life to meet Mr. Right. Though recent develops frightened her into wondering something very upsetting; what if she never felt for someone else the way she currently felt for Damon? Real or magic, it didn't make much of a difference in the long run. After the initial warmth began, she'd waited for it to wane away so that she could function properly. It was clear now that was never going to happen. Damon Salvatore was just going to pull her in deeper and deeper until she was buried alive.

Pushing her rambling thoughts away and getting back to the present, she stretched her green eyes wide in a sort of startled awe. Damon was not putting his fist through Ben's face or simply shoving him away like he could do without any difficulty. Instead he looked thoroughly entertained—as if he had wandered into an alternate reality where things like this actually happened to people like him.

Turning, he looked to her. "Meet me outside." And then he was walking away.

Running a hand through her ebony locks, the cute little witch could only nod.

"You okay?" Ben inquired.

"Yeah." She grinned. "Thank you."

He hunched his solid shoulders in his forest green t-shirt. "Anytime Bonnie."

Whoa. "Wait, you remember me?"

His face broke out into a big smile. "I didn't graduate that long ago! You're making me feel old."

She giggled cheerfully. "No I didn't mean that I just...didn't know you knew me."
His brown eyes softened. "I always know a pretty face."

Blushing, she hoped her cheeks weren't too red. "Well um, thanks again. I—I should be going though."

A nod. "He your boyfriend?"

Wetting her lips, she shook her head. "Nope."

"That's good to know." Winking, he strolled back to the bar.

Fluttered danced into her stomach and she grinned again, happy that she could feel something for someone other than Damon. Perhaps there was hope for her after all. Giving Ben one last look, she made her way outside and debated sliding into the passenger seat of Damon's vintage car before ultimately climbing in. She sat her belongings in the floor and exhaled.

There was silence for nearly fifteen minutes as the handsome vampire cranked the engine to life and drove off, heading out of the town area. The streetlights became fewer and fewer, and soon they were parking by a large oak tree in the middle of an overgrown field with nothing but the waning last quarter moon for luminosity.

Damon's nimble fingers turned on the radio and Bush's *Out Of This World* drifted from the hidden speakers. "So, who was the meat head?"

She smirked to herself. "Ben McKittrick. He was a big time football player until he got injured in college. I think that is what happened anyway."

"He's lucky I didn't rip his arms off and beat him with them." He said idly. "Still guy stood up to me. I'm aggravated yet tickled by his boldness."

"Right because the world revolves around you."

"No. But it should."

Snickering, she leaned her head back to the headrest. "Why are we out here anyway?"

Putting his arm onto the seat behind her, he grinned. "I think we need some alone time. We get along so much better when there is no one around to stick their nosy little noses into our business."

*When we are alone I also find it harder to resist you.* "Tell me you're sorry first."

His brows narrowed. "For what?"

"Just tell me you're sorry." She replied quietly.

Glaring at her, the vampire set his strong jaw, fully prepared to play the verbal don't blink game they were entering into. But then his face leveled out and he gripped the steering wheel, having an unspoken argument with himself. If it got him what he wanted, shouldn't he just do it? Whatever his reasons?

"I'm...sorry." The words were literally forced out.

*It's not much but it's something.* "Now..." Gliding across to him, she ran her fingers through his hair in the back. "Was that really so hard?"

"Nearly killed me for a second time." Before she could come back with a suitable quip, he captured
her lips with his own, kissing her feverishly. And yet he still couldn't admit to anyone, not even himself that he'd missed her. Or maybe especially not to himself.

Wrapping his arms around her slender waist, he shifted until she was on her back and he was hovering over her. One hand held to her neck as the other slid down her side, his mouth creating an odd sensual dance with hers. His tongue flicked over her bottom lip, taking its chance to dart inside when sighed lightly. His skin began to slowly warm, his body twitching when her nails dragged over his happy trail.

The one thing he could confess; touching Bonnie in reality beat dreams any day.

"Damon…" She whispered, pushing at his jacket. "Off."

He had it off in seconds, tossing it into the backseat. "I love it when you take control."

She chuckled and brushed her fingertips under his shirt, around his nipples and over his collarbone. God he has a beautiful body. If only his personality was the same.

Looking up at him rather irresistibly, she grabbed at the ends of her blouse and slowly brought it up over her head, revealing her navy colored bra. For a few minutes she would close down her thoughts and be daring. All she had to do was make sure she didn't get carried away or let him do something she wasn't ready for yet.

The blue hue of Damon’s eyes flared black for a moment, and he inhaled before they returned to their normal state. He unbuttoned his silk shirt and yanked it down his arms, dropping it to the floor. Grinning, he covered her again and sucked at her neck, biting down lightly at her pulse. She moaned and arched against him, crossing a leg over his. Her heart thudded against her rib cage as his mouth trailed to the valley between her breasts, sweeping over each one before trekking lower to her bellybutton. His tongue traced a series of wet circles around it, tasting the salty sweetness of her flushing skin.

Shuddering, she flashed back to her dream and just what that decadent tongue could do. No doubt it would feel ten times better right here, right now. But that would mean her jeans would disappear, and there would be no buffer to keep her sanity intact.

"Ah…" Tugging at him, she rose up a little and mimicked his actions, the tip of her tongue finding one of his nipples and laving it leisurely. He shivered and she smiled, taking the tiny nub into her mouth and biting.

"Uhn fuck." He grunted and tangled a hand in her silky hair. "The things I could do to you right now."

Bonnie reclined again, pulling him with her. "Less talking, more kissing."

Smirking, he lunged playfully and she squealed like a timid mouse. Nevertheless she knew that nothing but satisfaction would follow as the windows gradually began to fog over.

~*~

"You're in a good mood." Caroline observed as she danced with one of her best friends in the midst of their classmates.

Bonnie shrugged. "I look cute and the music isn't half bad. Why wouldn't I be in a good mood?"

The blonde eyed her suspiciously. "Uh huh. I think this has to do with your secret lover."
"Caroline, for the last time I don't have a secret lover!" She exclaimed. "Now can we just have fun without thinking about boys for once?"

"Fine." Her friend grinned. "I do look rather cute myself and it should be flaunted."

Matching her grin, the witch snapped her fingers and tried to keep to the beat of the oldies song playing. So far the 1950s dance was a success, with everything dressed in their best poodle skirts or greaser wear. Yellow, pink and white balloons covered every surface, while the giant screen off to the right showed people in black and white doing the twist or the mashed potato. There was punch, smiles and all around good feelings for all. With there being no more random animal attacks, people felt they could let their guard down and just enjoy being alive.

Caroline was right of course—she usually was when it came to matters of the heart—she was in a good mood. Making out with Damon had put her in a good mood. Hearing his tiny little I'm sorry had put her in a good mood. Absently she thought that maybe she shouldn't forgive him so quickly for being a jerk, but deep down she knew that wasn't entirely his fault. He was a product of his experiences and saw emotions as being weak. The fact that he let her in at all sometimes was a miracle. So although she was still a bit pissed at him, she decided not to dwell for the moment.

Tonight was about kicking her heels up.

As she shimmied and shook with Caroline, the blonde pointed to a table and took her hand, leading her over to the refreshments. They got two small glasses of punch and migrated off to the side where Elena was standing fiddling with her oversized earring.

Upon seeing them, the brunette's face brightened. "Having fun?"

"Mm no…" The blonde gestured to her pale green sweater with matching poof skirt. "But this took two hours so I'm at least staying half of that."

They all chuckled, and then Bonnie blinked. "What's Damon doing here?"

Elena looked to him, then her friend, giving her an I'll give you the full story later look. "He wanted to come. I promise he'll behave."

"What is this like a threesome now?" The other girl mused. "You and the Salvatore brothers."

"No but if I'm gonna be with Stefan I have to learn to tolerate Damon." The brunette smiled. "Not like I can kill him."

"Well if you did I'd help." She replied, raising her glass as if a toast was in order.

She is not gonna take the news of him and I well. "I thought we weren't talking about boys anymore?"

"Only bad boys." Caroline responded. "I never get tired of talking about the good ones."

"We know." Elena teased. "Where's Matt by the way?"

Her face fell and she pouted. "He said he had to work."

Stefan infiltrated their little group next with a simple nod of his head. "Ladies. You all look lovely tonight."

A chorus of thank yous replied to him.
Smiling, he gently took his girlfriend's hand. "Would you like something to drink?"

She considered his question, then nodded. "Sure. I'll go with you. Be right back."

"She is so smitten with him." Caroline snickered when they were out of earshot. "Which I suppose is good for me. Least I know she won't be taking Matt back."

"Elena wouldn't do that even if she weren't with Stefan." The witch took a sip of her beverage. "She just wants you and Matt to be happy."

The blonde grumbled. "I'll be happy when he gets over her and finally sees me."

Reaching over to rub her shoulder affectionately, she glanced around, locking eyes with Damon. He grinned and swaggered through the crowd over to their table. "Hi Bonnie."

*He is seriously not going to do this in front of Caroline.* "Hi…" She thought about pretending to be outraged and leaving, but that might cause more problems in the long run. "What do you want?"

He placed a hand on her waist. "Wanna dance?"

Biting her bottom lip, she looked to her friend and then back to him. "Will you leave Caroline alone if I do?"

Being the quick learner that he was, he smirked but played along. "Sure. And I promise to be perfectly polite for the rest of the night. Though if you say no well, that's not a check I would take to the bank."

Groaning as if were a huge chore, she allowed him to take her hand. "Fine."

The blonde was absolutely surprised. "Bonnie, you don't have to dance with him. I—I'll kick him if he doesn't back off."

"It's okay. I'll be fine." She smiled subtly. "I'm a witch remember? I'll turn him into a toad if he doesn't behave."

Rolling his eyes, the gorgeous vampire twirled her out onto the dance floor and then pulled her close. "You're quite the little liar."

She frowned. "I wouldn't have to lie if you hadn't come over in the first place. Caroline doesn't know about…us."

He didn't care one way or the other. "That's a bandaide you should rip off quickly. Besides it's not like we were married. I compelled her, fed on her and used her for sex a few times. I've did the same to complete strangers."

*Glad you can't compel me then.* "Please don't talk like that about her. She may have meant nothing to you, but she's one of my really good friends. And…you messed her up a little."

"We're all a little messed up, sweetheart." Slowly he swayed with her, his lips at her temple. "Some of us, just more than others."

Wrapping her arms around his neck, she sighed. "What are you doing here? I wouldn't think high school dances were your thing."

He made a *meh* sound. "Long story. I'm sure Elena will fill you in later."
"Or you could tell me now." She gazed up at him.

His lips twitched into a grin. "I could, but then I wouldn't be able to concentrate on just how radiant you look tonight. Now shush, just look pretty for me."

/~*

The music switched to fast about twenty minutes later, and Elena found herself begging Stefan to show her some of his moves. She knew that she should be feeling apprehensive and scared because of what happened earlier, but she was surprised by the good time she was having. However maybe that was because she was with Stefan. He wouldn't let anything happen to her and she was well aware of this. For all of his faults when they first got together, he was an amazing person and she felt lucky to have him.

"I can't believe Bonnie actually danced with Damon." Her smile was contagious. "You know I think he really likes her."

Stefan was not too sure. "I think she's convenient for him because of the spell, but he hasn't given up on Katherine."

She pouted. "Hey. Try to be more positive. I mean do I like the fact that they could be falling into bed together? No. But I'm gonna support Bonnie and as my boyfriend, you have to do the same thing."

His dark eyes twinkled. "Is that a direct order?"

She nodded dramatically. "Yes." A pause. "You know, maybe that guy isn't gonna show."

"You mean we did all this dancing…for nothing." He managed to look irate.

She giggled and leaned into him. "The horror!"

"I'm really sorry for all of this." He said softly, giving her a squeeze.

She played with the collar of his jacket. "It's my choice. I decided to be here. I officially signed up for it so I don't wanna hear you apologizing anymore." The song kicked into high gear and she twisted her hips. "Now, show me how it was done in the fifties."

"Um, no."

"C'mon. One move."

He grinned and shook his head. Pouting, Elena turned to walk away when he jerked her back suddenly and criss-crossed her around his body before righting her once again. "Now you remember that because it's never gonna happen again."

Laughing, she pressed to him for a brief but heated kiss. "You're kinda wonderful, do you know that?"

"I've been told." He taunted.

"Ha ha." She said dryly, her eyes landing on a dark form with a hoodie pulled down low over his face. "Stefan, back corner."

He followed her gaze and headed in that direction. "Get Damon."
Swallowing hard, she weaved her way around her classmates, looking for the vampire in question. He must have run off with Bonnie or something, she thought in a slight panic. Her cell phone ringing next startled her, and she had a little trouble getting it open. "Hello?"

The voice on the other end was definitely not a friend. "Hello Elena. Here's what you're going to do. There is an exit door behind you. You have five seconds."

Whipping around, she spied the man who had attacked her in her own home only hours early. No not man, homicidal vampire that also caused her car accident. "No."

He smirked. "Or your friend dies. I have her in a safe place but it's up to you if she stays that way."

Her worried expression made him chuckle. "I can snap all the bones in her body before she is able to call out for help. Now...start walking."

Elena didn't know which friend he was talking about since she couldn't see Caroline or Bonnie, but of course it didn't matter. She couldn't just leave them in danger either way. "Don't you dare touch her."

"Keep walking." He advised. "Through the door."

Snapping her phone shut, she took off into the hallway, calling for both girls but there was no reply. Her shoes were slick on the super clean floor and she slipped several times, running up to the first door she came to and shaking it violently. Chains rattled on the other side and she cursed as the stranger appeared behind her. Whimpering, she ran into the cafeteria towards the exit by the drink machines.

A lifeless body off to the side caught her attention and she gasped, quickly kneeling beside it. "Bonnie!"

"Hey." Suddenly the outsider was in front of her. He grabbed a handful of her thick hair and she screamed, trying to pry his hand away. But he just snickered and tossed her over a table as if she were a handful of rocks.

She groaned but forced herself to stand, yanking up a bunch of pencils that had fallen with her. As she was slammed into the multi colored wall, she stabbed the stranger in his chest with the small wooden spear. He grunted, falling to the ground in pain, his hand shaking as he pulled it out of him.

Before he could get his wits about him, she stabbed him again. Arms. Chest. Hand. They weren't big but they were doing the trick. Stumbling away, Elena backed into a mop left in its small blue bucket. She snatched it up and cracked the thick handle across her knee, jabbing it towards the evil vampire's chest. But he was expecting the move and faster this time, wrenching it out of her hand and tossing it across the room. With clouded eyes filled with triumphant rage, he dived at her, his teeth preparing to sink into her tender neck.

Screaming, she tried to push him away when unexpectedly he was thrown into a few tables. Stefan stepped in front of her protectively and she sighed, holding her stomach to keep from possibly passing out. "Oh God."

"Argh!" The foreigner growled and was up in a second. "Son of a bitch!"

"Hey dickhead." Damon called from his right. He lifted his hands, one of which was holding the discarded shard of broken mop handle. "Nobody wants to kill you. We just wanna talk."

The other man snorted and launched himself at Elena with a roar. Everything happened so quickly that she barely noticed Damon tossing Stefan the large splinter until her boyfriend was ramming it
into the new arrival's gut. He fell to his knees in agony, wheezing and spurting.

"Now ya feel like talking?" He asked.

"Screw you." A beat. "I don't have to tell you anything."

Just then, a tiny moan snapped Elena's head around and she sprinted over to where Bonnie lay. "Oh my god, are you okay? What happened!"

The pretty witch rubbed the back of her head. "I—I don't know. One minute I was getting some punch and the next…" She frowned in thought. "Where am I? What's going on?"

Elena helped her stand, putting an arm around her waist. "You asked why Damon was here. Well the guy who made me crash my car is a vampire, and he tried to kill me earlier. In my house—he got invited in. So he was here to help Stefan kill him." Pause. "He kidnapped you to get to me."

"Geeze." Sighing, she hobbled over to where the Salvatore brothers were still trying to get answers. Both girls stood transfixed as he was tortured by the usually calm tempered Stefan.

"Answer him. Why are you doing this?" Stefan demanded.

"Because it's fun." He gasped with a chuckle.

He received another thrust of the stake as a reward. "What do you want with Elena?"

With blood dripping down his chin, he smiled. "She looks like Katherine."

Bonnie inhaled sharply, at first thinking that she'd heard wrong. But from everyone's reaction, she realized the mystery man was indeed telling the truth. The love of both Salvatore brothers' lives—the love of Damon's life—looked like her best friend. No wonder he went out of his way to annoy her in the beginning. No wonder he whisked her off to Georgia for some alone time.

"Did you know?" She questioned Elena. "A—about Katherine? Did you know you looked like her?"

"I..." The brunette sighed. "Why don't we talk about this later? After this."

*Guess I got my answer.* "You knew. I mean, there I was going on and on about—and you knew."

The excruciating sounds of the stranger moaning diverted their conversation off track as their attention was pulled back to the matter at hand.

"Tell me how to get into the tomb." Damon commanded.

"The grimoire!"

"Where is it?"

"Check the journal. The journal, Jonathan Gilberts'."

Having heard enough, Bonnie broke away from Elena and jogged out of the room, heading to the double doors that would lead her to the parking lot. She bit the inside of her cheek hard to keep from tearing up, from letting on that she felt stupid and betrayed by the people in her life. Having the ghost of Katherine haunting the back of her mind hadn't been easy in the first place. But now knowing that she looked exactly like the friend she'd called on all her life? She didn't know how to react. She didn't know how to process the things her brain was telling her.
On the one hand it was clear that Elena wanted Stefan and wanted to be with Stefan. On the other though was the fact that Damon wanted Katherine, and Elena pretty much fit the bill for being her twin.

And then there was the tomb that he still very much wanted open.

She was getting another headache.

"Hey Bonnie! You leaving?" Caroline leaned against her vehicle. "Thought you'd stay and have another dance with Damon."

"No. I'm done with Damon." She ran her fingers through her hair. "Can we just get out of here?"

The blonde nodded. "That's the best idea I've heard all night."

~*~

Damon did not find life to be very complicated for him. Complications were for people who didn't know what they wanted, but he'd never had that problem. Well…not until a few weeks ago. Not until a nosy witch put her mojo on him and made things convoluted. His one mission upon returning to Mystic Falls was to free Katherine and then hit the road again. Maybe he was stupid though to not expect several potholes along the way.

But whatever. At least now there was a sunny sky in sight for him in the form of Jonathan Gilbert's journal. All he had to do was find it, read it and voila! The grimoire would be his and he would be one-step closer to being with Katherine. It was cause for celebration and mindless vandalism! So… why wasn't he happier? Why wasn't he tap dancing on his father's grave and making plans as to which town they'd drain next?

Bonnie.

Bonnie, Bonnie, Bonnie.

God he was sick of everything he felt for her—well except for the lust. Lust was always all right. But the need to protect her and the urge to be nice was slowly taking its toll on his psyche. He didn't want any of it and he sure as hell hadn't asked for it. So yeah, he did fucked up things and hurt a lot of people. Lots of people did the same thing every day so why was he being punished?

Okay yes that was how it worked with laws and stuff, but he always thought of himself above the law. He was immortal—he was a God. The laws of man didn't mean shit to him. The feelings of man didn't mean shit to him either. Yet here he was at the Grille, having followed Bonnie's scent. He wasn't sure what he was going to say to her. He didn't think he needed to say anything. That just walking in, looking gorgeous as usual should be enough to make her fawn all over him.

Apparently that wouldn't fly this time. Still he tried to convince himself that he was trying to remain in her good graces for reasons that had nothing to do with how he felt about her. That he wanted her in his back pocket for her power and his greed, not because she had an adorable smile or he liked the way her eyes lit up when she was excited.

Definitely not because she had looked amazing tonight, just like a fifties starlet.

Grumbling under his breath, he glanced around the room to find her up at the bar, chatting with that idiot from before. He tilted his head to the side and listened to their conversation, frowning to discover that the idiot was flirting heavily with her. Bonnie. His Bonnie.
Growling, he strutted over but tried to keep his face neutral. "Bonnie. We need to talk."

"I don't wanna talk to you." She snapped.

"Yeah, I get that loud and clear. But we're going to anyway." He put his hands on her bare shoulders. "And do you wanna know why we are going to? Cause I have answers to your questions. And for the low rate of leaving with me now, I'll tell you anything you wanna know."

"Dude, why not just leave her alone?" Ben pointed out.

"Dude why not just mind your own damn business?" Damon retorted.

Ben ignored him. "So what do you say Bonnie? Are we going out?"

The vampire watched as she looked between him and the football stud, actually having to think about her answer. *Looks like I'm going to have to step up my game.* "Yeah Bonnie, what do you say?"

~Fin~
Duplicity

Chapter Summary

In the end, everyone is always out for themselves.

Chapter Notes

This tags episode 1.13: Children of the Damned.

Duplicity

Damon Salvatore was not the type of person who ever lost at anything. Even when he was human winning was very important because as far as he was concerned, it separated the men from the boys. And he of course was all man so it only stood to reason that he always had to win. Whether it was a stupid game of croquet or racing on PS3, he liked to come out victorious. Maybe that was why Bonnie agreeing to go on a date with that waste of space Ben seriously threw him for a loop. There was no rational reason for her picking some random guy over him.

Him.

Damon fucking Salvatore.

For literally more years than he could count, girls chose him. They just did—and he didn't always have to compel them either. That was usually just for fun on his behalf when he wanted to take someone down a notch. He liked to screw with people's brains but then again who didn't? Anyway girls liked him or rather they liked the look of him. He could be a jerk and they would still come back for more because some just couldn't stay away from the whole bad boy thing. Those were the ones that usually died but that wasn't the point at the moment. The point was that Bonnie was going on a date with Ben, and it made him want to kill people.

Like actually go out and hunt down some poor hiker who strayed too far from the trail. Rip out his throat, hope he bore a resemblance to the football kicker and toss his body into the bushes for the animals to feed on. She has no right to do this. No rhyme or reason either.

Of course he didn't want to feel anything about being passed over. On the rare occasions in the past that it'd happened, he'd use his hypnotic stare to change the chick's mind. But that didn't work on witches and it made him feel powerless in a way. Dangerous combination where he was concerned. Damon knew that he always needed to be in control, because if he wasn't in control the world was spinning off its axis. Things would cease to make sense. It was basically akin to him being played, and no one toyed with him.

It was easier for him to focus on the situation in those terms instead of the odd pang in his temple that throbbed whenever he pictured what the two might do on their stupid date. She might have agreed to it, but he would tear out Bennie boy's spine if he touched her. He didn't care if it made the papers or if the Sheriff suspected vampires were back in town, he would punch down his throat and pull like
he was reaching for a sweet toy surprise.

*Bonnie Bennett was his.* Not by choice but he was the kind of person that adapted to change really well. He couldn't even concentrate on the fact that none of this was his doing, but he would be damned if he let someone else just *walk in* and take her away. He would be damned if he let anyone else win. Because it didn't matter if she said yes just to make him jealous or to prove some kind of odd *point*, a part of her belonged to him and he was the type of person who protected his investments.

Pulling on his trademark black long sleeved shirt; he tilted his head to the side with a snort. He could smell Elena in his brother's room, which wasn't a big surprise since she came over a lot. But she was in there with him *right now*, probably spent the night. Aunt Jenna was sure on the ball, wasn't she?

Damon didn't understand why Stefan appeared to be in this happy place while he had to flounder in limbo, the woman he loved trapped in some prehistoric tomb. Why did his annoying little brother get everything he wanted while he got nothing? Was he more deserving or something because he didn't take human life? Not like he'd *never* killed anyone before. All vampires did—it was their nature.

Of course Stefan was always the favorite, even when they were growing up. Or perhaps *especially*. Their father doted on him and made excuses for him because he towed the company line like a good little follower. In those days a man was only as good as the respect he paid to his parents—mostly his father. It didn't matter if he didn't agree with his choices or the stupid things he said, a son was supposed to take orders and make his family proud.

And he hadn't cared much about any of that. After the Katherine incident with Giuseppe Salvatore turning the young woman in because she was a vampire—and because he didn't understand them so naturally he feared them—Damon decided the old man was utterly useless. As the years went on, his indifference turned to detestation and now he was quite glad he could never die. Didn't have to run the risk of running into the fool in the afterlife.

Nevertheless fortune favored Stefan. So he had to make his own fortune and he was going to start with finding Jonathan Gilbert's journal. The journal would lead him to the grimoire and the grimoire would lead to hot haven't seen you in almost forever Katherine sex.

*And where does Bonnie fit into this scenario? Hopefully between him and Katherine.*

It was a long shot but maybe he would get lucky. In any case once Katherine was free he'd have to figure out a way to keep her from killing Bonnie. Bringing up her lineage might work since Emily was the reason she hadn't been burnt to a crisp. It was worth a shot anyway.

Smirking, he made his way across the hall to his brother's room. Sleepy time was over and they all needed to start their search since they could cover more ground that way.

*I can't believe Stefan actually wants to help me free Katherine. What's his angle? He has to have an angle because his eyes are open.*

He didn't trust his little brother and he had years and years of examples as to why he never should. But...he wanted Katherine back *so badly* and he felt like he was running out of options. Maybe two heads would be better than one to get the crypt open and get his ladylove out. And he did only care about her. Everyone else in there could continue to rot as far as he was concerned. Perhaps though this was Stefan's way of making amends for starting it in the first place. After all it was his fault that she was captured.

Knowing that Katherine was locked up because of his brother's ignorance and faith in someone
besides him made trusting him basically impossible. Being betrayed by someone you cared about caused a rift inside of you and sometimes it wasn't able to be mended. All of the love he felt for the pretty female vampire spurned the hatred he felt for his own family member. The two went hand in hand. However if Stefan was being real and honestly wanted to help him, it could be a new relationship for all parties involved.

It was likely that is what they needed after so many years of pain and torment. *Not that I'm letting my guard down or anything. I can't do that until Katherine is free.*

Sighing, he slipped into the room without a sound and perched on the edge of the bed, waiting for the lovers to wake up. They had a full day ahead of them after all.

~*~

Bonnie was excited and giddy at the fact that she had a hot date with a hot guy. Romance was not exactly something she believed in, but she wasn't going to discount it this time. Finally she wasn't just the *best friend* who had to watch as everyone else around her paired off into couple-dom. Even Caroline who she was sure would never settle down now had Matt in a boyfriend capacity. And when Caroline Forbes—resident man-eater gets a boyfriend, it's time for *everyone* to start looking for a significant other.

Of course she didn't *need* a man to complete her life or make her happy, but she wanted someone like anyone else might. A guy to bring her flowers or cuddle with on a cold day. Someone to go dancing with or comfort her when she was in a bad mood. Besides it was high school and dating was a time-honored tradition for teenagers such as herself. And going out would take her mind off of everything she was currently going through.

With all the Damon drama aside, she still had to worry about the vampires that were after her to get into that tomb. They hadn't outright attacked her again, but she had a weird feeling they were plotting behind the scenes or something. Coming up with a master plan that would no doubt end with her dead or forced to do their bidding, neither of which she wanted.

*No. I'm not gonna worry about that tonight.* She crawled off her bed and opened her closet door, looking over her many outfits. *Tonight is about just having fun for a little while.*

As she continued to thumb through dresses and skirts, the doorbell sounded loudly from downstairs. Hoping it wasn't another salesperson trying to sell her something she didn't need, she bounced down the steps and into the living room, slowly pulling the door open when she reached it.

Her best friend Elena Gilbert stood on the other side, her long dark hair framing her cute face. She gave her a small smile, tugging idly on the strap of her large purse. "Hi."

Bonnie exhaled deeply. "Hey." She hadn't spoken to her in two nights since the Katherine revelation came out.

"Can I come in?" The brunette inquired. "I—I think we need to talk."

Debating for a moment, she relented and let her in. "Yeah. I was just…getting ready for my date."

Elena arched her brows. "You have a date? With who?"

"Ben McKittrick." She explained closing the door. "He asked me out and I said yes."

"Oh. I mean that's great. I know you thought he was cute and everything." The other girl said with a grin. "Look Bonnie, I—this whole Katherine thing—I know it's totally bizarre. And I'm sorry that I
didn't tell you that she looked like me but I've just had so much on my mind lately."

Pointing to the couch, both girls moved over and sunk down onto the soft cushions. The witch spoke up next. "I know and I'm not all that mad, at least not at you. You can't control how you look or whatever. But you still should have told me, especially after I confessed about Damon."

A nod. "You're right. I guess it honestly didn't cross my mind because he's hung up on Katherine and he knows I'm not Katherine."

"Maybe that doesn't matter so much." She whispered. "At least now I know why he took you all the way to Georgia for some alone time."

Elena made a face, clearly not liking what she was getting at. "Damon saved me, that's all. I'm with Stefan and he is who I wanna be with. Damon is—he's complicated and selfish and not someone I could see myself being with." Pause. "But I've seen the way he looks at you and how worried he was when he didn't know where you were. No matter how much of a jerk he is to you, he cares."

"The spell makes him care."

"I don't think that's the only reason. Magic can only do so much."

"Either way, I can't compete with a memory or an image. I don't even know if I want to."

"Bonnie, you obviously like him and there is nothing wrong with that. Eventually he could—he could change and be a decent guy."

"Yeah. But I think I would be stupid to wait around for that to happen. Besides, if Katherine gets out all bets are off. She'll kill me because of our link…and he'll let her."

Glancing around slowly, the teen lowered her voice. "Stefan and I are taking measures to make sure that doesn't happen. I'd tell you but I think it's better if you don't know because of our…connection or whatever."

Sounds promising. "I hope whatever you are doing works, because the thought of running into her freaks me out more than I thought possible."

"Me too." Her best friend expressed. "I really am sorry though. You know I would never keep secrets from you."

That she did. "Yeah. I feel stupid to be a little jealous anyway. It's like I have to keep reminding myself that Damon and I are nothing more than—than some mirage created by someone else. We don't really exist."

Elena shrugged a little. "What you feel exists." She sighed. "Do I think he is the right guy for you? No. Maybe if he promised to always behave himself or got Katherine out of his system. The only thing I can go by is remembering the night you were shot and the worry on his face. That was real."

Bonnie wet her lips and stared at the pillow in her lap, tracing her fingers around the frayed edges. She wasn't sure whether she wanted to think about Damon being honestly worried about her or not. It was easier to disregard the way he acted if she pretended he didn't have another side. If she pretended that he couldn't be funny or even sincere with her like he was on rare occasions. Then again it was those moments that kept dragging her back to him in the first place. If he behaved like a horny jerk all of the time, there was a chance she could push down the overwhelming sensation to be near him and stay far away.
"I guess this is just a wait and see." Running a hand through her black curls, she slouched.

"Does he know about your date?" The brunette asked, grinning when she nodded. "I bet his head is about to explode right now."

She giggled lowly. "You think so? He does seem to dislike Ben a lot though they just met."

"Oh totally. Doesn't he just strike you as the jealous type?"

"He really does. Nice to know he can feel something besides anger."

"Perhaps going out with Ben will help you in the long run. Either you end up with him or Damon pulls his head out of his ass where you're concerned."

"I think the first will happen before the latter. It's not even that I like Damon. Most of the time I can't stand him but this—this urge is just always there."

"Have you talked to your grandmother about removing it?"

"Not exactly. She seems to think Emily had a very good reason for doing it. Sometimes I think she was just insane, and then I'm attacked and I'm actually glad she made it so someone is watching my back."

"After it's certain that the tomb can never be opened, and if Damon is still a jerk, I think you should talk to your Grams about reversing it or something. No need to keep suffering or whatever the way you are."

"That's a good point. I'm sure I could become secure in my own witchcraft where I could do all of the saving that I might need myself."

Elena pulled her legs under her. "Of course. And hey, I bet you could float some mean feathers at them right now."

The other girl laughed and whacked her with a pillow. It was very hard to stay mad at her friend, even when she tried. They were just so close that anytime they had a disagreement it felt wrong. "Keep that up and my first experiment in floating bigger things will begin with you!"

"Okay but put some pillows down so that when I crash, I won't break anything." She winked. "Unless you can heal me then it's cool."

"Instead of teasing me, you should be helping me decide what I am going to wear tonight!" Bonnie exclaimed with a big pout. "I wanna look flirty but cute."

Dropping her purse to the floor, the brunette stood. "Then what are we waiting for? Let's go raid your closet until something jumps out at us."

And that is exactly what they did for the next two hours before Elena finally left to head home and check on Jenna. Time flew right by and it was almost like they hadn't had a falling-out in the first place. Bonnie believed that Elena had her best interest at hand, and that she would never withhold information intentionally. No doubt finding out her entire life was some type of fabrication screwed with her head and made her absentminded on other serious issues. In any case she figured Damon should have been the one to tell her about Katherine. He should have told her the moment things looked like they could turn physical between them.

But Damon only cares about Damon, so I shouldn't be surprised that he didn't say anything. There
God, she was so tried trying to figure out why he did what he did! It was like trying to solve some huge riddle whose answer didn't make sense even when you got to it. She should have never allowed herself to get closer to him. To save him or kiss him or touch him. Dreams were one thing but they'd moved on to more tangible transgressions; just a while ago she was honestly considering having sex with him. What is wrong with me?!

If Damon continued to rattle around in her head, she'd handle it the best way she could. However at least for tonight she could stare into Ben's pretty brown eyes and know she could still have a slice of normal.

Changing into her slinky black dress with its v-neck and smooth lines, she put on her makeup, smoothing gloss on her pouty lips. She added a few fresher curls to her hair and stepped into her shoes, leaving her father a note that she was going out for a while. She then grabbed up her purse and slipped outside, blinking at the stranger standing on her front porch.

It took a second but she recognized her as the girl from the Grille who wanted to talk about witch stuff. "Um, Clarissa, right? What are you doing here?"

The blonde nodded, having the decency to blush. "You never called me. I thought that maybe you had lost my number or something."

"Wow. I have no idea what I did with her number. "I did misplace it. But to be honest, I don't know if I would have called either way."

"I understand. We're not supposed to talk about what we are and what we can do." She folded her arms over her chest. "I'm a witch and I need your help. Normally I wouldn't ask but it's very important."

Deciding to humor her, Bonnie shrugged on her red cardigan. "With what? I'm not really experienced; I can do a few small things."

Nibbling on her bottom lip, she swallowed her. "I need your help to kill Damon Salvatore."

"Wh—what?" The other girl stammered, thinking she'd heard wrong.

"I've seen you two together, and I know you can get close enough to do it."

"Why would I want to do it?"

"Why wouldn't you? He's an evil son of a bitch and he deserves it."

"Look I don't know what's going on here but I don't want any part of it."

"He killed my best friend. Do you know that?"

"I…"

"Her name was Lexi and she was the sweetest person ever. And he—he staked her like she was nothing. Just an inconvenience."

"She was a vampire?"

"Yes, but she didn't feed on people. He set her up for something she didn't do and then killed her as an alibi for himself."
"He's done very bad things—I'm not disputing that. But I really don't want to get involved in your revenge plot."

"I know you think he cares about you, but he doesn't. He's using you like he does everyone else, and when he's done he'll discard you. Just like Lexi. Just like Bree."

"Who's Bree?"

"Another friend. He—he ripped her heart out! I wish Lee had killed him when he had the chance and saved us all."

"I'm very sorry that he has caused you so much pain, but it has nothing to do with me. I can't get in the middle—I have my own problems to deal with."

Clarissa glared at her. "You just don't want anything to happen to your boyfriend."

She bristled. "He's not my boyfriend. It's also not my place to punish him."

The blonde snorted and pointed an accusing finger at her. "I bet if he hurt someone you cared about you wouldn't be so quick to write it off." A beat. "You should be helping me kill him or turn him into a living statue and yet you're protecting him. It's almost like you're compelled."

Huffing, she rubbed her forehead. "I'm not protecting him; I just don't want someone's blood on my hands. Not even an asshole like Damon."

"You'll wish you'd helped me." Clarissa said, and it almost sounded like a threat. "Just wait and see."

Annoyed, she stalked off the porch, disappearing down the street.

~*~

With all the madness that has been going on in my life, I had forgot what it feels like to be a normal teenage girl.

Ben McKittrick was not much of a singer, but Bonnie found him to be witty and eager to try anything once. He'd been such a good sport with their karaoke adventure, willing to make a fool of himself just to entertain her. And then when it had been her turn behind the mic, he'd clapped and whistled loudly to make sure she had some type of support. So far she was having a good time with him. And he looked so freaken cute in his black leather jacket and hoodie.

The best part was that she hadn't thought about Damon Salvatore more than twice. This considering how her thoughts usually went where he was concerned, was a victory for her.

Sitting at the small table, watching as the waitress took away their empty plates, she smiled. "Did you enjoy your burger?"

He nodded, wiping his mouth with a napkin. "I always love a good cheeseburger and fries. I'm convinced the Grille makes the best in Virginia."

"Well I don't know about that, but I know the best hot dogs are in Richmond from this lady vendor on the street." She sipped her Coke. "I don't know what she does to them, but whenever I have to go there I make sure to get one before she leaves."

He grinned. "I should write that down. I'm always looking for new food to try."

She chuckled. "I'm surprised you're not bigger with your love of food."
"Nah, guy's got to work out and stay in shape." He shrugged. "I can't play ball anymore, but I do hit the gym once and a while."

"Do you miss it?" She asked thoughtfully. "Football I mean…"

He seemed to think on it. "Sometimes I do. It was supposed to be my big ticket out of this town, ya know? And then I'm busting my knee and being told I'll never play again. You'd be shocked how fast the scholarships dry up when the colleges figure you won't be winning games for them."

"I'm sorry." She said softly. "That must have been really hard for you."

"At the time, yeah." He admitted. "But I got a job now and…who knows? Good things could be right around the corner." His eyes met hers as they twinkled.

Blushing, she rubbed at her warm cheek. "I think it's good to be positive. It's not always easy of course, but it helps sometimes when the situation appears dire."

Ben tapped his fingers on the table. "True. There was a point when I thought my life was over. I'm told I…lacked direction." Pause. "What better place than home to find it again?"

"That's kinda deep."

"Well I'm glad you're back. I—I mean it's nice that we can catch up."

He smirked lightly. "You'd say anything to make me feel better at this point."

She blinked, confused. "What do you mean?"

"Admit it. I can't sing." He lifted his glass to his lips.

Snickering, she glanced down. "No you were great."

He waved a hand. "C'mon I totally trashed that Metallica song."

"Yeah that had been horrible…but amusing."

A grin. "Well first mistake, Metallica karaoke?"

"Yeah well at least I committed."

Bonnie fluttered her lashes at him. "The woman with the tattoos loved you."

Ben rolled his eyes playfully. "Next time I'm gonna throw out my Pearl Jam."

"Did I just hear him correctly?"

Smiling, he nodded. "Yeah." A pause. "So uh, what are your friends up to tonight?"

She made a face. "They're doing their own things. Caroline's at her dad's, Elena's with her boyfriend."

"Elena…Gilbert right, yeah I remember you guys used to hang out."

"She's my best friend."

"Yeah my friends they all moved away after graduation and I didn't so we all kinda drifted apart."

"Yeah. Elena and I are bonded…for life. I can't imagine it any other way."

"That tight huh?"
"She's my sister. I mean I'd die for her."

He took a slow sip of his drink. "Wish I had someone who cared about me that way."

"I'm sure you do. Or will." She replied tenderly. *Maybe it'll be me.* "Um, would you excuse me for a second?"

"Sure."

Digging her cell phone out of her purse, she pressed the speed dial for Elena's number and stood, drifting over towards the back of the bar, near the dartboard. A melodious voice picked up on the other end. "Hello?"

"It's me." Bonnie responded. "Can you talk?"

"Gimme a second." Elena migrated away from the two vampires currently in her living room, venturing upstairs. "Okay I'm alone. Gimme all the dets, Bonnie."

She tittered with laughter. "It's going great. He's a perfect gentleman."

"Gentleman huh?" Her friend mused.

"I know boring huh?" Pause. "I just wanna grab him and lay one on him."

Elena chuckled. "So why don't you?"

*Ugh.* "Cause I'm a chicken."

The brunette snorted. "You're a powerful witch goddess. C'mon cease the day Bromhelda."

Giggling again, she exhaled. "Okay I'm gonna text you later with more details."

"You better."

"You better." "I will. Bye."

Hanging up, she took a moment to erase the blush from her face. Movement at the bar caught her big green eyes, and she looked over to see Damon sitting there. She swallowed hard and watched him for a few moments, realizing that he wasn't paying her any attention at all. He was staring at Jeremy Gilbert and his pretty new friend as they played pool. Feeling more disappointed than she thought she would, she shook her head and returned to her seat.

*Why do I even care? I'm on a good date with a nice guy; I should be focusing on that only. Who cares about Damon Salvatore? I don't.* "So where were we?"

Ben pretended to think. "You were just about to tell me what we are gonna do on our second date."

"Karaoke is out." She teased. "How about the standard dinner and a movie?"

"Sounds good." He remarked. "I'll have to check and see what night I'm not working, but I can't wait."

She watched him. "I can't be *that* fascinating…"

"I think you're great." He retorted. "You're fun and smart; pretty. Why wouldn't I wanna go out with you again?"
Good question. "It's just—it's been a while since I've had a guy pay much attention to me."

His brows shot up. "Must be some stupid guys in this town."

A few. "I don't know. Everyone has an idea of what they want, and I suppose I didn't fit the bill. It doesn't bother me but it's also nice to be noticed."

"I saw you the moment you walked in that day with Elena, but I figured you wouldn't wanna go out with me." He leaned back in his seat. "A washed up jock bartender."

She almost reached to squeeze his hand but didn't. "Your injury wasn't your fault. And there is nothing wrong with being a bartender…it's an honest way to make a living. Besides you're a good person and that is all that matters in the end."

He smiled at her and she lowered her gaze, happy that she could make him feel better. She was also looking forward to seeing him again. Perhaps in the future we can go on a giant date night thing with Caroline, Matt, Elena and Stefan. That would be so cool.

I think there is hope for me after all. I control my life and my destiny, not some dead ancestor who thinks they know what is best for me. I can still be a regular person with a regular boyfriend.

~*~

Sometime later after more conversation and listening to his stories about his high school days, Ben announced that they should get outta there and go do something else. She not surprisingly was totally for it. As she watched him strut up to the register to pay their bill, the only thing she could think about was kissing him. Obviously they had chemistry and he had such nice lips; one peck wouldn't make her a slut or anything. It would be innocent compared to the make out sessions with Damon. No, don't think about him!

She could kiss Ben if she wanted to. No harm in doing so. And…he had left already so clearly he didn't give a damn what she did or with whom. He probably hadn't even gotten jealous.

"Well, the check is paid." Ben said breaking her thoughts. "I'm all yours for tonight. What do you wanna do?"

Biting her bottom lip, she grabbed his shoulders. "This." Next she was laying a solid kiss to his lips. A cold tingle shot through her entire body at the contact, making the hairs on the back of her neck stand up. Oh god! Jerking away, she gaped at him. I know that feeling. I felt it when I touched Stefan for the first time, but it's worse here!

Tilting his head, he blinked. "What's wrong?"

Cover quickly! "Nothing. Sorry I just should have waited until the end of the night to do that."

"I didn't mind." He chuckled.

She smiled, swallowing thickly. "You know I'm starting to get tired."

"You wanna go?" He asked.

No. I want you to go so that I can run home very fast. "I was gonna say let's have some more coffee, get a caffeine buzz and I dunno…go out and do something crazy."

He looked intrigued. "Like what?"
She played it calm. "Like anything."

Seemingly placated, he shrugged and pulled out his chair again. "Okay."

Removing her sweater, she draped it across the back of her own. "I'm gonna run to the rest room."

Taking slow steps, she tried to keep her breathing even as she strolled towards the bathroom. Noticing that he was still sitting, she veered to the right as fast as her legs would carry her towards the exit, jerking her head around to see where he was. Before she could find out either way, he was suddenly in front of her, his eyes liquid black and angry. In a flash his hand was over her mouth tightly, his free arm around her upper chest. He dragged her out the back door so fast that no one had time to even realize what was happening or that she was in trouble.

Bonnie tried to scream but she could hardly breathe with his fingers pinching her nose. She tried to kick or fight back, her brain wracking itself for a spell that wasn't coming. Her teeth managed to bite down on his skin and he cursed, shoving her hard into the brick of the outside wall. Her head bounced off it hard and she swooned, feeling herself falling backwards.

The last thing she saw was Ben leaning over her with an arrogant smirk before the world went dark.

~*~

It had been ages since Damon visited his father's grave. He couldn't even remember if he'd attended the funeral or not. And yet seeing it earlier tonight had brought up memories not of the feelings he had for the man, but of the woman that the man had cost him. He remembered quite vividly the night that Katherine was taken because a part of him wished that he'd died. Seeing her carried out with a muzzle over her mouth and not being able to help cut him in ways he didn't know possible. It was one of the last times he'd ever felt weak and helpless.

Sitting in the dark of his room with Emily's grimoire in his lap, he stared out of the window at nothing. He felt hollow and just a little stupid that he'd actually—for a moment—let himself believe that his brother was telling the truth. That he wanted to help him or mend their long destroyed fence. *I should have trusted my first instinct. I am the only one that I can ever count on. I am alone.*

While he was somewhat hurt at Stefan's actions, he found himself more so by that of Elena's. Perhaps it was because she looked like Katherine, but knowing that she'd lied to his face honestly pained him. Surprised him. Cut him to the quick. He didn't feel any remorse for threatening her and if some tried to arise, he forced it down so deep that it caused his insides to ache.

Yes he had done terrible things. Yes he took pleasure in the pain of others. But he was just a product of his environment and it was normal sometimes to lash out at someone who caused you distress. Stefan was the reason Katherine was gone, so he'd punished him for every minute and every hour he was without her. It didn't mean that he didn't love his brother, rather the contrary actually. If he hadn't loved him, then his betrayal wouldn't have sliced so deeply.

Everyone looked upon him as a monster and in a way he was. But it was too late to make apologizes and expect anyone to believe them. They only saw what they wanted to see.

Except Bonnie. Sometimes he thought she looked deeper into him, and that un-nerved him. In truth he wasn't sure how he wanted to be perceived. The man would get sympathy but the monster would get respect, and he didn't want to be pitied.

Sighing, he jiggled the ice in his glass of bourbon and took a sip, closing his eyes as it burned on its way down. At least something good had come out of the cluster-fuck that was today. Something to
keep his mind off Elena's treachery, Stefan's faithlessness and Bonnie's date with Ben… the book was finally in his possession.

And tomorrow was a whole new day.

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

You don't know how you're coming across. You don't know what you're coming across. And I don't think you're aware of the cost. So you come undone.

Chapter Notes

This tags episode 1.14: Fool Me Once. Also summary lyrics by Placebo.

Come Undone

"I hope Elena dies."

Damon knew he was a bastard for liking the look of despair on his brother's face, but he couldn't seem to care about that anymore. After being betrayed one too many times by his younger sibling, the dark blows he dealt were more second nature than thought about. Especially after last night and realizing that one again, Stefan had fucked him over. That once again Stefan couldn't seem to understand how much he loved Katherine and wanted her by his side. All he cared about was Elena and the other useless humans of Mystic Falls that he acted as if he was charged to protect. In reality he just liked pretending that he was a saint to make himself feel better.

Saint Stefan…that is who he wanted to be, but not who he was.

His harsh words stemmed from the fact that Anna aka Annabelle the vampire had kidnapped Elena and spirited her off to God knows where. It all dealt with getting into the tomb—everyone appeared to have their own reasons for wanting to get in and Anna's was her mother. Come to find out, she had been the one that turned Logan Fell and most likely sicced those other vampires after Bonnie. He would applaud her efforts if she hadn't fucked up things for him and just made them harder. But like with everything else, patience was not a vampire's strong suit and she had finally upped her game.

Well played except she didn't know where the grimoire was. Because I have it now. I love it when things go my way. Now all he needed was a witch and soon Katherine would be free. For a brief moment he thought about going to Bonnie's home and seeing her, but then decided against it. Of course he could always ask her grandmother to do the spell; however something told him she would give him the same answer everyone else had. A loud and resounding no.

Oh well…he'd make things work. He always did.

Damon should have been shocked that Stefan asked him for help where Elena was concerned, though he wasn't. That was Stefan's M.O.—being a dick and then expecting to be bailed out when the trouble hit. Before last night, even if his brother was a douche, he would have helped him because he wanted Elena to be safe. Now after her betrayal, he felt like he didn't owe her anything. He felt like she deserved whatever she got because payback was a bitch and so was he when he wanted to be.
So let Anna rip her throat out or do whatever she wanted to do. His mission was clear and almost within his reach; he didn't have time to deviate now. So what if it was wrong? Since when was Damon Salvatore known for doing the right thing?

There were plans to make and he figured the first would be convincing Bonnie to do the spell. He had no idea what he was going to say to her, and he couldn't force her so that put a crimp in his plot. I can't force her but I'm sure having someone she cares about in danger would do the trick. A desperate man was not above using threats to get what he wanted, and he was a desperate man. He was so close to getting Katherine out that he could taste it. There was no way he was going to stop or give up now.

*If I have to intimidate her to get her to do what I want, then I will. I'm sure all will be forgiven once she, Katherine and I are able to turn this town upside down.*

He was aware that in the past he'd fought against his feelings for Bonnie Bennett tooth and nail, but it was obvious that pulling her in tighter—especially when Katherine was free—would do more damage to the traitors than just letting her go. Elena would be very upset if he had her best friend in his pocket, and Stefan would be empathic to whatever his girlfriend was feeling. He'd knock out two birds with one thick stone, and that's what he wanted.

He wanted them to suffer for all of the pain and misfortune they had caused him. He wanted them to see what it was like to lose something—to see something slipping farther and farther away and not being able to do anything about it. He probably wouldn't turn Bonnie—yet—but there were other things he could do to make sure she never wanted to leave him.

Every good girl had a bad side just waiting to be unearthed, and he was totally prepared to do some digging.

*A few minor setbacks that shook up old memories, perhaps in the end it'll turn out to be a good thing. A teaching lesson or whatever. Who am I kidding? I didn't learn anything except never, ever trust my stupid brother or his pixie girlfriend.*

*And I knew that already knew.*

Taking his feet off the sturdy desk, he stood and stretched his arms over his head, making his shirt ride up over his flat stomach. There was really no harm in going to see Bonnie, perhaps it would even cause something good to happen. Yes just earlier he thought it was a bad idea but he didn't have time to play it cool. It would be nightfall soon and he needed all of his ducks in a row. Besides he would be lying if he said he wasn't interested in how her date had gone. The whole jealousy kick could actually get him extra points.

Smirking, he snapped the musty old spell book shut and arched a brow as he heard Stefan's cell phone ring. Curiosity got the best of him and he tilted his head to the side, listening to the conversation. It was Anna and naturally she was calling about Elena. He shook his head as his brother inquired as to the brunette's welfare, and migrated to the doorway so that he could watch him pace.

"She's fine, for now." Anna mused from the receiver. "Tell me you have the grimoire and she'll stay fine."

Stefan swallowed hard, putting his hand on the wooden banister. "I can get it."

She chuckled lowly. "Which means your brother has it. And I have the witch so...one of you had better meet me in the very public square in thirty minutes so we can safely discuss how fun it's going
to be to work together." And then she hung up.

Damon twitched; "and I have the witch so...". Of course this was not going to be easy. Why should it start now when he was so close? How did she get her though? There is no way Bonnie would just run off with her. She must have gotten the jump on her like she did Elena.

Leaning against the threshold, he glanced to his little brother who looked positively broken. Good. "Go ahead and grovel again. Oh wait, no. I don't care." Before Stefan could reply, he snorted and walked away. "Do I have to do everything myself?"

Apparently, especially if he wanted it done right.

~*~

Being knocked out was so different from simply being asleep. It was like not existing for a while because you don't even realize you're in the world. You're just a body at the mercy of everyone around you. Some people said they dreamed but that wasn't the case for Bonnie. She was just out, laying in a dingy hotel bathtub until something cold and wet touched her forehead.

With a groan she slowly started to come around, the pain in her temple throbbing. A soft voice called her name and she blinked, the blurry images morphing into the face of her best friend. "Elena?"

"You're okay." The brunette said, obviously relieved. She continued to dab her with a cold compress.

Bonnie frowned. "Ah, my head." She struggled to sit up, fighting off the small wave of nausea. And then the previous night hit her like a ton of bricks. "Oh my God! Ben is a vampire!"

Elena pressed a finger to her lips and pointed to her ear. "They can hear." She whispered and turned the faucet on full blast.

The witch sighed deeply. "I was so stupid."

Her friend shook her head and smoothed the hair back from her eyes. "No he had all of us fooled."

Unfortunately that doesn't make me feel any better. "What's going on? Why are we here?"

Shaking her head, Elena gestured with her hands. "It must have something to do with the tomb and Emily's spell book."

"Spell book..."

"Damon said it could be used to open up the tomb."

Bonnie felt out of it and confused. There was a vague recollection of hearing about said spell book at the dance, but everything was crashing together in her brain at the moment and she couldn't pick out what was real and what she'd possibly made up. I'll just look upon this as new information for now. "Why didn't I know about any of this?"

Sitting down by the tub, the other girl shrugged. "I was trying to keep you out of it, hoping it would never come to this."

A frown. "Come to what?"

"They need a witch to break the spell and let the vampires out." Elena replied softly.
A jolt of fear shocked her system and she began to tremble, realizing that earlier fleeting thoughts on why those vampires had attacked her were right. In a way she knew it had something to do with the tomb, but for some reason she'd never let herself truly believe it was to get it open. However now she knew the complete truth and it scared her to death.

As Elena tried to comfort her the best she could, the door flew open, slamming back against the wall. Ben stalked into the small room and glared at them, then shifted his attention to the running water. He turned it off slowly, his hand lingering on the glass knob.

Bonnie fixed him with a defiant stare while still managing to be touched that Elena was trying to protect her. "You're wasting your time. I'm not gonna help you."

He chuckled slowly and yanked the brunette up. "That's why she's here. Motivation for you to behave." Leaning in closer, he smirked. "You shouldn't be so desperate. You made it too easy."

Tears filled the witch's eyes and she stood as he dragged Elena to the doorway, tossing her out into the bedroom. She tried to follow but he blocked her and slammed the door closed, leaning against it. "No no, my girlfriend needs a few words with your bestie."

She wet her lips. "If you hurt her I will kill you."

"Ooh I'm so scared." He snickered. "If you could do anything you would have done it already."

*God I just wanna burn that smirk right off his stupid face.* "You know this isn't going to end well for you, right? I'm sure Stefan is looking for Elena right now."

"Too bad no one isn't looking for you."

"I wouldn't be so sure."

"Oh I am. Your life revolves around your friends and their lives. We both know you were so starved for attention that you practically threw yourself at me."

"Shut up."

"I bet I could have screwed you last night if my master plan wasn't about getting into that tomb. You were just begging for it."

"I said shut up!"

"Or what?" He moved like a flash of lightning, pinning her against the tiled wall. "Face it Bonnie, maybe you are just not cut out for being a girlfriend. I'd consider turning slut—at least that way someone might notice you. We can start right now if you want."

Swallowing thickly, she curled her hands into fists. *Where is my power when I need it?* "I've been noticed, and I don't need some disgusting parasite to do me any favors either."

Ben smiled, leering at her. "You didn't think I was so disgusting when you were fawning all over me and kissing me."

A shrug. "I felt sorry for you, considering the fact that you're a washed up jock while your friends have all went off to actually make something of themselves."

Growling, he grabbed her upper arms and squeezed hard until she winced in pain. "If Anna didn't need you to get into the crypt, I'd make you regret you ever met me."
Knowing she would be bruised, she set her jaw against the ache. "I already do."

In fact she was starting to regret ever meeting any vampire, Stefan and Damon included. While Stefan was a good guy and Damon was the lesser of two evils in this situation, vampires had done nothing but bring pain and destruction to her life and the town. Maybe they all would be better off if the Salvatores had never returned to Mystic Falls. Surely Elena would have found another boyfriend, someone who cares about her as much as Stefan did.

And of course she wouldn't be linked to a psycho. Though the others would still be in the tomb and there would probably always be someone wanting to bust them out. Without Damon and Stefan around to somewhat police their actions, the town could possibly be in even worse shape by now.

_I wanted to prove that I had it in me to be normal so badly and look what happens. I'd have been better off going with Damon that night. For all of his many, many faults—one of which includes trying to kill me—at least I would be relatively safe right now._

**But if I have to be here to make sure Elena is alright then so be it. We'll take care of each other.**

"I'm leaving." A female knocked on the door, and Ben jerked her towards it as he opened it. "Keep 'em buttoned down. Compulsion won't work. Just use violence."

He nodded as she left. "Right. I got that." He shoved her onto the extra bed and removed his jacket. "Sit. Behave. So you're the key to this…the one who opens the door. Tell me…” He perched on a chair. "How long have you been a witch?"

Elena couldn't hold in her annoyance with his taunts. "Is there anything to drink around here?"

Ben moved towards her. "Are you offering?" Satisfied that he could rile her up when she flinched, he grinned. "There's water on the night stand."

Exhaling she reached for it slowly and brought it to her lips.

*Light bulb!* Bonnie met her gaze intensely. "Can I have a sip?" The brunette handed her the glass with uncertainty. _God I hope this works. It'll be my first time trying it._ Taking the liquid, she looked to Ben and threw it onto his arm.

"What the—" His sentence was cut off when out of nowhere, the material of his shirt burst into flames. He cried out and rubbed at it quickly, managing to grab Elena around the waist before she could reach the front door with the witch. "Shut the door!"

A wave of defeat rolled over Bonnie but she did as he requested. "Don't hurt her."

"Don't make me!" His eyes were alight with anger…and hunger. "Lock it!"

Slowly she pushed the chain into place, catching her best friend as he threw her into her arms. Together they moved back to the beds and sat down, most likely thinking the same thing. _We are never getting out of here._

Checking his skin for damage, the vampire was happy when he saw none. "Witches don't have eternal life right? So you guys can die?"

"Yeah. We can die." Her voice was stoic.

He nodded almost thoughtfully. "That sucks, and not just for you. After this tomb shit is taken care of, I'm gonna ask Anna if I can have you. To be honest I'm just _itching_ to play with you properly and
it sucks knowing my toy could break before I'm done with my fun. Guess I'll just have to get a lot in before that happens, huh?"

"You won't touch her." Elena stated bravely. "I won't let you."

Laughing, he meandered back to his chair. "You and what army?"

The front door cracked open next with a loud thud, sending brilliant rays of sunlight flooding the room. Ben screamed and scrambled down behind the bed, his flesh blistering red and smoking. Both girls jumped in surprise and made a beeline for the outside, welcoming the feel of daylight on their skin.

Running both hands through her hair when they were a suitable enough distance away, the witch stared at her savior. "What are you doing here? How—how did you know we were here?"

Damon Salvatore strolled closer and lifted her arm, smoothing his pale fingers over the darkening bruise. "I always know where you are, remember?"

This is a dream. I'm still back in that tub and this is a dream. "I'm honestly glad to see you."

He smiled and caressed her cheek. "Good. Hang on to that feeling for a while."

"Stefan!" Elena's yell interrupted them as she launched herself into her boyfriend's arms.

He on the other hand looked confused to see brother. "What are you doing here?"

"What are you doing here?" He mocked. "Oh Anna says hi by the way. She wants the grimoire tonight at sundown or she's gonna kill Elena."

Stefan stiffened. "Where is she?"

The female brunette shook her head. "I don't know. She left and her lackie Ben was keeping us prisoner."

"So Ben did this?" Damon remarked, gesturing to the bruise. "I should have pegged him for a vampire. Only someone who thought they could take me would stand up to me the way they did."

"I'll take care of him." His brother said, heading to the room.

"Come on." The older Salvatore took the witch's hand. "I need to borrow you for something."

She pulled away. "I'm not opening the crypt, Damon. I—I can't let Katherine out."

"Who said I wanna talk about that?"

"What else would you wanna talk about?"

"Maybe I just wanna make sure that you're okay. You've been through a traumatic experience…"

"I'm…shaken but I'll be fine. Eventually."

"I think you should work on that at my place. And then later we may take a field trip into the woods."

"You're unbelievable. All you care about is Katherine."
"She's not all I care about…"

Bonnie blinked, biting her bottom lip. Did he just…

Elena took hold of her shoulders. "Bonnie let's go. Your grandmother is probably worried about you." She didn't give her a chance to reply; that would be dangerous where Damon was concerned. Instead she steered her around him and towards the street.

~*~

After taking a nice shower and letting the hot water calm her nerves, Bonnie changed and flopped down at the dining room table in her grandmother's house. She sipped on the tea she was made and sighed when her Grams sat down across from her. Her mind was reeling with all of the information it had absorbed, and a part of her wanted to go to Damon just because when she was with him, everything else faded away.

A distraction is totally what she needed right now. Alas that would not be happening anytime soon. "How did you know where we were to tell Stefan?"

Tituba "Shelia" Bennett smiled at her. "Many things can fuel a witch's power. Worry…anger…After Stefan told me that they had taken you I had a lot of both. Simple locater spell was easy after that."

She nodded. "I'm sorry…about all of this."

The older woman shrugged nonchalantly. "Not as sorry as they are going to be."

Bonnie heard the door opened, and seconds later Stefan and Elena joined them holding hands. Elena tucked strands of hair behind her ear. "So what do we do now?"

Her boyfriend crossed his arms over his chest. "Well for now you need to stay here."

Grandma Bennett arched a sculpted brow at him. "A prisoner in my own home? I don't think so."

"I can't protect you if you leave the house." He said.

"We'll protect ourselves." She replied.

His expression became perturbed and there was silence for a minute until Elena spoke up. "We need to let him have Katherine back. He's not gonna stop until he gets her. If we help him maybe that ends it."

Frowning, Bonnie couldn't believe what she was hearing. She especially couldn't believe that her best friend was suggesting something so damn ridiculous. No one wanted Katherine to be less free more than they did, so why was she suddenly on team let out the crazy bitch? Obviously that would make their entire situation worse. "No. He doesn't deserve to get what he wants…"

The brunette shrugged. "What other choice do we have?" Pause. "I know it's not something you want Bonnie but now might be the time to let Damon go. He's never going to stop, and you're going to just keep getting hurt."

Maybe that's a chance I want to take.

"Witches being pulled down by vampire problems. No matter what we try to do to stay out of it." Grams remained unconcerned. "I'll open the tomb. You get your brother's girl and destroy the rest…"
"Grams." Bonnie pulled at her gray sweater. "I—I don't think this is right. What if it causes more problems than good?"

"I know you feel something for him baby girl, but this has to be done so that no one in this town has to be in danger ever again. So that Damon and Katherine can both leave. Afterwords I'll look into a spell to remove your link to him."

Falling quiet, she played with her teacup. Being faced with never having those tingly feelings for Damon again should have her happy as a clam, but she wasn't. They were—they were scary and weird but also expected now, and they made her feel wanted. Could she really give up having Damon in her corner?

Stefan rubbed the back of his neck. "We still have to get Damon to agree."

"He already agreed once." His girlfriend responded.

A nod. "Yeah and then we double-crossed him. He's angry."

"He's hurt. There's a difference. I…think I know what I have to do."

Right because there is nothing no one else to can do. Nothing I can do. Irritated, Bonnie stood and left the room, going into the kitchen. She leaned against the counter and closed her big green eyes. I bet Elena could get Damon to do whatever she wanted him to do simply because of her face. I'm such a fool. I thought Ben actually liked me and look how that turned out. And now I'm sad that my blood connection with Damon will be severed and why? Not like it means anything. Not like it means anything to him.

"Once Katherine is free all bets are off anyway." She whispered to herself. "Everyone else is right. This is something we have to do. Besides it's not like I'll miss what I never had in the first place."

_Dreams don't count._

~*~

"She knew where you were Damon. She didn't care."

The fire burned bright yellow before his melancholy eyes, throwing shadows about the room and across his pained face. He sat with his hands clasped on his lap, the crackling of the wood the only sound that he could focus on without breaking apart. Vaguely he realized that Stefan was sitting across from him, offering silent support, but he didn't dwell on it. The only thing that Damon could think about was the fact that his entire reason for existing—for becoming the creature that he was didn't matter at all. Katherine hadn't been in the tomb…she was never in the tomb.

Years and years he'd fought against everything to rescue her. To finally get to be the white knight in his fucked up version of a fairytale. Killing and torturing all seemed alright when he thought about why he was doing it. When he thought about her being locked in the cold and in the dark, wishing that someone would just care enough to get her out. He was going to be that person. He was going to show her that no matter what and through it all, he loved her the most.

More than Stefan ever could.

Yet the joke was on him because it was all a lie. It was all for nothing. All of the pain and heartache…senseless when he thought back on it. While he was setting up his master plan and killing
anyone it took to get it underway, he could have been just surviving. Perhaps finding a small thread of happiness in something besides putting all of his energy into chasing a dream.

So it was never real? Was I compelled?

It was hard to tell the difference at the moment. Before he'd been so sure that free will brought him to Katherine, not her powerful mind control. Though that is probably why it hurt so badly...because it had been real. Well...at least real for him.

Once again he was the fool. Once again he came up short, even when he tried his best. Even when it was something he wanted more than life itself.

Thinking of all that he could have and all that he'd given up for her made him sick to his stomach. How could she do this to me! If he were anyone else he would most likely be in tears by now. They were there on the edges of the surface, brimming in his icy blue eyes but sheer will alone held them back. Crying wouldn't solve anything and he refused to give up his last shred of dignity and sense of self to her.

"You must think this is hilarious." He said lowly.

Stefan watched him quietly. "No. I don't. I'm sorry that she wasn't in the tomb."

"Yeah." He snorted. "I'll just bet you are."

"Damon, even with everything that we have put each other through, I am sorry." His brother replied. "This isn't what I wanted."

Isn't what I wanted either. "But it works out I suppose for all the little humans you care about."

A shrug. "They would have been safe either way. I was going to burn the others."

"Ah. You should do that anyway. Start with Anna and her mom."

"They are long gone by now, hopefully Ben is with them."

"I doubt it. I ran into him after—I put him out of his misery. Thought it would take me out of mine."

"How?"

"Nailed him to a tree with sticks before pushing one into his heart."

"I would have used fire."

"Creative. Maybe one day I'll hunt Anna down."

"Why?"

"Why not? It doesn't matter anymore."

"You're going to be okay."

"That is so easy for you to say. Elena is here. She risked her life to make sure you were safe. Where's Katherine? One hundred and forty five years, and she didn't so much as send me a fucken postcard."

"One day you'll see that you're better off without her. If this is how she is...you don't need her."
But he did. He *needed* her because without her, he wasn't sure who *he* was. "That still remains to be seen."

Stefan glanced down to his hands wishing he could help his brother. Yes they had their problems, but they were still family. "What will you do now?"

Damon tilted his head to the side. "Get drunk. Fuck the rest." Standing, he moved over to the table and grabbed a large decanter of whiskey, then trudged up the stairs to his room.

Once inside, he slammed the door shut and fell onto his bed, bringing the bottle to his lips. It was almost amusing how in the end, everyone else had been right about the tomb. Some things were better kept hidden away.

~*~

Bonnie rubbed the back of her neck as she took the old teapot off the stove, holding down the top and pouring the steaming water inside into a small mug. She reached into the cabinet and pulled down a box of teabags, taking one out and ripping open the packet. Dipping it into the liquid, she scrunched up a face at the smell and then smiled as a memory filtered across her subconscious. She glanced to where Elena paced in the dining room on the phone with her Aunt before taking the cup upstairs and into her grandmother's bedroom.

"Here you go Grams." Her voice was soft as she noticed the older woman sleeping.

Sitting the cup down, she picked up the red blanket at the end of the bed and slowly pulled it up over her to keep off the chill. Her brows twitched as she realized how still she was—her hand resting against her chest limply. It looked odd and way too static. "Grams?"

Receiving no response, she moved closer and started to shake her. "Grams? Grams wake up." Leaning, Bonnie stared at her intensely, tears pricking her eyes as her calls went unheard. "Grams!" She held to the sides of her face, willing to her grunt or move. Anything! "Elena!"

The brunette barreled up the stairs and into view, confusion written over her pretty face. She took in the scene before her, hearing Bonnie when she exclaimed that her grandmother wasn't breathing. Something clicked and she hurried for the phone to dial 911.

Bonnie was sobbing now, begging, pleading with the person she counted on the most to give her a sign that she was there. "Please wake up!" She shrieked in agony and leap off the bed, grabbing the ratty spell book from where it lay on the dresser. Hastily she flipped through it, muttering the same words over and over. "I can fix it! I can fix it!"

Elena hung up with the operator even though he requested otherwise and threw her arms around her best friend. "Bonnie…"

"No! I can fix it!" She cried, trying to pull away. "Grams!"

But it was too late and they both knew it. Sheila Bennett was gone—slipped away in her sleep after her body couldn't handle the strain that it had been put through earlier. In retrospect she had probably known all along what was happening to her, yet hidden it as to not worry her granddaughter. In the end her thoughts had once again been about protecting her own.

The sounds of an ambulance grew closer and Bonnie gasped, her heart feeling like it was being squeezed tight. She broke away from her friend and sprinted downstairs, throwing open the front door with all of the strength she had. Red and blue flashing lights lit up the block and people stepped out onto their porches to see what was going on. Her vision was blurry but she didn't care; she
couldn't stop. She had to fix it.

She hurried down the steps and across the yard, running as fast as she could until she was in the woods. Branches caught on her clothes but she kept going, pushing herself until her lungs were shouting for air and her legs were aching from the pressure. She didn't stop until she was forced to, falling over a thick root and crashing to the ground. Pain reverberated up her body but it was nothing compared to the ache that was already there.

Sitting up on her knees, she looked up to the sky. "Emily! Please! Yo—you have to help me! Please!" She implored, trembling. "Emily! Bring her back! I'll do whatever you want! Take me! Take me instead!" Fumbling around, she yanked up a stray piece of glass from the earlier Duke party and held it to her wrist. "Take me instead…"

Damon jerked so hard that he rolled and fell off the bed loudly, groaning. He pushed the empty whiskey bottle away and stood, stumbling into the bathroom to splash cold water onto his face. He gazed at his reflection for a minute and then cursed, making his way downstairs. He was blur of motion as he passed by the chair where Stefan sat, ignoring when his brother called his name.

He didn't know why he was going into the forest or why he should care but he was probably a little too leftover drunk to analyze things like he usually did. Instead he ran until he was near Fells Church—the place where dreams were broken and blood had been spilled. He rubbed his tired eyes and scanned the area, seeing a figure on the ground a few feet away.

She had the shard clasped within her fingers, her hand shaking so badly that she couldn't hold it steady. With an almost aggravated gait, he strode over to her and ripped it away, tossing it out of sight.

Bonnie glared at him. "What are you doing here?" She stood slowly. "This is all your fault!"

"And what is that?" He inquired.

"She did the spell to get rid of you!" She yelled. "To—to trap you so that—so that everyone else would be safe!"

He shook his head. "Opening the door didn't kill your Grams. Lifting the field did and I didn't ask for that."

"Was it worth it?" She asked through clenched teeth. "All the pain and all the devastation that you caused. All the lives you ruined…"

"I guess it wasn't." He folded his arms over his chest. "But now you and all of the others can have a laugh at my expense and feel better about yourselves."

She blinked. "My grandmother is dead because of me! Because I—I asked her to lower the field for Stefan. For you." Pause. "I wasn't strong enough so she took on extra trauma and—and it killed her. I killed her."

Damon sighed deeply. "It wasn't your fault."

"Yes it was!"

"No it wasn't!"

"How do you know?" She poked him in the chest.
He didn't flinch. "Because I am a killer and I know the difference. You think she didn't know the cost? You think she went into any of this not knowing what could happen? Fuck no! She knew the risk and she took it anyway…for you."

Bonnie swallowed, tears rolling down her cheeks. "I take it all back."

The vampire tilted his head. "It doesn't work that way. Oh and slitting your wrists? I doubt that will make the situation better."

"Then you do it." Gathering up her long black curls, she showed him her neck. "Do it."

Damon's expression was unreadable. "Do what?"

"I—anything. T—take me instead so that Grams will be okay." She stammered softly. "A life for a life."

"No." What the hell am I saying? "Go home, Bonnie."

Wetting her lips, she stepped closer, taking hold of the sides of his jacket. "Damon please. If—if you ever felt anything for me you will do this." When he refused again, she beat her tiny fists against his chest over and over. "Do it! Do it, do it!"

The handsome vampire caught her easily after a moment, his blue orbs dangerously close to turning black. Growling, he buried everything that he was and everything that pining for Katherine had turned him into, and just hugged her. He wrapped his arms around her waist and embraced her, burying his face into her hair. His tiny bit of compassion was all it took for her to break down completely, her legs giving out soundlessly. Together they sunk to the cold ground, her fingers clutching at him as if he were the only thing keeping her from shattering into a million pieces.

Most times neither understood the other because they were from two very different worlds. But for once something more than lust or magic had brought them together. Linked them closer than they could ever hope to be or perhaps not be in Damon's case.

It was the only thing that struck without warning to human and vampire alike: grief. Of course Damon would never admit it, but obviously his only sense of solace would be in Bonnie's arms. While it didn't stop the turmoil rolling inside his body, it was a welcome change from sulking alone. By being here for her, he could forget all that he had turned himself into for Katherine Pierce.

And—if even for one fleeting moment—just be Damon Salvatore once again.

~Fin~
Unlike Us

Chapter Summary

Actions done out of grief or the need to feel anything else cannot be judged. Or can they?

Chapter Notes

Tags 1.15: A Few Good Men. It's pretty AU with mentions of actual show events for continuity.

Unlike Us

Music with thick drumbeats droned from the large stereo, vibrating the speakers and furniture in the room. The curtains were wide open, letting in the bright sunlight to warm the hidden corners. Bonnie Bennett moaned and leaned her head back, her face the very picture of bliss as Damon Salvatore bit down into her wrist. Before when he'd fed from her there had been nothing but pain and almost dying, but now everything was different. Now there was pleasure and a swirling sensation that stretched to all parts of her body when he sucked.

It had been a week since her grandmother's funeral, and her grief over her death hadn't subsided at all. Every time she closed her eyes, she could see the scene replaying over and over in her mind. For a moment she thought she would go crazy from the agony of it all. Her father noticed and shipped her off to visit an aunt, hoping it would make her feel better to be away from Mystic Falls. However it didn't, so after a few days, she returned to the small town under the cover of darkness and by bus where Damon was waiting for her. No one knew she was home yet—not even her best friend.

Well Stefan knew because he could smell her in their home, but she'd forced him to remain silent. She just wasn't in the mood to deal with anyone or to see their looks of pity. He didn't like it though—not that she cared.

The night in the forest where she asked Damon to take her life had brought them closer together. They were both grieving in their own ways, and it seemed natural that they gravitated towards each other. He didn't ask her stupid questions about her feelings or to talk about it. He let her sulk if she wanted to sulk, or found means to take her mind off of stuff.

That is where the biting came in.

When he'd suggested it, she'd thought he was out of his mind and just using it as an excuse to get a taste of witch blood. But he assured her the affects would be amazing, and oddly enough she'd believed him. Without compulsion she was sure it would hurt to high heaven—apparently that was up to the discretion of the vampire. The first time he sunk his teeth into her, a white-hot pulse had throbbed through her veins. She imagined it's what doing cocaine or heroin felt like when it was still scary and new. It was only made better by seeing his contact high.
Now it didn't hurt so much as prick and even that was welcomed. Sometimes a little pain was needed.

"Damon…" She whispered with a grin. "Mmm, how am I gonna show my face again with all these?" She gestured to the bites on her neck, inner thigh and now wrist. "People are going to think I was attacked or something."

He smirked, licking his lips. "I'll give you a little nip to heal them before you go home."

Wrapping her arms around his neck, she swayed to the music. "Sounds good to me."

"You know how they would feel even more amazing?" He arched a brow, his hands sliding down her back.

She chuckled and played with the hair at the nape of his neck. "Always wanting more, huh? I'm letting you taste me, isn't that enough?"

He shook his head. "Of course not. I wanna taste you and be inside you."

His words made her shiver. "Maybe…if you're good."

The handsome vampire snorted. "When am I ever good?"

"Good point." She mused. "Still I don't know if I'm on board with sleeping with you yet. One out of character thing at a time."

Pouting, he nuzzled her throat and sunk his fangs into the tender skin, groaning as her blood flooded his mouth. Her legs trembled and he held her up to his bare chest, her skin flushed and warm. "You are the best I have ever tasted."

"I—I bet you say that to all—all the girls." She panted breathlessly.

"Yes. But with you I actually mean it." Pause. "Trust me."

Giggling, she gazed into his intense blue eyes. "Not a chance."

Damon grinned and bit his finger, slicking it across her pouty lips. She flicked her tongue against it before sucking it into her mouth, shuddering with a gasp as her wounds began to slowly heal. He watched her with rapt fascination, his thoughts no doubt filthy but for once she didn't care. Anything was better than feeling the torment rooted deep in her soul.

It was strange the way she was allowing herself to behave, but she dared anyone to judge her considering what she'd been through in the last few weeks. Having the people she cared about in danger and dying around her—it's something that would affect even the strongest person. And she was just a young girl looking for her place in the world. Grams was supposed to always be around to help her, with magic and just growing up in general. Now she was gone…and Bonnie was all alone. Her father—bless his heart—was a good man but there was so much he was clueless about. Spells and witchcraft at the top of that list. How could be help her when he didn't even believe in any of it?

Maybe she was acting out or rashly, but being with Damon took her mind off of things for a while. Sure he wasn't the best companion but there were only so many times she decided she'd be able to cry on Elena's shoulder until her brain oozed out of her ears. Besides her best friend had enough on her plate as it was. She didn't need to be dealing with her issues as well.

Damon was…he was those fleeting moments where she didn't wanna sit in her room and cry herself
to sleep. Where she didn't wanna refuse food and focus on all of the horrible mistakes she'd made. He wasn't a gentleman and he wasn't a therapist, but he damn sure knew how to put her attention elsewhere. Not to mention it was something he needed as well.

Katherine not being in the tomb had fucked up his head, though he pretended otherwise. He didn't talk about it and she didn't bring it up, but it was there of course. How could it not be really? Someone he spent most of his immortal life searching for didn't appear to give a damn about him. It was like a death for him too…in its own way.

So just for once—or whatever—they were giving in to what Emily put into motion. Their lust and attraction because they knew they were joined not only by a spell, but also by their sorrow. And when drinking blood or alcohol became too much, they just lay in bed together and talked nonsense, enjoying the closeness. Everyone had their way of dealing and this was theirs, a mutual agreement to let the ache remain unspoken while they tried to heal.

_It might not be healthy but it helps. And that is what I need right now…a distraction._

"How come your bite marks are _bite marks_ and not just little holes?" She inquired, smoothing her nails over the one on her thigh.

"Cause we use our other teeth to squeeze I suppose." He said, his arms around her waist. "And because this is real life, not an episode of your favorite vampire show."

She chuckled softly. "There is still so much I don't know about vampires. Like that you could eat or drink regular food…"

He shrugged. "It all comes down to the blood. You name it and absorbing it does it while giving us nifty little powers as well. But don't ask me how that works because I don't know—I just enjoy them."

"Has there ever been a vampire witch?"

"Not that I know of. Why? You offering?"

"No. Just curious."

"You'd make a wonderful vampire, Bonnie. All dark and sexy and wearing leather. We could rule the world."

"We?"

"Of course. Who else would turn you?"

"I don't know if I could handle living forever. It's so…permanent."

"Heh nothing is permanent baby. Nothing at all."

Scooping her up into his arms, he spun her in a circle until she was laughing and dizzy, but it was exhilarating. Like she was floating or something. _As long as I don't get sick I'll be fine!_

The overhead lights clicked on and Damon frowned, slowly putting her feet on the floor. "Oh, buzz kill Bob."

Stefan Salvatore turned off the stereo and stared at the sight before him. "Having fun?"

"Of course." His brother grinned. "What about you Bonnie?"
Rubbing her eyes, she waited until the room stopped spinning to answer. "So far. Hey Stefan."

"Bonnie." He nodded. "How are you?"

She smoothed down her matching tank top and shorts. "Kinda hungry but other than that okay." A beat. "Coming from Elena’s? How is she?"

"She…found out more information about her birth mother. And I get the feeling she misses you." He shoved his hands into his pockets. "Perhaps you should call her or go see her."

She shook her head. "I'll see her soon enough. Besides she still thinks I'm away visiting family."

"Right. But you're not. You're here." He pointed out. "With Damon."

"How astute of you." Damon rolled his eyes. "She's here cause she wants to be. You know I can't compel her."

A nod. "I know, but I'm worried that perhaps she isn't thinking clearly right now. Like you."

Bonnie frowned. "I can hear you, and I'm fine. Just cause I want to blow off a little steam doesn't mean I've gone mental."

Stefan arched a brow. "You're staying with my brother and letting him bite you. That seems like a lack of judgment to me."

*God sometimes Stefan can be so annoying.* "I didn't ask you. I'm sorry if spending time with Damon because he makes me feel better is something you don't approve of. My Grams died because I wanted to help you—the least you could do is allow me a slip." Rubbing her suddenly aching head, she sighed. "I'll be upstairs."

Damon nodded and watched her go, then looked to his little brother. "Stefan Salvatore, the eternal cock blocker." He swaggered over to the bottle of vodka on the table. "But I get it. You're worried about me—that's nice. Don't be…there is no need. I'm fine, why wouldn't I be? I spent the last one hundred and forty five years with one goal, to get inside that tomb. I succeeded. Granted Katherine wasn't in there to be rescued but why dwell?" He blinked hazily. "Do you know how liberating it is not having a master plan? Because I can do whatever the hell I want."

"That's kinda what I am afraid of." Stefan admitted as he leaned against the couch.

"Relax. I haven't killed anyone in…too long." He made a face.

The younger Salvatore sighed deeply. "And Bonnie?"

"Ah yes, the delicious Bonnie. Of course I wouldn't kill her." He replied. "I can't, remember?"

"What you're doing with her is wrong. She is in mourning and you shouldn't be playing off her emotions." Stefan explained. "It's not what she needs right now."

"She came to me." He stressed. "And besides it's just a little feeding. I've did far worse with people whose names I didn't even know."

"You can't honestly think you're helping her…" Stefan was shocked at the very notion. "This is basically an escape for both of you."

"So?"
"It's wrong."

"According to you."

"And then what, Damon? When you feel better are you going to just toss her aside?"

"No. I like Bonnie…I've got plans for her."

"I thought you were done with master plans."

"I said plans, there is no master. But I don't think you put on your father hat to scold me about the half-naked girl in my room. What do you want, brother?"

As Stefan began to talk, Bonnie tip toed from her hiding place and continued up the stairs to Damon's room. She threw herself across his bed and stared at the ceiling. It was probably the ecstasy-like feeling from the bites, but hearing him say that he liked her made her smile. In the past it was so hard to tell because Katherine clouded his every thought. But with her finally looking like the bad guy she was, perhaps there was a chance for them to be…something. Yes he was still basically bad but he wasn't killing people…she could deal with the rest.

It's not like she was looking for love, especially not any time soon. The best he could do was take her out of herself in times of crisis. Perfect. Yawning, she snuggled to his pillow and closed her eyes, inhaling the smell of his cologne.

It was time for a nap.

~*~

The only problem with humans was that they couldn't play as long as Damon liked. They needed sleep and food to recuperate which translated to him moments lost where he could be amusing himself. However in order to make sure that he and Bonnie could have the maximum time allotted, he pulled himself together long enough to stumble to the Grille and get food.

So yeah, he was fucked over the whole Katherine thing. The bitch had ripped out his heart, made it beat, stuffed it back into his chest and ripped it out again. And he wasn't even that upset that she hadn't been in the tomb. Or at least he wouldn't be if she'd bothered to contact him actually letting him know she was okay. But no…she was off whoring around while he was missing her. Well whatever. I don't need her. I've got Bourbon.

And he didn't care that spending time with Bonnie made the pain less so. He didn't care that it was obvious to Stefan or that it made him seem less threatening. He felt that he deserved something besides death and guts. Katherine was gone but Bonnie was here. And how did that old song go…love the one you're with?

In his case it was bite and suck the one you're with but hey…it was working. Each time he swallowed a bit more witch blood, he felt light. Shiny even. It didn't take all of his problems away, but it made him forget them for a bit. Everyone needed that once and a while, just because he was incredibly gorgeous didn't mean he was any different.

Shrugging out of his new leather jacket as he made his way upstairs, he strolled into his room, jiggling the brown paper bag. "I've brought burgers."

Bonnie folded her legs under her, pulling at his shirt that she'd slipped into while he was gone. "Yay."
"You would not believe what happened to me while I was out." He kicked off his shoes. "The Sheriff seems to think I am an eligible bachelor, and she wants to auction me off to some lonely housewife."

The witch chuckled. "That sounds interesting. Are you doing it?"

He shrugged. "Eh why not? Might be fun or whatever." He flopped down in front of her. "Don't get jealous if I come home late smelling like—what do older women wear? White Diamonds?"

"Ha. Trust me the last thing I will get is jealous." She ate a fry. "I am curious though as to who might buy you. Almost enough to make me come and watch."

"Really?"

"Almost."

Smirking, he ripped open a packet of ketchup. "I think you'd look cute jealous until you bashed all of my shit and tried to stake me."

"Why bash when you can burn?" She gave a flick of her wrist, and the few candles in his room flared to life. "I was practicing while you were gone. And I snooped."

Another shrug. "Like I care. Unlike Stefan I don't have anything to hide. Well I don't anymore."

Smiling, she tilted her head to the side. "You have some cool stuff though. I hope I can see the world some day. At least get the hell out of this town."

"I thought you liked it here…" He remarked. "Well I don't know if like is the right word to use. A hundred and forty five years, and not much has changed except the scenery and equality for all. But the people are still greedy, seedy and all around fucked up. Hiding behind money so that they can do horrible things."

Her interest was piqued. "Like what?"

Damon bit into his burger and chewed. "The hunting. Granted vampires aren't cuddly teddy bears that appear in washing detergent commercials, but not all of them wanna torture and maim. Some find it appalling just like others enjoy it. But did they stop to ask which was which? Nope. They loaded 'em all up and hid 'em away like a dirty secret. Maybe my new master plan should be destroying their descendants."

"People fear what they don't understand." Pause. "I would be the same way if—well if you were the only vampire I had to go off of."

He winked. "I like when people are scared of me. Makes them smell better."

She rolled her eyes playfully. "Then it must really annoy you that right now, I couldn't be less scared of you."

"Eh." He took another bite of his food. "You are different thanks to Emily and her magic. So I'll settle for the rest of the town being afraid of me."

"Except they don't know what you really are." She pointed out. "What do you think would happen if vampires ever returned like back in the day?"

"Ka-boom!" He gestured with his fingers. "This town would implode faster than you can blink. It's
almost poetic enough to make me wanna let them outta the tomb."

Bonnie frowned. "No way. I'd eat the grimoire before I let it be used to open that thing again."

Damon eyed her. "You need to consider all the possibilities that come with owning such a powerful little book. You could be stronger than you ever dreamed of. No more of this lighting candles bullshit, I mean real power. Moving the earth or controlling the weather."

"I don't know. It still scares me." She sighed. "Especially now after what…happened to Grams."

"If you change your mind I'd be happy to help." He smirked. "I've got a few targets in mind for test practice."

"I'll bet." She snickered. "I guess I should keep doing small stuff though. Quitting cold turkey might do more harm than good."

"Perhaps." He murmured. "I don't see how you could quit anyway. Having power and then losing it just seems like such a waste."

"I'm not a power hungry freak though."

"And I am?"

"Well if the show fits…"

Damon waited calmly until she was finished with her burger and drink, and wiping her hands on a napkin until he put his own down onto the floor in its bag and lunged at her. She squealed and then laughed, pushing his shirt off his shoulders. "If I have to be under you, at least I can get something out of it too."

"Does that mean you think I have a nice body?" He wiggled his brows at her. "Of course you do. Everyone does."

The witch balked at him. "If you were anymore conceited, you'd be Narcissus."

"Please. That guy wished he looked as good as me." She giggled and he tilted his head to the side, listening. "Elena is here. Must be looking for Stefan."

"Ack!" She shoved at him until he moved. "Do not tell her I'm here." Next she sprinted into the closet, closing the door behind her.

Pouting, he forced himself up and into the bathroom to splash cold water on his face. Might as well get ready for the charity crap if he wasn't going to get to play again.

Elena made her way into the bedroom a second later and glanced around slowly. She'd checked the other rooms but found no one. "Stefan?"

"Better. Me." Damon sauntered out of bathroom, his jeans low, revealing sharp indents on either side of his torso.

The brunette's brows quirked up. "You look um…"

"Dashing? Gorgeous? Irresistible?" He swayed into her, crowding her space.

She took a step back. "Wrecked. You look wrecked."
He shrugged. "No reason why. Do you know I am one of Mystic Falls most eligible bachelors?"

"Huh."

"Yup. Never better. Yup."

He swaggered over to the mirror and slipped into his shirt. *Aren't I popular today?*  "What can I do for you? I'm a *barrel* of favors today—it's my newfound purpose. How can I help people..."

She sighed. "I'm just meeting Stefan; we're going to the fund raiser."

Damon nodded and tried to button up his shirt, frowning when his fingers wouldn't work. "Help a guy out will ya? I can't..." He tried again. "...get this."

Elena shook her head but moved closer to help, feeling sorry for him and what he was going through. "So, I found out who my birth mother is."

"Eyush, who cares?" He gazed at her. "She left you. She *sucks.*"

Before she could reply, Stefan strolled into the room. "Hey."

"There you are." She was quite relieved to see him.

The older vampire huffed as he put on his jacket, his muscles aching. "Ugh I need a bigger jacket." When his brother didn't so much as chuckle, he tsked him. "You know, an *occasional* sorority girl might mellow you out a little bit." *Bonnie will come out when she is sure everyone is gone.* He sent Elena a look as he buttoned his shirt with no problems and left the room.

*God sometimes I love being a bastard.*

~ *~

Bonnie woke up to someone caressing her cheek, and she was surprised to see Damon in his suit sitting on the edge of the bed, his fingers grazing her cheek. She smiled at him sleepily. "Hey. I thought I heard a noise downstairs."

He dismissed it. "Just me stumbling into things. How are you feeling?"

"Okay." She whispered. "How was the auction?"

"Uneventful." He ran his fingers through her hair. "I ditched the Mayor's wife."

"Ooh I'm sure that annoyed her." She yawned softly. "Well if there is nothing else exciting going on, are you coming to bed?"

*I won't mention the Katherine thing just yet. She will have to be eased into the idea of joining us.* "Sure."

Damon didn't exactly understand the compulsion he had to find Katherine, or the futile way he was linking random facts together to validate his crazy ravings. But it was obvious he *had* to *dosomething* so that he didn't seem like a complete loser for pining over someone who didn't want him. Yeah he still wanted her—feelings didn't just *go* away because you wanted them to. Because it would be *easier.*

However now he had to deal with the fact that he *also* turned Elena's birth mother into a vampire. *This is all some straight up incest type shit.* It wasn't his fault though. She came to him and
he had no idea who she was. He thought she was just some bored housewife looking for a few thrills of the undead variety. The question remained if he had known, would he have changed anything? Eh well he wasn't sure to be honest. Luckily he didn't have to make that decision.

Alaric was dead—mostly—and everything was fucked up, not that he cared that much.

He just had to figure out what his next move was…tomorrow. Tonight he was going to crawl into bed with a beautiful witch. Screw the rest for a while.

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

It's never too late to go home again, even for those that shouldn't.

Chapter Notes

This tags episodes 1.16 (There Goes The Neighborhood), 1.17 (Let The Right One In) and 1.18 (Under Control).

Going Home

Bonnie Bennett had seen her best friend go to the Mystic Falls Cemetery time after time when her parents first died. If she was missing and couldn't be found, it was likely that she was sitting against their large tombstone, writing in her diary. Since meeting Stefan she hadn't been by as much and that was a good thing of course. It meant that she was moving on, trying to heal. Bonnie had never exactly understood the peace or serenity she had achieved by being alone, surrounded by the dead, but now she did. It's what brought her to her grandmother's grave more and more. But usually at night or when she was sure everyone was in school so she wouldn't be seen. As far as her friends knew, she was still at her relatives' house.

However it was time to come home now. There were people who needed her.

Sitting comfortable before the shiny headstone, she placed a fresh bouquet of flowers on the soft ground. Her fingers traced the lettering itched into the marble in the form of Shelia Bennett and she sighed, forcing herself not to cry. For about three weeks she'd been hiding away at the manor and letting Damon take her mind off of her screwed up life. It was crazy and so out of character for her, but it's what she needed so that every time she closed her eyes, she didn't see her Grams lifeless in her coffin. Besides it's not like her family would have understood, not really. Perhaps the grief aspect but not all of the supernatural mumbo jumbo currently hovering over her like a cloud.

Damon understood.

Damon didn't judge.

Damon didn't try to make her talk about her feelings.

Damon was a nice release.

And yet she had not forgotten all of the horrible things he'd done once upon a time. All of the murders and generally bad behavior. He had his part to play in her grandmother's death just like Stefan and Elena, and the other vampires from the tomb. They weren't best friends or boyfriend and girlfriend, but like Emily's spell wanted, there were certain things she could share with him that she couldn't tell anyone else. There were ways he could make her feel better that others didn't possess. She dared anyone to judge her for the biting or say it was wrong when they hadn't experienced the
trauma and tragedy she had. Yes it was akin to losing oneself in drugs but just for a little while she wanted to float away.

Wasn’t that normal of all people with emotions?

She was going to tell Elena everything though, she had to. She didn’t want them to have secrets anymore because secrets only caused drama in the end. As soon as she got the nerve, she was going to explain about Damon and her actions. And she expected Elena to do some explaining of her own.

While locked away in the manor, exploring its many rooms and hidden passageways, she’d discovered a few interesting tidbits that had her curious. She knew that her best friend loved Stefan religiously, but she was growing closer to Damon as well. It shouldn’t make her jealous or wary, but it did and she wondered what the future would hold for them. Elena did look like Katherine after all and Damon so wasn’t over her. He was angry at her and it helped their…sham of a relationship grow but he wasn’t done with her. Not by a long shot. Nonetheless his rage at what she’d done made her feel better about actually being his…friend? Were they friends? It was hard to say considering everything that was going on, and everything they didn’t say to each other.

Sometimes feeling was deeper than words. Sometimes people really communicated when they stopped talking, and that is how things went with Damon Salvatore. The moment they stopped going around in circles over their blood attachment because of Emily’s spell, they were actually able to have fun. To make out for the sake of making out and trade jibes without underlying hostility. She didn’t trust him, but she decided that wasn’t necessary to lose herself in his intoxicating presence.

Can you not trust someone and yet manage to feel safe with them? Is something she had been asking herself for quite a while. Since finding Damon writhing on the living room floor without eyes. Even now he refused to tell her what happened; simply saying he was on the wrong end of pissed off pointy nails. She figured it was someone sending him a message that they were stronger and meant business, but he didn't seem to care. He’d slipped on black sunglasses, told her to stay upstairs and swaggered off to get drunk. Leaving her with many questions—one of which being was he shielding to protect her or himself?

Later on Elena, Stefan, Matt and Caroline had shown up on some twisted double date sort of thing. It was odd and even now she couldn’t wait to get the 411 on what that had been about. Probably Caroline trying to work through her own insecurities—Bonnie could relate. It was hard being in the shadow of someone like Elena. You speculated why she was always the favorite, knowing deep down that the answer was clear. There was just something about Elena Gilbert that people liked. Herself included.

She wasn’t even angry when Damon returned later with—of all people—Matt's mom Kelly. She’d watched from her hiding place and been amused when he couldn’t bite her. And yes a small part of her hoped it was because of her. Because he liked feeding from her and others just didn’t compare. Not that she was going to keep letting him do that, no doubt Elena wouldn’t approve when she finally found out. The biting was a distraction and if she were going to deal with what fate was throwing her way, she needed a clear head.

Especially since that very night Stefan and Damon were attacked. She didn't know by whom and when the commotion downstairs interrupted her reading, rightfully she'd stayed in Damon's room until things settled. Better that then get in the way and end up hurt. Upon venturing downstairs afterwards, she’d found glass everywhere, Stefan bleeding and the desiccated body of a female vampire lying on the floor. It didn’t take a rocket scientist to realize something had gone wrong with the tomb.

Damon wasn’t forthcoming with information, not that it mattered. I didn’t need it spelled out for me.
Sighing, she ran a hand through her long black hair and sighed. "Everything is all messed up, Grams. Even more than before. The vampires are out of the tomb and we both know that won't bode well for anyone. I wish you were here so that you could tell me what to do." Wetting her lips, she continued. "My magic is getting stronger but I don't know if it'll be strong enough to do any good. I wouldn't even know where to begin. We thought Damon was a terror…he's a puppy compared to what this many vamps could do. And—and I've been having dreams. There is blood and death—something bad is coming."

Looking up to the dreary sky, she rubbed the back of her neck, feeling the need to come clean. She can probably see all anyway. "I've been…hanging out with Damon lately but you probably already know that. You once told me that Emily knew what she was doing binding us together and at the time I thought it was crazy. Forcing someone to be BFFs with a psychotic vampire didn't seem stable to me. Still doesn't. But Damon is—he's been a welcoming diversion from—missing you. And I do Grams…I miss you so much. I'm so sorry."

Tears blurred her vision and she wiped them away. It was hard not to continuously blame herself, and in a way she thought she didn't deserve to not shoulder it. Why should she be free and clear when she'd fought so hard to save Stefan? Grams would have left alive had it not been for her.

"I know you'd say it's not my fault but it is in a way." She said softly. "Maybe that's why the only person I've been able to talk to is Damon. Cause I feel just as screwed up as he is. We—we're not sleeping together but I have let him bite me." She smoothed a hand on her flawless skin, the marks completely gone. "I'm crazy, and I'm in pain and it makes me feel better. No excuse though right? I spent so much time avoiding him and being scared of him and now—now I don't know what I feel. I think I care about him…"

But does he care about me, that's the million dollar question.

The other being what exactly does he want with me when he's still pining for Katherine? Where do I play into his agenda?

In truth Bonnie didn't know if she wanted to know the answer. He was always joking about her becoming a vampire or using her powers for the less than hello kitty sort of things. What if he wasn't joking? What if he did have a plan and now she was just another one of his chess pieces?

"I wish you could tell me what to do." She replied. "I wish there was a way I could talk to you. I'd try a séance but I don't know how you would feel about that. I…wouldn't wanna disturb you or anything." Pause. "But I promise to take care of myself and everyone else that I care about. I let you down once, Grams, I won't do it again."

The caw of a black crow startled her and she jerked her head up, watching as it landed on a grave across from her. She stared at it, arching a brow. "Checking up on me?" There was no reply of course. The bird just watched her, its head tilting from one side to the other. It could be just a bird, but if it's not it's nice to know he at least doesn't want me in danger.

She could remember very clearly the night Damon nearly killed her. Sometimes in her mind it blurred into the first sex dream she'd ever had about him. For some reason they both seemed to be so far in the past, almost like another lifetime. So much had happened since that night, including the shifting of emotions from hatred to indifference to…she wasn't sure. What she felt for him didn't have an exact name but she could admit she didn't want him psychically hurt. Whether that was the spell or just evolving on her part, she didn't know.

Perhaps it's a little of both. Or maybe it's because I try so hard to pull away that I just end up making our weird ass bond stronger.
It would be easier to classify everything Damon did as self-serving if she didn't know the truth. If she didn't know that all of his actions—especially the bad ones—revolved around getting Katherine back. In his fucked up way he twisted being evil into being about finding the person he loved. It was wrong to hurt people and use them the way he had, and there was probably a part of him that honestly didn't give a damn. If he were always like that it would be so much easier to write him off.

And yet he had to go and do things like rescue Stefan from a house full of pissed off tomb vampires. Bonnie imagined that Elena was a mess that day, but at least the other Salvatore was going to be okay. He'd worked with Elena and she'd asked him about it later, but he'd waved it off as just a way to save his brother. She's sure that was half true since he also worked with Alaric.

"Grams, you'd be shocked at some of the stuff I could tell you." She smiled a little. "I think you'd get a kick out of the history teacher by day-slash-vampire slayer by night. And this witch girl who wants Damon's head—though I haven't seen her lately. Anyway though I—I promise to come back by as soon as I can. I'll bring fresh flowers when I do…"

Leaning, she placed a kiss to the cool stone and stood, dusting off the back of her jeans. She pulled the hood from under the leather jacket and slipped it down low over her face. Her big green eyes scanned the area and she headed for the gate, walking down the street moments later. The crow flapped its wings and took to the air, soaring in the direction she went.

As Bonnie walked along, she got the distinct impression that she was being watched and not by the friendly neighborhood crow. She probably looked like fair game—young girl out alone while the sun was dipping low below the horizon. *Sucks the safety of Mystic Falls only lasted a short while. I was just getting used to it again.*

She reached the manor in one piece and hurried inside, closing the door behind her. Noise from the living room caught her attention and she moved in, seeing Stefan as he poured himself a large glass of Whiskey and chugged without problem. *I didn't know Stefan drank.*

"Hey." Taking off her jacket, she slung it over the back of the couch. "Didn't know it was happy hour."

Stefan Salvatore smiled at her. "It helps with the cravings."

*Right. Hadn't had human blood in a while. "Well whatever works. Is Damon here?"

He shook his head. "No. I'm not sure where Damon is."

She nodded. "That's okay. I'm sure he'll turn up sooner or later."

"Can I ask you something?" He inquired after a moment.

*Ugh. "Sure."

Pouring himself another drink, he took a sip. "How do you feel about Damon?"

*Wow, right to the point. "Honestly? I don't know. If this was a few weeks earlier I probably would have called him really bad names that only sailors are supposed to know."

He chuckled. "I think I know where you are coming from. You see him and you see the things he's done, and you can't ever imagine finding common ground. You don't even want to." A beat. "I've known him all my life and sometimes it's hard for me to remember the man he used to be. That… there is a possibly he could still be in there somewhere."
"I get that he's flawed." That was putting it nicely. "And don't worry; we won't be picking out china patterns anytime soon. But he's been—he's been good when I needed someone to be good."

"He hasn't forgotten about Katherine you know…" He said slowly. "He still thinks about her. Maybe not when he's with you but it doesn't change anything. If she came back tomorrow…"

"Stefan I get it. I do." She pressed her lips together. "I know that you're concerned and don't want me getting hurt, but when I'm with Damon I don't even think about that. I should but I don't. And he doesn't threaten me anymore like he used to."

"I don't just mean psychically. In fact I don't mean psychically at all."

"What are you talking about?"

"It would be seriously bad for you to fall for Damon."

"I'm not."

"Good. Because he might be charming and sweet when he wants to be, but he always has an ulterior motive. And I'm not sure that he has the capacity for real affection anymore."

"People can change."

"People can. Damon can't."

Subjects can. "How is Elena?"

He shrugged. "She was shaken up over what happened to me, but she's doing better. In fact we're going to the Founder's Council kickoff party tonight. You should come. I know she would be happy to see you."

"I'll see her soon; I'm going home tomorrow or whatever." Pause. "You haven't told her I'm here, have you?"

"No. But you should." He related. "So where does your Aunt think you are?"

"I plan on telling her everything. No more secrets." She yawned lightly. "I know she might not approve but after everything we have been through, there is no way I can keep anything from her. I need her more than ever now. And my Aunt thinks I'm staying with friends. She has my cell."

Stefan lowered his gaze. "I liked your grandmother—she was a strong woman. I'm truly sorry for what happened to her. I take responsibility for her death."

"So do I." She whispered. "But Grams wouldn't want me to fall any deeper than I already have. And I need to be strong for what's to come."

"You make it sound like we're about to go to war." He arched a brow. "Damon and I will take care of Pearl and the others. You don't have to worry."

I've heard that before. "I wanna be ready just in case."

"Fair enough." He lifted the glass to her. "Here's to being ready."

~*~

"My knowledge of this town goes beyond anything that you or you or the Council knows. So if you
were planning on some clever high-speed snatch ring, vamp kill move, know that if I die everything I know goes to the Council. Including the fascinating little tale of the Salvatore brothers, and their present day return to Mystic Falls."

"How do I know anything Damon? So many questions…"

Damon Salvatore did not like the feeling of not knowing something. He hated needing answers but having no way to find them out. Obviously Jonathan Gilbert was going to be an annoying threat, even more so since the bastard couldn't die as long as he was wearing that stupid ring. And people accused vampires of being irritating. Anyway he wanted to know his secret and he had a feeling he needed to find it out as soon as possible.

Sighing, he leaned against the side of his car and watched as more people flowed out of the party. Look at them. Rich and privileged assholes going on and on about their family name like it means something. Hiding behind tradition so that they can screw others over. It's like a country club with vervain as their seal. If only they knew what lurked in a farmhouse on the outside of town.

The whole deal with Pearl—he wasn't saying no because he cared about the people in the town. As far as he was concerned, they could all go to hell. Well, almost all. He just didn't like the fact that she was blowing onto his territory and complicating matters anymore than they needed to be. The people were finally letting their guard down, and he was finally able to play without worrying about being staked. And now here were twenty or so more idiots wanting revenge for something that happened over a century ago. Instead of going off to see the world and how it had changed, they wanted to stay in a small little place for no good reason.

Morons.

Folding his arms over his chest, he glanced around but caught no sight of Stefan. It was amusing to him how his little brother was behaving. A few drops of human blood in so many years and he was totally off the wagon. However feeding Stefan was much more fun than brooding Stefan. He'd always thought his brother should use his gifts and not shun them. It would be interesting for him to come over to the dark side. Not like he had to kill or start cooking up schemes.

Yet there was another part—a very very small part that could be considered worried. Stefan was spiraling quicker than a newborn. It was only a matter of time before he would do something stupid or lose control of himself, and that could jeopardize both of them. He wasn't sure what to do though. The younger Salvatore wouldn't ask him for help or trust the help he offered. So he supposed he'd have to just watch him and make sure his newfound habit didn't blow up in their faces.

I'll just look on the bright side which is Elena calling on me for help.

He liked it but that was a given. Damon liked a lot of things that he wasn't supposed to. Killing people being at the top of the list before he started cooling that down. He also liked having Bonnie all to himself. It felt naughty and that was never a bad feeling. Not to mention getting to feed on her was awesome…although it was so awesome that he didn't exactly want to bite others. It felt like a cheap imitation of fine wine.

It was funny how being with her took his mind off of shit. Not all of it but sometimes a few hours did the body good. She helped quell his rage that he would usually take out on a poor defenseless camper. He wasn't sure whether that was a good thing or a bad thing. It was just…nice having someone care about him for a change. In spite of all the crap he'd done. Yeah she had her issues but it was fun being broken together.

Wonder could she help me find out the deal with Gilbert?
He had to discover what he wanted...why he was back in Mystic Falls. That whole protecting my business spiel was bullshit, and if he sent Isobel to be a vampire he clearly wasn't too concerned with what the other blood drinkers were doing. So what was his agenda?

Rubbing his chin, he smiled to the Sheriff as she made her way to her car. *Might as well use her while I can. She hates Gilbert too...maybe she'll tell me something interesting.* Opening the driver side door, he slid under the wheel and started the engine. Seconds later he was cruising down the street, heading for his home. Upon pulling into the driveway, he turned off the car and strolled inside, inhaling deeply.

*Bonnie.* He grinned and in seconds he was upstairs in his room, nuzzling his face into the hollow of her neck. "What cha doing?"

She smiled. "Packing. I...think it's time for me to go home."

He shrugged and flopped onto the bed, picking up one of her frilly bras. "Why? I thought we were having fun together."

"We are. But it can't last forever." She snorted and took the article of clothing from his hands. "Besides I need to touch base with Elena and stuff."

"How much are you going to tell her?" He questioned.

"All of it." She said softly. "Don't worry. I'll make sure she knows you didn't kidnap me against my will and force me to stay here."

He chuckled. "Mm sounds fun." Grabbing her wrist, he yanked her into his lap. "What say you stay a little while longer, and we christen my sheets? They'd never been christened before and they should be."

Bonnie smirked at him. "Are you gonna keep trying to sleep with me until I say yes?"

"Uh, duh." He gave her a look. "Why are you holding out on me anyway? You like me. I know you like me. And when a boy and girl like each other they take their clothes off..."

Gazing at him, she ran her fingers through his hair. It was a simple gesture but his face twitched anyway. "I have to keep some part of myself for a while longer."

He pouted. "I promise not to spread rumors around school on how you're easy. Hell, I won't even ditch you the next morning."

"I know." A pause. "To be honest, I do wanna be with you like that. You know I do—you're in my dreams. But wanting to do something and actually doing it are two very different things. And for as much as I might not hate you now or spent all this time with you, there are still parts of you I haven't figured out."

His expression became stoic. *Katherine.* "You know these past days doesn't mean we're dating, right? It was just for fun."

Oddly enough she didn't look surprised. "I knew you'd say as much. Whatever floats your boat, Damon."

Damon stared at her, his blue eyes searching her face for *something*--maybe some of the fire she used to have. Grief had a funny way of getting rid of that for a while. "Not to say I haven't enjoyed having you. Cause I have."
"I've enjoyed hanging out with you too." She giggled. "Things are nice when you're not being an asshole."

"Yeah but that's too much work." He mock sighed. "But, maybe you going home isn't such a bad idea. I wouldn't want Stefan getting antsy and thinking you're a free meal."

"He'd never do that."

"You'd be surprised what a hungry vampire would do to a tender little morsel like yourself."

"You really think he'd hurt someone?"

"Eh anything is possible."

"What about Elena?"

"I'm sure he'll take extra precautions to that he won't rip her throat out."

"I hope so. That would—if he attacked her I don't know if she would ever be able to forgive him."

"Naturally. But being upset that he just does what is in his nature is not exactly his fault. Sometimes you just get tired of fighting it."

"Is that what happened to you?"

"No. I never fought it."

"I guess that's why you are—in a way—more stable than he is."

"That's one way to look at it, yes."

"Would you be happy if Elena dumped him?"

"Is that a trick question? Because it sounds like one. Of course I would be happy. I can be concerned for his well-being and still wanna screw with his life. We're family."

"Yeah, I'm sure that's why you would be happy."

_Not this again._ "How bout I drive you home so that you make it in one piece? I'd hate for anyone else to snack on you…that's my job."

About thirty minutes later they were sitting in his vehicle outside of her father's home. She fiddled with her fingers and he just watched her, having a pretty good idea of what she was thinking. The only person he'd ever lost who mattered to him was Katherine, so he didn't really know anything to say to make her feel better. That wasn't his specialty anyway.

"You can always come home with me again." He wiggled his brows. "Play new games of cat and witchy mouse."

She chuckled lowly. "I would but it's time to go home." Grabbing up the duffel by her feet, she leaned across the seat and kissed him.

As usual he threaded his fingers into her hair and took control, sliding his tongue past her lips She shuddered with a whimper but responded, her hand on his chest. It was even better when he had her blood in his system, like someone had rubbed tingling powder on his skin. The thought of her blood made him growl lowly, and he pulled back as his eyes went dark. "One for the road?"
She smiled but shook her head. "Goodnight Damon. Sweet dreams." And then she was getting out of the car and heading up the walk way.

Fuck. He drummed his fingers on the steering wheel. *Wonder if there is anymore soccer mom left in the fridge?*

~Fin~
Just Moments

Chapter Summary

You'd be surprised what can happen in the shortest amount of time.

Chapter Notes

This tags episode 1.19: Miss Mystic Falls.

Just Moments

Having a secret sometimes made you feel special or particularly naughty depending on what the secret was. If it was something that hurt people a guilty conscious usually took away any joy that someone could experience. However spending a few weeks at Salvatore manor didn't hurt anyone and that is why Bonnie felt giddy when she returned to Mystic Falls High School. Everyone thought she'd been at her Aunt's house and that was half-true. Knowing that they would be scandalized to learn the truth made getting through all of their I'm sorry looks a bit easier. She appreciated the sentiment but pity wasn't what she needed.

Perhaps that is why Mr. Saltzman's class went by so quickly. She focused more on learning than the people who were sneaking looks at her, including her best friend. For just a few minutes more she'd wanted to remain in her own little world, thinking back to her time with Damon.

She was extremely nervous to talk to Elena and actually come clean about everything she'd been doing. They'd had brief words before Mr. Saltzman's class started, but nothing more than a whispered hello. However sitting out by the picnic tables with her bag on the ground by her feet, she knew it was only a matter of time before the brunette exited the side door and came to ask her how she was doing. Last night she'd wracked her brain for a suitable answer…one that didn't sound fake or whatever.

In the end she decided the truth was her best option.

Sure enough seconds later Elena Gilbert made her way outside, her big brown eyes scanning the area. Upon landing on her friend, she hurried over and sat down in front of her. "Bonnie, hey. How are you? How is your family?"

The witch smiled softly. "We're dealing but it's been hard you know? I suppose since it was so sudden—Gram's passing and all."

Elena nodded. "Yeah. Well if you need anything don't hesitate to ask." A beat. "I've really missed you these past few weeks. I'm so glad you're back."

Bonnie reached over and gave her wrist a squeeze. "I've missed you too. And—and I wanna thank you for being so understanding. And for leaving me that message about the vampires and the tomb."
"I know it's not what you wanted to hear." She sighed. "It's not what any of us wanted. Oh Bonnie, I have so much to tell you and I don't even know where to begin. Things have just been so crazy."

Okay it's now or never. "Can I go first?"

Her friend nodded. "Sure. What's up?"

Taking a deep breath, the pretty witch cleared her throat. "First I want to say that after Grams died I—I felt hollow. Nothing made sense and all my Aunt wanted to do was feed me cake and other stuff she'd made. It was nice but it wasn't what I wanted. I didn't wanna talk—or—think about the good old days. I just wanted to forget and pretend I was someone else for a while." Pause. "So…after about a week there I—I came home."

"What?" A brow rose. "Why didn't you tell me? I would have came over and kept you company."

She smiled softly. "I know but I just wanted something different." Here it comes… "I didn't go home though, not to my house. I went to Damon's."

Big brown eyes stretched wide. "What? All this time you've been at Damon's?"

"Yes."

"But I've been there and I haven't seen you."

"I hid."

"From me? Why?"

"Cause…I didn't want you to know I was there. I didn't want you to be disappointed in me."

"I'm not disappointed just really shocked. It kinda seemed like you hated him, especially after your Grams died. I thought you blamed him and Stefan."

"In a way I did—do. If Damon hadn't been so intent on getting into the tomb, she would still be alive. If Stefan hadn't run in to save you then she wouldn't have had to waste so much energy to lift the spell."

"Then how did you get to staying with him? With them?"

Bonnie tucked her hair behind her ear. "I was—I was broken, Elena. You know what that's like better than anyone. Damon was the only person who didn't try to force me to talk or come to grips with anything. He just—we just had fun. We danced and—surprisingly enough—cuddled in his bed talking nonsense. It was so relaxing being with someone who didn't want anything from me. Well…who didn't want me to spill my guts about all of my problems." She shrugged lightly. "He was upset too so we kinda bonded over that."

"Wow…" Elena frowned in thought. "All this time while I was leaving messages, trying to keep you up to date and you already knew."

"I'm sorry." She apologized. "A part of me wanted to come clean but like I said, I didn't know how you would react. Damon is horrible most of the time but you know how he can flick a switch and bedifferent."

The brunette shook her head. "Not really."

Now who's not telling the truth? "I know that he helped you save Stefan. I know you've been
"Not by choice. Everything I do with Damon is for Stefan's benefit." Elena replied.

The other girl tilted her head to the side. "Yeah but it's not like you don't notice his differences when it comes to you. All I'm saying is that Damon has three faces and we've both seen them all."

Glancing around, the brunette wet her lips. "Are you and him…you know…"

The question made her blush. "No. Not that it doesn't come up—literally. I've let him bite me again though. It wasn't as awful as it was the first time."

Studying her friend, the teen folded her arms over her chest. "I don't really know what to say, Bonnie. I can't be mad at you though, not after what you have been through. Besides you know Damon and if anyone can handle him, it's you."

Relief flooded Bonnie and she smiled. I don't know why I was stressing this so hard. Of course she wouldn't go off on me. She never has. "So you're not upset with me or whatever that I didn't tell you I was back?"

Elena pouted. "I'm a little angry that you didn't confide in me, yes, but not terribly so. We're best friends and we shouldn't have any secrets. You shouldn't be scared to tell me the truth, even if it's weird. You're like a sister to me and I could never shut you out for anything."

The witch stood and moved around the small table, pulling the other girl into a hug. "Thank you." She rubbed her back. "I could never shut you out either. And I promise the next time I have a sleep over with Damon, I will totally tell you."

The brunette laughed. "Deal." A pause. "So you're up to speed on everything then?"

She nodded. "Yup. I'd get the cliff notes version from Damon and your messages would clear up the rest. By the way how is Stefan? He looked fine this morning but I know he's been having a hard time."

"He said he's all better now." Elena nibbled on her bottom lip. "I'm really glad; I was getting worried about him."

Before Bonnie could reply, Caroline Forbes rushed over and gave her a big hug. "Bonnie! I'm so glad you're home! I missed you. How are you doing?"

"Better just…better ya know?" She grinned. "Glad to be back and um…trying to keep myself busy." Caroline bounced in place. "Well I can help with that. Major wardrobe confab needed ASAP! You need to help me pick the perfect dress for the Founder's Court."

Elena scrunched her face in confusion. "The Founder's Court? Did I miss something?"

The blonde stared at her in disbelief. "The Founder's Court. Miss. Mystic Falls. They announced it today and…you and I are both on it."

As recollection came to her best friend Bonnie gazed at her thoughtfully. Poor Elena. It's like she's forgotten everything since her parents died, not that I'm bashing her. Trauma can make a person forget their own name.

"We signed up so long ago I completely forgot." The brunette exhaled.
"Yeah." Caroline tried to hide her hopefulness. "Are—do you plan on dropping out then?"

Elena curved back into her jacket, giving Bonnie a look. "I—I can't…"

"No?" The blonde inquired.

"Her mom is the one who wanted her to enter." The witch revealed, and of course that explained everything. "But um, yeah I'll help you pick out a dress and stuff."

"Great!" Caroline smiled from ear to ear. "It's really good to have you back." And then she was fluttering off to find her boyfriend.

"Maybe I should drop out." Elena voiced. "There is a lot going on and the last thing I wanna focus on is some pageant."

Her friend pulled at her shirt. "I think you should do it. Maybe a little slice of normal is exactly what you need right now. What we all need. It's been vampires and magic for so long. Maybe this Founder's Day crap is a good way to zone out."

"We'll see." She groaned. "I gotta find a dress and tell Jenna about it. It's funny; before mom and dad died I was all about school spirit and parties. Now I don't do any of that anymore and I don't even miss it."

_Hard to miss those things when other things take up all your time._ "You're a different person now. Nothing wrong with that. I am too."

Bonnie knew how true her words were in both of their cases. Elena wasn't the peppy cheerleader that she used to be. For a while she was the Debbie Downer no one wanted to hang out with. Yet she'd managed to pull through her cocoon and turn into a beautiful butterfly despite all of the drama surrounding her. She hoped that she could do the same thing. That she could transform into a new Bonnie Bennett after everything was said and done, but one that she approved of.

She hated the thought of becoming a person she didn't even recognize anymore. Whether it be from the magic or a certain Salvatore that somehow got deeper and deeper inside of her head each time they were around each other. At this point she didn't know who or what was more dangerous but with the way things were going, she figured she would soon find out.

~*~

"Bye Caroline! See you tomorrow!"

Waving, Bonnie slipped into her car and put her bag in the back seat. She yawned and stretched her poor muscles, pouting at the aching in her feet. After helping the other girl practice the dance of the Founder's Court, she'd taken her shopping for the perfect dress. And shopping to Caroline meant going into every store _twice_ and trying on every gown they had until one _spoke_ to her. She'd also revealed just how badly she wanted to win the contest but how she figured she wouldn't because of Elena.

_I really hate it when they put me in the middle. Good thing it's not hard to be neutral when the situation calls for it._

Her stomach growled and she sighed, wondering if going home and ordering a pizza was the right way to go? The thought of standing in line somewhere made her toes grumble even though she was more in the mood for a cheeseburger than anything else. _Too bad I can't float the food to me. Or maybe I could…_
Tap!

Tap!

Jerking out of her thoughts, she glanced to the passenger side window. "Can I help you?"

Damon opened the door and slid inside. "Funny. How do you stand Caroline? Even when she was under compulsion when I wanted to squeeze her head like a grape."

"Hey, she's my friend." She pointed a finger at him. "She has her faults just like everyone else. You are the last person to throw stones."

He smirked. "So, how was school?"

She shrugged. "Normal. I got a lot of you poor thing, welcome back stares. And I told Elena the truth about us."

He looked intrigued. "Which is?"

*God he is so smug.* "That you basically forced me to stay with you and locked me in the attic."

"Well wasn't I a bad boy?" Winking, he slouched to the seat. "Seriously, what did she say?"

"She was okay with it." Pause. "I was worried for nothing."

"Hm."

"Hm? Would you rather she pitched a fit?"

"No. I'm actually glad that she approves. Though defiling you against the wishes of others does have a certain appeal."

"I'm sure it does. But yeah she was okay and I'm happy for that. I'd hate for her to be upset with me."

"She'd get over it if she was. Anyway, how was Stefan today?"

"Okay. Why?"

Damon glanced to her, seemingly weighing his answer. "It seems my dear little brother has been hording human blood. He robbed a hospital and the annoying Jonathan Gilbert brought it to the attention of the Council."

*Whoa.* "Does Elena know about this?"

"No, but it's only a matter of time before she finds out." The handsome vampire flipped down the sun visor to look in the mirror. "Or he goes off the deep end."

Bonnie rubbed the back of her neck. "So what do we do?"

He arched a brow. "We? We don't do anything. I'll handle Stefan, you just keep looking pretty."

She snorted. "Do you not want me to help because I could get hurt, or because you wanna be the hero?"

"Both." Grinning, he took her hand and kissed the back of it. "When I need those witchy powers I'll call. Or text or whatever the cool kids do these days."
She shoved at his shoulder. "I'm not your little poodle that you can summon whenever you want." Geeze. "Damon, if you don't start treating me with some kinda respect you're gonna find yourself alone."

"Meow!" He ran his fingers through her hair. "I respect you. Besides how is what I say to you any different from what I say to anyone else? When we were sneaking around you didn't want to me tell anyone and I didn't. Not to mention I've saved your life several times. There are others who can't boast that way."

Even the truth sounds shady coming from him. "Do you want me to be honest?"

He stuck out his lower lip. "No. I find lies make people happier that's why I try to do it as much as I can."

Before she could stop herself, she cracked a smile. "Sometimes I wanna slap you."

Damon leaned closer, nuzzling his face against her throat. "It happens."

Sighing, she stared out of the windshield. "Is Stefan dangerous?"

His voice was muffled. "Define dangerous."

"Do we have to worry about him hurting someone?" She questioned slowly. "Like Elena or someone else?"

Resting his chin to her shoulder, he hummed. "Elena? No. Random girl going for a late night stroll in the woods in high heels? Maybe. Though with that big ass fridge he should be good for a while."

Surprisingly that doesn't stifle my fears. "It's so strange. It's like someone flipped a coin and changed your sides."

"Oh please! Stefan is always or was always brooding and being generally annoying. The human stuff might give him a bit more pep, but it doesn't make him as cool as I am." The vampire exclaimed. "He doesn't get to join my club until he's actually killed someone."

She scowled. "I hope it doesn't come to that. I—I feel like I owe Grams something. Mystic Falls was her home for such a long time—I kinda wanna keep it as safe as I can for her."

He nipped at her earlobe. "Well the tomb vamps split so that might be easier now."

Shivering, she turned her head and captured his lips in a soft kiss. "It would go easier if you helped me."

"I'll do my best to do what I do best." Pause. "Like finding out what Jonathan Gilbert is up to and what device he wants to get his hands on."

"Elena's Uncle?" She asked and he nodded. "Yeah from what I hear he's not very liked by…well…anyone. No wonder you don't fancy him, he's like you."

Damon's expression went blank. "Ha ha. He's got a master plan and I wanna know what is it."

Bonnie watched him, tracing her thumb across his brow. "Wow Damon, you look worried. It's not a look I see a lot when it comes to you."

"I try not to let people read me." He admitted. "But I like you so I'll make an exception."
For some reason that simple sentence made her heart flutter, however she decided not to look too much into it. Damon was an excellent manipulator of emotions and words. "Thanks, I think. Did you get in here to talk or did you have something important to tell me?"

He hunched his shoulders. "Nope. I thought we'd sneak a few kisses before I have to get back to being demanding and stealthy."

"And make you lose respect for me? No way."

"I could never lose respect for you, Bonnie. If anyone was ever my equal I'm pretty sure it would be you."

Smirking, she looked out the window to make sure no one was around, and then faced him. "I suppose a few minutes wouldn't hurt."

Winking, he wrapped his fingers around the back of her neck. "Never does."

He was kissing her next and vivid memories began playing behind her eyes from their time together. For all of the ways that Damon could get under her skin or irritate her to no end, kissing was one of the things he actually did right. It was overpowering in just the right manner that always made her moan softly after a few minutes. You'd think he'd dominate until there was nothing but submission, however when it came to the matters of pleasure he wanted an unwilling participant to participate...willingly. He appeared to be under the impression that pleasure felt was pleasure returned.

Funnily enough she never complained on that particular point.

It was everything else about him that usually rubbed her the wrong way. Yet for the few moments they were alone and his mouth was working magic against hers, she reckoned she could overlook those things.

Just for a few moments.

~*~

* Damon Salvatore looks good in a suit.
* Damon Salvatore is a surprisingly good dancer.
* Damon Salvatore is totally making eyes at my best friend.

Those had been Bonnie's thoughts as she had watched the two dance together, their eyes saying things their mouths dared not confess. The moves and non-touching were all about seduction without physical touch and although she didn't want to admit it, and it had been for just a brief moment, there was a fire between them that she didn't really understand. Or want to understand. Maybe it was because Elena looked like Katherine for Damon, but if that was the case, what was it for Elena? Was Damon just one of those people that you couldn't help but be attracted to? Granted he was gorgeous but sometimes his heart was so black...if a spell wasn't pulling her strings she was sure she wouldn't be anywhere near him.

I hate to ask Elena with all she is going through, but I won't be satisfied until I do. I just hope I don't hate the answer.

I bet I hate the answer.
Sighing, she put down her flute of sparkling cider on a table and headed for the back room where the coats and cardigans were being held hostage. She rounded a corner and frowned lightly at the sight of Damon and Elena huddled together, speaking in a low whisper. Her friend looked worried and Damon looked…inconvenienced which sometimes translated to worry depending on the situation. *I wonder what they are talking about. Something is going on.*

Hurrying to the back, she grabbed her black coat and followed the path they took, hoping she didn't see something that scarred her for life. Yes she didn't have a claim on Damon and yes he was free to do whatever he wanted, but that wouldn't change how she felt inside. It wouldn't make her set him on fire or stop wanting to look in those baby blue eyes. The best she could probably do is force herself to stay far away from him and suffer the withdrawals it would cause.

*I'm going to have to start causing him some withdrawals sooner or later. Sooner sounds nice.*

Sprinting in high heels wasn't easy, especially in the foggy darkness but she managed to catch up to her friends just in time to see Stefan sink his teeth into Amber before tossing her unmoving body to the ground. His eyes were onyx yet frightened like a small animal with blood smeared around his mouth. It was a scene none of them had ever witnessed before and she could tell they were all feeling unnerved shocked. Or in her case…fear.

"Stefan!" Elena yelled her face a mask of disgust and repulsion.

Damon pushed her back. "He can't control it. Stefan, it's okay. C'mon." He edged closer. "I'll help you through it man."

Stefan eyed them all before growling and flinging his brother into a nearby tree. He was angry and out of control, ready to take it out on someone. Anyone.

His girlfriend held out a hand to him. "Stefan, stop it!"

He wasn't listening however. Hestalked towards Damon like a lion, his hands balled into fists. Bonnie wet her lips and concentrated, drawing on the power inside of her. She pictured it as a burning ball of sound before thrusting it out at Stefan, watching as he grabbed his head and doubled over in pain. The magic ran along her skin, accelerating her heartbeat and shuddering with each breath she took. It focused on the vampire's sensitive sense of hearing, much like how high pitched noises aggravated dogs, it grew louder and louder, stopping him dead in his tracks.

Elena and Damon both stared at her in stunned amazement, neither having realized how much her powers had grown. When she was satisfied that he was at least dazed, she exhaled and stopped soundlessly.

Stefan looked so sickened by the expression on Elena's face that he took off running into the woods, disappearing from sight.

"Bonnie..." The brunette turned and hugged her tightly. "How..."

"The grimoire, I've been studying." She whispered. "Are you okay?"

"No." Elena's voice quivered. She was near tears. "Thank you for—for helping."

The witch nodded. "Of course."

"Elena, can you go get the Sheriff please?" Damon inquired. "Tell her—tell her you don't know what's wrong but Amber appears to be hurt. The less she thinks you know the better."
"Okay." And she was off.

Bonnie wrapped her arms around her waist. "Still think you can handle him?"

He sighed. "Might take a few of my bigger tricks but I don't see why not. Can't have him running around attacking people though—that would put us back on the Council's radar. And Gilberts'."

"I'm less worried about the Council and more about my best friend." She said softly. "Stefan is feral, he could do anything. You shouldn't deny my help because you want be the big man."

Cracking his neck, he stepped closer to her. "I'm only gonna say this once so pay attention. I'm not rejecting your help because I wanna do everything by myself. I'm saying no because I don't want you to get hurt. That whole can't kill you thing? Well I think it's evolving into wanting you safe all the time. Your powers are growing but it only takes a second…" He snapped his fingers. "And that girl could be you. So let me do this my way. Okay?"

Searching his face, she nodded. Can't believe I believe him but I do. "Okay. You know I don't want you to get hurt either."

He looked behind her to the approaching Sheriff. "Like I said, I can handle Stefan."

Red and blue flashing lights lit up the night as police and an ambulance rolled up the driveway. The EMT workers rushed out quickly and began working on the fallen girl, wrapping her in a silver blanket and checking her wounds. Sheriff Forbes gave them a brief glance before taking control of the situation and asking her a few questions.

The answers were the same as always however. "She doesn't remember what happened."

Damon put on his I'm human and thereby harmless voice. "It's a good thing the girls got here when they did. She'd lost a lot of blood."

"You didn't see anything?" She queried.

Both girls shook their head. "No we just…" Elena exhaled. "Found her and called Damon."

"Is she going to be okay?" Bonnie asked softly.

"Looks like it, yeah." The Sheriff replied. "Why don't you girls get back to the party, Damon and I can take it from here."

Shivering from the chill, Bonnie took Elena's hand and led her towards the front door. "What are you going to do now?"

The brunette shook her head slowly. "I—I can't just let Stefan go through this alone. I have to find him. I have to help him."

"I know I can't talk you out of it so be careful." Her friend sighed. "I don't want anything to happen to you."

"I will be. I promise." She bit the inside of her cheek. "Damon will help me."

Smiling sadly, Bonnie gazed at him where he stood. "Yes. I'm sure he will."

~Fin~
Nicest Thing

Chapter Summary

Bonnie is tired of wishing for what she wants. Now is the time for action.

Chapter Notes

This tags episodes 1.20: Blood Brothers and 1.21: Isobel.

Nicest Thing

Bonnie Bennett's big green eyes were trained on nothing as she gazed into space, her finger rubbing at a small imperfection in the wood of her table inside the Mystic Grill. She was lost in her thoughts and all of the information that Elena had been forwarding to her concerning Stefan, his condition and of course Damon. The brunette had crashed at the Salvatores while helping Stefan deal with his new addiction to human blood, and she'd requested that her best friend join her, but after being away for so long Bonnie thought it was best to visit but remain with her father. He needed her support as he was having a hard time dealing with Grams being dead.

It was very strange to walk into the grand home and find Elena's stuff laying around, to know that she was staying there. But she had managed to keep her thoughts to herself because she wanted to be there to help her best friend cause she was going through a tough time. It wouldn't have been right to bring up her relationship with Damon or his motives for being so nice where his brother was concerned. However a part of her could tell that he was honestly worried about Stefan, and it made her see him in a different light than the one he always tried to portray. Of course she knew a lot of what he did was an act. Him using that off switch he went on about when it came to vampires because he didn't wanna feel.

What's the point though if you don't feel?

She was also thinking of Stefan differently now that she knew he was the first to take the immortal plunge. It was weird to think of Damon as the mopey, wanting to die one. It was also annoying to have to hear it from Elena instead of the man himself. But it was times like that when she remembered he liked to fight tooth and nail to stay as emotionally detached to her as he possibly could. He would probably never open up if she didn't threaten to do something that would cause herself harm. It wasn't much but seeing him fired up over her safety did make her smile.

Anyway she'd heard it through the grape vine that Stefan was fine now, and Elena was back at home. Everything worked out I suppose...

A hand on her shoulder jerked her out of her thoughts, and she looked up to find Tyler Lockwood staring down at her. He showed off his bright smile. "Didn't mean to scare you. I'd call your name but you didn't seem to hear me."

She chuckled softly. "Sorry I was totally spacing out. What's up?"
He shrugged and sat down in front of her. "I know we're not like good friends or whatever, but everyone else is kinda avoiding me. And by everyone else I mean Matt."

She nodded slowly. "Well you did make out with his mom. Some people frown on that."

He smirked, stealing one of her fries. "In my defense I had been sneaking vodka all night. Ya know, I think he's more pissed off that I tried to choke him…"

"Where did that come from anyway?" She inquired.

Tyler shook his head. "I…have no idea. Lately I've been feeling all of these different emotions like…really strongly. I blame it on the booze most times but…" He trailed off. "Maybe I just have anger management problems. I don't know."

Bonnie watched him for a moment. Or it could be something else entirely, especially knowing this town. "Well I think you should apologize to Matt for starters, even if he doesn't seem like he wants to listen. And maybe give him some space afterwards. Let him process everything that is going on in his life."

"Yeah." Slouching in his chair, he sighed. "I really screwed up this time."

"Everyone deserves a second chance though."

"What about third and forth?"

"Depends on the person."

"Matt is like the closest thing I have to a brother, ya know? If I could go back I'd totally not drink that night."

"I think he'll forgive you when he's ready. You can't push him or he'll just pull farther away."

Sighing, he itched at his cheek. "Remember how just a few months ago things were like…cool? Parties in the woods, mindless fun and no bodies turning up from stupid animal attacks. I miss those days."

You're not the only one. "Yeah. Me too."

"Ugh I'm sorry. I've been sitting here going on and on about my problems when you got like, real stuff to deal with." Pause. "How are you doing by the way? I was sorry to hear about your Grams."

Pulling at the bracelet she'd received from Stefan a while ago, she shrugged. "Some days are better than others but I'm dealing. I know Grams would want me to grieve but not let the grief control me."

His dark eyes studied her for a second. "Is it? Controlling you I mean?"

"No. I—I've been making peace with it and myself." She related softly. "It's not easy but I need to focus on other things right now. And if you believe all of the things people tell you when someone dies, then she's not really gone. She'll always be with me."

"I tried to think that way when I heard about Vicki." He tapped his fingers on the table. "I was a total dick to her because—because of my parents. And I never got a chance to tell her that I was sorry. That I did like her…"

Reaching over, she gave his wrist a comforting squeeze. "I'm sure she knows."
Tyler placed his hand over hers. "I hope so. I've spent a lot of my teenage life being a dick to people because I could. Never thought it would turn out like this. That I'd push everyone who ever mattered to me away."

"Hey, what happened to Vicki was horrible but trust me, it wasn't your fault at all. And yeah you could have been nicer to her but I don't think she would want you to dwell on all of the bad times you had. There were good times, right?" He nodded and she continued. "If the last few weeks have taught me anything, it's that you don't know what could happen tomorrow so you have to prepare today. You have to take care of yourself sometimes."

"Interesting way to look at it." Grinning, he glanced to his watch. "Ugh I gotta go. My dad wants my help with float duty for that stupid parade. I think he just wants me in his sight so that he knows I'm not screwing up the Lockwood name."

Chuckling softly, she dug in her purse and put a few bills on the table. "I'll walk you out. I have to meet Caroline to talk about her ideas too. Even though I have a feeling I know what she's gonna want already."

He stood. "I don't know who has it worse, you or me. Probably me though. Least I don't have to hear about dresses and frills."

Smirking, she slipped on her jacket and walked outside with him. "How can you be sure? Maybe your dad needs your expert opinion on dresses and frills."

Tyler made a face and bumped his shoulder to hers. "Thanks for listening to me whine, Bonnie. You didn't have to but you did—I'll remember that if you ever need a favor or whatever."

"It's cool." A beat. "We all need someone to talk to every now and then."

"True. Still…" Grinning, he headed to his truck. "I'll remember it!"

Snorting playfully, she waved and then headed in the other direction, crossing the street to her little blue car. She opened the door and tossed her purse into the passenger seat, rummaging in her pocket for her car keys. In the past she'd never exactly had a heart to heart with Tyler because like everyone else, she saw him as the rich boy jock that used his daddy's influence to get what he wanted. But the past couple of months had changed everyone and he was no exception. Sometimes the last person you ever expect to confide in is the first person you turn to. It didn't always make sense but when you are lost, you don't make sense either.

A figure entered her peripheral vision and she spoke first, assuming it was Tyler come to tease her more. "Forget that you owe me already?"

"Do I?" Inquired a strange voice.

Bonnie blinked and swirled around, coming face to face with Jonathan Gilbert. Great just what I need. "Mr. Gilbert, I'm sorry I thought you were someone else."

The blonde man flashed a brilliantly white smile. "No harm done. And please call me Jonathan, Mr. Gilbert was my father."

She forced a grin. "Um so, what can I do for you? I don't know where Elena is if you are looking for her."

He shoved his hands into the pockets of his jacket. "Actually I wanted to speak with you if that is alright? I...heard about what happened to your grandmother and I wish to offer my condolences."
Shelia Bennett was a pillar of this community and we are all feeling her loss."

*Blink blink.* "Thank you…"

"I didn't speak with her much but I do know a bit about the history of the Bennett women. Very powerful witches if you are to believe the history." A brow rose. "It all started with Emily Bennett if I am not mistaken."

*Um…* "I guess. Grams never really talked much about our ancestors or whatever."

He tilted his head to the side. "Oh? I would think she'd want her granddaughter to know where she came from."

"I know where I came from." She said defensively. "We do have a family tree and all that."

"Of course." Jonathan replied. "Well whenever you wish to know more about the witch aspect of your family line, just ask. I plan to stick around town for a while."

*Yeah like that will be happening any time soon.* "Okay. Bye." Quickly she darted behind the wheel of her vehicle, started the engine and drove off.

Jonathan smirked as he watched her drive away, turning and unable to hide his surprise at the person suddenly standing in front of him. "Damon. I…didn't hear you come up."

"What are you doing?" The vampire asked.

"I'm not sure I follow." The blonde looked confused.

"You were talking to Bonnie Bennett." A pause. "Why were you talking to Bonnie Bennett?"

He shrugged. "The Bennett family has been in Mystic Falls nearly as long as the Gilberts. I was simply inquiring as to if Bonnie knew about her heritage."

Damon smirked, not buying his excuse at all. "Stay away from her."

Jonathan was amused. "And why would I do that?"

"Um well, if you don't I'll find a way to get that ring off your finger and then I'll rip your head off."

"All this for a young girl you hardly know?"

"She's Elena's best friend."

"Ah so you're doing this for Elena's benefit? Come now Damon, you don't have to lie to me."

"What are you talking about?" Damon feigned boredom.

Mr. Gilbert chuckled deviously. "I thought you wanted Katherine but it appears that ship has sailed. Did it happen because she lied about being in the tomb or because she never gave a damn about you? Either way I've noticed how you look at Elena and I can't help but wonder if you see her or her doppelganger…" A beat. "And now here you are playing white knight to the little witch. You don't know what you want, do you?"

Growling, the older Salvatore balled his hands into fists. "I know I wanna tear out your eyes and shove them down your throat."
"Hm. If you do that then the Council finds out your dirty little secret." Jonathan mused. "So what I do or don't do with little Miss. Bennett is really none of your concern, now is it? All you should focus on is getting me *that* device before I lose my temper."

*God I want to kill him. Please someone make it possible so that I can kill him. Santa I believe in you! Help me kill him!* "She's a minor you know. That carries a jail sentence for humans."

The blonde laughed. "You aren't exactly *young* yourself. And the fact that you're so adamant about protecting her makes me even more curious about the role she plays in all of this."

"I could care less about her." He rolled his eyes, trying to sound convincing. "Do whatever you want."

"Oh I will." Smiling, he strolled off. "Good day, Damon."

The vampire narrowed his brows at him, feeling the sides of his eyes crinkle with anger. He exhaled deeply to calm himself and thought about the gold pocket watch-like object in his possession. It would be a cold day in hell before he let it end up in the hands of that douche bag. And if he did try to do something to Bonnie, he'd slice that ring off his finger himself and make Jonathan Gilbert eat it…right before he killed him.

What? Even death row inmates got a last meal.

~*~

Sitting at Elena's vanity, Bonnie tried on several of her necklaces and rings idly. She stared at her reflection and then at the pictures pasted next to the glass, remembering the moments that they had captured. *Seems like a lifetime ago.*

"Sorry about that." Elena sighed as she walked back into the room. "Uncle Jon has been so annoying since he got here. I don't like that he keeps trying to get Jeremy on his side."

"It's okay." She wiggled the ring on her finger. "He said he knows a lot about my family. Should I be worried?"

The brunette thought on her answer. "I don't think so. He seems pretty harmless to me, just irritating as hell."

Her best friend chuckled. "That's good to know though. So your birth mom is back?"

"Yeah." Elena swallowed hard. "God it—it was one of the single most horrible experiences of my life. I mean I wondered about her but I never thought she would be so—so callous. If you had seen her…*heard* the things she was saying…"

"I wish I could have been there with you." Bonnie frowned. "Even if just for moral support."

"Thanks." A beat. "It's like—it's like everything that made her human has been scooped out and now she's nothing but this hollow, evil shell. And all she cares about is this stupid invention, the *same* invention Uncle Jon wants. She's willing to kill people to get it."

The witch shook her head. "We won't let that happen."

Inhaling she scratched at her cheek. "I hope not. Gah, subject change."

*Fair enough.* "Okay. So Stefan looked nice today. Seems like he's back to his old self…"
A nod. "Yeah I think he is. It's such a relief to not have to worry about him anymore." Wetting her lips, she perched on the edge of her bed. "Bonnie I wanted to talk to you about Damon."

_Eh. "What about him?"

"I've been thinking about what you said…about my relationship with him and you're right…" She fiddled with her sleeve. "We have grown closer. In a way I think we've become friends. I don't know when it happened but it did."

The witch plucked down a photo of herself, Elena and Caroline from cheerleading practice. "Why are you telling me this?"

She watched her. "Because that's _all_ it is, especially on my end. I love Stefan and I would never do anything to hurt him. I'm _not_ Katherine. And—and I know that you have feelings for Damon. Screwed up, confused feelings but feelings just the same. I—I don't want you thinking that I'm some kinda competition for him."

Bonnie exhaled and turned to face her. "But you are. Maybe not on purpose and maybe you don't want to be, but you _are_. Because of how you look. If that is what it comes down to for him, I'll never be able to compete."

Elena dropped her head. "Damon cares about you Bonnie. I know he does."

_Not disputing that. _"I honestly think he does…but is it enough? In the beginning the last thing I wanted was him even acknowledging that I existed because he scared the shit out of me. But it's different now even though he still hides behind the spell whenever he's forced to _say_ he cares about me. I'm tired, Elena…"

"Of what?" Her friend questioned.

"Being second." She whispered. "I know you can't help how you look or who you look like, but _he_ can. He can choose to not feel anything for you but I don't think he will. Perhaps you're just that amazing or maybe he'll do whatever to screw over Stefan, it still leaves me awkwardly in the middle and I'm tired of being there. I'm tired of him acting like I'm always going to be around to kiss or talk to when he can't spend time annoying you."

The brunette gazed at her thoughtfully. "What are you going to do?"

"Move on."

"Can you do that? I—I mean I thought you were _bound_ to him…"

"Yeah but I've been thinking. Maybe I should focus less on that and more on my ability to _choose_. If I find the right guy, who's to say everything this spell puts on me won't just go away? Things have been going so well that I haven't even been _trying_ to fight it anymore. In the end however Damon is still _Damon_, and he can still turn everything off when he wants to."

"Well either way you don't have to worry about _me_ and Damon."

"I get that. You know how Stefan is willing to do anything for you? That's what I want. I want someone who is willing to walk through fire for me…and I'm not convinced Damon is that person."

Elena shrugged. "You could always start one and find out." She smiled to let her know she was teasing.
The witch giggled. "True but if he didn't I'd feel even worse." Clearing her throat, she put the picture back where she got it from. "Actually I was thinking of maybe—sorta—asking Tyler out."

"Tyler?" Her big brown eyes stretched twice their normal size. "Tyler Lockwood? In what alternate universe would you wanna go out with him?"

Bonnie snickered lowly. "I know he's not a prince but he's never killed anyone. That I know of." Smirking, she continued. "We had a nice little talk earlier today. I think he's been given a bad rap to be honest. It can't be easy having the Mayor as your father, especially considering the way his dad acts. Am I saying that I want to follow him off to college or whatever? No. But…maybe we have something in common."

Her best friend appeared doubtful. "Like what?"

"Something inside of us we can't always control." She said straightforwardly.

Elena arched a brow in uncertainty, then gave her shoulders a hunch. "I…guess he could be a good guy when you get far, far down to it. I tend to just see the image of him kissing Matt's mom though over and over again in my head."

*Yeah that's not one for the plus column.* "He was drunk. I don't know. He's normal and at least I wouldn't have to compete with an image for his attention."

Pouting, the brunette stood and crossed the few feet to wrap her arms around her friend's neck. "I love you, Bonnie Bennett. You know that right?"

She patted her wrist. "I know. I love you too, Elena."

Kissing her temple, Elena sighed. "Well whatever happens I've got your back. Whether it be with Tyler, Damon or witchy stuff."

*That is the most comforting part of all of this.* "Totally vicing the versa with that one." Pause. "Eh I should be getting home though. I gotta make dinner for my dad."

"Okay. I'll see you tomorrow then."

"We have float duty you know…"

"Oh yeah. So looking forward to that."

"Wait until you hear Caroline's idea…"

~*~

Damon Salvatore lingered in Bonnie's bedroom, staring out of the window. He could hear her moving around downstairs putting leftovers away in the fridge as her father related that he was turning in for night. Her scent was all around him, sticking to his skin and his clothes like a thick spider's web. Part of him enjoyed it but the other wanted to shrug it off like a heavy blanket. That last thing he needed was his head being clouded right now. Too much shit was going down, about to get real very fast for him to be zoning or thinking about sex.

He'd shut it all off if emotions weren't helping to make him stronger at the moment. Anger fueled his deeds, whether they were threatening Isobel not to go after the people he cared about or daydreaming about gutting Jonathan Gilbert. It was all the rest he could do without like those he'd mentioned to Alaric.
And yet here he was, checking on the little witch because—well because he wanted to. Because that damn spell makes me want to.

Even now Damon wondered just how potent Emily's mojo still was. It was supposed to get stronger and yeah, that was happening, but he couldn't help but be curious as to if it had just opened some sort of floodgate that was bound to pop up anyway. Maybe drinking from Bonnie had been the first step. Maybe the spell was just an afterthought.

It's like now he didn't even care that he cared for her. In the beginning it'd been this rash he couldn't stop scratching and now...well it wasn't horrible. Spending time with her those few weeks hadn't been horrible. She wasn't horrible—for a human anyway. They could be having such a good time together if she stopped expecting him to be anything other than what he was.

A vampire.

Footsteps made their way upstairs and he glanced to the doorway as Bonnie strolled inside, visibly jarring at the sight of him. "Damon. What are you doing here?"

Checking up on you. Deal with it. "I saw you talking to Jonathan Gilbert earlier. Guy's a real dick, isn't he?"

She lifted a brow. "I've met worse."

He smirked at her teasing barb. "If you're referring to me, everything I want from you has always been out on the table."

"I suppose you're right." She kicked off her shoes and hopped onto her bed. "I didn't see you earlier. Were you following me?"

"Maybe." Was all he committed to. "Either way I think it would be best if you stayed away from Jon. I don't trust him."

She snorted. "You don't trust anyone."

Damon tilted his head to the side. "I trust you. Marginally."

Her expression was one of surprise. "You have a funny way of showing it."

Sighing, he folded his arms over his chest. "What do you want? Planes to sky write it across the clouds or something? Isn't it enough that I'm...here and not killing you?"

Another snort. "As time goes on Damon I find that I want less and less from you."

Suddenly he was beside her, his hand in her hair. "Liar. You think I infuriate you? Yeah? Well take a walk on my side of the street sometime, baby." His blue eyes fell to her lips. "We could be so extraordinary together if you let us."

She shivered at the tone of his voice. "And where does Katherine fit into all of this?"

"Forget that little bitch." He grunted. "I don't need her."

Bonnie gazed at him. "What do you need then?"

He smiled. "Right now? You."

She wet her lips. "And tomorrow?"
Shifting onto his knees and pulling her up flush against him, he traced his fingers on her cheek. "Why don't we just focus on tonight for a change?" Before she could reply, he sealed his mouth to hers, his tongue sliding past her lips.

She shivered and he felt it, smirking inwardly. The kiss started out slow and chaste before quickly escalating to the point of erotic madness. He nibbled and sucked on her bottom lip, coaxing her tongue into his mouth so that he could flick his own against it. His right hand slid down her side and underneath her shirt, up to her pale pink bra. He pushed the soft cup out of the way and gave her breast a gentle squeeze, delighting in the tiny moan that managed to escape.

Her soft skin grew warm and he could hear the blood pumping loudly beneath her flesh. The racing *thump thump* of her heart made his senses swoon, and he had to steel himself against nicking her with one of his fangs. It didn't help that her slender fingers were in his hair, tugging hard before slipping lower to brush the twitching muscles of his bare stomach. They trailed along his protruding hipbones and in seconds he had her flat on her back, both their shirts gone and her bra soon to follow. It was already unhooked in the back, hanging on by sheer willpower alone.

His thoughts were a jumble as she arched to him, her face a mask of bliss and faltering resistance. He loved the way she tasted and the way she reacted to him…like she was his and no one else's. Like he was the only one who could drive her to the edge and back. Even if he didn't want to admit it or *couldn't* admit it to himself, his feelings for Bonnie were growing deeper than *some spell*. Of course he could only fess up to something like that in his mind.

Damon's lips were chilly as they cascaded down to her neck and over her jumping pulse. He burned with the urge to sink his fangs in around it but reframed, placing butterfly kisses over her bra and between her breasts. He caught the fabric between his teeth and inched it down, wiggling his brows when she looked at him. Tossing the article of clothing to the floor, he laid on her fully, goosebumps breaking out on his arms.

"You're so warm…" He whispered nuzzling her.

Bonnie's nails raked across his back. "Sometimes."

He lifted his head to look at her. "Are you gonna ruin this with…a talk?"

She searched his face. "A part of me wants to, but the other part doesn't. The other part loves it when you touch me and kiss me."

"Go with her. I like her." He grinned. He fixed his eyes on the nail file on her pillow and reached for it, flicking the tip. "Don't suppose you'd let me bite you, would you?"

"Nope." She smirked.

He pouted. "Figures. Okay…this might sting a little."

"Ah!" She yelped and frowned, craning her neck to see the deep, bleeding scratch he'd made to her shoulder. "Asshole."

"I love it when you sweet talk me, Bonnie." He murmured, dragging his tongue across the wound, giving a low *mmm*. "Besides, what's a little pleasure without pain?"

The witch shuddered. "The—the two are—aren't mutually exclusive."

"They should be." Licking his lips, he hummed in appreciation. "I could *eat* you up."
The double meaning was not lost on her. "I'll bet."

He blinked, scowled and rolled to the side, propping his head up with his hand. "Usually I like my girls to be docile and compliant, but what gives? You're much more fun when you're giving me shit."

She grabbed her pillow and put it over her breasts. "You said you didn't want a talk."

"Ugh. Really? Fine. Speak if you must."

"It's nothing I just—well you've made it clear we aren't dating or whatever so I think I'm gonna find someone to date." Pause. "Like a real boyfriend."

Damon's scowl grew deeper. "Why?"

Bonnie gave him a blank look. "Because I want someone who cares about me and only wants to be with me. And not cause my blood is awesome or because I let them get to second."

"And the spell? It has us both on a short leash."

"And yet you have no problem giving Elena goo goo eyes or lusting after Katherine."

"For the record I don't give anyone goo goo anything. And I'm totally over Katherine."

"Be that as it may, you're not my boyfriend and I want a real relationship."

"Do you know how overrated those things are? How much drama it causes? Look at Elena and Stefan."

"Most of their issues were your fault."

"Heh well someone else could come and fuck up what you want to. That's how it works."

"I don't care. I want someone who wants me."

"…I want you."

"You want it all, Damon."

"Since when is that a crime?"

"It's not. It's who you are and that's fine…but it's not who I am."

The vampire rolled his faded blue eyes. "Please tell me you're not gonna start some Lolita-like affair with Jonathan Gilbert."

Bonnie made a face. "Ew, God no. Gross. I don't know who it's gonna be, I just know I want something real."

Clicking his tongue against the roof of his mouth, he sat up. "And what makes you think I'll let you have that?"

She blinked. "What? What are you talking about?"

The side of his mouth twitched. When at first you don't succeed, threaten. "This boyfriend you want? What makes you think I'll let him live if he touches you?"

Groaning, she rolled off the bed and yanked her robe off the back of her door. "I'm not your
"Emily's spell locked us together by blood." He said exasperatingly. "Like it or not princess but you're mine." He put his shirt on, grabbed her chin and pecked her lips before she could stop him. "And I don't share."

Seconds later Bonnie found herself alone in the room, the drapes by her open window blowing in the slight breeze.

Damon was already at his car, grasping the handle so hard that he almost crushed the metal. It would be so easy to just open up to her and be honest about his feelings. Say that yeah he felt something for Elena but he also felt something for her and at the end of the night, it was her that invaded his dreams. Not Elena. It would be so easy...if he was anyone else but who he was.

A vampire.

A vampire named Damon Salvatore.

~*~

The next day found Bonnie sitting in a vacant chemistry class, surrounded by empty beakers. Damon's words from the previous night ran through her mind, and she was trying to decide if he were being honest or just Damon. Sometimes it was hard to tell the difference, especially when he got into one of his spoiled brat sort of moods. She didn't know whether he was forbidding her from having someone else because he wanted to be the only one or if he was just that selfish. Wanting her to be alone while he had the world.

It's probably both.

The wooden door to the classroom opened and she smiled as Elena made her way inside. "Hey, thanks for meeting me. I wanted you to see this."

Elena crossed the room to her, noticing the tattered book. "Is that Emily's spell book?"

She nodded. "I've been going through it since Grams died." They shared a look and she waved her hand. "Check this out."

Turning her hair back, the brunette leaned to glance at the pages, tracing the drawings. "That's the vampire compass."

"Yeah. Jonathan Gilbert never actually succeeded in inventing anything." She explained slowly. "Emily secretly spelled them all with magic. The compass. Rings. The mystery device you told me about."

Elena pointed to it. "That's it...well part of it. Damon only has the one piece."

"Emily pledged her loyalty to Katherine, but she couldn't stand by and watch innocent people get killed. This was the only way she could think of to help." She sighed. "To let Jonathan Gilbert believe he'd actually invented these devices."

The other teen bit her bottom lip. "Does it say what it does?"

Bonnie turned the page, scanning briefly. "A—are you sure this is what Isobel wants?"

"Yeah I'm sure. Why?"
"This is a weapon. Against *vampires*."

For a moment they were both speechless, and then Elena was shaking her head. "I don't understand. Why would Isobel want to destroy her own kind or herself for that matter?" She frowned and turned another page. "I should go get Stefan. He'd wanna—Bonnie."

"Yeah?" The witch inquired. "What's wrong?"

"Th—this is the spell to release you from Damon and the blood bond." Her best friend pointed out. She looked shocked.

"I know." Bonnie replied softly. "You should go find Stefan. This is much more serious…"

"We'll talk about this later." She headed for the door. "I promise."

*That's what worries me.*

~ *~

The sun had just set by the time Bonnie, Elena and Stefan made it to the Salvatore manor. After Isobel's threats and her minion causing Matt to most likely break his arm or dislocate his shoulder, it had taken a while for everyone to get their wits about them. Not to mention Jeremy was missing and would be dead unless Damon handed over the device; all per Isobel's orders.

Bonnie sat on the side table, holding the grimoire in her lap. She listened to Damon rant about liking being a living dead person and finding Jeremy his own way. Of course Stefan was the one who tried to talk some reason into his brother, reminding him that Isobel was fast and Jeremy was breakable.

Taking this all into account, he turned his piercing eyes to Bonnie. "Are you even *up* for this? No offence but you're no Emily Bennett. Emily knew what she was doing."

"I've been practicing." She noted the attitude in his voice. *Someone's still smarting over last night.* "However if you want me to be honest? I don't know. There is a chance that it might not work."

"I don't deal in *chance* when my neck is on the line." He snapped. "It's not piano lessons, honey. This is serious."

Angry, she stepped forward. "What's your favorite book?"

Folding his arms over his chest, he appeared to look bored and intrigued at the same time. "What?"


*Smug little…* Releasing a deep breath, she focused her energy on the title until the book wiggled itself free and soared across the room.

Damon caught it easily before it hit him upside the head. *Call of the Wild. Jack London.* While Stefan and Elena looked impressed, he simply tossed it aside. *Great parlor trick.*

Elena rolled her eyes. "We're doing this Damon, and we're doing it my way. Now give me the device. We're running out of time."

His face was blank but obviously there were things going on inside his head. "She just said she's not
sure it'll work. Are you really willing to take that chance?"

"What other chance do we have?" The brunette questioned. "Isobel wants the invention and she's gonna kill Jeremy if she doesn't get it. At least this way what she gets won't work."

"And if it does? If the witch messes something up?"

"Then we'll cross that bridge when we come to it. With Bonnie's help, right?"

"Of course." She whispered.

Weighing his option, Damon dug into his pocket and handed over the watch-like device, his fingers lingering on Elena's as they did. Bonnie noticed and by the look on Stefan's face, so did he. She found herself wondering what he was thinking at that moment but she had a pretty good idea if she had to guess. *This just strengthens my earlier thoughts. I deserve someone who will be loyal to me and me only.*

Moving over to a cleared space on the table in front of the fireplace, Bonnie cleared her throat and opened the grimoire. She read the brief passage and then concentrated, closing her eyes, calling on the power inside of her. Her fingers began to tingle as the small golden object floated into the air; Damon's annoying humming distracting her only a small amount.

She searched for the magical link to the gadget, her body trembling as the lights switched themselves on and off. And odd wailing whoosh flowed through the room, and all of the candles as well as the fire in the hearth exploded into bright yellow light. Her hands caressed the air around the mechanism, pulling out some unseen force that made her give a shaky breath.

Suddenly she gasped and the device dropped into her hands, the lights returning to normal. "I'm done." She wet her lips. "Elena I—I can't be sure that it worked. I'm sorry I just can't."

"Great. Now what?" Damon grumbled.

Elena stroked her best friend's shoulder reassuringly. "It's okay Bonnie. Now…we give it to Isobel."

~*~

"History will not be repeating itself…where Elena is concerned. You understand what I am saying? Do you…understand?"

Sitting his glass of Bourbon on the desk in his room, Damon sighed and flopped back onto the bed. Sometimes Stefan tickled the hell out of him, playing the jealous boyfriend type and all. As if he would be able to stop Elena from wanting him if that was the case.

*It might become the case…but I'm getting ahead of myself.*

Bonnie wanted a real boyfriend and that made him really pissed off. Would he honestly kill whomever she ended up dating? He wasn't sure…he hadn't hammered out the details yet. In any case he wouldn't be happy and when Damon wasn't happy, people had a way of turning up dead. Or at least seriously injured. He could always kill Jonathan Gilbert again just for the fun of it. Sure it wouldn't stick but snapping his neck for kicks would probably make him feel better.

*In other news…do I love Elena? Am I even capable of loving anyone?* He wasn't sure and there was a part of him that didn't have the slightest desire to find out. After carrying a torch for Katherine for so long only to have it snuffed out by the truth of her actions, he didn't want to feel anything remotely like love. But that's the thing about emotions, even though he could turn them off at will,
sometimes they sneaked back in no matter what. It only took a single second to make someone crack.

So it stood to reason that instead of fearing love, he should fear whatever could cause those cracks. Not that Damon truly feared anything of course but if he did…

Staring at the ceiling, he felt fatigue pulling at him, trying to drag him down into the thick fog of sleep. He was willing to follow it as long as it meant good dreams, however his thoughts were buzzing where that damned device was concerned. If Bonnie hadn't succeeded in taking away its power, they were all royally screwed. *She looks sexy trying though...*

Good news, bad news situation.

Good news, he was always up for a challenge win or lose.

Bad news, he actually *had* something to lose this time.

~Fin~
Disoriented States

Chapter Summary

There are some things that just can't be explained. Human emotion is one of them.

Chapter Notes

This tags episodes 1.22: Founder's Day.

Disoriented States

It was hard to break certain habits like biting your nails or eating sweets that were filled with calories. However Bonnie Bennett always prided herself on having a certain amount of self control when it came to such things. After making the revelation that the best thing she could do for herself was stay away from Damon Salvatore, she began to put her plan into motion. It wasn't easy though because as usual Damon had plans of his own, and she was factored into most of them. But after a few days of avoiding him or throwing herself into planning for Founder's Day, she felt as if her head was clearer and that she would be able to break away once and for all.

Well that was not entirely true. Breaking away for good meant that she would break the blood bond, and although she had the spell she had not performed it. Yet. She was trying to figure out all of the pros and cons of the situation...all while telling herself that no matter what she felt deep down for Damon, he'd never be able to give her what she wanted. Stefan was probably right—his brother was incapable of genuine human emotion.

That would be so easy to believe if she did not have other images in her mind. Damon coming to her rescue, saving her life and actually managing to make her feel better after her Grams died. If only he could get the hell over himself and—and grow up! He was the oldest man child she knew, clinging tooth and nail to vengeance and some ideal woman that wanted nothing to do with him. Perhaps if anyone else had turned him and Katherine didn't exist, they could be something more than what they were.

Whatever that was.

Anyway the more she thought about it, the more she figured she could date Tyler. She didn't wanna marry the guy and yes he had issues of his own—such as making out with his best friend's mother...who does that—but he was nice as far as she could remember. Or at least nice to her. And they could have pleasant talks about things that had nothing to do with how screwed up their lives might be. And he was cute...he had a warm smile. Sure they weren't the smoldering good looks of Damon, but she wasn't going to be superficial. Tyler wasn't caught up in any type of boyfriend/ex girlfriend drama and for her that was a big pro.

Damon was still angry at her because she wanted a life outside of him. He wasn't willing to commit but he also didn't want her to have anyone else—classic spoiled brat syndrome. Except he could probably kill Tyler which would put a huge damper on everything. She'd only seen him a few times...
since their argument about a week ago and those had been in passing. But she got the feeling he’d come into her room when she was asleep. She’d find the window open when she was certain she’d closed it, or the things on her dresser slightly rearranged. If they were still on speaking terms she’d tease him about his Edward Cullen stalking behavior.

In a weird way though she missed him. She missed the way he touched her and even how he annoyed her. He was under her skin and digging him out was not going to be quick and painless. Her biggest fear was that she’d break their link and yet continue to feel everything while he was suddenly free and clear. Then she’d be the one pining for someone who could care less about her.

Sighing deeply, she pulled her knees up to her chest and rested her chin to them, glancing around with big green eyes. Her surroundings were familiar if hazy; the woods of Mystic Falls where she’d walked or parties had been held time and time again enveloped her with their crooked branches and thick trunks. A few yards up ahead were the falls and the bridge which led to the small picnic area most people enjoyed during the day.

It was night in her mind. Yes she was quite aware that she was dreaming. After doing it so often with Damon it wasn’t hard to pick up on the signs. She was alone here however…just listening to the sounds of crickets and feeling the cold touch of the full moon on her skin if that were at all possible. A part of her wondered if perhaps Emily was about to show up and try to murder her again, have scary dead hands pull her underneath the frigid ground. Another questioned whether Katherine was going to jump out and attempt to strangle her all while looking like her best friend.

Was it true? If you died in your dream would you die in real life?

She did not want to find out.

Itching the back of her neck, she frowned when she noticed the thick fog floating around her body. She’d been so deep in thought that it’d crept up on her and was now threatening to swallow her whole. Fear should have been choking her but she wasn’t scared at all. She knew nothing in the mist could hurt her and the person who controlled it would never hurt her. Also…Damon Salvatore was fond of making an entrance.

"What are you doing here?" She asked aloud, not sure what direction he would come from.

"Watching you." His voice was all around her.

She nodded. "Seems you’ve been doing that a lot lately. Still pissed at me?"

"Well you know how I can carry a grudge." He teased. "Actually I just wanted to make sure Jonathan Gilbert left you alone."

"He hasn’t talked to me since that day in the parking lot." Standing, she brushed off the back of her jeans. "Where are you?"

Suddenly he was in front of her as if she’d wished him into being. "Found that boyfriend yet?"

Smiling, she simply shrugged. "Yeah like I would tell you so that you can go kill him."

He tilted his head to the side. "Why are you pretending as if you don’t want me? Does it make you feel better? More in control of the situation?" He shook his head. "Neither of us is in control here; Emily saw to that. Maybe if you’d stop being such a chick about everything you’d actually start to have fun."

Does he know how to talk someone into something or what? "Excuse me for wanting a real
relationship. I'm sick and trying of seeing everyone around me start to pair up. Even Caroline has a boyfriend. And she hasn't been a one woman man kinda girl since first grade."

"You don't need a boyfriend, you have me. Trust me I'm better than any guy you could ever find in your school or otherwise." He pointed out. "And I don't just mean with sex."

Bonnie scowled. "I don't need Superman, I'll be happy when I find Clark Kent as long as he treats me with respect and doesn't cheat on me."

The handsome vampire snorted. "Good. Clark Kent will be easier to eat."

It will always be the same with Damon no matter what I do. He'll continue to lay some kind of odd claim to me until he feels nothing for me anymore. If I want any chance at a real life and a real relationship, I have to break the spell. I'll worry about the consequences to my health later. "Leave me alone."

He lifted a finger at her. "You can't pop me out of your head, princess. It's a two-way street remember. You let me in once and now I can just come inside any time I want."

For now. "Even if you're not welcomed?"

His icy blue eyes gazed at her intensely. "Yes. But I think deep down you like it when I show up. You can't tell me that you haven't missed me the past couple of days."

She averted her gaze. Of course she missed him. She was pretty much programmed to miss him but that didn't change anything. "Why do we keep doing this? You don't want me and I—I need more than you can give me so just step back. Let me have the life I want and we'll both come out of this happier people."

Running his fingers through her hair, he yanked her closer. Even though it was a dream she could still feel the hard press of his chest brush her nipples. "But I do want you, Bonnie. Maybe more when you play hard to get. You don't need some stupid guy to go to the movies with or raar raar sis boom bah at pep rallies with. You need me because I understand. Two powerful beings like us should be together...forever."

The world tilted and her head went with it, causing everything to spin for a moment. She grabbed his waist for support and wondered if perhaps she were going insane. However she had to remember that this was his mode of operation. He would say anything to get his way. "I don't want to be a vampire."

"I'm sure Emily's grimoire has a spell of eternal youth or something." He replied nonchalantly.

"You're just saying this because you hate to lose."

"And your point?"

"God!" Shoving him away, she bit her lip so hard she almost broke the skin. "I'm sick of you and your bullshit. I'm not a toy or your personal property and I will do and see whoever I want! I might just sleep with someone too!"

Turning on her heel, she stomped off through the trees angrily, pinching her upper arm to try to wake herself up. Usually she'd jerk upright in bed right about now but something was keeping her under. Or someone. It was possible that the longer she allowed herself to be linked with Damon, the more control they would have over each other's minds. That was a truly terrifying thought.
All the vampires in Mystic Falls and I get stuck with the supreme douche bag.

"Hey hey hey...let's not get touchy." He grabbed her wrist. "C'mon, stay. Hear me out."

"Let me go." She tried to pull away. "I'm waking up from this nightmare once and for all."

Damon smirked at her. "How about we don't but say we did?"

Bonnie fixed him with a defiant stare. "I swear to God if you don't—"

*Her words were cut off when a low growl echoed densely through the area. She looked to Damon to see if it had come from him—if his eyes were black and his fangs bared—but he'd simply arched a brow in much the same fashion as herself. So far the only people to interrupt their private times had been Emily and her version of Katherine. It didn't make sense for odd sounds to be drifting around in her brain. Then again anything could happen in a dream.*

She was just about to attempt to dislodge her appendage once again when the fog broke apart at the seams, exploding from a particular spot in the darkness as if someone had turned on a fan. Two shining amber eyes cut through the nothingness and very slowly, a large black wolf ambled into view. It looked so real, its fur bristling and its teeth sharp.

*Surprised, the pretty witch took a step back. "Damon this isn't funny."

"Why do you assume this is my doing?" He questioned. "Why would I bring an oversized dog into our happy little domesticated world? I hate animals, especially when I am forced to eat one."

She backed up again, bumping into his chest. "You're not doing this?"

*Unconcerned with the new arrival, he nuzzled her neck. "Nope."*

Wetting her lips, she felt a strange surge of energy coming from the creature, much like she felt with the vampire behind her but different. His energy was downright freezing most times, like icicles on her tongue. This was warm and almost comforting...like cuddling under a blanket on a chilly day. And the peculiar part? Kinda familiar.

*Damon continued to occupy himself with the soft skin of her throat, going so far as to bite down moderately to make her shudder. The wolf growled loudly and bared its pointed fangs; one giant paw slapping down hard, threatening to bring it closer to the pair. The vampire noticed and laughed, winding his arm around Bonnie's waist. "I think he's jealous. Sorry Spot but she's mine. Go find another leg to hump."*

*Before either of them could react, the animal lunged and Bonnie shrieked so shrilly that she woke herself up. Her legs were tangled in the covers and she was shocked when her father didn't burst into the room to make sure she wasn't being murdered. She sat up and ran both fingers through her silky hair, willing her heart to stop racing. Stupidly she'd figured that once all of the so-called bad vampires were out of town that life would be better or at least go back to normal. Damon bothering her was actually kinda normal. Hell maybe in a few more weeks' time she'd get used to the idea of Elena being Katherine's twin. And now here was another curve ball.*

Sure it could just be some random addition to already screwed up dreams but what if it wasn't? What if something was trying to tell her something or warn her? Spectral dogs were considered to be bad omens...
"I really miss getting a good-nights' sleep." She said to no one as she flopped back to the pillows.

~*~

Standing in the town square and listening to all of the chaos going on around her, Bonnie chuckled as Caroline picked more lent off of Matt's costume. For some reason she was nervous and fidgety which was not that much out of character for the blonde. However she wanted everything to be perfect because she was Miss Mystic Falls and she knew many, many eyes would be on her. Bonnie found the whole thing rather adorable to be honest. She liked seeing her friend happy and Matt had brought a certain type of happiness into Caroline's life that she had not had before. Feelings of acceptance and being worthy of someone's love with no strings attached.

"You two look so cute together." She grinned and adjusted the focus on her small gray camera.

"We'd look even cuter if Matt would hide his cast." Caroline gave it a gentle pat. "Hide your cast it's not era appropriate."

He snorted. "Seriously?" Without waiting for an answer, he shifted around and pulled her into his arms, making sure to hide the aforementioned item. "Okay fine fine."

Smirking, Bonnie snapped the picture. "There."

The blonde smiled. "Okay I want one with Bonnie now."

"Oh here I'll take it." Came a voice from behind.

The witch glanced back and flashed Tyler a grin. He looked so cute in his soldier garb. "Hey. Thanks that would be awesome." She handed him the camera.

Matt however did not look in a picture taking mood anymore. He made his quick excuses about being on the float and walked away without a word to his former best friend. Tyler sighed, shaking his head. "I said I was sorry."

"You made out with his mother and then beat him to a pulp." She sent him a look. "You're going to have to do a little bit better than sorry." With a flip of her golden hair she strolled after her boyfriend.

Poor Tyler. Yes what he did was wrong but who hasn't made a mistake once or twice? "Hey, sorry about that."

He shrugged. "It's okay. I deserve it and I deserve Matt being mad at me. It just—you know… He's my best friend…or at least he was. It's weird not being able to talk to him."

I know exactly how you feel. "Well I'm not a guy but if you need someone to talk to, I'm always here. If you want I mean."

His brown eyes softened and he squeezed her hand. "That sounds nice. You know Bonnie, you're alright. I kinda thought you'd shun me too because you're friends with Caroline and…"

She nodded slowly. "Honestly that never occurred to me. What happened between you guys is horrible but it's between you and Matt, and I think it would be wrong for me to not talk to you when I'm not actively involved in the situation. Besides, I like talking to you." Oh crap!

He looked a little shocked at her admission but recovered nicely. "I like talking to you too."

Willing her cheeks not to blush, she cleared her throat and pointed to her camera. "Can I get a picture
of you?"

"Oh sure." Pulling her closer and tucking her against his side, he held the device out and snapped, hoping he got them both in the frame. "Hope I look okay."

*This feels…snuggly. I'm sure you do. I'll get you a copy if you want."

"Cool." He related.

"Tyler! It's time to get on the float!" His mother yelled, waving at him with her clipboard.

He sighed but thumbed in that direction. "Duty calls." Giving a salute, he headed off.

Bonnie waved and watched him go, then checked the picture. They looked good together if she did say so herself. However she didn't want to jump to any conclusions. Things were still too heavy all the way around for her to be getting too deeply into anything. First she needed to make sure the town was indeed safe and then she had to handle Damon. Afterwards perhaps she would ask Tyler out on an official date.

Tucking her bouncing waves behind her ear, she hurried through the already gathered crowd and tried to find a good space so that she could see everything going on. The Mayor's wife collected everyone's attention for a moment to introduce the Mystic Falls High School marching band as they strode down the street, red and black flags flashing as horn and drum sounds filled the air. The throng of people cheered and waved, especially as the floats grew closer.

"And for a bit of local history, Mr. Saltzman's students have recreated the *Battle of Willow Creek.*"

She informed into the booming microphone.

*Gotta give them credit for being authentic,* she thought as the float rolled along and Tyler spotted her, giving a friendly wave. She giggled and returned it.

Next was the court of *Miss Mystic Falls* with Caroline, Matt, Elena and Stefan looking gorgeous in their vintage wear. Elena's hair looked wonderfully bouncy and Bonnie couldn't help but wonder if Katherine's had been the same back in the day. *Bet her appearance really shook Stefan earlier.* Pushing her thoughts out of her mind, she waved and grinned at her friends, frowning when suddenly they were blocked by a tall figure in black.

It didn't take a rocket scientist to know who it was. *Damon.*

As if he heard her, he turned with arms folded over his chest and just stared. She lifted both brows, annoyed by his intrusion. "What do you want?"

"To watch the parade." He said, his eyes squinting against the sun.

Having neither the energy nor patience for him, she decided to duck into the group and lose him.

"Where are you going?"

"Away from you." She replied simply.

"I wanna say something to you." He crossed the small area to stand before her.

"Just leave me alone." She sighed. "I am not in the—"

He interrupted her. "Thank you." Pause. "The device that Emily spelled could have killed me. I don't take what you did lightly so…thank you."
Big green eyes blinked at him curiously. "Wow, you almost sound sincere."

He gazed at her calmly with an expression she'd never seen before. "I am being sincere. I realize that... I'm not an easy person to know. I annoy you—and everyone else. It's my thing. But you've saved my life and you're right, I should stop being a bastard... to at least you."

"What changed since last night?" Her voice was soft.

"I don't know. Don't get me wrong, I sort of like it when you are giving me grief." He smirked. "Keeps things interesting. But for all that you've done, being a dick just seems a bit tacky. So I thought I would let you know that even after this moment if I go back to being a pain in the ass, it doesn't mean I'm not thankful for what you've done."

*I think I am going to pass out.* "You're welcome."

He nodded. "I suppose I owe you too so... ya know..." Winking, he adjusted the ring on his finger. "Enjoy the parade."

He left her standing there swimming in confusion with more questions than answers. Just when she was sure of what she wanted and what she needed to do, he revealed another face to her. She couldn't remember the brief times he'd been a normal person with her or managed to utter something that wasn't laced with innuendo. She had *no* reason what so ever to believe him but... she did. There was just something about the look in his eyes that told her he was telling the truth. That he was truly thankful for what she'd done.

The number one question however was did it *change* anything for her? Five minutes before she would have said no and been completely certain of her answer. Now? Now she didn't know what was right or what was right for *her*.

~*~

By the time nightfall rolled around, the inhabitants of Mystic Falls were still partying and having a good time. The square was lit up with white lights and glowing lanterns, strung from tree to tree and bush to bush. People were eating, drinking and chatting with one another, waiting around for the amazing fireworks display to begin. Bonnie found herself walking around aimlessly, not really paying much attention to anyone. Her brain couldn't seem to focus on one thought for too long. She was either waxing poetic about Damon's *thank you* or remembering fond times with her Grams when it came to local functions about history. She missed her grandmother very much and was in desperate need of her guidance. She always had all of the answers in the past; things she had taken for granted at the time. Now here she was a young witch on her own with powers she did not understand half of the time. Yes she could do remarkable things but at what price? There were times that she felt drained after using her magic, especially on big spells. And the more she used the more spells she wanted to know. Every day she found something different in the grimoire as if it were adding things just for her.

If Emily was indeed burned at the stake for helping the vampires and yet was supposed to be immensely powerful, why didn't she just save herself? Or did she believe that she *deserved* to burn because she didn't recognize herself anymore? And how long before she became that way as well?

She was jostled out of her daydreaming when a body collided into her shoulder, and with it came that cold feeling of something un-natural. As she said her apologies to the stranger and listened to him do the same, she knew he wasn't human. That he was a vampire.

For reasons that she couldn't explain she began to follow him. She wasn't certain what she was going
to do when she caught him—set him on fire was probably the best bet—but she just had to make sure that he didn't hurt anyone.

Suddenly the young man fell to the ground in pain, grasping his head and writhing on the dry grass. One by one other people started to do the same thing, sinking to the knees in some unseen agony that only a select few could feel. She wet her lips and watched as one of the Sheriff's deputies discreetly walked over to the guy she had been following and stuck him with a needle before hauling him to his feet.

_Oh shit!_

Jerking this way and that, she didn't see Damon anywhere. Panic set in and she jogged past people, seeing Mr. Saltzman making a beeline for a young man hunched over with a girl kneeling beside him. _Elena._ She followed quickly, heading down into a small enclosure that lead into the back entrance of the _Grille._ "Elena!"

"Bonnie!" The brunette exclaimed. "What's happening?"

"The cops are grabbing everyone who has gone down and shooting them with vervain." Mr. Saltzman explained, still helping to hold a crippled Stefan up. "I'm gonna go see where they are taking them." And then he was gone.

Elena was astonished. "What!" Pause. "They are rounding up the vampires. But—but how?"

Stefan groaned and slowly sat down a moment later. "It stopped…"

His girlfriend rubbed his shoulder. _What stopped?_

"This piercing sound in my head…now it's just gone." He blinked slowly. "It had to be the device that Jonathan Gilbert wanted."

She shook her head. "But Bonnie unspelled it."

"Maybe it didn't take." He replied.

Bonnie swallowed hard. "I am so, so sorry Elena. I—it was the first time I'd tried a spell that big."

"It's okay, Bonnie." Elena responded, her voice free of malice. "You tried your best and that is all that matters."

"Hey." Alaric called out as he returned. "They are taking all of the vampires to your family's old building. I don't know why or what they plan to do but it's what I gathered anyway."

"Where's Damon?" Stefan questioned. When everyone shook their heads, he forced himself to stand. "I have to find him."

_I'll second that._ "I'll help you."

Elena rubbed her forehead. "Mr. Saltzman could you please find my brother and take him home? I don't want him here around any of this."

He agreed and they all dispersed.

Thankfully most of the stragglers were still trying to figure out what was going on and didn't attempt to stop them as they hurried towards the old Gilbert building. Cops were patrolling however, checking for anyone that they might have missed. Idly Bonnie wondered where Tyler was and if he
was okay—Caroline and Matt for that matter as well. At least her father was safe at home. The less people she had to worry about the better.

Rounding a corner, they spied Jonathan Gilbert and a slew of officers guarding the entrance. Elena wasted no time in stalking over and asking what he was doing and he was surprisingly honest in his intentions to kill all of the vampires. Damon especially included. Bonnie couldn't concentrate on their tense conversation because all she could think about was the possibly of Damon dying. Or Damon not being in her life or around to give her grief. She was stunned by how greatly his loss would affect her, and she knew that it had nothing to do with some stupid spell. It was just Damon himself and probably the same emotions he experienced whenever she was in danger.

Snapping back to attention, she caught Jonathan's eye as he told Stefan to go ahead and the look he gave her made her shiver, and not in a good way. She didn't ask any questions or permission, instead opting to follow the vampire around the side to the utility door.

"Stefan…” She trailed off, words escaping her.

"Don't worry, I'll get him." He disappeared inside.

Her chest heaved up and down, her power building up in her stomach like storm clouds on the horizon. She trembled with the intenseness of it all, the very tip of her fingers going numb like when your foot falls asleep.

Elena ran around the side next, barreling for the door. "Stefan!"

Smoke was already starting to seep its way out. "Elena!" She latched onto her wrist. "You can't go in there you'll be burned alive!"

"I have to help Stefan!" She cried, yanking to be free.

"Elena, you have to trust me." Bonnie exhaled deeply, closed her eyes and began to chant in Latin.

The brunette frowned and tried to get away again before realizing that the wind was blowing out of nowhere. She felt it sail past her as if it were being controlled, cold and frigid like in the first days of winter. It only lasted for a minute or two and then it was gone, and Bonnie was stumbling back looking exhausted.

Elena grabbed her shoulders to steady her. "Are you okay? What—did—are they coming out?"

Her green eyes shifted to the door just as Stefan tumbled over the threshold with Damon's arm slung over his shoulder. Relief flooded her system, mixing with the dying flicker of magic that never quite faded all the way. She knew if she tried she could have put the fire out entirely or stoked the flames until the whole building was consumed. A small part of her wanted to do that still.

Moving over to the curb, she sat down hard and smoothed a hand across her forehead. This is never going to get any easier. "Come to yell at me?"

The black boots in front of her shifted, and Damon joined her on the cold cement hump. "Too fucked up right now to do that. You okay?"

She nodded. "Tired. You?"

He mimicked her nod. "Oh yeah. Still feeling that pesky vervain in my system. Guess you've got a bit more to learn about being a witch, huh?"
She could hear the teasing tone. "Guess so." Falling quiet, she looked at him. "Damon… Damon I don't really know what to make of you most times. I get that you're in pain because of Katherine and I get that you've had years and years of not caring who you hurt in the process of getting what you want…"

When he didn't reply, she continued. "That just makes it so much harder to trust you when you're being sincere. I find myself second guessing every action that you make. I need you to be honest with me."

"About what?" Though he probably already knew the answer.

Bonnie's fingers twitched as she reached out and took his hand. "Me." A beat. "I found the spell that would break whatever Emily did to us. I was going to use it so that I could—so that we could both be free."

He stared at the ground. "Is that what you want?"

Lord if I knew what I wanted… "Is it what you want?"

The gorgeous vampire sat up straighter with some snarky retort on his lips but at the last second—for whatever reason—he changed his mind. "No. I saw something tonight and…it—just no."

Her lashes fluttered at his honesty. It was more than she could have ever expected from him. "Okay…but if we continue this dance something has to change. You have to change. I'm not saying you should start petting puppies or talking to them in a baby voice, but no more pain for pain sake. And no more threatening guys who may or may not get close to me." She caressed his cheek and made him look at her. "If you spill so much as one drop of innocent blood, I'll take you down. I may not want to but I will…"

He smiled a little. "Stefan would never let you do that…the martyr that he is."

"I'll take him with you." She taunted but otherwise serious. "Just try to behave and we'll see where this goes."

Giving a small irritated huff that was more for show, he leaned and kissed her softly on the lips. "Look I have to go do something but I'll come by later. We'll…talk more. But there better be nudity too cause I can only do so much in one night."

Giggling, she pushed at his bicep. "We'll see. Where are you going anyway?"

He stood slowly. "To see Jeremy Gilbert."

I should probably find Elena and make sure that she is alright. "Okay. See ya later."

The sounds of him walking away drew her eyes up to the sky and the scattering of stars that twinkled above. Founder's Day had been full of surprises and she speculated as to whether Grams was looking down on her with an amused expression. Most likely, and telling her that she needed to be extra careful when it came to Damon Salvatore. Getting to his chewy middle was like beating through a concrete wall—it would take a while but the benefits might be worth it. Either way it didn't change her thoughts about Tyler it just lowered the flame on that particular burner.

She wanted to believe that Damon could be normal if still bitchy but she wasn't going to get her expectations too high. That way she wouldn't get hurt if he fell back into old habits, especially where Elena was concerned. However just for a small moment while she was sitting here all alone, she would pretend that he'd sneak into her room later and they would continue their frank conversation
about what they meant to each other.

She would pretend that there were no more surprises around the corner. Damon would come to her after seeing Jeremy and things would be different…

~Fin~
Bonnie and Damon can feel the calm before the approaching storm.

Damon Salvatore hated surprises and always had. He liked to know what was happening and when it was going to happen so that he could be prepared and act accordingly. To him being surprised was the equivalent of getting caught with your pants down, and while in the right situation that could be wonderful, this was not that kind of situation. This was one of those fucked up, damned if you do, damned if you don't type of situations that would no doubt give him worry lines if he could age. Another thing Damon Salvatore hated? Worrying.

Being worried or showing worry was on that list as well. But he'd get to that in a moment.

Seeing Jonathan Gilbert murder Anna and then just walk away like it was nothing struck a chord in him that he'd been trying so hard to keep turned off. Watching her die—knowing that all she wanted to do was live and leave made him look at life in a completely different way. Usually he didn't think about life at all because he was dead and there was no point. There wasn't much that could kill him so why bother with trivial bullshit? Apparently however you could teach an old dog new tricks and he'd learned one…that even though it was buried deep down inside, he still had the capacity to want to help people.

That was his main reason for going to see Jeremy Gilbert. He knew that the boy would be wondering what happened to his girlfriend and he was just sullen enough to have the sense of mind to tell him. It probably screwed him up even more but hey, sometimes information was all you had. Anyway after having that conversation and leaving, he'd run into who he assumed was Elena on the porch. Long story short he'd kissed her and she'd kissed him back—surprise surprise! It wasn't until he was walking down the steps that it hit him like a ton of bricks.

He had not just kissed Elena…he'd kissed Katherine.

So many thoughts were running through his mind as he sat behind the wheel of his vintage car. Okay so yeah it was wrong to try to kiss Elena—his brother's girlfriend—but it's not exactly like he was the good guy in all of this. And besides he was confused and vulnerable from everything that had happened earlier in the night. Almost getting barbequed made people do weird things; it was nearly a scientific fact. And yes he remember everything he'd said to Bonnie and he'd meant it, but a part of him just wanted to try his luck with the brunette and see what happened. Change didn't go down over night. He couldn't just snap his fingers and magically not be a dick.

Moving on though so Katherine was in Mystic Falls and—and he was at a loss. A few weeks earlier and he would have been dancing on air but that wasn't the case right now. She'd proven to be less than trustworthy, not to mention to be an utter bitch who only looked out for herself. There was no doubt that her visit to the town had nothing to do with him. Maybe there was some mess isobel had failed to clean up and she was going to do it on her own. Either way it royally fucked everything.

I should be worried that she'll gut Elena but something tells me not to be. Hell she might not even let
Elena see her…the game is more fun that way.

Bonnie Bennett though is another matter altogether.

Sighing, he leaned his head back to the seat and frowned. After all that he'd been through with the little witch, he did honestly feel like he owed her a bit more civility in their relationship. He could admit to himself that he wanted her and the thought of her with anyone else made his blood boil. And if she needed to feel that want more then he was going to give it to her. He could be courteous to her while still annoying the shit out of everyone else. He could also show her that as far as other chicks were concerned, she was the only one he had a true interest in. Not counting the tiny spark for Elena that was never going to be mentioned again if it could be prevented at all.

Needless to say the kiss was something that hopefully faded into the ether after tonight.

Maybe it was luck that it was Katherine and not Elena. Word got back to Bonnie that I was kissing her best friend on the night I said I'd try to stop being so much of a jerk wouldn't go over well. Doubt it would go over well with Stefan either...who did save my life earlier...

However there was a much bigger issue than some phantom kiss. Katherine Pierce was in Mystic Falls and she made the tomb vampires look like toddlers who'd thrown tantrums. She was diabolical and perverse, taking pleasure in the pain of others. Even though she was quite older, her mind still ticked at times like that of a bratty seventeen year old who pouted and stomped if she didn't get her way. She killed without thought or mercy and took what she wanted because she could. That was how Emily got roped into her deal with the devil.

Katherine would probably want another witch under her thumb. Enter Bonnie.

He couldn't let anything happen to her—it just wasn't an option. No matter who he kissed or who he gave side glances to, the link with Bonnie transcended all of that and he knew it. He acknowledged that perhaps some of his feelings for Elena were a rebellion to prove to himself that he could feel for whoever he wanted. That some stupid spell was not going to dictate his life. And yet before tonight he hadn't thought about it that much. He certainly hadn't thought about it those weeks he and Bonnie had played pajama party in his bedroom.

"Fuck…" He murmured aloud.

Turning the ignition, he shoved the gearshift into gear and drove off, heading for Bonnie's house. He hadn't worked out what he was going to tell her but for once the truth seemed like the better option. Well not all of the truth. There were some things a vampire needed to keep to himself of course. He was as asshole but he wasn't a fool.

Upon reaching her street, he parked before her walkway and stared up at her home. Her bedroom light was on; the windows open with the lace curtains bellowing in the slight breeze. He inhaled deeply and shivered, his blue eyes bleeding black as her smell drifted up his nose. Sometimes he wasn't sure how he was able to resist what came natural to a hunter—consuming its prey. Feeding on her was like doing a shot of Tequila, it burned but you still wanted more and more. You'd drink the entire bottle before realizing what a bad idea it might have been. He wanted to drink Bonnie up so badly that he couldn't stand it at times. Yet just when he'd be near the point of no return, something would soothe the raging beast inside of him.

That chick has done a real number on me…

Getting out, he smoothed down his shirt and jogged across the yard, leaping up onto the small patch of roof under her window effortlessly. Next he was inside, smirking at the way she jumped when he
suddenly appeared. She closed the book she'd been reading and smiled at him, and he found himself returning the gesture.

"How did things go with Jeremy?" She inquired.

"As good as they could have since he got bad news." He replied and folded his arms over his chest. "Jonathan killed his girlfriend. Anna. You remember her right? She used that idiot to kidnap you and Elena…"

The witch nodded. "Yeah. Poor Jeremy…he must be so upset."

"I'm sure he'll get over it eventually. Time heals all wounds and whatever other crap you humans tell yourselves so that you can function." Moving over to her bed, he stretched out and put his hands behind his head. "Anyway I'm here for our talk."

She grinned at him. "I gather this is like…ingesting vervain to you but thanks for being willing."

He shrugged. "I'm always willing, you know that."

She chuckled and tucked her hair behind her ear. "I don't really have much to say to be honest. You've been pretty good with the not killing people thing. I—I guess I just wanna be sure we are on the same page."

He arched a brow. "And what page might that be?"

Biting her lip, she sighed. "The you only want me page. Or how about the you especially do not try to break up Elena and Stefan page."

Labels…you're better off with polygamy. "You want to be boyfriend and girlfriend. Baby I've never been someone's boyfriend before but I'm quite sure I'd be horrible at it. I run on instinct and if instinct tells me to fuck some girl I find hot then that's usually what I do."

Bonnie frowned at him. "Then why the hell did you come here in the first place? I'm serious Damon. I'm done with playing back up and second fiddle. I am a powerful practicing Wicca and I don't need your bullshit."

Gazing at her, he found himself smiling broadly. Man I love it when she gets feisty. "I suppose I could try it though. I'm am open-minded after all."

She snorted lightly. "You're always saying how much you want me, yet when I tell you the simple way to have me you run. Scared?"

"No." His expression shifted to irritation. "Just got a lot of habits that aren't easy to break."

Her pretty green eyes twinkled with amusement. "I get that. But as my boyfriend or as the guy I'm dating that will eventually become my boyfriend, you'd be entitled to certain perks."

That got his attention. "What kinda perks?"

"Boyfriend or guy I'm dating privileges only. I can't tell some random dude."

"You're sneaky and I like it. Let's get naked."

"Haha. So what's it gonna be Damon? Me or…whatever's out that there you think you might be missing?"
"…you."

"Wow and I didn't have to stick toothpicks under your nails this time."

"What can I say? You've grown on me."

Falling to the side, she rested her chin to his chest. "Likewise."

And now to ruin a perfectly good moment in which I could probably talk her into taking her shirt off. "I have something to tell you and you're not gonna like it. In fact you're probably gonna wanna set it on fire."

She blinked. "O…kay. What?"

Rip the band-aid off! "Katherine is back in town."

Bonnie sat up quickly. "Wh—what? How do you know?"

"I saw her at Elena's after I talked to Jeremy." He explained.

"Oh my God!" She scrambled off the bed. "We—I have to go over there and make sure that Elena is okay!"

Damon was in front of her in a flash, grabbing her upper arms. "No. That would be the worst possible thing you could do. If I thought Katherine was going to hurt Elena I would have stayed." Pause. "She might not even let her see her. Anyway I'd worry less about Elena and more about you."

The witch wet her lips slowly. "If—if she finds out about us she'll be after me, won't she?"

"Maybe. I think she'll be more interested in the witch side of you though. Which is why I'm gonna need you to be on the lookout." He caressed her cheek. "Shouldn't be hard. You can sense vampires —Katherine may well stay far away from you."

"I hope so." She whispered. "I know who I am and what I can do, but when I get really upset sometimes my powers act up. It's like they are connected to my emotions."

"Don't worry. I won't let anything happen to you…at least not until I get you into bed." He teased, hoping to make her feel better.

She cracked a small smile. "This just means I have to study the book harder and try more dangerous spells."

Sounds promising. "I don't think you should tell Elena about this either. Not until I know more about the situation."

Bonnie appeared to think on it before nodding. "Okay. No need to worry her unless it's absolutely necessary I suppose." A beat. "Do you think Katherine will be pissed that her two guys have moved on? I mean if you have and all…"

Have I? The lying bitch didn't give a shit about me so it would be stupid to still be carrying a torch for her. Not to mention when I turn it—all of it—back on I can clearly see how psychotic she was. How it was all a game to see if she could get Stefan and I both to want her. "She's a bitch."

"Yeah but emotions don't just go away because we want them to." She tilted her head to the side. "You try to shut yours off but they never seem to stay that way."
"True." He agreed. "But they do dampen when the object of your affections apparently never gave a damn about you in the first place. So don't expect me to run off and join her if that's what you're thinking."

She didn't say one way or the other. Instead she changed the subject. "Are you gonna tell Stefan?"

He smirked. "And ruin the surprise? I couldn't do that to dear old Stefan."

She shook her head and crawled back into bed. "He saved your life tonight."

Damon smoothed his thumb across her lips after joining her. "You saved my life tonight. I hope you plan to let me repay you later."

Her cheeks flushed pink. "Maybe when things cool down a bit."

"I hate waiting." Pause. "I went through something very traumatic tonight, and the only thing that can possibly soothe me is—are breasts."

Laughing, she sat up and looked to her door. It wiggled before closing of its own volition and locking. "Well go ahead. Let me see them."

Sitting up, he nuzzled her neck. "You really annoy me sometimes."

"Likewise." She said softly. "So why do we keep putting up with each other?"

He appeared to think on that for a moment. "Well I don't know about you, but I find the whole being annoyed bit quite endearing. The more you annoy me the more I know you care."

"Ha! Yeah the more you annoy me the more I wanna stake you." She teased. "Opposites attract I suppose."

"Why don't we attract right now?"

"I would but all that saving your life stuff earlier kinda wore me out. I'm exhausted."

"Hm. You need a talisman or something to help you focus your magic and conserve energy. Emily had one and I'll bet cold hard cash so did your Grams."

"Where do I get one? Or can I turn anything into one?"

"I suppose you could…though some pink flower necklace wouldn't do anything for your reputation. You know I think I have the perfect thing at home."

"Handcuffs or some kinda metal chain?"

"Tempting but no. Just a little trinket I procured many years ago. Remind me and I'll bring it to you."

Nodding, Bonnie ran a hand through her hair and lay back to the pillows. "You can stay if you want. I mean if it's not too totally boring for you."

He seemed to weigh his options before stretching out beside her. "I'll stick around for a few. Make sure the only monster in here is me."

"You're not a monster, Damon." She kissed his cheek. "You're more human than you give yourself credit for."
Making a face, he put his fingertips on her eyelids. "Sleep before I change my mind about letting you."

As the pretty witch snuggled down, the vampire sighed and stared at the ceiling. He'd been in tough situations before but something told him this was going to be unlike anything he'd ever dealt with. It would be terrifying if it didn't sound so exciting.

~*~

Curling up on her couch the next day, Bonnie rubbed at her forehead and stared at the book in her hands. After a while all of the spell information began to run together and she didn't know whether she was studying to cause a hail storm or conjure up hundreds of frog. It was hard to concentrate when so much crap was going on. Katherine being in town should be the biggest obstacle in her path, however that wasn't the case. It's like last night exploded and was now raining badness down onto the land of Mystic Falls.

In the middle of the night while sleeping soundly with Damon beside her, she'd awoken to her cell phone ringing loudly. Elena had been on the other end, informing her that someone had attacked Jonathan in her very own kitchen and that he was in the hospital—that they weren't sure he was going to make it. She'd had to listen and play dumb while offering her total support in the matter. While at the hospital, Elena discovered that Caroline was also in bad shape because of some car accident and that she had internal bleeding.

Hopefully she was going to be alright. It wouldn't be natural for Caroline to not be around anymore.

Sighing, she placed the grimoire on the table and swung her legs around, putting her feet on the floor. The house was quiet due to her father being at work, and idly she wished that she could call up her Grams for a conversation about nothing. It was times like this that were the hardest for her. When she would almost forget that the older woman was gone…it made remembering that much more painful.

Deciding something cold would perk her up, she padded into the kitchen and pulled out a jug of lemonade. Just as she fished a glass out of the cabinet, someone knocked softly at her front door. Groaning, she abandoned her light quest and jogged through the living room, pulling open the door. She blinked at who was on the other side. "Stefan. What are you doing here?"

He smiled at her. "Hey. I was in the neighborhood and I thought I would come see how you are doing."

She chuckled. "Damon lies better about that sort of thing." Stepping to the side, she waved him in. "But I'm fine so thanks for asking."

He strolled inside but stopped before reaching the sofa. "I'm not staying. I have to go meet Elena at the hospital but I wanted to check on you."

"Now let's see how well I lie. "Oh yeah she called me and said that someone attacked Jonathan. Do they know who did it?"

He shook his head. "No, but considering the type of people he has dealings with who knows who it could have been. Hell Isobel could have sneaked back into town and did something."

Nodding slowly, she wet her lips. "Yeah. I just hope he is okay for Elena's sake."

"Me too." Pause. "So I saw Damon this morning. He said he spent the night here…"
Her cheeks grew hot and she smiled. "Yeah but it was totally PG. We had a nice talk and I think things are going to be okay. He knows I mean business when it comes to the welfare of the people in this town."

"And your welfare?" He inquired.

"Let's just say I'm not gonna let him straddle the fence where I am concerned." She explained, tugging on her ear. "Either we are together or we're not."

"I'll do my best to help keep him on the straight and narrow." Stefan related. "Though sometimes when you try to make him do something he does the opposite just cause. However—and I'm shocked to admit this—but he's different with you. He reminds me of the person he was before I changed him."

*So much blame and remorse in their family. How do they stand it?* "Don't tell him that…"

He chuckled softly. "Right. Anyway though I just wanted to check in and say thank you for your help last night. I couldn't have saved him without you."

"You're welcome." She said softly. "Tell Elena I'll come by and see her soon."

Nodding, he exited her home and headed to his car. Bonnie watched him go and leaned against the doorframe, feeling guilty for keeping information about Katherine to herself. However it wasn't really her place to say anything, it was Damon's. The best thing to do was to try to coax him into telling his brother; it was the safest thing for everyone involved. The more people who knew the more people that would be prepared if she unleashed some sort of master plan on them.

_Elena especially needs to know. She could need to be in grave danger._

*At this point we are all in grave danger.*

Her cell phone chimed and she kicked the door closed with her heel before hurrying to answer it. "Hello? Elena?"

The voice on the other end was male and definitely not Elena. "Hey Bonnie."

"Tyler. Hi." She sat down on the arm of the couch. "What's up?"

There was a pause before he spoke again. "My—my dad…he died last night in that fire."

She blinked, surprised by his admission. "Wh—oh Tyler I'm so sorry. If there is anything you need, anything I can do just ask."

"Yeah." A beat. "I figured you'd be—that you would know what I am going through. It's just, I don't understand ya know? What was he doing down there in the first place?"

_That is a good question. Mayor Lockwood wasn't a vampire, right? No of course he wasn't. _I—I don't know. Were there supplies down there for the Founder's Day celebration?"

"Not that I know of." He replied somberly. "Last night was supposed to be this big party, but it just ended up being horrible. Not only did my dad die but I had an accident that almost killed Caroline."

_Wait a minute… "You were driving? What happened did you lose control or something?"

He sighed deeply. "I—I don't know. My dad found us at the Grille and he told us to go home and he seemed really adamant about it so I listened to him for once. We got into the car and we're driving
along when suddenly this—this loud piercing sound came out of nowhere. The others acted like they couldn't hear it or maybe they really couldn't, but the next thing I know I'm blacking out and the car is going off the road. I woke up on the pavement with the ambulance guys leaning over me."

Bonnie bit her bottom lip hard in thought. The only piercing sound from last night had been the one that the vampires heard. But she knew Tyler wasn't a vampire, she'd touched him many times and hadn't once got that odd cold feeling. So what the hell was going on? Grams would know. Grams knew everything.

"I'm sorry. Maybe you should talk to your mom about what happened."

"I've tried but she claims to have no idea what's going on."

"What are you gonna do?"

"Keep digging. I need answers ya know? I wanna know why my father was in the old Gilbert building for starters. Then I'll work on figuring out what the deal was with that noise."

"Maybe you should get like a CAT scan or something. Rule out anything serious."

"Yeah that's not a bad idea."

"Anyway I'm sure Caroline is going to be okay. A little fender bender isn't strong enough to take her out."

"I hope so. I feel terrible. If anything happened to her Matt would kill me and he'd be totally justified. I keep screwing up his life."

"Tyler, no. I—whatever that noise was, it made you wreck. It wasn't your fault and neither was what occurred with your dad. You know that right?"

"I tell myself that but I don't know if it's taking."

"Well if you need to talk I'm here."

"Thanks. I guess I should go though. I gotta help my mom with arrangements and telling the rest of the town."

She rubbed the back of her neck. "Okay. Call me later if you want."

"Will do." And then he was gone.

Mayor Lockwood is dead and Tyler heard the sound that only vampires could detect. Talk about an awful time for some homicidal vampire with a grudge to show up.

~ *~

No one knew what had happened to Jonathan Gilbert but Damon had a pretty good idea that Katherine had filleted him like a flounder. Why? Why did she do anything for other than the thrill it caused her? Maybe she felt he'd betrayed her or maybe she didn't like the tie he had on, whatever the reason it was done and he couldn't say that he cared. If Jon died he would shed not a single tear—his main thought was finding that device and driving over it until it was destroyed. As long as it existed he was in danger.

There was too much going on. Wasn't this supposed to be the time where he could now relax because the evil had been thwarted or whatever? Seems like more shit than ever was being shoveled
into his doorway and that did not make him a happy person. He'd just…decided to be exclusive with Bonnie and now Katherine was lurking around town, and it appeared that she was going to have a grand old time posing as her long lost relative. And then there was the kiss…

*Oy vey. What else is going to jump out at me?*

*Knock! Knock! Knock!*

Snorting, he sat his drink down on the table and strolled through the ornate hallway to the front door. He pulled it open and tilted his head at the stranger on the other side. "Yes?"

The young girl swallowed hard and glared at him, clutching the necklace around her neck. "Hello Damon."

"Do I know you?" He asked, already bored.

She shook her head, sending tendrils of strawberry blonde hair flying around her face. "No. My name is Clarissa."

Huffing, he waved a hand at her. "I don't buy girl scout cookies and I don't wanna hear about Jesus, so whatever you're selling I suggest going elsewhere with it."

Glowering at him, she stuck her foot in the door. "I'm not going anywhere. It's time for you to pay for what you did to Lexi…"

~Fin~
Danger is always right around the corner when you're connected to a Salvatore.

The Weakness

Damon Salvatore coughed and chuckled slowly, groaning from his place on the floor. He struggled to rise up onto his arms and winced as another ripple of pain shot down his spine due to the criss cross of lashes on his back. After Clarissa had forced herself into his home and laid a hand to his chest that burned, she'd proceeded to use her power to whip him. And each time he tried to get up or get to her, she'd send another wave of piercing torture that made his head feel like it was having an aneurysm. Obviously he'd promised Bonnie that he wouldn't kill but naturally that didn't include psycho bitch witches sporting a vendetta?

Right?

"She was innocent and you just…threw her out like trash!" Clarissa snapped as she circled him. "For your own selfish needs. Did it ever occur to you that she had people who cared about her? People who loved her!"

"Honestly? No." He panted irritating until the end. "I didn't care. Still don't. She was a means to an end just like all of the others."

"Shut up!" She shouted, and another slash appeared on his skin. "From the moment I found out what you did I swore revenge. I asked Bonnie for help but she said no."

"Yeah, I'd go ahead and stay away from her if I were you." He managed to shoot her a glare.

Arching a brow, she folded her arms over her chest. "Wow, you honestly care about her, don't you? I didn't think it was possible for you to give a damn about anyone but yourself. And yet…" She crouched in front of him just out of reach. "I'm not sure I am totally convinced. The Damon I know never does anything without a motive behind it."

The handsome vampire slouched against the bottom of the couch. Did this chick have a screw loose or what? "You don't know me at all, sweetheart. This is the first time I have ever seen you; I think I would have remembered running into a nut job before."

She snorted. "I know you. I've been watching you for weeks since Lexi died. All the pain and destruction you have brought to those around you. All the evil stuff you did just for fun. Tell me something Damon, do you really think you're what Bonnie needs in her life? I mean you're not sensitive or decent or…any of the things a young girl should have when the going gets tough. Not to mention you tried to kill her."

He grinned at her. "Oh c'mon. That's the equivalent of a love tap that five year olds give each other. Besides she got over it."

Clarissa rolled her eyes. "Not like she had a choice in the matter because of that spell." When the realization that she knew dawned over his face, she snickered. "I told you I've been watching you.
I've been trying to find out where it would hurt you the most. I considered taking out Stefan, when really the answer was in front of me all along. Bonnie."

Okay now she is starting to get on my nerves. "You think you've seen my bad side little girl? You haven't seen shit. Trust me. Fuck with me and I will end you."

"Touchy." She stood. "But this is how it's always going to be Damon—surely you knew that. Bonnie will always be in danger as long as you are in her life because that is what you stand for. Well… she'll always be in danger if she survives."

"I'm warning you..." He growled, struggling to sit up. "How is hurting her going to bring Lexi back? She didn't even know Lexi or have anything to do with her death. That was all me."

Sighing, she nodded. "You're right. She's innocent in this and I—well I don't want to hurt her. But I do wanna hurt you. I wanna hurt you so badly that it's all I have been able to think about for weeks. And it seems the only way to do that is to take away something you care about. Bonnie is that thing."

"Why not just kill me?"

"That's too easy. You suffer for a minute and then it's over. It's not enough."

His brows narrowed as he watched her. If the circumstances were different he would probably be dissolving into a set of slow claps and congratulating her on being so cut throat. Usually he found that quite sexy in a woman, but in her case it was just stupid. While he agreed that the best way to get revenge on someone who'd hurt you was to take away something they loved, he didn't concur when it involved the people he cared about. So he was a hypocrite... sue him.

There were a whole slew of reasons that he didn't want Bonnie included in his drama and surprisingly only one tiny part had to do with the spell. It was such a small fraction of what they were now. Of what they were going to be if he had any say what so ever. His feelings—while forced upon him in the beginning—were there to stay and he'd made peace with them. She was his and he would be damned if he let some crazy person do anything to her. Especially before he got to sleep with her. That would just be wrong.

Maybe if I keep her talking long enough I can heal and then rip parts of her off. "You're human, right?"

She blinked, caught off guard by his question. "Of course I'm human."

He shrugged. "No need to get offended. I was just curious because, well, you're all about vengeance and hurting an innocent. Like... me."

She bristled. "I am nothing like you."

The vampire smiled slowly. "Oh but you are. You see this is exactly what I would do. Actually..." He tilted his head to the side. "I probably would have killed Bonnie first and then put her body in my bed or something for... effect. But I think for a beginner you've got the right mindset."

Clarissa huffed, completely insulted. "This is a one time thing to teach you a lesson that you can't just— just destroy other people for kicks."

"Do you know how many lessons I've taught people over the years?" He questioned. "Dozens. Hundreds. All under the guise that I was teaching them a lesson when really? I was just being a major dick. So you see, we're not that different."
"Don't say that!" She shrieked. "You're a monster! A demon that—that eats people to stay alive. I'm just someone left in the wake of your damage. I'm a victim."

"All your life." He quoted the old *Addam's Family* movie. "I think you realize you're not tough enough to go against me, that's why you're going after Bonnie. But I wouldn't underestimate her if I were you. I have and...she's quite the firecracker."

"I've been practicing the craft a lot longer than her. I'm not worried."

"Maybe you should be. She's no slouch when it comes to witchy mojo."

"But she is still just starting out. And she doesn't have a teacher while I do."

"Going after the weak; that's how I'd decide who to eat."

"Well perhaps this is your karma then, Damon. Next time I would think twice before killing someone. Think about the people that person is leaving behind. Think about what they could do to the people you give a damn about."

It's now or never. Using all of the strength that he could conjure up, Damon lunged at the young girl and knocked her back onto the decorated carpet. They tumbled to the floor a bundle of limbs, with him trying to get both hands around her neck so that he could snap it. However the moment his palm grazed the necklace she wore, he hissed in pain at the burning sensation that traveled up his arm. It was only a second's hesitation but it was enough for her to kick him in the nuts and scramble out from under him as he groaned.

Her chest heaved up and down as she glared at him fiercely, a bruise blooming on the side of her cheek. His blood stained her clothes and she cringed at the sight, wiping frantically but to no avail.

"Fuck you Damon Salvatore! Fuck you!"

"No thanks." He grunted out. "You're not my ty—ahh!" The ache started in his temples and quickly blossomed over his entire head, immobilizing him to the point where he felt paralyzed. It didn't take a rocket scientist for him to know that Clarissa was the one doing it, and this time she obviously meant business.

The ringing in his ears grew louder and louder; he couldn't shut it out. Wetness dribbling down the side of his face brought him to the understanding that his ears were now bleeding—maybe even the drums busted. He heard someone screaming and knew it was himself, his throat becoming dry but he couldn't stop. It hurt. Everything hurt and he found himself struggling to stay conscious.

It was a losing battle though and he knew it as darkness began to seep in around the edges of his mind. The last thing he felt was glass from the shattering windows slicing at his skin as the witch unleashed her power upon him. The last thing he saw before blacking out was her smiling face...and then all was quiet.

~*~

"I'll call you if there is any change." Sheriff Forbes spoke to the small group gathered outside of her daughter's room. "I promise."

Bonnie Bennett nodded and watched her go back to Caroline's bedside, her heart going out to the woman. Caroline was a lot of things but the most important being her friend, and she needed her in her life. It was true the blonde didn't exactly bring anything more than the superficial at best, but they were still best friends. They had still known each other back when pigtails were in fashion—it would be weird not having her around. Besides she'd already lost one person close to her this year and she
didn't want to go for two.

So far besides family, Matt Donovan had been the only person allowed into the teen's room. The Sheriff felt it might do her daughter some good to hear from him or just have him holding her hand.

"I can't believe this happened." Elena Gilbert sighed as she leaned against the wall. "Last night was—I don't even know how to describe it. I thought the worst of it dealt with that device and the vampires but I was wrong."

Bonnie rubbed her shoulder. "How's your Uncle?"

"He's…stable." She shook her head. "They said his fingers were cut so cleanly they were able to reattached them, but they aren't sure it's going to take. God there was so much blood."

"I'm sorry." Pause. "Do they…know who did this?"

"No." The brunette exhaled deeply. "But I know the police plan to ask him who attacked him when he regains consciousness."

_I wonder if he is going to be honest? _"Where's Jeremy?"

Elena blinked back tears. "Aunt Jenna is down with him in the emergency room. He—he had to have his stomach pumped or something. Everything was happening so fast I didn't even ask. A part of me doesn't even want to know."

The pretty witch hugged her friend. "I hope he's okay. I hope everyone ends up okay." A beat. "You should call Stefan. I know he would want to be here with you."

She pouted. "I don't wanna seem needy…"

"I don't think it's needy when you really need someone." The teen smiled. "You need someone to lean on and we both know he's that person."

"Like Damon is for you?"

"Heh I don't know if we're there yet but maybe."

"Are you sure you wanna start something with him?"

"It was started the moment Emily fused us together. Now it's just running its course."

"Yeah but you could break the bond if you wanted to. I saw the spell."

"I could. And I honestly thought about it, but we had a nice talk last night and I think he wants to be a good guy."

"For everyone or just you?"

"Well me but he's promised to at least he civil to everyone else."

"If Damon is who you want then, I'm gonna support you in this. I mean you supported me and Stefan…"

"It's what friends do."

Running a hand through her long brown hair, Elena glanced around. "I hate hospitals. They always
remind me of the accident."

*That's a club I'm a member of as well.* "Me too. Seems nothing good ever happens in them."

She cracked a tiny smile. "Unless you count babies being born, and the occasional help the doctors give."

Chuckling lightly, Bonnie looked to her watch. "I should go and check in with my dad. I left him a note but most times he manages to over look it. Are you gonna be okay here?"

The other girl nodded. "Yeah. I'll call Stefan and see if he wants to sit with me."

*Which he totally will.* "Okay. Gimme a ring if anything changes with anybody." Hearing her bestie echo that she would, she kissed her cheek and then made her way to the elevator.

Upon reaching the ground floor and getting off, she exited the building and strolled through the parking lot towards her car. *I feel horrible not being able to tell Elena about Katherine. She should know so that she can protect herself and be aware that danger might be lurking about. I have to convince Damon that it's the right thing to do. I hate to even think it but mentioning Elena's safety will no doubt help change his mind.*

Sighing, she fumbled in her purse for her keys. She was trying to not be jealous anymore; Damon was with *her* and that is how he liked it. But suspicions didn't just evaporate into thin air. It would take her a few to trust him completely on everything.

Yawning, she turned a corner just as her fingers brushed her keychain. Yanking them out, she jerked at the figure standing between her vehicle and a truck. "Um, Clarissa, right?"

The blonde nodded. "Yeah. Hey."

"Hey." Bonnie arched a brow. "You visiting someone?"

"No. I—actually I'm here to see you." She admitted. "First I want to apologize for the way I acted the last time we met. I was out of line."

*I'll say. It's okay. You were upset and I understand that feeling.* And then she noticed something odd. "Are—is that blood?"

Clarissa brushed at her blouse. "Yes but it's not mine."

*Okay. It's time to be leaving now.* "Well I—I should be getting home. I need to shower and check in with my dad."

"I'm afraid I can't let you do that." Pause. "I'm really sorry, Bonnie. I didn't wanna have to hurt you but you're the only thing he gives a shit about. You're the only thing he'll be heartbroken over if it's gone."

"He? You mean Damon?" The brunette eyed her warily. "What—is that his blood? Did you do something to him?"

"Yes." She didn't try to lie. "He's dead, or he will be soon. But he'll die knowing that he wasn't here to save you."

Bonnie jerked as anger began to swell in her chest. Who did this girl think she was? Threatening her because she wouldn't help her with some stupid revenge plan? How was that sensible or fair? "I
The blonde was emotionless. "I guess we'll see then, won't we?"

Before she could reply, a vise-like grip snapped around her throat, cutting off her air. She coughed and fought to breathe, pulling at the invisible hands that were choking the life out of her. When it was clear that wouldn't work, she summoned the power inside of her, picturing it as a thick fist. She let it lash out without warning, striking Clarissa across the face and sending her stumbling into a parked SUV with a yelp.

Air rushed into her lungs and she gasped. "I don't wanna hurt you!"

Rubbing her sore jaw, the other witch snorted. "You think that hurt? That's nothing compared to what I can do!"

Suddenly Bonnie was thrown a few feet away, skidding on the hard concrete, her head nearly bouncing off the blacktop. She groaned but forced down the pain in her ribs to sit up. Why do all of the crazies find me? "Congelo!"

Clarissa went still like a statue, frozen in place. It was only for several moments but it gave her enough time to get to her feet. Bit by bit the blonde pushed against her hidden constraints until she could move again. She let out a long shudder. "Nice but no cigar." Turning her attention to a car idling by the emergency room doors, she waved a hand and inside the gear shifted from park to drive, the gas pedal moving of its own volition.

The vehicle lurched forward rapidly, jumping the curb to head straight for Bonnie. She knew she needed to move out of the way but she felt rooted to the spot, and the ache running through her body wasn't helping matters. Move, move, move! She didn't allow herself to think about it, she just did it, literally hauling herself out of the way mere seconds before the front tires rolled where she had once been. The white Honda crashed into a tree, the horn blaring loudly.

"You can't run from me, Bonnie!" Clarissa shouted. "I will have my revenge!"

"Hey!" As the blonde turned, she screamed when a phantom hand snatched the talisman from around her neck.

"No! Stop!" But it was too late. She watched as it was thrown to the ground hard, cracking into numerous pieces. Perhaps it was the shock of the act itself, or maybe she felt outnumbered, whatever the case she sprinted off down the street as fast as she could.

And yet Bonnie had a feeling things were not over where the other witch was concerned. "Damon?"

"Bonnie, are you okay?" It was Stefan who rushed over and helped her up.

The Salvatore brothers are really making a habit of rescuing Elena and I. "Stefan, thank god. I thought I was about to be road kill."

"What's going on?" He inquired.

She sighed. "That girl was a friend of some vampire named Lexi, and she's really obsessed with the fact that Damon killed her. She wants revenge and apparently she's going to get it by hurting me."

He frowned deeply. "Lexi was my best friend. I had no idea other people cared for her so strongly."

If she is willing to kill, I think we passed strongly a long time ago. "I—wait. She—she said Damon
was dead or would be. We have to get to him. *Now.*

Glancing around to make sure that no one was looking, Stefan scooped her up into his arms. Obviously he could run faster than a car and he didn't have to stop for lights. "Let's go."

It was like flying almost—the sensation of him running and feeling the wind on her face and in her hair. Everything passed so fast that it blurred around the edges and she had to close her eyes to keep from getting dizzy. She had enough sense of mind to be guilty that she was taking him away from Elena, but this was a life or death situation. And it wasn't like he couldn't just dash back to her just as rapidly.

*What if he's dead? What if it's too late? Why didn't I feel him in danger? Why didn't I sense anything? Is our bond weakening because Katherine is here?*

It took great effort to make those thoughts quiet down but she found the strength somehow. A flash later and she was running into the manor, ignoring the pain in her sides and back. She skidded through the foyer and into the living room, the sound of broken glass crunching under her cute sneakers. That was where she found him, sprawled out on the carpet with blood staining his chest, under his nose and the sides of his face. He was so still.

"Damon!" Scuffling over, she dropped to the floor on her knees and pulled him into her lap. "Damon? Damon!"

Silence.

"Stefan!" She yelled, tears in her eyes. "I—he's not—what do I do?"

The younger Salvatore gazed upon his brother solemnly. He wasn't petrified so he still had a chance. "Blood. He needs blood. We have some in the freezer." And just like that he was off to get it.

Her rational mind told her that Stefan would literally be back in a pinch, but the vision in front of her said he wouldn't make it. That Damon would bleed out or whatever happened to vampires before he could return. *This is your chance. You can be free of him forever now if you want.* But that wasn't what she wanted. He irritated her to no end and she often wanted to slap him, but she needed him. She needed him.

Grabbing up a jagged piece of glass, she exhaled and slashed it across her wrist all in one movement. If she had given herself time to think she would have been too scared to do it. Propping up his head, she pressed it to his lips. "C'mon, Damon. Drink."

For a heartbeat nothing happened…and then he was sucking slowly, using his tongue to usher more of the crimson liquid into his mouth. It stung but she didn't move. Instead she stroked her fingers down his cheek, lifting her eyes to Stefan when he returned a breath later holding a bag of B positive in his hand.

They stared at each other, neither speaking but each silently thinking the same thing. She was in deep where Damon was concerned, maybe as deep as Elena was where Stefan was concerned. Yet neither wanted to say the actual word. They didn't want to utter it into existence because of what it could mean for everyone else. Because *that word* scared her to death and made Stefan scared for her. He couldn't help it; it was just in his nature.

"Ah, fuck…" Damon finally speaking broke the quiet.

Bonnie pulled her wrist back. "Are you okay?"
"Yeah." He sat up slowly.

Stefan thumbed to the kitchen. "I'm...gonna go get a broom."

When he was at least out of view, Damon bit into his own appendage and offered it to the witch. "For your...thing."

Debating, she brought it to her lips and took just enough to heal the gash. "Thanks."

He nodded. "Ditto." Sighing, he watched her intensely. "We gotta stop meeting like this in the mix of danger."

She smiled and ran her fingers through his hair. "I'm getting used to it."

"You shouldn't have to." He sighed; he felt like he'd gone three rounds with Mike Tyson and lost. "Fuck. Thanks for saving my ass."

"You're welcome." She said softly. "Sorry I couldn't get here sooner."

Damon snorted but leaned against her, resting his head to her shoulder. He allowed himself a few minutes of her quiet comfort, relaxing to the feel of her rubbing the back of his neck. "Let's go upstairs. I'm sure Stefan will clean up the mess."

"Shouldn't you eat something?" She asked, motioning to his healing wounds.

"I will." Pause. "C'mon. We need to talk."

~*~

Resting to the headboard of Damon's bed, Bonnie hugged his pillow to her chest and listened as the shower switched off. She was exhausted and it wasn't even six yet, which meant that when she did finally go to bed she'd probably sleep like a baby. Or perhaps not considering the way her mind was buzzing with thoughts. First Clarissa was clearly a powerful witch and that meant she had to step up her game. Find someone who could coach her or as a last resort, contact her Grams for pointers. If Emily could pop up when she wanted then why couldn't her grandmother do the same?

Second on the list being her ever developing feelings for the vampire in the bathroom. God I think I'm falling in love with him. I don't know if I should be happy or terrified. With Katherine back in the picture there was a good chance she was just being set up for heartbreak. Of course if that happened she could just break their blood bond and hope that was the end of it. But she knew deep down that it wouldn't be. That magic may have got the ball rolling but like she'd told Elena, things were moving on their own now. Each day it twisted and turned inside of her; her affections for Damon. They were going to consume her alive if she wasn't careful, yet she didn't know how to be careful.

The bedroom door opened and Damon strolled inside with a towel so low on his waist there was really no need for a towel at all. His lithe body was damp with water and errant drops sliding their way along his shiny skin. He was so gorgeous, like a marble statue come to life to make all of her dreams—and nightmares—come true. His hair looked even darker if that were possible, his flesh flushed from the bag of blood he'd devoured beforehand.

Her big green eyes watched him like a hawk stalking its prey as he splashed on aftershave and surveyed himself in the mirror, smirking when he noticed her expression. "Like what you see?"
"Always." She said truthfully. "How are you feeling?"

He turned, leaning against his dresser, his happy trail on display for the world. "Good. But I doubt that frozen stuff had anything to do with it. It was all you."

She shrugged. "I was just trying to make sure you were okay."

Without replying, his turned his back to her and dropped the towel. She bit her lip hard to keep from squeaking and clutched the pillow tighter. *Even his ass his perfect and I'm not an ass girl, but I just wanna squeeze it.*

Thankfully he slipped into black silk pajama bottoms before facing her again. "You were worried about me. Can't say that doesn't make me all warm and gooey inside because it does. I…was worried about you too."

"Oh?" She arched her brows. "Clarissa is a serious nut cake but Stefan destroyed her talisman so, maybe she'll stay away for a while. At least until I'm stonger."

Stretching, he flopped down beside her. "Bonnie…I'm a dick. I can say this because I'm secure in the fact that I'm a dick." Pause. "My point is…I've done a lot of shit to people because I could. Bad shit that would probably freak you the fuck out for days. Some of those people could still be around and might have it in for me. Which means they'll have it in for you too."

"I know that."

"Do you?"

"Well, duh. It's kinda expected."

"Yeah well, I just thought you should know if we're gonna do this."

"Damon, do you care about me? Like…you know…"

"Yes."

"And you believe that I care about you?"

"You slit your wrist to save me so, yeah. I'm convinced."

"Then who cares about the other shit? If you look out for me then I'll look out for you."

He grinned broadly, nuzzling her neck. "Mm that sounds good."

Her lashes fluttered when his nuzzling turned to kissing. "Damon we—we need to tell Elena and Stefan about Katherine."

"Why?" He groaned. "It'll just cause drama. Wait I like drama…why was I against them finding out again?"

She snorted. "You said it would be *funner* if they were surprised. But, Stefan saved my life today and I—I can't let that bitch just spring herself on my best friend. I'm scared for her, Damon."

Meeting her gaze, he seemed to weigh the pros and cons in his mind. "She's been invited into Elena's home. If we tell her, she'll never feel safe there."

Bonnie gave his shoulder a squeeze. "I'll never feel safe for her either way. Please…" Her eyes
shifted down. "Do it for Elena…"

Crawling off the bed, he moved over to his bookshelf and poked around with the knick knacks until he found what he was looking for. "I'll do it but not for Elena." He handed her a silver necklace with a teardrop cameo in the center. "I'll do it cause you asked so nicely."

She put it on, figuring it was for her to focus her powers. "Thank you." His words were not lost on her either. "If asking nicely will always get you to cave so easily, expect more of it."

"Ha ha." He snickered and sat down in front of her. "You know I'm new of all of this…having feelings and crap but I'm trying. That's more than I have did for anyone in one hundred and forty five years."

"Damon, I know you're not gonna be this Boy Scout over night. To be honest I don't even know if I want you acting like some total do gooder. I just…" Sighing, she raked her fingers through her hair. "I just want you."

His face twitched but he was amazing at hiding his feelings. "You got me." A beat. "Why don't we go out to dinner? I'll pull out your chair and everything."

Giggling, she tapped his nose but that did sound like a good idea. "I wouldn't mind getting something to eat."

"Hm." Leaning, he grasped her chin and kissed her, slicking his tongue across her bottom lip. "I will put on clothes then."

Bonnie smiled and yawned, trying to let her brain go numb. There were many unanswered questions and things that she still didn't understand, but one thing was definite. Damon was going to be there for her to the best of his ability, and with his history that had to mean something. Whether or not he was falling as deeply for her as she was for him, she didn't know. But she had a feeling as the days went on; she was certainty going to find out.

~Fin~
Sometimes you have to stop fighting what you feel.

The woods of Mystic Falls were dark and ominous feeling, with creepy sounds emanating from the shadows. A thick fog covered the ground, seeping through the low bushes towards the rushing falls. It was midnight and everyone had since left the surrounding areas long ago, the random party over with. The only things that remained were cans and bottles that some older patron would no doubt pick up in the morning to recycle while muttering about the stupid kids.

Slowly making her way past the tall trees with their dark, thick leaves, Bonnie wet her lips and tried to watch where she stepped but it was hard. The moon was full but slightly hidden; casting distorted silhouettes like crooked monsters against what was usually cheery looking foliage. She could hear the twigs snapping under her black boots, and overhead an owl hooted lazily. She felt like she was in a horror movie, waiting for the monster to jump out and try to attack her.

Crack!

Jerking around, she swallowed hard and cursed the fact that she'd forgotten her flashlight. "Hello? Is —is someone there?" The hairs on her arms stood to attention; a sharp jolt running down her spine. "Screw this!"

Turning on her heels, she hurried through the brush, heading towards the clearing. I shouldn't be out here. I'm not ready yet.

She stepped over a wide fallen limb, frowning when her pretty blue dress snagged. She delicately freed it so it wouldn't rip and then continue on her way, her anxiety rising as the weird sounds got louder and louder. Something was watching her—waiting for her to make a mistake so that it could swoop in. And she wasn't sure that she could fight it off or defend herself this time. Yes her powers were growing more and more each day, but there were some things even she couldn't defeat.

The moon broke through the clouds briefly, illuminating the small trail and she found herself sighing in relief because of it. Tucking the hair out of her face, she hurried along the path, letting her mind wander to all that she needed to do when she got home. Suddenly something grabbed her from behind and lifted her into the air, swinging her around and shoving her unceremoniously into the nearest tree. She coughed as the wind was knocked out of her lungs. Quickly it turned into a scream the moment sharp fangs drove down into the soft skin of her neck.

"Please…don't…kill me…"

Damon groaned lowly and pulled back, gazing into her eyes with liquid black ones of his own. "That was fucken awesome. You're good at this game."

She shook her head yet was amused by him. "Really? I thought I was overacting…"

He licked his red tinged lips. "No, no you were magnificent. If you want I could go kill Julia Roberts
“and give you her Oscar.”

She chuckled. "Um, thanks but I'm good." Looking at him, she smoothed her thumb across his brow. "Was I really okay? I—I've never done anything like this before."

His face returned to normal. "Bonnie, you were perfect. Granted there is a certain thrill when it's actually life or death but this was fun too. I'm gonna wanna do it again by the way, but maybe next time at the manor and you can wear a nightie."

Bonnie smirked; I should have known Damon Salvatore's kink would be scary vampire/helpless victim. When he'd suggested they do a little role playing, she'd hit him with a serious case of side eye. Naturally she figured he meant sex, and he figured that she figured he meant sex, so he'd then decided to call her a pervert and go on about his fragile sensibilities.

He'd get away with a lot less if he weren't so hot.

"Well you got your…fix for tonight so I guess I should be going home." She rubbed at her neck, wondering if she had a choker big enough to cover the wound.

"What's your hurry?" He pressed close, one arm sliding around her waist to pull her flush against him.

The witch had been in this situation several times now, but it always made her heart skip a beat whenever he took her into his arms. Whenever he lined their bodies up just right and molded them together like two different types of hot candle wax. The material of her outfit was breathable cotton and light, so she could feel the cool chill of his skin seeping through the fabric. He'd be warm soon; her blood always made him warm.

Looking up at him, she bit her lip and he grunted softly. "Maybe I have homework."

"Screw it." He rubbed his nose against her soft cheek. "I'll compel your teachers to give you As."

Giggling, she let her fingers slip under his shirt to trace the definition of his abs. "Have you ever thought about the fact that you're a lot older than me?"

The handsome vampire clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "Hm I have, and I decided it just makes you that much more desirable. I like the thought of corrupting you."

Shivering, she raked her clear painted nails across his bellybutton. "Who says I'm gonna let you corrupt me?"

He grinned. "Me." Wiggling his brows, he skimmed his lips across hers for a feather soft kiss.

"Besides it's not like you don't want it."

God he is always so cocky. Someone needs to knock him down a peg. Getting a bold burst of energy, Bonnie unbuttoned his shirt and pushed the sides open. She drew an imaginary line down the indent of his body, delighting in the way his muscles twitched under her touch. "And what? You're totally devoid of wanting it?"

"I didn't say that." He tipped up her chin. "Pretty sure all those dreams where I fuck you into the mattress tell you how much I want it."

Those dreams. Those vivid, vivid dreams. "Yeah but whenever we do cross that line, it's not like you can be that rough our first time. You'll have to be gentle and practice restraint." Tangling her fingers in his hair, she angled his head down so that she could whisper in his ear. "You'll have to warm me
up before you take me for a test drive. Kiss me all over until I'm trembling so bad, everything in your room is floating in the air. And then—just when I can't take anymore—you sink your fangs into my thigh and drink."

A low growl sounded in his chest and before she could blink, he'd picked her up off the ground and fit himself between her thighs. She swallowed hard but went with the urge to hook her heels behind him, hovering her lips over his teasingly before letting them meet. The kiss that followed was scorching hot and demanding, with sultry promises of the way he could make her feel if she just let him. His tongue was caressing and yet severe, leaving no doubt in her mind that Damon Salvatore was anything but a skilled lover.

He seemed to know all of the ways to make her moan lightly, and even though he didn't need air, he was panting. Probably with the craving to have her and to not overstep any boundaries. However his hands couldn't be bothered to obey the same rules. While one steadied her against him, the other ventured up to her dress strap and pulled it down her arm. It shoved the cloth of her stripped red bra out of the way so that his fingers could torturously roll her nipple until she was whimpering loudly.

"Da—Damon…" She gasped out. Whatever she was going to say died the moment his quickly warming mouth replaced his fingers. She arched and yanked his hair at the nape of his neck as the ball of heat in her stomach exploded, spreading out to all the parts of her body that it could reach. Usually she had a level head—even in these conditions—but for some reason tonight she couldn't appear to get a grip on herself.

Maybe it was all of the drama in the past weeks or maybe it was the fact that he had been quite charming recently or maybe it was that ex shaped cloud hanging over her head; either way all she knew is that she wanted him to touch her. Now.

When he bit down she yelped and then dissolved into a low mantra of oh Gods and please. She felt completely carefree for once and she wanted to roll in it for as long as she could.

"Fuck, I never get tired of tasting you." He hissed, his expression one of total euphoria.

Her lashes fluttered. "Touch me."

The insufferable smirk returned. "Where?"

Blushing, she knew there was no way she could say it. "Damon just—you know where."

That he did. "You're being a naughty girl. If I knew role playing got you hot, I would have suggested it a long time ago."

She frowned but he washed it away with another kiss, sucking her bottom lip into his mouth. The slender fingers on his right hand tickled a path up her inner thigh until they brushed her equally stripped panties. He pushed the silky material to the side and rubbed his knuckles against her, testing the waters as it were. Idly she thought that if he had any doubts about her not wanting him, he didn't anymore. In just that short amount of time kissing him, she was damp and aching. It's like all of the need and yearning that she experienced when the spell first gripped her was suddenly coming back tenfold.

_Please perhaps it's the woods. I mean this is where it all first happened._

While Bonnie was indeed a virgin, she wasn't absolutely pure. She'd once let a boy get down her pants when she was fourteen after a dance because Caroline had just done it and made it seem so exciting. At the time she hadn't really understood what the big deal was and after a moment made
him stop. It wasn't until she started experimenting alone that she grasped the concept. Needless to say Damon had no problems grasping anything.

His palm was curved up as a single finger slid inside of her and began to stroke in and out lazily. Over and over before adding a second and then a third, forcing her hips to shudder along with his actions. Her head was pressed back to the tree, her tongue snaking out to lick her lips. Her legs tightened around his waist, drawing him closer, needing to feel his flesh sealed against her own.

He strummed her like a guitar, playing a song she'd never heard before but was rapidly beginning to love. Her sounds, once soft and timid were now unbridled and vivid; a string of breathy keening cries the closer she got to climaxing. And then his thumb was kneading her clitoris like fresh dough, and she lost all sense of right and wrong. Of past and future, caught up in the moment so entirely that all she could do was cling to him and hope it never ended.

When her orgasm happened it was like a barrel of fireworks ripping through the inside of her body, making a circle of phantom flames erupt out of thin air to char the area surrounding them. She barely noticed however, her muscles trying to lock his fingers into place. Damon groaned into the hollow of her neck, shivering, unable to stop himself from biting her again. A stifled shriek slipped out but she was too far gone to focus on the pain because it just made the pleasure that much better. She wasn't sure how long she coasted among the stars, but when she finally returned to Earth she felt sated yet…weak. Literally.

Guess there is a first for everything. Coming so hard that it literally takes something out of me. And where did all of this smoke come from? Did I… do this?

Damon slowly placed her feet to the ground and she stumbled but he caught her. "Whoa there. Totally cutting you off. You can't hold your finger sex."

She chuckled, blinking slowly. "Th—that's never happened before."

He hummed in reply. "I…may have got a little carried away while feeding. Not enough to do serious harm but just…enough to remove some of your pep."

"What?"

"Blood tastes better when it's filled with sex. And yours is already like the last cherry on top of a sundae."

"I thought you said you could control yourself?"

"I thought you said I'd never get you? And for the record, I can control myself. You're still alive, aren't you?"

Sighing, she shoved him away from her, righted her clothes and headed for his car. "Way to ruin the moment, Damon."

Frowning, he sucked his fingers into his mouth and caught up with her. "Hey…" Taking her wrist, he yanked her to him. "I'm sorry. But…it's not like you didn't enjoy it."

"Yeah but that's not the point. What if next time you can't stop?" She inquired.

"I will. No worries." He assured her. "Now that I know what I'm dealing with, I'll have a better handle on it." She went to reply but he stopped her. "You need to heal those wounds."

"Ugh he's right. He probably always thinks he is right. "Shouldn't I be more freaked out by this?" She
asked as he pierced his skin, making blood bubble up.

He shrugged; his beautiful face pale but engrossed in the conversation. "It's just blood, Bonnie."

In no mood to argue for arguments sake, she sucked the liquid into her mouth and swallowed. She felt her skin seal itself back together and backed off before it gave her the equivalent of a sugar rush.

"Did I set the woods on fire?" She motioned to the burnt leaves.

He smiled. "With my help."

Sigh. "If this happens again I could burn your house down. Or wherever we are could go up in flames." Pause. "Why do you look so intrigued?"

Damon tucked her hair behind her ear and grinned. "Have I told you how incredibly sexy it was making you come earlier?"

She blushed, she couldn't help it. "No…"

He pouted playfully. "Well it was. Pretty sure my dick got so hard it almost broke the zipper on my jeans."

Laughing, she punched him lightly in the stomach. *And yet…* "I'm sorry. I mean that you didn't get to…"

"Hm maybe not in the traditional sense but drinking you while you did is nothing to complain about though." He admitted re-buttoning his shirt. A yawn caught her by surprise and he snickered. "Spend the night at the manor. We'll snuggle and…talk about our hopes and dreams."

The pretty witch rubbed her big green eyes. "I can't. My dad would kill me if he came into my room and I wasn't there. After he got over being happy I was alive."

"Fine."

He huffed. Falling quiet, he tilted his head and studied her.

"What?" She questioned sleepily.

"Nothing just…" He took her hand, leading her towards his vintage ride. "Admiring how beautiful you are. Your skin especially—the color."

*Did I nod off?* "Oh well, thank you."

The vampire snorted. "Yeah I know how out of character for me to tell a girl she's beautiful."

*Well…* "Maybe it's not. Maybe back in the day you said it all of the time even if you didn't mean it. I think what matters now is that, *just now*, I believed you."

Damon was silent the rest of the way, lost in his own thoughts no doubt. She'd learned that is how he'd get whenever he was having serious, go against his nature thoughts. Even though she was tired, she remembered getting into his car and driving but somewhere along the line she must have fallen asleep. When her eyes opened again, she was in her room in bed. Beside her was Damon sleeping or pretending to be asleep. Still she made no noise as she got up and quickly put on her pajamas and brushed her teeth.

Afterwards she crawled back in and laid down, her head resting to his shoulder. Conversations from weeks earlier with Caroline—when she thought Damon was an abusive asshole—filtered into her brain out of nowhere. It was so *odd* how far all of them had come. Things she was sure she'd never
do or let him do...everything was turning upside down. But in some strange way she was...happy. Not head over heels happy but she didn't feel like that lonely girl watching everyone else around her have fun either.

That had to count for something.

~*~

Damon sat at the kitchen table, sipping from a cup of coffee while his eyes scanned the newspaper in front of him. He wasn't actually paying attention to the black words however; his mind was too busy reliving events from the previous night. The wonderful, dirty events from last night. Like he'd figured, dreaming about touching Bonnie was nice but doing it in real time was fucken amazing. The way she'd came alive under his hands was like seeing a shooting star streaking across the sky. She'd been hot and slippery—just the way he liked it.

Not to mention she tasted like ambrosia itself, and he didn't just mean her blood.

Smirking, he leaned back in the chair and exhaled, his brows twitching. And to think all I have to do is close my eyes and I can have it over and over again. However while getting to slide his fingers inside of her was great, he couldn't help but think about the fact that he hadn't pushed for more. And he always pushed for more. Feeding on Caroline also meant having sex with her. When the girl was hot enough and he had the time, it just happened. Until last night.

Not that I didn't want it to happen. If I had wanted it any more my hair would have fell out. Yet there he'd been; standing between caramel colored thighs with her cute dress hiked up around her waist, his hands in a place they'd never been before but he didn't seal the deal. Why? Cause he knew she wasn't ready and he honestly wanted to respect that. Ugh! It put a bad taste in his mouth just thinking about it!

A vampire's instinct was to not feel but try as he might he couldn't chase away what he felt for Bonnie Bennett. Deep down he knew he didn't want to anyway...still he decided pretending was the only way he could keep some of his sanity intact. After all he'd felt for Katherine and look how that had ended up. He needed major closure on that issue.

The little witch isn't Katherine... a voice whispered. He was trying to listen to it but sometimes it was hard. In any case he was beginning to realize that the way he felt for Bonnie and the way he would continue to treat everyone else suited him just fine. He didn't want to be a good guy. He didn't want to do the right thing or stop his snarky, sarcastic nature. He didn't wanna change because that would negate the past hundred or so odd years of being a total bastard. Damon had no time for guilt, especially not with Katherine roaming around.

Bonnie. What is this broad doing to me? Or more importantly, why am I enjoying it so much?

He couldn't remember half of the things he'd promised himself after the initial casting of the blood bond, but he figured it was mostly how he wouldn't let her get under his skin. Maybe that was just him being an idiot because really, it was inevitable. Perhaps if he'd stayed away from her he could have stopped it, but obviously some sick part of him liked the cat and mouse game. Liked to see her squirm whenever he brought up their shared dreams or her lustful feelings for him. Guess I should have been paying more attention to my lustful feelings for her as well.

You're kinda beyond lust now though. There was that damned voice again. Whatever, he didn't want to acknowledge anything. He would just go on making sure she didn't get murdered and...spending time with her. Titles and declarations weren't required.
"What time did you get in last night?"

Damon snapped out of his thoughts to find Stefan leaning against the doorframe watching him. "It wasn't last night, it was this morning. Not that it's any of your business."

The younger Salvatore smirked. "No need to be touchy, Damon. I don't care if you break curfew."

His brother flashed him a fake grin. "Gee dad thanks. Gonna give me a condom next and tell me to use it wisely?"

Stefan got the coffee pot and poured himself a cup. "I would but I think it defeats the purpose entirely since we can't have children."

"Speak for yourself. I got a witch girlfriend; there could be no limit to what we can't do." Wait…

"You just called her your girlfriend." Stefan was surprised. "Wow…"

"Oh shut up." Icy blue eyes rolled hard. "That was her idea, not mine. Apparently if I want a chance of talking her panties off we have to be exclusive. What is it with human girls and labels?"

His little brother was not fooled so easily however. "Right. You know Damon; there is nothing wrong with sincerely caring about someone. I mean I know it goes against everything you stand for, but maybe it's time to pick a new cause."

Sanctimonious Stefan. "It's too early in the morning, brother."

He smiled. "She really cares about you. It wouldn't kill you to be nicer…"

"I'm nice…to her." Damon pointed out. "It's the rest of you I can't stand."

Stefan snickered, shaking his head. "Why don't you do something nice for her then? That doesn't involve digging out a wooden bullet or rescuing her from peril."

"I am not going to the mall. All that chipper music and shit, I might end up eating everyone in sight."

"Um, okay. For that I suggest online shopping or…just making a gesture."

"Why do you care?"

"Bonnie is a good girl. She didn't have to help me save you but she did—even if she had her own reasons. After all that we have put her and Elena through, I just don't want to see her get hurt again."

"Always the white knight…"

"If you say so though this has nothing to do with that. I'm being honest. You can say whatever you want or act however you want, but it's obvious you feel something for Bonnie. If she makes you happy then treating her right doesn't sound like such a stretch."

Staring at his brother, Damon folded up the paper and stretched. "We're vampires, Stefan. We don't have it in us to be happy." Dumping his mug into the sink, he left the room and headed upstairs.

～*～

Standing by the bedside of Jonathan Gilbert, Damon mused on how easy it would be to kill him. He wasn't wearing his ring because who needed a ring when you weren't sure your fingers would last? It would be so easy to snap his neck or smother him with a pillow. The only reason he wasn't doing
either is because he needed to get that device back so that it couldn't cause anymore damage.

"Turn down service. Time to get up." He lightly poked at the man in the bed.

Jonathan groaned, his blue eyes slowly opening. When his vision cleared and he could see, he sighed deeply. "Come to finish me off?"

"I thought about it." The vampire admitted. "But I decided to give you a chance to save what's left of your miserable life. Tell me where the device is... and I'll let you live."

The blonde managed a weak chuckle. "I was stabbed... and my fingers were cut off. You'll have to excuse me if my memory is a little shoddy at the moment."

Damon twitched. "I know it was Katherine that did this to you."

That got his attention. "How do you know that? Have you seen her?"

In a matter of speaking... "Yes. I thought she was Elena at the time but still. This has her sense of flare all over it."

"Well, you must be thrilled then. The woman you love is back in Mystic Falls and apparently as cut throat as ever."

"I don't care about her. I want the pocket watch."

"You don't care about her? Since when? Since Miss. Bennett?"

"You know, you are in no position to be pissing me off right now."

"Hm. Katherine did this to me for—who knows, kicks maybe—but what do you think she is going to do when she finds out you're in love with someone else? Elena she perhaps would spare out of freakish curiosity but I doubt she'd be so forthcoming towards anyone else."

"See I keep hearing words but not the right ones. Do you really want me to rip out your catheter?"

Exhaling, Jonathan smiled. "I'll tell you where the device is, if you do something for me."

Damon made a face. "What?"

"Katherine probably has my ring, so I want your little witch friend to spell me another." Pause. "And I want to be healed... a few drops of vampire blood should do the trick."

*If I didn't hate this man completely, I might respect him.* "I'll have to think about it."

The other man nodded. "Don't think too long."

Resisting the urge to punch him, Damon strolled out of his room, coming face to face with a stunned Elena. He looked her over slowly—force of habit—and then smirked in his usual way. "Hello."

She arched a brow, folding her arms over her chest. "What were you doing in there?"

"Checking up on Jon." He said simply. "His little device is still out there and I think it should be in safer hands. Mine."

She stepped back, putting space between them. "I'm sure we'll find it. Not like he can use it in his condition."
He's not the one I'm worried about. "True…"

Running a hand through her long brown hair, she watched him. "I told Bonnie that I would support her in wanting to be with you, and I plan to do that. But if you hurt her, I'll find a way to strike back at you."

"Aww best friend threats, how cute." He grabbed his heart.

"I'm serious Damon." She repeated.

He tilted his head to the side. "I know you are." A beat. "I know how much she means to you."

"How much does she mean to you?" She inquired softly.

Grunting, he leaned against the wall. "Not really the sharing kind."

Frowning, she shook her head. "What is so hard about saying that you like her? Or…more? Remember when you asked me if you could trust Stefan? I—"

"Lied to me." He interrupted.

Elena's pretty face morphed into a scowl. "Yes and I apologized for that, and I meant it. My point is that I just wanna know the truth like you did." When he said nothing, she nodded. "We have an understanding, Damon—you trusted me once. And you know Bonnie wasn't the only one worried about you the night of the Founder's Day festival…"

Lowering his head, he looked up at her through long lashes. How did women always know what lines to say to get their way? "Bonnie is safe with me. Always."

It wasn't much but it was something. "I'm glad. I know that you can be a good guy—Georgia showed me that. If you can manage to keep that up, then I think she's lucky to have you."

The gorgeous vampire snickered. "We'll see, won't we?"

"Hm. But I stand by what I said. You break her heart and I'll shoot vervain in yours."

"Yes ma'am."

~*~

Sitting on her couch with the stereo droning in the background, Bonnie twirled her hair around her finger and bit back a grin. She'd been doing it all day, drifting off into daydreams even though she was supposed to be studying the grimoire. However her brain just didn't want to mesmerize spells, it wanted to be wistful and think about Damon shirtless. He looked so good shirtless, and those hips indents were suddenly one of the sexiest parts she'd never found sexy before.

She couldn't believe she'd let him get down her pants—or up her skirt as the case was. But considering how long they'd been doing the dance of making out, it wasn't like she just jumped into something with him. Time and time again she'd resisted her urges for him. They were a couple now so it was okay to give in just a little. Right?

Shifting, she smoothed her fingers across the leather jacket beside her and laughed at herself. If I wasn't into him before I would be now. Damon Salvatore was the dangerous bad boy but he was also strikingly gorgeous and he wanted her. Bonnie Bennett, the girl who was always the best friend or just one of the guys. In this moment she felt like such a teenager, giggling cause the hottest guy
showed an interest in the unlikely choice. But maybe she wasn't that unlikely. He was a vampire and she was a witch...they weren't exactly normal.

Not to mention if she thought about how old he was the entire situation seemed surreal. So it was best to pretend he was in college—at least that is what she would tell her father if he ever caught them together.

She had no marks from the bites but absently she told herself that he'd always be able to stop. No matter how sweet or delicious she might be, he wouldn't take it too far. Yet it un-nerved her how she hadn't even realized she was getting weak until it was too late. If any other vampire got the jump on her, she'd have a small window before she was toast.

Fiddling with her necklace, she flipped a page, prepared to spend a few minutes thinking about Damon's lips when several random words caught her attention. Reading slowly, she realized that it was a spell to strip another witch of their power or to transfer their power onto oneself. Immediately Clarissa popped into her mind. It would solve their problems if the crazy witch wasn't a witch anymore, but Bonnie didn't know if she could be that wicked. Also the spell called for some serious juju and she wasn't sure that she was strong enough to pull it off by herself. She didn't want to use all of her energy...like Grams had.

Ear marking the page, she decided to come back to it later.

Ring! Ring! Ring!

Grabbing her cell phone off the table, she pressed the talk button. "Hello?"

"Hey Bonnie." It was Tyler. "I—are you busy?"

"No I was just doing a little light reading." She snapped the book closed. "How are you doing?"

"I'm...hanging in there." He replied quietly. "Mom's a mess so I've been trying to help her with the arrangements and stuff. We still don't understand how this happened."

Neither do I. Mayor Lockwood wasn't a vampire. "I'm sure it was just a horrible accident, Ty."

"Yeah. Anyway the house is filled with casseroles and flowers that keep making me sneeze. Why do people think food and flowers automatically make the grieving feel better?" He sounded angry.

"I don't know. I guess they just want to do something." She explained. "It was the same way when Grams died. It's like some unspoken tradition..."

Tyler huffed. "Yeah. Let's talk about something else. Who's that guy I've seen you hanging out with?"

She grinned a little. Since agreeing to be a couple, she wasn't so concerned about being seen around town with Damon. Though the few times they'd been out it was just cruising in his car or playing darts at the Grille. "Heh um, he's Stefan's brother, Damon."

"I didn't know Stefan had a brother. Isn't that the guy Caroline can't stand?"

"Yeah. They had a...thing and it didn't end well."

"And now you're dating him?"

"I know she's gonna slap me when she's better. I'm actually kinda looking forward to it because at
least then I'll know she's okay."

"I know the feeling. I almost hope she reams me good for losing control of the car."

"Oh she will."

"So this Damon guy, he's not being a jerk to you like he was to her, is he?"

"No. He's a different person with me."

"Well if he ever gives you any trouble let me know. I'll straighten him out for you."

"Haha thanks. You're a good guy, Tyler."

A female voice called to him in the background and he sighed. "I gotta go. My mom is having a crisis. Again."

"Okay." She felt bad for him. "Remember you can call me any time."

"I will. Thanks. Bye." And then he was gone.

Hanging up, she scratched at her cheek, glancing over when the doorbell rang. Crawling off the couch, she strolled over and opened the door, smiling at who was on the other side. "Hi."

Damon's brows shot up in his flirty way. "Hello. Is your father home?"

"No." She responded. "Why?"

Flaunting his impressive speed, he swooped her up into his arms and had her on the sofa underneath him before she could blink. "No reason."

"Uh huh." She mused. "Did you close the door?"

"Of course. Do you think I was raised in a barn?" He nuzzled her neck, licking her skin.

She giggled. "No. But it's not like they had central air back in the 1800s."

"Oh whatever." He snorted, his hands inching up the sides of her blouse.

Her lashes flickered rapidly, and then she was recalling her conversation with Tyler. "Damon, when you were in the basement did you see Mayor Lockwood?"

Lifting his head, he tilted it to the side. "Yeah. Why?"

The cute little witch shrugged. "It's just, he wasn't a vampire so what was he doing down there?"

"When he came to I actually asked him that. Well I think he asked me first and then I came clean. I don't think he had any idea why he was down there." He retorted rather matter of fact. "And then an angry vampire snapped his neck so that was the end of our conversation."

Bonnie wet her lips. "So...there is something else in Mystic Falls besides vampires that are affected by the device. And whatever that something is, Mayor Lockwood was one of them. Which means Tyler probably is too." Pause. "There is way too much going on right now. Caroline is in the hospital, Elena thinks something is up with Jeremy and Katherine is lurking in the shadows. Now this."
Damon rested his chin to her chest, running his fingers through her silky black hair. "It's not your responsibility to police the town."

*True but…* "I know but I feel like I owe it to Grams. There are innocent people in this town who don't have a clue about the dangers lurking around the corner. If I don't help keep them safe then who will?"

He pouted adorably. "Do I have to…help?"

She laughed. "How about you just watch my back?"

"I can do that. I'll watch your back…" He smirked, kissing the exposed skin of her throat. "And your front…" Another kiss. "And your top." Kiss. "And your bottom." Kiss. "And of course…your center…"

Squirming, she chewed on her bottom lip but let her eyes slowly close. Damon just had a way of shutting down her brain completely. However it was times like this that she welcomed it. At least for a few hours she could zone out, focus on him and forget everything else.

~Fin~
Sleepover

Chapter Summary

A brief break from the uncomplicated brings people closer together.

Sleepover

Sitting in the middle of Elena Gilbert's bed with a bowl of popcorn on the left and bars of chocolate on the right a few nights later, Bonnie Bennett watched as her best friend slowly let the small brush glide over her toenails. It left a pretty pink color in its wake that sparkled when the light hit it. It was their first girl's night in a long time—before vampires starting coming out of the woodwork and Bonnie realized she could float feathers. They both felt it was needed so that they could relax and reconnect.

Of course from the moment they got settled, Bonnie recounted her time with Damon in the woods in great detail, amused that her friend's brown eyes were twice their normal size as she absorbed the information. It was so real and so normal, giggling about their boyfriends and how far they'd gone. It was like old times—way old—months ago before Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert lost their lives in that car accident. All that was missing was Caroline with tales that would put them both to shame.

Surprisingly enough she didn't feel shy about opening up to Elena about Damon like she assumed she would. Actually it was very much the opposite. In some odd way she felt liberated, as if she had won some great victory even though she knew Elena only had eyes for Stefan. However with the way things had went weeks earlier she couldn't be blamed for her emotions. In a sense she was stretched to the limit—wanting Damon and needing Damon—only to have him have feelings for her best friend who happened to look like his ex.

I'm shocked I've been able to handle it so well.

Blowing over the polish, Elena placed a small cotton ball between her friend's toes. "You little slut. I can't believe you let Damon get to second in the woods."

Bonnie blushed, sticking her tongue out. "He got to third, and didn't you let Matt do the same after a game under the bleachers?"

The brunette gasped in mock shock. "It was not after a game! It was after practice."

"Ha! Either way you were a slut too." The witch snickered. "Honestly I'm not sure how it happened. I just—I just needed him to touch me."

A nod. "I get it. When Stefan and I first started dating all I wanted to do was kiss him. He was so new and gorgeous, and you know that I felt something for him right off the bat."

I do seem to recall something to that effect. "Yeah. But there was a period where I hated Damon. Now I can't stop thinking about his lips and everything attached to them."

Elena smirked and reached for a chocolate bar. "That's because now you know what he can do. At first it was just kissing and dreams, but now you've tasted the dark side Bonnie Bennett. What's that like?"
If I get any redder I'll look like a lobster. "Scary but addicting. Like being on a rollercoaster and hating the drops but secretly wishing there were more." Pause. "Sometimes I honestly can't decide if wanting Damon is better or worse than the alternative."

Elena tilted her head to the side. "What do you mean?"

She sighed, gathering her thoughts. "I feel like I'm living in a parallel world and there is another me out there that can't stand Damon or vampires in general. She's angry but it helps her—it fuels her. I suppose I just wonder if maybe she's better off for not having these feelings. That in the end when this is all said and done, she'll still be whole."

"Oh Bonnie…" The other teen reached over and tucked her hair back. "I know it's frightening like times ten because Damon is a vampire and you never quite know what you are going to get with him, but you can't let your fear keep you from being happy. And I think when you get down to it, he does make you happy. I was scared of Stefan but I couldn't stay away. He's my destiny and in some strange way, maybe Damon is yours."

"I'm falling in love with him." She whispered; the words burning her tongue. "I tried so hard not to but obviously I didn't have a choice."

"Neither does he. You know he feels the same way, right?"

"No. I never know what he's feeling unless he's horny."

"Heh well be that as it may, Damon is falling for you too. He didn't come out and say it but it's clear."

"You asked him about it?"

"I told him that if he hurt you I would drive a stake through his heart. I got the impression that's the last thing he wants to do."

"Aw, I love you too."

Elena pushed her lightly. "We have to watch out for each other. It's what sisters would do."

Lowering her gaze, the other girl smiled and focused on her pretty painted toes. No matter what happened, she was going to do her best to make sure that Elena was always safe. I'll start by coming clean about Katherine very soon. Before she does anymore damage. That no matter what they got their happy ending. And when Caroline was well she was going to take better care of her as well. They were all missing parts of their family; her mother and Grams, Elena's parents and Caroline's father. So they had to be that missing connection for each other.

"What do you think is going to happen in say, five years?" She questioned as she pulled a pillow into her lap. "Do you think you'll still be with Stefan?"

"I hope so." Her friend responded dreamily. "I hope we're still together in twenty years."

"What about kids and…" Sighing, she waved a hand. "In twenty years he'll still look seventeen."

The brunette pouted. "I know. We haven't exactly talked about anything but if we're still together, then I suppose eventually he'll turn me."

Wow. "I don't know if I could ever go there."
She received a pat to her thigh. "Luckily we both don't have to worry about that for a long while."
Pause. "You let Damon feed on you, right?"

Bonnie gazed at the young woman across from her. That's one thing her and Stefan will never have. "Sometimes."

Dark lashes fluttered. "What's it like? I mean does it hurt or... I gave Stefan blood once but that was to save his life but I don't think that's how it is. We all know how that turned out by the way."

The witch weighed her answers carefully. "It's—it does hurt a little but in a strange way that's what makes it nice. You feel this prick and then tingles running across your skin all over. But then again he doesn't feed on me for food so..."

Elena fell to the side, propping her head up. "And you like it?"

*Do I like it?* "I—yeah. Kinda. It makes me feel closer to him, especially since he claims my blood is so much better than anyone else's. Man, this is so hard to explain."

Her bestie chuckled and drew imaginary designs on the comforter. "You're doing good. I'm following you."

*She has always been able to understand my inane ramblings.* "That night he first bit me it felt like a crazed animal had latched onto my neck. Now it's soft and the sucking is gentle. And he holds me close while he does it; sometimes he rubs my back or strokes my hair. He'll...moan or make this noise in his throat and for reasons I can't describe it does something to me." A beat. "He never takes too much."

"That's such a fine line though, isn't it?" The brunette inquired, sincerely curious. "I don't know if I'd—I mean even if he could—I'd probably be terrified that he might lose control."

Well... "Oddly enough I trust him. I also trust that Emily's spell continues to make sure he can't hurt me just in case one day I'm a little too scrumptious. When I was hiding out at the manor and he was feeding on me, it gave me this feeling of ecstasy that I'd totally forget all of my problems for a little while. Nowadays it's like that but also—I don't know—since he doesn't eat other people it's like our thing..."

Digesting, Elena rolled onto her back and stared at the ceiling. "You're gonna sleep with him, aren't you?"

Her cheeks grew hot again. She'd been asking herself that since their first heated kiss in his room. "That's the million dollar question. Remember those NC 17 dreams I told you about a while ago?"
After her friend nodded, she continued. "We still have them. The first few freaked me the hell out and it was always the same thing. Extremely hot sex all over his room, and I wanted it so bad that sometimes I'd wake up trembling."

Silence.

"I'd be lying if I said I didn't wanna be with him. He's gorgeous and oozes sex, and I know that he'll make me feel unlike I've ever felt before in my entire life. But I'm terrified." Bonnie confessed.

Elena poked her leg. "It doesn't hurt that bad the first time, and it gets better."

"I know that." She scrunched up her nose. "That's not the scary part. It un-nerves me but it's physiology. Having sex with Damon would be giving him the last piece of me. I want to be sure he deserves it first."
"There is nothing wrong with that." Sigh. "I know a lot of people say it's nothing, but I don't think it's weird to want your first time to be special. Or to want the guy you're with to appreciate you and love you. It's not just stupid romance movie crap. It's real life."

That's what worries me unfortunately. "Least if it were stupid romance movie crap I know at the end Damon would propose or something instead of skipping town."

The brunette giggled and sat up. "When Stefan and I broke up, it was like all the lights in the room went out and we hadn't even done it yet so I get it. As crazy as this idea is going to sound, maybe you should talk to Damon about it."

Bonnie snorted loudly. "He won't take it seriously. He's only serious when something is trying to kill me."

"You could try. Communication is the key. When Stefan started being honest with me, even with all of the other drama, things got better."

"I guess. It has been easier to talk to him lately."

"See? Besides you're not just connected by magic anymore. You're his girlfriend and that means something."

"Let's hope it means something to him too."

~*~

Lounging on the red couch in the grand living room of the Salvatore home, Bonnie stared into the fireplace as her mind wandered aimlessly. She was wearing one of Damon's soft, long sleeved knit shirts and each time she shifted, the smell of his cologne drifted into the air. The sounds of Florence + The Machine's I'm Not Calling You A Liar were thumping from the stereo over in the corner, climbing up the stairs to where Stefan and Elena were in his room. Probably being naughty as two people in a relationship often were.

It was late at night or early in the morning depending on how you looked at it. Creeping after midnight and steadily heading towards the AM hours. After eating all of their chocolate and popcorn, Elena suggested they sneak over and see their boyfriends. Jenna was too busy tending to Jeremy so that is what they had done. She also figured that Elena needed an escape and Stefan always provided that for her. She could relate because of Grams.

Sometimes it was too much to worry about anything let alone the serious stuff. Besides Jeremy wouldn't talk to her anyway so what else was she supposed to do? Maybe Stefan would give her some good advice on how to approach the subject of him accidentally taking too many pills to help him sleep.

Sighing, the witch sat up and put her feet on the floor. The song ended and she glanced to the CD player; the play button switching back by itself to repeat the song once again. Standing, she moved to the front door and opened it, gazing out at the courtyard and then up to the stars in the sky. Such a beautiful night...

Next she was feeling a cool hand on the back of her neck, threading into her mass of black curls. She smiled and looked up as Damon walked around and pulled her outside a little bit, sliding his hand down to her waist.

"You look like you're having serious thoughts. Figured I'd come over here and put a stop to them." He grinned, swaying their bodies from side to side.
She chuckled lightly, wrapping her arms around his neck. "I like this song."

He listened for a moment. "Has a certain appeal I suppose. So..." He popped his lips. "What's with the broody, watching the fire burn, thing? You're not picking up Stefan's habits are you?"

Shaking her head, she threaded her small fingers into the back of his hair. "Not that I know of. Just... thinking about stuff."

"Deep stuff?" He asked, and she nodded. "Well that's no fun."

_Tell me about it._ "No, it isn't."

Spinning her around slowly, he picked a beat in the song and kept tempo with it. "C'mon. Tell Daddy what's wrong."

A laugh escaped before she could stop it. "Well first would be the fact that you just referred to yourself as _daddy_, which is creepier only by the fact that you are old enough to be my _great_ great grand daddy." She laughed again when he spun them around rapidly, her feet lifting off the ground. "I suppose second would be something more normal."

"Such as?" He dripped her dramatically.

_You can do this. You can have this conversation with him because he's your boyfriend now._ "Sex."

Now she had his full attention. "You are right. Sex is very normal. We should be upstairs having _very_ normal sex right now. Well..." Trailing off, he righted her. "Maybe not completely normal..."

Bonnie snorted teasingly. "If I try to have a real conversation with you about this, will you at least humor me?"

Mock sighing, he pressed his lips together and continued rocking with her. "If I must. But don't think I'm not crying on the inside or whatever."

"Fair enough." She giggled. _As long as we keep in motion I might be able to get through this without having a stroke._ "I just—I just—I'm finding it harder and harder to resist you."

Damon tilted his head to the side, his expression quite intrigued by what she had just said. He took the opportunity to slip his hand under _his_ shirt, feeling her warm skin. "Then why do you keep trying?"

She shivered and wet her lips, becoming lost in the piercing color of his icy blue eyes. _God they are amazing._ "Because I—I'm scared."

He swallowed whatever he was going to say and instead opted for, "Why? People have been having sex since the dawn of time. I'm no _slouch_ at it—I totally plan to make you see stars. Maybe even planets. _Maybe_ even aliens."

_Ooh boy..._ "It's not the act itself...well maybe a little but I could get over that once we're..." She blushed. "Anyway, Damon we didn't get together under _normal_ circumstances. You hated me and I hated you...and then suddenly we're in each other's heads. I've changed a lot since the night we became connected and most of that is because of you."

"Actually it's because of Emily."
"True. But it was your need for revenge on her that sealed our fates. You said I shouldn't remove our connection but you never have me a reason why."

"Well not like it was really interfering with my day to day activities."

"Don't do that."

"Do what?"

"Pretend. Hide. Flick that button to cut off. Not with me."

"What is it that you want me to say, Bonnie? You know why."

"You like me? You like being bonded to me?"

"Yes. Just as you like being bonded to me."

"I do. I thought it would wreck my life but it's been comforting in a way. Knowing I had someone looking out for me, even if they didn't want to."

"Then what's the issue?"

Pressing her cheek to his chest, she chewed on the inside of her jaw. "I'd like to know that if we—if we make love that you're not gonna pretend it's no big deal. Cause it will be for me."

Damon frowned to himself. "You think I'd ditch you afterwards?" Before she could answer, he continued. "Just how much faith are you lacking in me, Bonnie? I'm a creature of habit but I've tried to be different with you. It's not something that happens overnight, and it's not something I can magically make happen. I feel but everything inside of me is telling me that I shouldn't feel because it's ten times worse than anything else. Maybe you're the one who needs to figure out what she wants…" He released her. "Cause from that night at your car when we first met again, I think I've been pretty candid about what I want."

He brushed past her and headed into the yard. Groaning, she followed. "Damon, wait. Yeah he's wanted me but he's also wanted everything else. How do I decide which is bigger? I'm not trying to upset you or negate all that you have done for me. It's just hard to read you sometimes. I get snapshots of your kindness or your ability to reach out to others, and then you shove it down deep and I know it's because it hurts…" She grabbed his arm and turned him to look at her. "But if you tell me right now that even with Katherine being back in town that you're with me, then I'll believe you. I'll trust you."

Exhaling, his brows narrowed. "Why? Why now? Because we're dating?"

"Because I'm falling for you. Hard. So I wanna be able to trust you with everything, not just my life." She said truthfully albeit softly. "I'm tired of fighting against what we're gonna be, but that doesn't mean I won't keep fighting so that I don't get my heart broken. Unlike you Damon, I can't turn off the pain once it's there."

He didn't reply but instead fought hard to maintain whatever emotions that wanted to seep out through his face. She stared at him for a minute and then retreated back into the manor, climbing the stairs slowly until she was walking into his room. She considered whether she wanted to go home or stay, and opted for sitting on the edge of his bed. It wasn't that she didn't trust Damon now, it was just hard to shift that trust to matters of the heart. Katherine was back in Mystic Falls and although he hadn't mentioned her, he had to be thinking about her. And there was no doubt in her mind that they would all cross paths with her eventually. To be honest it made her angry.
She didn't know the vampire who doppelganger'd her best friend, but it was clear that she was a petty bitch who took without asking. She was poison to Damon and naturally if she got her claws into him again, she'd destroy him from the inside out. He was capable of so much good when he wanted to be. She feared that Katherine would erase those parts of him for the fun of it. Treat turning him back into a monster as some sort of a game to see how far she could push him. And if he reverted, she would be the one caught in the crossfire. Obviously her feelings wouldn't just disappear because he changed.

They might even get stronger. I might be overcome with this urge to save him from himself. Just like Elena was for Stefan.

However I suppose there is another way to look at his being offended. Why would he care how I see him unless he cares for me? Why would he be insulted if all he wanted was to get me into bed?

Pouting, she flopped back and stared at the ceiling. She fiddled with the necklace around her neck and closed her eyes. "Damon come to bed..." She knew he could hear her. "...either way I'm not leaving so...take your time."

She'd come too far to give up now.

~*~

Damon Salvatore didn't like to brood although he could, but he decided Stefan had the monopoly on it so he tried to avoid it whenever possible. When he was screwed up in the head he turned to alcohol and tonight it was Jack Daniels. He didn't wanna get drunk so he wasn't knocking back shot after shot, but he was slowly sipping while tapping his finger on the glass decanter. He was trying to focus on Bonnie and their earlier conversation, but other conversations kept drifting into his thoughts.

One in particular stood out—the one he'd had with Jeremy Gilbert the night he almost roasted on the barbeque.

"Anna said that vampires don't have to feel pain. That they can turn it off if they shut out their humanity."

"That's very true."

"Is it easier that way?"

"Is what easier?"

"Life."

"Life sucks either way, Jeremy. Least if you're a vampire you don't have to feel bad about it if you don't want to."

"Is that what you did?"

"I did it for—I did it for a very long time. And life was a lot easier".

Some people thought that taking a life wasn't easy, but for him it was like riding a bicycle. Simple to start and effortless to remember. He had so much blood on his hands that sometimes no matter how much he washed them; he could still feel it under his nails. But the whole time he was shutting out his humanity, he didn't give a fuck. Seeing others in pain was just a way to pass the time. Experiencing their fear and watching the light fade out of their eyes was all just one giant game that he loved to play.
Coming back to this stupid town was supposed to be about watching it burn. Yet I'm the one dancing on hot coals.

Truthfully he was more surprised that a Bennett witch was worming her way into his head more so than Elena had. She was obvious because she looked like Katherine. Of course he'd feel a modicum of something for her even if it was just lust. With Bonnie it was different and it had the possibility of ending either very good or extremely bad. *Not that I should give a fuck…*

But he did. Spell or whatever, he did and a tiny part of him liked it, made him feel like he wasn't such a lost cause after all. Stupid part, if it knew what was good for it; it'd shut the hell up and disappear. He needed to pretend otherwise so that he didn't go crazy. He *needed* his walls and not just because they made everything uncomplicated. They were his best defense against humans…and everything his own humanity carried with it.

Cracking his neck, he sat his glass on the table and swaggered up the stairs. *I've put this off long enough. Time to be yelled at.* He reached the top and then rounded the corner, leaning against the doorframe to take in the scene before him.

Bonnie was lying in the middle of his large bed, her jeans slung over the bottom. Her dark curls were fanning the pillows with a few falling across her cheek. Her chest rose and fell steadily which meant that she was asleep, probably dreaming. He inhaled and her scent hit him hard in the face. It was *all* over the manor and *all* over him; sent his brain flashing back to their interlude in the woods. Her warmth, her soft skin, and the way she shattered for him and him only—he was royally fucked.

Crossing the room, he sat on the edge of the mattress and smoothed his knuckles on her face. He wasn't sure what she wanted from him or what she wanted to hear him say in relation to sex. Probably something sappy about *love* and treasuring yourself, but that's not the man he was. Hell he wasn't even a *man* anymore and hadn't been for a very long time. Everything he touched turned to ashes, even when he was *trying* to be decent. One day he would make Bonnie crumble because that is just how things *went*. Of course he'd attempt to shield her but he wasn't sure he would be able to entirely. He had an unspoken tradition of regressing when things got too close or too real.

*The one virgin left in Mystic Falls and I get stuck with her. Karma really is a bitch.* He snickered at his own thoughts. "Bonnie?"

She murmured and started to stir. "Hm?" Awakening more, she rubbed her eyes. "Still mad at me?"

The corners of his mouth twitched. "Very."

She pouted and slowly sat up. "Gonna kick me outta bed?"

He arched a brow. "I'm mad, not an idiot." Sighing, he pinched her chin. "You've got my head all twisted. I don't *like* being twisted. It leads to complications…"

"Such as? Making you show genuine emotion every fifty years?" She teased. "Damon look, I heard what you were saying and I understand. But I'm not asking you to start sharing your secrets with Stefan or donating money to charity. Just be straight with *me* and we're good."

*Perhaps that is half the point. Maybe that is a lot harder than being Johnny Sunshine to the world.* "I'll see what I can do."

Eying him, she leaned and captured his lips in a kiss. "You annoy the hell out of me, yet that is starting to be kinda cute."

He grinned, happy for the more light-hearted tête-à-têtes. "Everything I do is cute. I'm a very good
looking guy, Bonnie. You're lucky to have such a stud as your arm candy."

"Yeah but I haven't exactly been able to show you off." She pointed out. "We should go out on a real date. To a movie or something."

"You're intent on trying to domesticate me, aren't you?"

"Only on the days we aren't fighting for our lives."

"So every other Tuesday."

"Seems like it."

Damon smirked in response before removing his shirt and throwing it over into a chair. The second after he did, Bonnie was touching him, sliding her fingers across his ashen shoulders and down along his arm. She seemed fascinated by it suddenly or maybe she was just branding it to memory, he wasn't sure. Either way it felt good so he let her continue.

"On tv when vampires are turned, they stay how they were forever." She whispered. "But you guys can change, right?"

He nodded. "Our hair. The blood helps with the body aspects. Keeps us fit."

Looking down to his hand, she studied his ring, slowly slipping it off. "It's weird that one little piece of jewelry is the reason you can walk around in the sun."

Tilting his head to the side, he could hear Jonathan Gilbert's words ringing in his ears. "Speaking of jewelry, Elena's Uncle wants another ring. And he wants you to spell it for him."

"What?" She handed it back to him. "Spell it to do what?"

"Invincibility, immortality—the works." He replied with a snort. "He and Elena's father both had rings spelled by Emily that gave them some sort of indestructible advantage over everyone else. When wearing it he can't be harmed…which is why Katherine hacked off his fingers first. My guess is that she has the ring now."

Bonnie exhaled. "Why would I help him? He tried to kill you and Stefan."

Good point. "He still has the device and he refuses to give it to me unless I get him another ring. I'd kill him but apparently if he dies, everything he knows about my less than human past goes to the Council."

"I—I'll look into it then." She said skeptically. "I don't wanna take on too much magic wise though. I don't wanna become too depend on the power."

"You should embrace it." Damon whispered seductively. "It's in you whether you use it or not. I say why let it go to waste."

She managed a small smirk. "You would. I…ran across this spell to strip Clarissa of her powers or to transfer them to myself…"

"Do it." He said without hesitation. "She's a whacko who wants us both dead. You'd just be protecting yourself."

"I don't know…" She whined. "It's so evil."
It just so happens that I know a lot about evil. I wrote the book on evil. Or I should have. "And her trying to run you over wasn't? Bonnie, obviously you're a sweet girl with a good heart but things are changing baby. Clarissa is out for blood and who knows what the hell Katherine wants now that she is back. I think it's time for you to take off the kid gloves and be that bad ass witch who stopped Stefan that night in the woods with just a simple look."

Her brows narrowed in thought and he slipped his ring back on, flexing his fingers. He had no doubt that Bonnie would turn up the heat when it was needed but it never hurt to gently nudge her from time to time. He could be like her mentor when it came to getting her to lightly step over a line that perhaps she found shaky. Nothing wrong with being bad every once and a while. Keeps the cheeks rosy.

A low growling noise cut through the quiet and he snickered when she blinked and slapped a pillow over her stomach. "Hungry?"

"I could eat." She admitted. "Haven't really had anything but chocolate and popcorn, but that was a while ago."

Sighing, he stood as if it pained him to do so and grabbed her arms, tossing her over his shoulder. "I suppose I could cook you something then." He started downstairs. "But just know this isn't a restaurant and I'm not a chef."

"Of course not." The witch laughed. "Chefs usually cook in shirts and the customers usually wear pants."

Formalities... "Maybe they shouldn't." He sat her on the table and turned to the fridge. "Let's see what we got here. Blah blah blah crap Stefan likes, blah blah blah. Any requests?"

Stretching her arms out, she shrugged. "Surprise me."

Damon snickered low. "I thought I already did that?"

"Frequently." She mused.

He winked. "How about Pasta Puttanesca?" She nodded a yes and he continued. "It means whore's pasta I hear. Not that I'm calling you a whore."

Bonnie chuckled and lobbed an apple at the back of his head, which of course he caught without even turning around. "Gee thanks. Um, can you leave out the anchovies though?"

"Mmhmm. I'm cooking for her. Should I be concerned that I'm cooking for someone? A tiny voice reminded him that he cooked for Elena and Jenna and he rolled his eyes at it. Is that your main purpose now? To irritate the hell out of me?"

Yes.

Ugh.

The handsome vampire tried to annoy his surroundings—except for Bonnie of course—and instead focused on the meal that he was preparing. Soon a lovely smell was filtering through the kitchen, slowly making its way through the entire house. Bonnie inhaled and commented on his skills, surprised that he was such a good cook. He replied that of course he would be a good cook, there wasn't anything he wasn't good at.

Stirring the sauce with a wooden spoon, he tasted it. "Mm perfect." Turning to her, he offered her a
little sample. "What do you think?"

She leaned forward and took the bite, licking her lips. "That's really good."

He grinned. "Was there any doubt otherwise?"

Giggles sounded next and suddenly Elena and Stefan were strolling around the corner hand in hand. She was in one of his button down shirts and they both looked insanely pleased with each other. The brunette noticed that the kitchen wasn't empty first, poking her boyfriend in the side. "Looks like we weren't the only ones in the mood for munchies."

Stefan was thoroughly entertained. "Apparently not."

Bonnie and Elena looked at each other for a moment before bursting out into infectious laughter, sharing some joke that hadn't been spoken into existence. However naturally it dealt with their current situation.

Damon shook his head; yeah... all of this will end well I'm sure...

~Fin~
Breaking Inside

Chapter Summary

Only Katherine could make them shatter one by one.

Chapter Notes

This next installment takes place during 2.01 (The Return).

Breaking Inside

Bursting through the doors of the Mystic Falls Hospital, Bonnie Bennett hurried down the pristine halls towards Caroline Forbes' room. She'd received a call earlier on her cell from Matt telling her that their friend—his girlfriend—had taken a turn for the worst and had to go back into surgery. Something about internal bleeding and needing to find out where it was coming from. There was a good chance that she could die.

A world without Caroline just wouldn't be right. Sure she had her problems and vices like everyone else, but when the chips were down she always managed to come through. And there were times when she was completely sincere with her affections. Before her father ran off with another man, she'd been this bubbly, caring person from a two parent household. It was natural that shaking that up would change her outlook on life and herself.

This is all my fault. I didn't remove the spell on the device properly and now everyone I care about is paying the price. How am I supposed to fix this?

Running a hand through her hair, she rounded a corner to see Matt sitting on a bench looking like he had no reason to go on. With what was happening in his life, she couldn't blame him. "Matt, hey. I came as soon as I heard."

"Bonnie, hey." He stood and accepted her hug. "Thanks for coming."

"Of course." She said softly. "What's going on? I thought Caroline was doing better…"

He sighed deeply. "She was and then last night something happened. They said the monitors started going crazy and she just, took a turn for the worst. They had to take her back to surgery."

"She's going to be fine." The little witch related. "She has to be."

"I hope so. I—I don't know what I would do if…" He let the sentence die. "How could this happen? Tyler isn't a bad driver. I still don't understand how he crashed his car or that stupid noise he said he heard."

That he heard because of me. "I'm sure everything will be explained or whatever. All we need to do now is focus on having good thoughts and making sure Caroline pulls through."
The blonde flopped down hard. "I'm gonna wait here in case the doctor comes out or something. They won't really tell me anything because I'm not family but it won't stop me from asking."

Nodding, she gave his shoulder a squeeze. "Don't worry, Matt. She's gonna be fine." Pause. "I'm gonna go get you some coffee. You look really tired."

"Thanks." He whispered, turning his eyes back towards the double doors to the operating rooms.

Exhaling, she turned on her heels and headed for the snack room, her mind whirling with different thoughts. Something was up with Tyler and she felt as if she needed to figure it out. That she wouldn't be able to rest until she understood why he'd been affected by Jonathan Gilbert's device. It just didn't make sense because he wasn't a vampire and neither was his father...so what was their deal? Why had they heard what only supernatural ears could pick up?

_Is Tyler a something else too? And if so, what?

Drifting past the nurse's station, she was surprised when she literally bumped into her best friend Elena Gilbert. They embraced and the brunette asked, "Bonnie, how's Caroline? I came as soon as I heard."

"She's weak. They don't know if she's gonna make it." Bonnie replied sadly.

Elena's eyes widened in shock and she accepted another hug from her friend. "What? I—is there something you can do? Like, a spell or something?"

_God I wish it were that easy._ Before she could reply, Damon Salvatore stepped into view from where he'd been eavesdropping. "Unfortunately my little witch doesn't know how just yet. Do you?"

She arched a brow. "No. I don't. What are you doing here?"

He slipped an arm around her shoulder and pulled her against his side. "Sheriff Forbes called me. Apparently she needs my assistant on the whole Mayor Lockwood being killed matter. I figured it was the least I could do—I like Liz."

She leaned to him for support. It was nice to have someone there for her for a change. "Sheriff Forbes called me. Apparently she needs my assistant on the whole Mayor Lockwood being killed matter. I figured it was the least I could do—I like Liz."

She leaned to him for support. It was nice to have someone there for her for a change. "What are we going to do? Caroline is in big trouble and I don't have the skills to make her better. I've been studying but something tells me the big stuff takes time."

The vampire looked between her and the other female. "I can give Caroline some blood..."

"No, no way." Elena shook her head, not liking that one bit.

"No just enough to heal her." He explained. "She'll be safe in the hospital—it'll be out of her system in a day. She'll be better, Elena."

The brunette wet her lips. "It's too risky. I can't agree to that."

Bonnie gazed up at him with big round green eyes. _Vampire blood does have healing properties and with the way things are going, this could be our only chance to make sure Caroline makes a full recovery. It's a precarious fix but better than the alternative._ "Do it." When they both blinked at her in surprise, she continued. "This is Caroline, okay? We can't let her die. Do it."

Damon smiled at her. "She'll be good as new."

"I can't believe we're considering this." The other teenager sighed. "I mean I don't want Caroline to..."
"die either but this? And Bonnie, since when are you okay with going to this extreme?"

**Good question.** "I just—it was my fault that Tyler crashed in the first place. That stupid device did something to him and he lost control…and now our best friend is fighting for her life. If she dies I'll never forgive myself."

Elena squeezed her hand. "It wasn't your fault. You *tried* to remove the spell, that counts for something."

**Not enough.** "This is the only way to make sure she's okay."

Turning her big brown eyes to Damon, she waved a hand. "And you're okay with doing this for Caroline?"

He shrugged nonchalantly. "I'm doing this for *Caroline* or even for her mother. But especially not for Caroline." A beat. "I'm doing this for Bonnie."

The witch swallowed thickly and tried to keep her face neutral. She was still getting used to Damon *trying* to be a good boyfriend because he was still kinda horrible to most people. Elena excluded of course. Yet the fact that he wanted to save her pain by healing her friend spoke volumes to some of the stuff that went on in his head. "Thank you."

Another shrug. "Just doing my part as a good little Mystic Falls citizen."

Dragging her hand through her hair, Elena groaned. "I should get home and check on Jeremy; Stefan was nice enough to come over and play babysitter for a while. I still can't believe he wanted to become a vampire. That he *actively* tried to kill himself."

"It's been a weird couple of weeks." Bonnie voiced. "I should go get Matt his coffee. I think I'm gonna stick around and offer him moral support."

"Okay." A sigh. "Call me if there is any change."

"I will." The other girl responded. As Elena walked off, she poked Damon in the side. "It's time to tell them about Katherine."

He made a face. "Why now? We haven't heard a peep out of her since she sliced and diced Jon. Maybe she's left town."

"And maybe she hasn't." Her fingers clutched at the material of his jacket. "Damon I can't keep lying to Elena. I *don't* want to either. With everything that is going on, she *needs* to know the truth. Please?"

His brows narrowed but he relented. "Fine. I'll tell her and Stefan tonight. But I hope you know I'm only doing this to get deeper into your *good graces.*"

Her lips turned up at the ends before she could stop them. "How can you manage to make something so simple sound so dirty?"

Winking, he cupped her cheeks. "Years and *years* of practice." And then he was kissing her, biting gently at her bottom lip. "Go play bestie to the jock. I'll swing by later and fix his groupie."

Snorting, she wrapped her arms around his neck. "Thank you."

"Yeah yeah." And then he was strolling away towards the exit.
She watched him go, unable to stop herself from admiring everything that was Damon Salvatore. He wasn't perfect by any means but oddly enough, he was there when she needed someone. From that first night in the forest with the vampire named Patrick to the night her Grams died, he'd been one of the only constant things in her life. True she hated him and their bond in the beginning, yet now it was so comforting because it was maturing into something more. They were dating and steadily moving closer and closer to having a truly physical relationship. She trusted him. Maybe not completely but it was only a matter of time before she would. Obviously.

Out of all the people she ever figured she would need, it was outrageous to discover his name near the very top. But he brought this fire out in her that no one else had been able to. This fire that she was sure she'd lose or wasn't strong enough to hold on to. Damon helped her be strong because she had to keep up with him. He'd once told her that she was the only one who could put him down with a single look; the only one that he'd go down for. Sure it was a bit sexual in nature but she'd got the deeper meaning. And if she were tough enough to take down someone like him, she could take on the world.

The difference now is that he would be by her side while she did. Helping her every step of the way in his annoying way. Perhaps that is why they worked out so well, because it wasn't the conventional type of pairing that most people wanted. Normal guys never appealed to her that much. She'd lose interest or they would cause she was just a little weird for whatever reason. Now she had someone just as weird as she was, and it worked for her.

Apparently it was also working for Damon as well.

Smiling to herself, she glanced up at the signs bolted to each wall and started for the snack room.

~*~

Damon considered himself a ladies' man and had for many, many years now. His looks got him a lot and what they didn't, compulsion did the rest. For a long time playing the role of evil vampire had been more than enough to keep him occupied while waiting for the comet to pass through again. Only once and a while would he just be some gorgeous guy…like he'd been with Bree while she was in college. She knew he was a vampire but that hadn't stopped her from riding him six ways to Sunday. You'd be surprised what some chicks would let slide due to a pretty face.

However here he was…in a relationship for the first time in one hundred and forty five years. Naturally he assumed he'd be with Katherine by now and they would be tearing the world apart at the seams. Eating anyone and everyone they wanted. Yet that was not the case. Instead he was playing hero to the Sheriff of a town he hated, offering to save her irritating as hell daughter and dating the descendant of the woman who'd betrayed him.

When it's said out loud like that it doesn't make any damn sense. And I can't even fall back on the age old that I'm being forced into situations beyond my control.

Begrudgingly he admitted his blood bond had less and less to do with his reasons for helping her. It had kept her alive in the beginning but now it was the equivalent of an internet dating service. Just a means to an end to hook them up. Now much of what he did was because he wanted to, not because he was being made to. The spell kept their dreams spicy and their connection fresh; even now he could feel her essence pulsating underneath his skin whether he wanted to or not. He did but that was another matter altogether.

Bonnie was heat—pure and simple. He could detect it in the tips of his fingers and at the base of his scalp. After feeding on her his entire body simmered for hours on end, and that was something not even the sun was able to do to him. When she was scared he knew it. More importantly he wanted to
help her and protect and keep her all to himself.

She was the only one he didn't wanna disappoint, and on his off days that really pissed him the fuck off.

"Damon?"

Jerking out of his thoughts, he smiled. "Elena."

She frowned at him. "What are you doing here?"

"Smelling the roses."

"I'm serious. I thought you'd be at the hospital with Bonnie."

"I'd rather not sit and watch her console your ex. Besides, I need to talk to you and Stefan."

"About what?"

He hissed. "It's complicated."

"Okay." Digging her keys out of her pocket, she slipped them into the door and moved inside with him trailing behind her. Upon entering the living room, she blinked at the sight of Stefan pulling himself up off the floor. "Stefan? Wh—what happened?"

Her boyfriend looked completely caught off guard, as if he didn't know how to explain the situation to her. Damon however knew exactly what had happened. Looks like I won't be easing into this at all. "Katherine happened."

Elena's dark lashes fluttered and she pulled at her purple top. "Oh God! Jeremy." She took off up the stairs to check on him.

Well this is going to be an interesting night. "Did she say what she wanted?"

Stefan shook his head, pacing back and forth in front of the kitchen table. "No."

Of course not that would be too easy. "Woman certainty does know how to make an entrance."

His brother frowned. "She said she fooled one of us at least. What does that—what does that mean?"

Damon looked over his shoulder, his face impartial. "She pretended to be Elena...a while ago when I showed up to talk to Jeremy about Anna."

"A while ago?" The other Salvatore inquired. "Just how long have you known about Katherine being here?"

"A while." He smirked, facing him. "I thought she was just here to kill Jon so I didn't say anything. I was gonna tell you though."

Stefan was dubious. "I'm sure you were."

There are those judging frown lines I've come to know so well.

Silence stretched between them for a few moments and then Elena was returning. "I told Jeremy. I can't lie to him anymore."
"You alright?" Her boyfriend asked as he crossed the room to her.

"No I'm not alright." She admitted. "I thought that with all of the tomb vampire gone things would get better."

He sighed. "I know. We all did."

She scowled. "Katherine was in this house, that means she's been invited in. What are we gonna do?"

Damon leaned onto the counter. "Move." *It's actually a pretty good suggestion.*

"Very helpful." The brunette snapped. "Thank you."

Rolling his eyes, he waved a hand. "Katherine wants you dead there's zero you can do about it, you will be dead." He grinned cheekily. "So clearly she has other plans."

Younger Salvatore spoke up. "Right. And we need to find out what those other plans are and not provoke her in the process." He paused, gazing at his brother. "What happened that night when you thought she was Elena?"

*Crap. Do I come clean or make up some type of excuse? What would Jesus do? Eh... "To risk another frown line encroaching on a very crowded forehead..."* He smoothed his fingers on the countertop. "We...kissed."

Elena made a face. "And you thought it was me?"

Before she could go on, Stefan interrupted her. "What do you mean you kissed?"

Never able to resist annoying his brother, Damon smirked and tapped his lips. "Well you know when two lips pucker and they go..." He made kissing noises, barely super speeding out of the way before Stefan made a go for him. *I'm such a bastard but it's so much fun.* "Don't be obvious, Stefan."

The younger of the two stalked for him again, but Elena jumped between them to diffuse the situation. "Stefan he—he kissed Katherine, not me." She touched her heart, glaring at Damon. "I wouldn't do that. Speaking of which..." She folded her arms over her chest. "Does Bonnie know about this?"

He tilted his head to the side. "I haven't actually gotten around to telling her."

Furious, the brunette poked him hard. "What the hell are you doing? Do you think this is a game?"

"I know it's not." He replied, his voice with a slight edge.

"I don't think you do." Her expression was one of disgust. "Bonnie loves you. She's having all of these feelings and thoughts about you and you're kissing someone else. And she doesn't even know!"

Twitching, he flared his nostrils. "It's no big deal. It happened before we decided to be serious and it hasn't happened since. Not that it's any of your business anyway."

She balked. "Are you kidding me? Bonnie is my best friend—she might as well be my sister. She's looked out for me for all of my life and I'm totally repaying the favor. You have to tell her what you did...and that you thought it was me."

*Yeah let's not and never mention it again.* "Why? I mean what good would it do to tell her about the
kiss? She knows Katherine is in town somewhere—I didn't keep that from her. Bringing up the kiss would cause waves and we just started to settle. Do you really wanna hurt Bonnie like that because that is all you'll be doing."

"Oh no don't try to turn this around on me!" She exclaimed. "Either you tell her what you did or I will."

_Are you fucken kidding me? "Who says I'll let you?"

Elena rolled her eyes. "You don't control me, Damon or anyone else. And I won't let you destroy my best friend or keep her as a back up until you're reunited with Katherine."

"Fuck you." He growled. "Bonnie knows how I feel about her. She knows and I don't have to explain myself to anyone. Least of all you two."

Stefan snorted. "Maybe you should explain why you were kissing who you thought was Elena in the first place then."

"Maybe you should focus more on why I thought she'd let me." Damon grinned widely.

Holding a hand up, the petite brunette stopped all further conversation on the matter. "We don't have time for this, guys."

"Later." Stefan vowed, looking positively vengeful.

_This should be fun._

Ignoring them both, she soldiered on. "Jon must know something. There has to be a reason Katherine tried to kill him."

Eldest Salvatore leaned against the wall, folding his arms. "She's Katherine! She loves to play games and you're fooling yourself if you think you're gonna find out what she's up to before she wants you to know."

"No actually Elena's right, Jon could know something through Isobel." His brother appeared smug as hell. "Your mother she was in touch with Katherine so maybe we can go to the hospital. Get him to talk."

_Screw this. Screw all of this. I'm tired of the white knight and his simpering princess for one evening. I've got a better idea."

"What's that?" Questioned the only female.

He hunched his shoulders. "I'm just gonna ignore the bitch and focus on what I've been doing the past several weeks." _Bonnie...in a sense._

"I—is that smart?"

"If Katherine thinks she is being ignored, it'll lure her out. She'll make a move."

Stefan cocked a brow. "Yeah? Then what?

Considering the question, Damon decided to be truthful on how he felt about the situation. "Stake her; rip her head off, something poetic, we'll see." A pause. "Anyway I have things to do...like save Caroline's life for Bonnie." He fixed Elena with a defiant stare but remained quiet.
Next he was outside and heading towards his car, the cool air hitting him in the face. He was livid at the thought of her ruining what he was building with Bonnie. Okay so yeah he should have confessed about the kiss after it happened but he didn't. He just didn't think he'd end up as into her as he was and as things progressed the right moment to say I kissed another woman never came up. Telling her now would destroy everything and that is not what he wanted. He wanted her and he had her…and he wasn't going to let anyone fuck that up for him.

Not even Elena Gilbert.

~*~

The following day found Bonnie inside of the Lockwood home with a lighter heart and conscious than before. She'd visited Caroline earlier and the blonde was doing much better. Everyone was calling her recovery miraculous but she knew the truth. Damon had saved her life by giving her some of his blood and for that she was grateful to him. Odd that he hadn't come by afterwards but of course it wasn't necessary for them to be joined at the hip. Still she'd wanted to thank him properly for being so sweet.

Perhaps tonight she'd get her chance.

Lockwood Manor was a grand house, fully restored from the olden days and quite extravagant. But it wasn't exactly the warmest or friendliest atmosphere. Even now she could feel a distance seeping through the walls, whispering secrets of unhappy childhoods and raised voices. While the Lockwoods pretended to be the model family they were utterly the opposite and everyone knew it but never talked about it. It was one of the reasons she felt so badly for Tyler.

Standing in the door, lingering as he shook hands and tried to keep it together, she watched him idly. He looked nice in his gray shirt and dark jeans but his eyes were telling another story. He was drowning in flowers and fake praise for a man that most people didn't like, including his own son.

Smoothing down the purple cardigan that she wore over her dark blue dress, she stepped up to him. "Hey. How are you?"

Tyler smiled and hugged her. "The usual I suppose. Trying to look normal when I really just wanna break shit."

She smiled. "I can relate."

He nodded. "Yeah. Lots of people coming to either be nosy or pretend they give a damn. Least with you guys here I feel a little better."

"That's good though." She said lightly. "You shouldn't try to deal with this on your own. If you need someone to talk to you can call me. I meant that."

"I know." He shoved his hands into his pockets. "I just don't wanna bother you or whatever. I mean what would you really rather be doing? Hanging with your boyfriend or talking me down from a ledge."

She chuckled softly. "I have time and room in my life for more than one person. I promise."

Gazing at her, he reached out and touched her cheek. "Eyelash."

She blinked but remained calm. "Oh. Thanks."

Clearing his throat, he blew it off his fingers. "I took your wish. I hope you don't mind."
"No I think you need it more than I do." She mused. "Oh um, Caroline is doing a lot better. They expect her to make a full recovery."

"That's great." He sounded relieved. "I'm gonna send her something. Flowers or balloons—just something to let her know I have been thinking about her."

_How sweet._ "I'm sure she'll like that."

A figure in black caught her peripheral vision and she didn't have to turn to know how it was. Evidently Tyler noticed as well because he just stared, his eyebrows knitted together.

_Awkward._ Thankfully more people arrived to be greeted and she was able to excuse herself, venturing back into the house. Before Damon was able to be serious about her, she'd honestly considered asking Tyler out. If things had ended up differently, she'd be _consoling_ Tyler right now instead of wondering where her vampire boyfriend went. _Maybe I'd know what he is though something tells me he has no idea himself. I've got a bad feeling about this._

Suddenly a cold hand was wrapping around hers and she was being pulled into another room with deep red walls and a table of fine china filled with food. "I still can't believe the Gilbert device affected Tyler Lockwood."

Damon popped some fruit into his mouth. "Well we know it also took the Mayor down."

She smirked at him. "Don't you wanna know why? It could be important."

He seemed amused. "Yes Bonnie I would _love_ to know why a non vampire was tortured by the vampire torture device that Jon Gilbert used against us. And yes I'm being sarcastic. Who cares?"

_Sometimes he is so impossible._ "I care. Tyler is my friend and I wanna know what happened. Especially to his father."

The handsome vampire bit into a strawberry. "You feel guilty. Don't. It was their plan to round up all of the vampires and have a barbeque in the first place."

"True but…" She trailed off, pulling at her necklace. "It was my fault it was able to work."

"Mm. Speaking of your guilt…" He faced her. "How's Caroline?"

Bonnie hit his shoulder playfully. "She's much better."

"You're welcome."

"No you're welcome."

"Why am _I_ welcome?"

"You live to spend another day in my charming presence. And maybe get under my shirt."

He put his hands on his hips. "You're a feisty little thing, aren't cha?" As she smiled, he plucked a grape from its bunch and dragged it across her lips. "Hungry?"

She opened her mouth and bit into it, fully prepared to give him a flirty comeback when he closed the minute amount of space between them and bit into the other end, pressing their lips together. The contrast of the tangy fruit and his taste on her tongue made her shiver, her hands grabbing his lithe waist for support. She felt his tongue finish breaking the grape in half, pushing some into her mouth and the rest into his. It was very erotic for some reason and sent a rush of heat throughout her body.
that ignited the candles that sat in their golden holders on the mantle.

"Damon…" She whimpered. "Behave."

Snickering, he managed to look completely innocent even though a few people were staring. "What? I thought you were hungry."

_Get a hold of yourself. Someone has died and making out at their house is disrespectful._ "Uh-huh. Aren't you supposed to be playing Detective or something?"

His icy blue eyes trailed over her so hard that she could swear she felt her skin burn. "I'd rather be playing Doctor. Nice dress by the way. Easy access."

Blushing, she gave him a look. "Of course you would…" As she swerved around him, she deliberately pressed close. "But you won't be."

Not waiting for a reply, she waltzed out onto the porch; pretty sure that she still had his full attention. _There is such a fine line between decent and indecent where Damon is concerned._ Spying Elena near a large column as she just gazed across the grand yard, she made her way over. "God, Damon drives me crazy. I mean this is a wake or whatever and he's being all seduce-y, obviously trying to get me in trouble. Like Tyler needs to see people making out when his father has died."

Elena's head canted to the side. "I'm sorry Bonnie. What Damon's done is just awful."

The witch giggled. "It wasn't that bad. He's just being Damon. Anyway better now." She touched her friend's arm and was barely able to swallow the sound that nearly escaped her lips. _Oh God! Excuse! Run away! _"Um, I gotta find Tyler. Pay my respects. I'll be back." Smiling, she tried to walk away as normally as she could.

Once she was out of sight, she shuddered and rummaged through her purse, pulling out her cell phone. Her fingers fumbled to dial—she didn't know whether she wanted Elena to pick up or not. "Elena? Where are you?" Her friend related that she was late and on her way before a dial tone flared into her ear. _I think I'm gonna be sick. I gotta find Damon."

Swirling around, she gasped at the figure in front of her, clad in black with their hand on their hip. "We haven't officially met. I'm Katherine. But you knew that right? Of course you do."

_The resemblance is uncanny. Okay do not let her see you sweat. You are a strong, powerful witch and if she fucks with you, you'll take her down. She's just a vampire after all._

Katherine looked her over. "You're the best friend, right? I've been putting all the pieces of Elena's life together. Isobel told me it was a bit of a puzzle." Slowly she circled her. "I know who Jenna and Jeremy are, and I met that delicious ex boyfriend Matt who is sweet on Caroline. And then there's you, the vampire dating Bennett witch. Did I do good?"

"What do you want?" The witch asked, her voice calmer than she expected it to be.

"What don't I want would be the better question." She wiggled her brows. "To be honest I haven't really decided yet. Too busy having fun."

"Stabbing people is fun?" _Duh. She's crazy remember? "Why did you try to kill Jon?"

"He's a vampire hating asshole. Not to mention he murdered a very close friend of mine." She explained idly.
"The close friend you left in a tomb for over a hundred years?" Bonnie knew she shouldn't be getting smart but she couldn't help herself. "I'd hate to see how you treat your enemies then. Oh wait, you cut off their fingers."

Kat chuckled. "You're funny. I can see why Damon likes you."

No. "I don't wanna talk about Damon."

"Why not?" The vampire questioned deviously. "I mean clearly you're into him. What was he being earlier? Seduce-y? I think it's cute actually...the way you're following in Elena's footsteps. She gets one brother and you get the other. Except...Damon isn't exactly yours is he? I hear he's still hung up on an old girlfriend."

Bonnie bristled. "Used to be. But then he realized what a complete whack job she is and moved on."

"You really think that?" Pause. "Because I'm pretty sure I could have him eating out of the palm of my hand if I wanted him to. However maybe I don't want him to. Maybe I am willing to stay out of your way if you do something for me."

"Like what?"

"I could always use another witch in my...employment. Emily did a good job and I'm sure with a little training, you could too."

"No. I don't know why Emily helped you but I—I'm not her."

"The word duh comes to mind."

"I'm here to protect this town from people like you, not join you."

"Bonnie, you can't beat me. If you try I'll kill you."

"I'm not scared of you." She was terrified.

Katherine studied her for a minute. "Do you know Damon came willingly to me? He even watched me kill people in cold blood while he was still human and didn't bat an eyelash. You think you can dig away the bad parts, but you can't. It's who he is."

Anger flashed behind her green eyes. Better than fear anyday. "Don't you dare try to tell me who he is. I've seen parts of him you can't even comprehend. He's a good man and I'm gonna make sure he stays that way."

"Oh wow!" The vampire laughed. "You're in love with him! That's great. It's gonna be even more fulfilling when I watch him kill you and rip out your heart. Or maybe I'll have him turn you—my own witch toy for the rest of eternity. I like it."

"You'll like being set on fire even more." Bonnie quipped. "Damon would never hurt me because I've given him the one thing a monster like you was never capable of. So you can scoff at the fact that I love him all you want but yeah, it's true. I'm capable of loving him and you'll never be. You could never love anything. You're nothing but an ugly hollow shell and I so understand why Stefan couldn't wait to get away from you to find someone sane."

The lines around her eyes began to crinkle and the witch realized she'd hit a nerve. Dangerous considering the situation...
Run! Bonnie turned to do just that only to find the crazy vampire in front of her yet again. Glaring at her, she summoned the power inside of her, feeling it roll along her flesh like small ropes of electricity. She pushed it out and into Katherine's temples, watching as she cringed in pain and grabbed her head.

"Ah, ah…” Sniggering, she straightened. "I've been around a long time, Bonnie. You're gonna have to do better than that." She grabbed her around the throat and slammed her into the wall, eyes black and fangs bared. "You think you're so tough because you're a witch? Well first I'm gonna destroy what you have with Damon and then I'm gonna watch him destroy you." She squeezed. "Or I could just kill you now. Not like you could do anything about it."

Suddenly the doors flew open, slamming back hard against the wall. Kat actually looked impressed. "Nice."

"Katherine." Stefan stepped into view, his hands clasped behind his back.

"Stefan."

"Leave her alone."

"Okay." Grinning, she let the witch go and sashayed from the room.

Bonnie coughed and rubbed her neck, nodding to Stefan. She was trembling like a leaf and unable to stop. Her heart was thudding against her rib cage so loud that it made a ringing in her ears. *I gotta find Damon.* The last thing she wanted to be was on Katherine's radar. Just as she'd suspected, the psycho would screw with Damon's head for kicks but at least she didn't seem to know about their link. She'd probably try to best to break it somehow. *I gotta find Damon.*

Steadying herself, she hurried off to do just that.

After checking several rooms—most of which that had food—she found her boyfriend and who she prayed was the real Elena outside engaged in a heated conversation. She didn't have time to wonder what they were talking about, she was too shaken up. "Elena."

Her best friend was immediately concerned. "Bonnie? What happened?"

"Katherine. She—she's here." She stammered.

"Oh my God, are you okay?" The brunette inquired. "You look white as a sheet. Did she do something to you?"

"Does choking count?" The witch exhaled.

Damon blinked rapidly and took her arm, pulling her closer. "Did she say anything to you?"

"Threats mostly." She revealed, searching his face. "Why?"

He shrugged. "Just wondering."

*That doesn't sound very convincing.* "What—what's going on? You two look all tense."

Elena waved a hand. "Just…worried what she might do to the people we care about." A sigh. "I'm gonna go find Stefan and make sure he's okay."

The look she gave Damon as she walked away was not lost on Bonnie. "What's going on?"
He drained his glass of champagne and sat it on a passing waiter's tray. "Nothing. Just the usual someone trying to kill us but other than that it's a normal day."

"What were you and Elena talking about?"

"Katherine. She seems to think her being back is gonna drive me off the deep end."

"Is it?"

"I don't need Katherine to lose control."

"Damon…"

"Look I'm fine. The one we need to be worrying about is you. You said she threatened you? Yeah, not a good sign."

"She threatened me by saying she'd basically hurt you."

"Let the bitch try. I'm ready for her."

"But she's stronger and older."

"So?"

"So?" Frowning, she steered him over to a quiet corner. "Damon I—I don't want anything to happen to you. I know that her being back is naturally gonna shake you up. I get it. I just hope it doesn't negate all that we have been through."

His face softened and he ran his fingers through her silky hair. "Nothing has changed between us. Don't worry; I won't let her hurt you."

He embraced her and she went with it, her brain boiling in turmoil. She believed him but a tiny voice kept saying there was more to the story than he was telling her. She just hoped she discovered what it was before it was too late.

~*~

"We need to stay united against her. So yes as much as I would like to kill you, I'm not gonna fight you."

"I kissed Elena."

"Because you feel something for her. And what about Bonnie?"

"What about her?"

"You gonna stand there and tell me you're not in love with her? We both know you are. You protect her and you spend time with her because you love her. You actually care and I'm not gonna let Katherine come in here and destroy that part of you that is finally, after all this time is willing to feel something. She'll try to break you. She'll try to break us and how we respond to that will define us. It's our choice. So no I'm not gonna fight you…"

Damon trudged into his house and tossed his leather jacket into a chair. Stefan's words were all he'd thought about for the rest of the afternoon. As he poured himself a drink he felt as if he were self destructing like a faulty bomb. Maybe a part of him had kissed "Elena" because deep down he knew he'd end up falling for Bonnie and he wanted an escape when he did. Hell it'd seemed like a good
idea at the time. Now…not so much.

*I gotta tell Bonnie the truth and she is gonna set my ass on fire. And worse…I deserve it.*

Taking a few sips, he headed for the stairs before stopping dead in his tracks. "Very brave of you to come here."

Lounging on his couch like a cat that ate the canary was Katherine. "I wanted to say good-bye."

He stared at her. "Leaving so soon?"

She pouted. "I can tell when I'm not wanted."

He frowned at her bratty behavior. "Don't pout. It's not attractive on a woman your age." Leave. Now.

Katherine however had other plans and blocked his way. "Ouch. What? No good-bye kiss?"

A part of him wanted to but clearly that would only make things worse. "Why don't I kill you instead?" She huffed and he glowered, trying to figure her out. "What are you doing here?"

She played with her hair. "Nostalgia, curiosity, etc…"

*Anger. Rage. These I can do.* "I'm better at the one liners, Katherine. What are you up to?"

She grinned in her flirty way at him. "Trust me Damon, when I'm up to something you'll know." She stepped closer, crowding his personal space. "C'mon. Kiss me…or kill me." Leaning forward, she let her lips hover over his. "We both know that you're only capable of one."

Fuck this and her. I'm done being her lap dog.

He moved to leave and she shoved him down hard to the ground, straddling his waist.

Her hands caressed his face and chest. "My sweet, innocent Damon."

In a flash she was on her back and his fingers were around her throat. If he could he would have choked the air out of her right there, but there was no air to deprive her of. Instead he jerked back to the fireplace, his eyes wild and his hair disheveled. "Get out."

Katherine groaned as she stood. "Oh my God, it's the witch isn't it? She's really done a number on you."

"I'm serious." He growled. "I want you out of my house and out of my life."

She put her hands on her hips. "When did you start wanting her? Did she flirt with you or was it that chase that got you off? She's not prettier than me and she certainly isn't experienced. I could tell that just by one look at her. So…what is it about her that has you acting like such a pussy?"

Damon gripped the mantle so hard that the wood cracked under the pressure. *Don't let her get under your skin. It's all a part of her sick game.* "She likes my cooking."

The female vampire snickered with glee. "Okay. If you love her so much, why did you kiss Elena? Or are you trying to get some kinda kinky three way going?"

*Maybe in the past…* "That was a mistake. I was feeling vulnerable and she was there."

"Bullshit. You wanted to kiss her. Badly. And now you're pretending to be some valiant kinda guy.
We both know that's not who you are." She made a face. "You're a killer. An evil, sadistic bastard who takes pleasure in the pain of others. That's why I chose you…"

"Say whatever you want, I still want Bonnie and not you." He smirked. "She's not a whore."

Katherine snorted loudly. "Name calling? Really?" A beat. "You spent the last one hundred and forty five years looking for me, so I know there is no way you're just over me. You can try to be a good boy and not cheat but we both know you want to. If not with me then with Elena, and that is just as bad as doing it. Except Elena doesn't want you because she knows you're not good enough."

His face twitched but he kept his cool. "I have a question before you leave and never come back. I think after all these years you owe me the truth just once."

She exhaled. "Stop. I already know your question and its answer. The truth is I've never loved you. It was always Stefan."

He didn't hear her leave but he knew she had because suddenly she was gone and he was alone in his expensive living room, wondering why her words were having such an affect on him. It was surprising really—the pieces that he felt himself breaking into. How much he was feeling considering he thought he was totally over her. Though obviously he'd been kidding himself. You don't just move on because you tell yourself it's what you want to do. It takes time and he hadn't exactly begun to mourn her loss or anything. He just shoved it down and immersed himself in Bonnie because he could use the excuse that their connection forced him to do so.

Hearing that she never loved him when he honestly had loved her was like a sword through the chest. The entire time she'd been playing him. He'd been the game—just something to amuse herself with while Stefan was the one she truly wanted. But that seemed to be true in many circles. People liked Stefan because he was compassionate and sincere…because he went above and beyond to help those around him. He had a conscious and he didn't bury it deep because it was easier. He didn't run from all of the pain he'd caused, he embraced it and used it to make himself a better person.

I've wasted my life for nothing.

I've crushed people for nothing.

I've existed for nothing.

The only thing I've gotten right is hating Stefan.

Fuck!

I want it off. Why can't I turn it off!

Frowning, he stalked for the door and threw it open. He thought about going to see Elena, confronting her about her earlier words of being surprised that he thought she'd want to kiss him back. But there was no point really. She wanted Stefan. They all want Stefan.

They think I'm a monster? Well I'll show them what a real goddamn monster is.

~*~

Bonnie sat her vanity and stared at the scattered jewelry on top; at the rings, bracelets and necklaces that she'd acquired over the years. They were just simple trinkets and yet somehow Emily had been able to imbue hers with special powers that protected and shielded. She wanted to be able to do the
same. She wanted everyone to have a ring like Jonathan Gilbert had. She wanted Elena and Caroline and Matt, and even Tyler to be one hundred percent safe. Right then and there she vowed to learn how to do it or die trying.

Her curtains fluttered and she looked over, not jumping for the first time since Damon started appearing in her room whenever he wanted. "Hey…"

He stood where he was, his head down, his jacket in his hands. "Do you want him to?"

She blinked, confused. "Do I want who?"

"Stefan." He over enunciated his name on purpose. "Saint Stefan. The one who never does anything wrong. The one who's special. Do you want him too? You should…"

Wetting her lips, she got up. "Damon, what's wrong?"

He was in front of her then, moving faster than human eyes could detect. "Do you?"

She frowned at him. "I—what's—" Her fingers brushed the corner of his mouth. "Is this blood? Did you—did you feed on someone?"

"Yup." He chuckled. "They're dead. Totally and completely dead. Like me but better at it."

*What in the hell is going on?* "Why would you do that? You promised me that you wouldn't kill again."

"I'm a liar." He said simply. "I was just lying so that I could fuck you."

His words caught her off guard and she took his face in her hands, making him look at her. There was only one other time she saw this expression on his beautiful features, and it was the day he discovered Katherine wasn't in the tomb. *What has she done to you now?* "Tell me what happened."

The vampire yanked away from her. "I told you! I found a cute little thing and I ripped into her neck, and I *enjoyed* it. The look of fear in her eyes…the way she screamed and begged for mercy…"

"This is about Katherine, isn't it?" She balled her hands into fists. "She did something to you. She—"

"I kissed Elena." He smiled. "Well I kissed Katherine but I thought she was Elena. The night I came to you? My lips were on her lips and I liked it."

"What?" Her voice waivered with sudden emotion.

He nodded dramatically. "Hm. I thought *finally* I have a shot but it wasn't real. And then I decided to *settle* for you."

Tears blurred her vision. Looking at him even if they weren't would have been difficult. "Get out."

Damon flexed his jaw. "You're nothing like them. You whine and you second guess yourself constantly…"

"Get. Out."

"And all this sex bullshit? Just fucken put out already!"

"Damon, I'm warning you…"
"I mean seriously I'm so tired of the talks and the lectures when I could be out with someone far superior to you in every—"

He hit the wall with a deafening thud, his limbs immobilized. He could barely lift his head to stare at the witch and the look of determined sadness on her pretty face. "Do it. Finish it. You know how."

*God it would be so easy to just...* Exhaling, she released him and let him drop to the floor. He crumpled like wet sand, his head leaning back to the door.

Swallowing hard, she knelt in front of him. "Do you really wanna do this? Hurt me because she hurt you?"

His eyes met hers. "I don't wanna feel anymore. It's too fucken much and I can't shut it out for some reason."

*She's broken him somehow. I don't know for sure but it has to be the reason he's the way he is right now. After weeks of being with me he wouldn't just snap with no motive.* "I know this has something to do with Katherine."

"Kissing Elena doesn't."

"Or...who I thought was Elena."

"Twitch. We'll get to that. But right now we need to focus on your crazy ex and why you're suddenly so ready for me to kill you."

Damon grunted in response. "Just do it already. I deserve it. You'd be doing the world a favor. Cause I'll just kill again and again until there is no one left."

"No. You won't." She touched his shoulder. "I could stake you right now for what you said, but I'm trying to look at the big picture. *Something* inside of me is telling me to look at the big picture."

Annoyed or angered or just shocked that she found a way to still give a damn, he jerked to his feet and tugged her with him. He took two steps and pushed, sending her falling back into the bed with a low *oomph*. Before she could recover he was on top of her, his melancholy blue eyes drowning in a sea of black. "Do you know what I could do to you? What I have done? I could take whatever I wanted."

Bonnie got the distinct feeling that she should be afraid, but she wasn't. Maybe it was the spell or perhaps her own mind, but she just *wasn't*. "You could..." She whispered. "But the facts remain the same. I'm not gonna let you destroy yourself. And I'm not gonna let her destroy you either. For all your faults I've looked into your heart—you're not a monster, Damon. I couldn't love you if you were."

He jolted away from her as if she'd burnt him. "Yeah well your love is wasted."

Sighing, she sat up and pulled until he flopped beside her. "Look, this is what she wants ya know? She wants to screw with everyone and anyone because it's fun for her. She's a bitch and you should be angry. You should want revenge or something, but you shouldn't take it out on me. Especially not me. And you shouldn't let her dictate who you are."

He was quiet for a while before speaking again. "Now what? I killed someone tonight, and I kissed Elena and I didn't tell you. Now what?"

*That is a very good question. Am I stupid if I don't kick him out? Part of me wants to but he's in so much pain. That would just make everything worse for all parties involved...even the strangers he'll run across.* "Now...we talk. No more secrets. No more lies. And you decide once and for all if it's..."
me you want. This is your last chance, Damon. I suggest you use it wisely."
~Fin~
Watch Her Burn

Chapter Summary

Sometimes Bonnie just wants to burn.

Chapter Notes

This takes place during 2.02 (Brave New World) and 2.03 (Bad Moon Rising).

Watch Her Burn

Bonnie Bennett leaned back against the large flatbed of a truck, watching as all of her classmates did their part to help out with the annual Mystic Falls carnival. It was so interesting how people were able to push aside all of the tragedy that they'd faced lately and still manage to enjoy themselves with trivial things such as sports games and festivals. But she assumed that if one didn't find the fun they would just end up going insane. That or humans had an uncanny ability to use their blinders when the situation called for it.

Sighing, she pulled at the strap of her blouse and tried not to frown. Her mind was in complete disarray and she was not sure she would be able to focus on any of the tasks Elena had given her. All she could think about was Damon Salvatore. Damon, Damon, Damon—the name singed her tongue like hot ashes in her mouth. Meeting him had been both a blessing and a curse, and she was definitely getting more of the latter as of late.

*It's hard to think of it as anything else when the bad is still racking up.*

Their talk had happened in his car because she figured there would be yelling and she hadn't want to disturb her father. She'd been right of course. She and Damon literally aired all of the dirty laundry that he had not wanted to tell her. His feelings for Elena and his left over feelings and confusion for Katherine, not to mention the way he felt about her and what he would have done if Elena had kissed him back. Her anger spilled over so suddenly and so strongly at his words that all of the street lights rained glass onto the ground after exploding. At that moment all she wanted to do was set him on fire and never look back.

But she didn't. Because God help her she still cared about him and even felt sorry for him in some odd way. However it didn't negate all of the terrible things he'd said to her. Sure he'd been angry but she couldn't help but wonder if that is how he felt deep down. If their entire relationship was nothing more than a game to him; a distraction until he managed to win the *true* object of his affections.

And then he'd said something to her that would probably haunt her until the day she died.

"*Do you love her*? Elena?"

"*Probably in one way or another.*"
"Explains a lot… Certainty explains why you wanted to kiss her. Why you’d do anything for her."

"That doesn’t mean I don’t…love you too. Of course I do. I’ve saved your life several times, I stopped feeding on people and I stopped sleeping with people—for you. When Katherine wasn’t in that tomb I was convinced I had nothing to live for. No one that would give a damn about me the way she had. And then there was you."

"And yet you continued to bullshit me."

"Well…I’m not a very good guy most of the time and the last thing I wanted was love after that fucken disaster. But you think I don’t know how people see me? That they despise me? Most of the time I could give a rat’s ass about anyone other than myself, but I fully understand that you and Stefan are the only two people who care whether I live or die."

At least he’d been honest.

She felt stupid because she liked being that person for him. She liked being one of the only two people able to pull him back from the brink of insanity. But at this point she was wondering what she was getting out of the deal besides a serious case of the blues. Damon wasn’t able to articulate how he felt unless he was angry or upset, and then he was acting out like a spoiled child who didn’t get the toy he wanted. She understood that Katherine was able to yank his strings unlike anyone else in the entire world. She understood that Katherine was his kryptonite and that he had unresolved feelings for her. What she didn’t get is how he was able to forget her so quickly in the process.

Maybe he doesn’t. Maybe he considers my feelings and chooses to disregard them, which just makes things so much worse.

Of course there were some things she just could not get over and at the forefront was the whole kiss deal. While yes he had killed some innocent girl who no doubt left behind a grieving family, it wasn’t like she was the first one. There had been many, many others done when he was feeling perfectly fine. It wasn’t an excuse by any means but she saw it more as Katherine’s fault than his. That bitch had driven to the a breaking point—stripped away the goodness that was growing and replaced it with a black hole that continued to suck away any emotion that wasn’t rage. Besides how could she really focus on anything else but the kiss?

He had kissed who he thought was Elena because he cared for her. Because he wanted her. She got the distinct feeling that he wanted them both and for a moment had tried his hand to see if he could actually achieve his goal. Once he discovered that it was Katherine, he’d needed answers to one question that had plagued him for years and unfortunately she didn’t give the one he’d been looking for. Apparently she’d never loved him—it had always been Stefan.

Even now Bonnie could comprehend how that would screw up his head. One hundred and forty some odd years chasing a dream only to discover it was in fact a nightmare would turn anyone to stone. Basically everything he ever thought about his relationship with the female vampire had been nothing but a total lie—a game she’d played while grooming Stefan to be her true love.

I wonder what she would have done with Damon had she not been captured. Strung him along because she could? Or cast him out into the shadows once she got bored…

Anyway she had asked him to figure out what he wanted because she refused to be his back up anything. "You… he said…"I want you. But that doesn’t mean I won’t fuck up as long as Katherine is around. She made me what I am…"

God that couldn’t be more true in so many ways.
"Bonnie?" Elena Gilbert strolled over, waving her dark clipboard to get her friends attention. "I've been trying to get your attention for like ten minutes now."

The witch blinked. "Sorry I—I just got a lot on my mind right now. Like for instance… Katherine looked just like you. It was freakish."

Her friend sighed. "She is my ancestor. Oh hey I moved the student booths into the cafeteria."

Bonnie barely nodded. "Your vampire ancestor. And she didn't just resemble you like a family member would. She was you."

The brunette shrugged. "I—I don't know I can't explain it. It's creepy…that's all I got."

Damn right it is.

"How do you know she's not still out there pretending to be you?"

Grabbing up a large bag of stuffed animals, she moved it to another booth. "I don't. But I can sit here and be tortured by the not knowing…or I can get these prizes to the ring toss."

"I wish everything was that simple." The other girl whispered. "Look I—I know you're probably stressed out with all of this and I don't wanna add to it, but I need someone to talk to right now. I feel like I'm drowning and as my best friend you've gotta be my life line."

Elena reached over and rubbed her shoulder. "Lay it on me."

She ran her fingers through her soft black curls. "Damon told me about the kiss."

"Ah, yeah. I told him that if he didn't I would." Pause. "How did you take it?"

"In stride I think. I mean it hurt to find out that he has some kinda torch for you, but at the time I was too busy trying to talk him down from a ledge." She rubbed the back of her neck. "He saw Katherine and what she said fucked him up; he killed some girl and then tried to get me to kill him."

"Oh God, Bonnie are you okay?" Elena inquired. "You know when you said you were developing feelings for him I thought it could possibly be a bad idea but I never thought he'd snap like this. You were getting through to him before she showed up."

Guess not enough. "Yeah. It's amazing how she was able to undo all of the progress that we had made. I'm still so mad at him for the things he said and did, especially the kiss."

Her best friend bit her bottom lip. "Any of that anger aimed at me?"

She shook her head. "No. I know that you love Stefan and would have never kissed him back either way. I'm just confused on why he thought you would…"

The brunette waved a hand. "I don't know. Maybe because I looked like her or because we'd actually became friends? You know I said something similar to him after I found out about the whole thing and he just…well he pulled a Damon and said I'd hurt his feelings."

Sounds about par for the course when he has no other reply. "Do you think I should leave him?"

"Oh Bonnie, I can't answer that for you."

"But you can give me your opinion on the whole situation."

"I guess but I've decided to not think about or talk to Damon if I can help it."
"Why? What happened?"

"He said some stuff to Jeremy about Anna that really messed Jeremy up. I thought he was gonna try to kill himself again."

"This must have been the night he attacked that girl. He didn't mention it though…"

"Not surprised. I'm also pissed that he kissed someone else when he's supposed to be with you. What kinda friend would I be if I wasn't?"

"Thanks for having my back."

"Always."

"Give me your opinion."

Elena glanced around at the people meandering about. "I—I think you should do what feels right for you. Damon was becoming as normal as he can be at one point, and there is a chance he'll be like that again. The most important thing to remember here is that you love him and love is worth fighting for. Stefan once tried to push me away and he used his vampirism as the reason why I should have left, but I didn't. I wasn't going to let him destroy himself because I loved him too much to see him implode."

*I totally understand the comparison. If only Damon were more like Stefan however, then the choice would be easy.* "I just don't wanna continue to be his crutch when everything else falls through."

The brunette nodded slowly. "Bonnie I don't doubt that Damon cares about you a lot. And I don't doubt that right now if he didn't have you, he'd be in even worse shape than he already is. Perhaps you should give it a little while now that you are officially together and if he doesn't change, break up with him."

"I'll do more than that." She voiced. "I'll sever our link and wash my hands of him for good."

Elena smiled softly. "I don't blame you. He'll deserve it."

In all fairness he would probably deserve much more than being alone, but she wasn't sure she would ever be able to dole out that type of punishment to him. Maybe before but not now—not after all that they'd shared. *I'd find the strength however if push came to shove…at least I'd like to think I'd be able to.*

Wetting her lips, she picked up a bag of colored fake snakes. "Anyway, we have to make Caroline proud or she will kill us. I don't know how she does this all the time."

The other girl smirked. "She's not human. Obviously."

Bonnie giggled. "Obviously. She's lucky though. She has Matt and I think he's the perfect person to keep her grounded. Not to mention he doesn't eat squirrels or suck on blood packets."

"Ha! Yeah but could Matt catch a tree that might fall on her? I don't think so." She wiggled her brows. "Stefan and Damon might not be the boys next door, but there is an obvious reason why we fell for them. Caroline has always been high strung so she needs someone mellow to balance her out. We're the opposite so…we need danger in our lives to keep things spicy. But only every year if I had my way."

"Eh if Damon tries to kiss you again, he's gonna end up spicy." The witch mused. "Deep fried."
Elena laughed. "I'll bring the marshmallows."

~*~

"Is this your new…obsession?"

It wasn't that Damon was obsessed with the Lockwoods, he just wanted to know what the hell they were hiding. He felt it was his duty to know because if there was something out there bigger or badder then him, well it had to be taken care of as soon as possible. Damon was a survivor and he'd survived as long as he had because he knew how to play the game. Not much got the jump on him.

Except of course for one little witch.

*It infuriates me how bad I feel for what I said to her. It infuriates me to feel at all.*

Pacing in front before the table of decanters of wine and whiskey, he swirled the liquid around in his glass and took a long sip. He was going to lose Bonnie and he'd decided it was just inevitable because like always, he played too rough with his toys. And he could lie to himself all he wanted and pretend he didn't care, but he did. Maybe he didn't want to but he did all the same. She'd done something to him—burrowed deep into his soul and now he didn't know how to react in certain situations. A normal man would have sat down and talked about his feelings, not killed a waitress and tried to egg his girlfriend into staking him. But what else was he supposed to do? He'd just learned the love of half his immortal life had never gave a damn about him. Not to mention she'd took such fucken glee in telling him.

*I should have stabbed her ass right then and there. Actually I should have stabbed her back in 1864 when I first found out she wanted Stefan and me.*


But didn't.

Now he was stuck in this limbo of rage and depression that had him lashing out at the one person he didn't wanna alienate. Yeah maybe in the beginning when all he wanted was her blood but not now. Unfortunately Bonnie in all her innocence had shown him something he'd never truly had; love. She loved him despite every fucked up thing that he was. She was insane! She was young and stupid! She was out of her league! *She's mine.*

He wanted her in every way possible and it—well it didn't scare him so much as disturb him. Damon Salvatore did not get scared. It was probably her fault why he couldn't shut down like he was so used to doing. She made him wanna experience her and now he'd lost the off switch. So he was going to throw himself into the Lockwood mystery to keep out all of the voices telling him to do bad things. Telling him to go visit Elena or goad Stefan into a fight.

Funny enough however before Katherine showed up he hadn't thought about Elena in a none platonic way. He certainly hadn't thought about her while fingerling Bonnie in the woods. *Ex girlfriends ruin everything.* Now—okay he had a theory about his sudden interest in the brunette and it revolved around having the Katherine he should have had back in the day. Elena was sweet and kind, and didn't play games. She loved Stefan—the end. She had not flirted with him or whatever and that is how that stupid slut of a vampire should have been. So his feelings were being misplaced. And poor Bonnie was caught in the middle.

*I have to hold on too tight or I might not have anything to hold on to.*
So for now he was going to head the Council and find out why the Lockwoods had been affected by the device. With Jonathan Gilbert out of the way it would be easy to play the others. He could besweet human Damon Salvatore that all the cougars trusted. Staying one step ahead of the game would no doubt help him in the long run. Not with Bonnie but he wasn’t sure if anything could help him in that particular situation short of kidnapping her and leaving town. Which was a valid plan if push came to shove.

_I suppose I will have to be on my best big boy behavior until she forgives me for the kiss. Why are things so much easier said than done?_

Sighing, he placed his glass on the table and grabbed up his leather jacket. He had a carnival to get to.

~*~

The carnival was in full swing with bright lights, games and thrilling rides. Bonnie felt proud that she and Elena had made this possible, and she hoped that Caroline appreciated the fact that they were picking up her slack. _No doubt she'll be surprised we were actually able to pull it off_. Idly she wandered around checking on things, making sure that the ticket counters weren't going to run out any time soon, and that the cooks weren't burning the hot dogs. Cute carnival worker Carter had offered to hang out with her, but she'd declined after helping him fix the lights. It wasn't that she didn't want to bask in the attentions of a good looking guy; she just didn't wanna give Damon a reason to kill someone else. In his current state he was unstable and she didn't wanna lead someone on until she decided what she wanted.

_Aka to cut ties with the vampire or keep trying to get through to him. There should be a third option like running off to Hawaii and selling surf boards to the tourists._

Strolling past a small group of students who were watching Tyler's Uncle try to beat some guy at arm wrestling, she waved to the black haired guy in question and smiled. _Maybe I should have went after him when I had the chance. No doubt it would be easier dating him—for starters he's not a psychotic vampire._ She snorted at her thoughts and continued on, rounding a corner only to frown at what she saw. Damon and Elena standing close and having an obvious tense conversation with one another.

"Why do I even bother?" Bonnie asked herself as she watched Damon turned and noticed..._her_. She huffed and headed for the throng of people, stopping when a hand wrapped around her wrist. "Let go."

Damon lifted a finger. "Okay I know what it looks like but it's not. I just need to talk to her and Stefan."

She arched a brow. "About what?"

He blinked, his bright blue eyes squinting. "I...can't tell you yet."

"Oh whatever." She tried to yank away. "You know what? Screw you. I can't believe I was considering keeping us going."

He sighed and looked around. "Look you're just gonna have to trust me."

She laughed but it lacked humor. "Do you even hear what you are saying?"

"Eh. Alright I know you can't trust me right now but what about Elena? You trust her don't you?" He inquired.
I do. "Yes."

Nodding, he smiled. "Then hold on to that and once we get things figured out, I promise to come fill you in."

Growling, she relented. "Fine."

Grinning, he kissed her hand and then hurried off to find his brother. Bonnie watched him go and exhaled deeply, an odd rush of sensations welling up in her chest. She swallowed hard and noticed as the swinging lights double in their usual glow, getting so bright that a few people became aware and shielded their eyes. *Blowing them out would not help anything.* Wetting her lips, she forced herself to remain calm and headed into the school for something cold to drink. She spied Matt leaning against a wall looking like someone had kicked him, so she migrated over to see what was wrong.

"Hey. Why aren't you outside enjoying the carnival?" She asked.

He shrugged. "Not really in a partying mood. I saw Caroline earlier and she—she's acting weird. Like weirder than usual for her. It's like she's mad at me for something but for what, no clue."

She frowned slightly. "What happened?"

He shook his head. "She *freaked* out. She's been like that all day. Cool one minute and…crazy and neurotic the next…"

*And how is this any different than usual?* "She almost died. That's bound to mess with her head. Plus…she's Caroline."

The blonde managed a smile. "Yeah. I'm used to the insecurities and all that ya know… This seemed—I don't know—different. Like more. I—I can't explain it."

Folding her arms over her chest, she watched him for a moment. He seemed genuinely worried about his girlfriend and that was never a good sign. *Maybe I should go find her and see what's up. Maybe she just flirted too much with a cute male nurse and is now feeling guilty.* "I'm sure everything will be okay, Matt. I'll talk to her."

"Thanks." He continued to fiddle with his cast. "I hope you make more headway than I do."

*That makes two of us.*

Squeezing his arm, she fell into a brisk walk down the hall and continued until she was outside. She went to the usual places where she figured Caroline would be; mainly cotton candy or prize winning but found no trace of her. It took her about thirty minutes to search the entire fair before three figures caught her gaze near the grounds keeper's small tool building.

As she made her way over, she could hear voices and at once she knew who they belonged to. She thought about eavesdropping but that thought was lost the moment she saw Caroline's face. *Oh God…*

Suddenly she felt detached from everything around her. She moved on auto-pilot closer to the scene. "Caroline? No. No y—you're not…you can't be…" Disbelieving, she stalked over and grabbed her friends arm, jarring when a cold jolt ran up into her shoulder. She tried to keep her expression neutral but her pain and anguish shown through.

Caroline burst into tears, clearly upset by her reaction and who knows what else. "Bonnie? I…" She
was unable to form a proper sentence.

Shaking her head and slowly backing away, trying to force air into her lungs, the witch saw the still young man lying on the truck. Carter. "Oh God!" She didn't need to check his pulse to tell he was dead—his throat was in pieces.

"Stefan, take Caroline inside." Elena gave him a little shove. "Get her cleaned up."

He nodded and pulled the blonde into the bathroom without question.

Bonnie closed her pretty green eyes and the tears started to flow, rolling freely down her cheeks. She was trembling, feeling responsible for his death and for what had happened to Caroline. After all it had been her choice for Damon to give her vampire blood. Her choice and now—now she was damned forever. There was also no doubt in her mind who had done this; only one person was evil and sick enough. I can't breathe.

Very slowly Elena reached for her best friend. "Bonnie…"

She swallowed hard. "I can't believe this is happening."

"Bonnie why don't we go sit down somewhere?" The brunette suggested. "Get some water or something."

She blinked, focusing on Damon. "Is this what you didn't wanna tell me?"

"Yup. Knew you wouldn't take it well."

"She did it, didn't she? That bitch…"

"Yeah. She said game on. Fun times."

"Don't. Not now."

"Fair enough." Damon grabbed up a shovel, casting an amused gaze to Elena. "Thought you were calling the shots. Hm?" He veered towards the body. "Oh well sucks to be you bud."

There was only one time before that Bonnie remembered blacking out, and it had been ages ago at the charity car wash. However as she watched her boyfriend and her best friend trade glances, she felt herself checking out and didn't try to stop it. The power expanded inside of her body like a giant hot air balloon, taking her inhibitions with it the more engorged it became. She closed her eyes and let it, her body shaking as a faucet off to the side turned itself on. Water shot out of the hose and onto the pavement, trickling under the old truck until it touched the tires.

She exhaled and a fire erupted on the surface of the liquid, climbing up the along the metal doors. It was so scorching hot that when it licked against the windows the glass exploded loudly, the steel groaning as it started to buckle in on itself. The tires were melting into thick black goo and she felt… free. Exhilarating and lost to something that promised to protect her and take her cares away, and she was perfectly fine with losing control and letting it. Fuck it. Fuck everything. It deserves this.

Having ducked to avoid being pelted with shards of glass, Elena called out to the witch but got no response. She jerked around the dancing flames and took hold of her arms, shaking her violently. "Bonnie stop!"

Reality crashed back into her so hard that she staggered. Once she was aware, she slapped at the other girl's hands. "Why did you stop me?"
"Because this isn't us!" She pulled Bonnie in for a hug. "This can't be us! We can't just lose control because we want to."


Sighing, Elena tucked her hair back. "That's why we have to be the voice of reason. It sucks and it's not fair, but we have to do it."

*She's right. It's not fair but she's right.* "I gotta go."

As she started to walk off, the adorable brunette chewed on her bottom lip. "Where are you going?"

Pause. "To see Grams."

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Even though the sun was pouring in through her window and the room itself was bright and cheery, Bonnie woke up screaming. She bolted straight up, gasping for air, her white tank top drenched in sweat. The large vanity thudded back against the wall and she jumped, trying to figure out how she'd gotten to into her room in the first place. The last thing she remembered was talking to her Grams' tombstone and being so exhausted that her eyes wouldn't stay open.

Before however she'd cried for Caroline and for poor Carter, and wished that above all else her grandmother was still around to give her advice. She was all alone and in the grips of something she still didn't fully understand. Earlier the power had taken hold and overwhelmed her, and she'd been totally fine with letting it consume her. Letting it burn her until there was nothing of Bonnie Bennett left. There was such a fine line between light and dark, and sometimes she wondered if perhaps the darkness wasn't better. If her life would be easier if she cast off her protector role and instead shook the world to its knees. At least maybe then she'd never have to cry again.

"I'm coming up the stairs now. I'm almost to the stop. I'm at your door." Damon smiled and entered, perching on the side of her bed. "I thought I would announce my presence and not risk getting set on fire."

"What are you doing here?" She asked softly.

"Making sure you're okay." He said simply. "I brought you home last night. You know… it's very dangerous to fall asleep in a cemetery. Perverts frequent there I'm told."

She rubbed the sleep from her eyes. "Didn't know you gave a damn."

He frowned. "Well I do. Why were you screaming?"

Sighing, she scratched at her chest. "Bad dreams. Which is funny considering I live in a walking nightmare."

"Hm. So remember how we said no more secrets?" She nodded and he continued. "Well Elena wants to find out about Katherine and Alaric seems to think the best place to start is Isobel's office at Duke. My oh so handsome brother Stefan can't go with them because he has to babysit Caroline, so I'm going. Strictly to make sure they don't get killed."

*It's too early in the morning for this.* "Yeah fine, whatever. I don't care."

Damon frowned again. "I'm telling the truth, Bonnie. It's strictly business." A pause as he took her hand. "I know this entire situation is all fucked up, and for that I'm sorry. You've been nothing but
there for me and I—I've acted like a complete dick. I might act like a dick again in the near future but it doesn't matter cause I'm your dick."

*Don't laugh. Don't you dare even crack a smile.* Of course she couldn't help herself however and a tiny one escaped. "This isn't a joke you know. And just because I can talk to you doesn't mean I've forgiven you for what you said or the fact that you thought you'd kissed my best friend."

The handsome vampire played with her fingers. "To be fair, I did that before I decided we should be a real couple. Then I just never got around to telling you. Mostly because I knew you would be pissed."

"Is this some kinda…vacation for you?" She inquired. "I mean I thought we were moving forward in our relationship but you were hiding stuff from me the entire time."

He pressed his fingers to her pulse. "Out of love." When she tried to jerk away, he tightened his hold and met her annoyed gaze. "I know it's no excuse but please keep in mind that for years my whole existence was based around reuniting with my old girlfriend who turns out, never gave a damn about me. I've never been in a serious relationship and I've never been with someone like you. So yeah I'm gonna make mistakes and royally screw up. Kissing Elena was me royally screwing up but ya know I was also fucked up that night."

*Excuses, excuses. And I'm just supposed to overlook that and forgive you?*

Shaking his head, he sighed. "No. I fully expect you to ream me good for a long while until you see that I'm with you and okay with that. More than okay." A pause. "You don't have to worry about Katherine…or Elena."

There was a part of Bonnie that wanted to believe him, but she wasn't the same innocent young girl that she used to be. The death of her Grams had taken care of that. Damon wasn't a trustworthy guy on his best day, and now he was pretty much a nonexistent trustworthy person. Yet that didn't stop her from having feelings for him. It's so hard to want someone and yet not trust them as far as you can throw them.

Tossing back her covers, she crawled out of bed and moved to get her robe. "So this road trip to Duke…"

He shifted and leaned back to the headboard. "Ah. Elena wants to know where she comes from and we know Isobel in person won't be any help, so we're gonna rifle through her stuff and hope that does. I'm going for…moral support. And in case someone needs to be killed."

*Bet Elena and Alaric are thrilled about that.* "Well I hope for Elena's sake that she finds out something. Try not to irritate her too much."

"Yeah I can't make that promise." He smirked.

Rolling her eyes, she picked her purse up off the as her cell phone rung and answered. "Hello?"

"Hey Bonnie, it's Tyler." He said cheerfully. "Hope I didn't wake you."

She smiled. "Oh no, it's cool. What's up?"

"Well I'm having a party in the woods near the lake and I was wondering if you wanted to come?" He questioned. "It's gonna be mellow for the most part but swimsuits are mandatory for the ladies."

Giggling, she rummaged in one of her drawers. "Hm I do happen to have a new bikini that I haven't
broken in yet."

"Okay now I insist that you come and wear it. You can't let a good bikini go to waste!" He exclaimed.

Laughing, she lifted out the red two-piece. "It sounds like fun. If I can I'll swing by."

"Better than nothing. I'll be on the lookout for you." He said, probably smiling. "Later."

"Later." Hanging up, she placed her cell on the vanity top.

"Was that Tyler Lockwood?" Damon asked, his voice tight.

"Yes." Pause. "Why?"

His brows narrowed considerably. "He—you know he's some kinda freak of nature right? We think he's a werewolf."

Blink blink. "What? Seriously?"

He nodded. "Yup. And if he is it won't end well for anyone. You should stay away from him."

Hello jealously. "Why? It's daylight so I doubt I'd be in danger until sunset. Not to mention I'm pretty sure I could repel him if he wolfed off on me."

He grunted. "What if you can't? I won't be around to protect you if something goes wrong."

"I'll be fine." She mused, brushing her shiny hair.

He was in front of her next—suddenly and quite close. "You like him, don't you?"

Her eyes stared at his reflection behind her. "I don't hate him. He's a friend…in the way Elena is your friend."

His face tightened before going stoic. "You know you're not the manipulative type, Bonnie. That's one of the things I like about you. You're not into games."

That is very true. "Right. I wouldn't use Tyler to make you jealous. I'd just leave you for him."

Twitching, he put his hands on her shoulders, anchoring her back into his embrace. "It won't come to that."

Exhaling deeply, she rubbed his wrist. "For both our sakes, I hope it doesn't."

~*~

Later that afternoon Bonnie received a phone call from Stefan, begging her to come and spell a ring for Caroline so that she could go out into the sunlight. Although she didn't wanna have to face her other best friend and the reality of what she'd caused to happen to her, she'd picked up Emily's grimoire and drove over after getting dressed.

Standing in her room that held so many fond memories for her, she stared at the blonde as she sat curled up on her bed, the curtains closed. Stefan reclined in a blue small chair, his face thoughtful as usual. He doesn't have to help her but he is going to. He's such a nice guy.

"So…" Caroline's voice broke through her thoughts. "I don't get to choose the ring I have to wear
the rest of my life?"

The witch smirked; same old Caroline caring so much about fashion. "Hey, if you don't want it…"

Stefan glanced up. "No she—she wants it." He nodded to double confirm.

"Now what?" The blonde was anxious.

Opening the old book, she flipped through the pages slowly. "Now's the part I explain the rules. The witch who spells the ring has the power to de—spell it. So, if you ever do anything to hurt anyone…"

"I'm not gonna hurt anyone!" Her friend interrupted.

Bonnie smiled sadly at her. *There is so much she doesn't know about what she is now.* "You're a vampire. That means that urge to kill is a part of who you are. I don't wanna scare you or upset you, but the minute you let it take over, I will stop you. I'm not trying to be harsh it's just I—I made a promise to protect this town from harm. I can't go back on my word…"

The blonde pouted at her. "Bonnie, you're supposed to be my friend."

*And I always will be.* "I am—I promise—but I can't ignore what happened. Okay? You wanna be friends you're gonna have to prove that the Caroline I remember is still in there." Sigh. "Look I've seen a lot of death and destruction lately so it's made me kinda guarded. It's not personal. Now, put the ring on the bed."

Succinctly chastised, Caroline did as requested and put the small silver ring onto her bedspread with a soundless bit of grumpiness. Tucking her hair back, Bonnie strolled to the window and opened the curtains just enough to bath the piece of jewelry in the sun's warm glow, noting the way her friend tensed and drew back even farther. *I'm not usually one for revenge but Katherine will get hers if it's the last thing I do.*

"Do you really think I meant to kill that guy at the carnival?"

"He's still dead…so do you want me to cast the spell or not?"

When the other girl didn't reply, she took it as a go sign. She stood in front of the foot of the bed and closed her eyes, relaxing her shoulders. The words to the spell swarmed behind her closed eyelids and she muttered them silently, focusing on the ring, shivering when the incantation was complete. Snapping the grimoire closed, she picked up ring and handed it to the fledgling vampire. "All done."

Caroline took it from her with a rather skeptical expression before slipping it on. "Um…so that's it? I mean nothing witchy happened. Ya know no flickering lights, no gusts of wind. Have you even done this before?"

Stefan dropped his head. "Caroline…"

"What? I just wanna make sure it worked!" She responded petulantly.

Rolling her eyes, the witch stalked to the window and threw the sheer curtains open, smirking when no one burst into flames. "It worked."

"Ah!" A beat. "What if it hadn't Bonnie!"

*Oy.* "She's all yours." Giving the younger Salvatore a sympathetic look, she exited the room and
continued until she was outside. *He has his hands full.*

**Could this day get any weirder or worse?**

"Bonnie…" Stefan stopped her before she could step off the porch. "I wanna thank you again for helping Caroline out."

She shrugged. "What else was I supposed to do? I'm partly responsible for what's happened to her. Besides she needed the ring so you can teach her to control herself."

He smiled that understanding smile he had down so well. "True but thank you anyway. I know you're having a hard time because of Katherine and…what she did to Damon."

*That's putting it lightly.* "Yeah. The whole kiss thing didn't help either."

The vampire sighed. "Damon is—he's confused. Katherine was all he knew for so long and now that she's back—and didn't love him at all—he doesn't know how to react. He's letting her push his buttons, and he's lashing out because she is." He shook his head. "Now I—I'm not making excuses for him but I do know he cares about you. I've seen it firsthand. And I'm gonna do all that I can to make sure he makes the right choices."

"Thank you." She replied quietly. "Sometimes I wonder how you two can be brothers. You're *so* different."

"We didn't always used to be." He revealed. "Part of what Damon has become is my fault. I suppose that is why I make certain allowances for him even when I shouldn't. I know I said in the past that he was a lost cause, but perhaps I was wrong. I've seen glimpses of that good man—especially where you were concerned. I owe it to him to not let Katherine destroy it."

"What should I do?"

"Be there for him when you can. Remember the good times when the bad arise."

"So you're not mad he thought he was kissing Elena?"

"Oh I'm furious. I could have punched him in the face several times. But even though Damon pretends to be bigger and stronger than the rest of us, he's really fragile at heart. He often strikes out when he feels threatened because he doesn't know anything else. So while yes most of the time I want to beat the crap out of him, I try to remind myself that since he discovered Katherine wasn't in that tomb, the bad things he does are really a cry for help."

"He should use his voice instead of violence."

"I agree. You have every right to be angry at him; actually I think it'll do him some good for you to push back. Make him realize what he has."

"I guess we'll see, won't we? Katherine probably isn't done with this town or you guys. I shudder to think what she has in store."

"The best we can do is stick together. Protect each other. And not just against her but whatever else is out there."

She went to reply when Caroline whined, "Stefan I'm hungry!"

Chuckling, she thumbed to her car. "Go get the princess a squirrel or something. I'm gonna go."
"Thank you." And then he was walking back inside.

"It's what I'm here for…" She said to no one. "For now…"

~Fin~
Reality Vs Pretend

Chapter Summary

The reality is, neither Bonnie nor Damon know how to let go.

Chapter Notes

This takes place during 2.04 (Memory Lane) and 2.05 (Kill Or Be Killed).

Reality Vs Pretend

Spell to remove a Blood Bond

Blood Bonds should only be used as a last resort for protection and not for frivolous actions such as making someone fall in love with you or making it so they can never leave you. Remember the rule of the universe; whatever you send out comes back to you three fold. If the intent isn't true, love will turn to hate. If you've cast a bond and now wish to remove it, you will need these ingredients.

Cardamon
Dill leaves
Marigold
Patchouli

Ring! Ring! Ring!

Exhaling deeply, Bonnie Bennett glanced away from the worn pages of Emily's grimoire to her cell phone. She checked the caller id and pushed the book aside when her best friend's number lit up the small screen. It was almost midnight so obviously something was either very wrong or extremely right for her to be calling. She knew that her father had to get up early for work most days and on his rare days off he liked to sleep in. She would not want to disturb him.

Reaching for the cute black device, she pressed the talk button. "Hello?"

"Hey…" Elena Gilbert sighed out. "Is this a bad time? I didn't wake you did I?"

"No I was just…doing some studying." It was mostly the truth. "What's wrong?"

The brunette groaned and could be heard flopping back onto her bed. "You won't believe what happened today. Jenna had her family barbeque thing and Jeremy was nowhere to be found—but that's not serious. He probably just wanted to be alone." A pause. "I—I met Katherine."

Bonnie blinked. "Oh my God. Are you okay? Did she say anything or do anything?"

"No. Thankfully." She replied with a grumble. "She just looked at me like I was some kinda animal that escaped from the zoo and said I wasn't asking the right questions when I asked why we looked alike. I thought she was going to rip my heart out or something."
If she'd tried I'd have ripped out hers. "I'm glad you're okay. Does Stefan know about this?"

"Yeah. He said he was trying to get answers from her about why she's back in town, but I don't think she told him anything except how much she wants him back." She explained slowly. "I've got a bad feeling she is planning something though. I—I mean why stick around otherwise?"

Good question. "I figured we hadn't seen the last of her."

Her friend huffed. "She's using Caroline against us. The entire time she was at my house she kept talking about how Stefan and I would never work out, and how hard it was for him to be around me without killing me. She practically tried to get me to break up with him. And then when I wanted to go check on him, she totally spazzed out. At first I thought she was just being Caroline but…"

The witch frowned. Why in the world would Caroline be helping Katherine? It just didn't make sense. "So Caroline is on Team Katherine? Since when? I mean Katherine is the one who killed her in the first place."

"I wish I knew. Maybe—maybe she threatened her or something. Either way, Stefan and I are going to pretend to fight until we can figure something out."

"That actually sounds like a good idea. Throw her off."

"Yeah. It's so hard though. I know it's not real but I hate fighting with him."

"Of course. It's like, what if it turns real by accident or something?"

"Exactly. Damon was there by the way…"

"Heh, did he behave himself?"

"As much as Damon can I suppose. He's obsessed with Mason Lockwood and proving he's a werewolf."

"Well better than being obsessed with Katherine I guess."

"How are you guys anyway?"

"We're…in a strange place right now to be honest. Stefan says I should remember how fragile Damon is, but when he's an asshole I just remember wanting to slap him a lot."

"Sounds like a natural reaction to me. He—he overheard me and Stefan pretending to argue. I'm not sure how he took it."

Bonnie rolled her eyes. "He probably jumped up and down with glee."

Elena chuckled lightly. "Bon c'mon, Damon loves you. I'll bet if I didn't look like Katherine, he wouldn't even give me a second glance."

That's a nice theory. Wish there was a way to test it out. "Yeah. You know a part of me knows that nothing will ever happen between you two but the other part can't stop wondering what if it does? I don't wanna lose Damon, but I also don't wanna lose my best friend."

The brunette wet her lips slowly. "Bonnie, you will never lose me. You're the closest thing I have ever had to a sister, and I would never hurt you like that. Stefan is the one I wanna be with now and forever. At this point, I don't even consider Damon a friend but if I did that is all he would be."
It was comforting to hear her friend say that. "Thanks. It feels weird being able to talk to you about this, but it's like who else would I talk to?"

"I know the feeling." Pause. "But we have to be there for each other now more than ever. Katherine is dangerous to those we love. We'll need each others' support if we're going to get through this."

True. "Right. You're right."

Sighing deeply, Elena shifted the phone to her other ear. "Well I'm gonna let you go. I just wanted to keep you up to speed on what was going on. Why didn't you come to the barbeque today?"

Bonnie stretched her legs out before her. "I just—I needed some time alone to process everything that has been going on. Also my dad and I hung out a little bit. I think he feels he's been neglecting me because he's been working so much. Without Grams he knows I'm on my own a lot more."

"Hey, whenever you wanna come over or spend the night, you know you can." Her friend said sincerely. "I don't like it when you're by yourself. You get all grumpy."

She giggled lowly. "Sorry. And I know. I'll be definitely hanging out more, I promise."

"You better." Elena smiled. "Call me later?"

"Absolutely. Bye." After the other girl echoed the same, she hung up and exhaled deeply.

It was times like this that she longed for the simple life she had a few months ago when her biggest problem was straight or curly hair to school. Discovering that she was a witch and that vampires were real had cracked the very foundations that she believed in. The supernatural was something that was supposed to be in movies and tv shows, not real life. Real life was supposed to be boring with drama that consisted of relationships and work, not life or death situations dealing with monsters.

How am I going to survive all of this? How am I going to protect my friends and the family I have left?

And to think some people are just worried about getting into a good college right now.

Nibbling on her bottom lip, her eyes drifted back to the spell book and the page that was currently mocking her. While she wasn't going to remove the link tonight or hopefully anytime in the near future, she felt that she needed to know what to do just in case. So far getting all of the ingredients would be easy except one. And of course that one had to be the most important.

Blood of the intended. Damon Salvatore's blood.

He'd never give it to her—she knew that. Even if their ship was sinking and the very sight of him made her want to vomit, he'd never do it because—because he was Damon. And Damon didn't like to lose. It's more than that though and you know it. He needs you. She was both tormented and comforted by that notion.

Getting up, she picked up the miscellaneous bits of clothing around her room, tossing the dirty ones into the hamper. The sound of a car stopping outside caught her attention and she peered out the window, biting the inside of her jaw. She quickly slapped the grimoire shut and slid it under her bed, then tried to act as natural as she could as a figure lifted the windowsill and climbed through.

Speak of the devil.

Damon stood before her in his trademark black and while she tried her best, all she could focus on
was the skin exposed by his v-neck shirt; creamy and pale, completely unmarred and perfect. It wasn't fair for him to be so gorgeous when she as attempting to be aloof with him. It made her job that much harder when all she wanted to do was pull him close and sink her teeth into his chilly flesh. Watch the marks fade seconds later.

"Hey." She folded up a pair of her jeans. "You have frowny brow. What's wrong?"

He shrugged a little. "The usual. Katherine is a bitch and apparently silver does fuck all against werewolves. I stabbed Mason but he's fine. Looks like we're not gonna be best buds after all."

She kept her expression stoic. "Why would you do that, Damon? I mean if he—if he hasn't tried to go after you, why fan the flames?"

"I wanted to get the jump on him." He replied sitting on the edge of her bed. "And he did technically try to kill Stefan."

Nice to see he's not shaky about showing he cares for his brother anymore. "Hm well now he'll probably try to kill you too."

The handsome vampire shrugged again. "Not worried. I've got a sexy little witch to keep me safe."

She smirked at him. "Heard you went to a barbecue earlier…"

His head canted to the side. "To feed Mason silver. Why weren't you there? Caroline was there; it was a bit awkward what with her hating me and all."

"Can you blame her?" A beat. "I spent some time with my dad."

Damon glanced to her closed bedroom door. "Speaking of which, when do I get to meet dear old dad?"

She laughed. "Um, never."

He grabbed his heart. "Ouch! Would you be saying that if I weren't a vampire?"

"With the way you behave, yes." Continuing to put her things away, she sighed. "Okay so Mason Lockwood is a werewolf and he knows you're a vampire I assume, which means none of this bodes well for anyone. I wonder does Tyler know about his Uncle."

"Most likely he does by now." Stretching, he reclined back on his elbows. "Not exactly boyfriend material, is he?"

Not on the nights there is a full moon, no. "And you are?"

"Your words hurt, baby." His blue eye watched her move around. "Unlike dog boy, I can control myself. Granted I don't always do that but I can if I want. Werewolves are all about rage and anger. Even if you're not around him when he turns, he could still seriously hurt you. And then I would have to have him neutered."

Smiling, she rubbed her forehead and sat down beside him. "Tyler's not a wolf so I'm not worried. Hopefully he won't ever become one. I'd like to have at least one friend not touched by the madness of this stupid town."

Damon reached up and massaged the back of her neck, smiling when her lashes fluttered. "You'll wear yourself thin trying to look after everyone. Some people are just doomed."
That's what scares me. "Yeah but you don't know who is until it's too late. At least if I try then maybe I can make a difference. I can't just sit back and do nothing."

He clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "I really respect that about you; your...need to save everyone. Funny because on Stefan it just makes me wanna choke a puppy."

A small chuckle slipped past her lips. "Please don't, I love puppies."

"Do you love me?"

"Do you love me?"

"Yes. Now, your turn."

"Yes."

Sliding his arms around her tiny waist, he dragged her onto his lap and nuzzled her neck, inhaling deeply. "That wasn't so hard, was it?"

"Harder than you think to be honest." Bonnie ran her fingers through his hair and yanked, exposing his throat. "You make me so angry and crazy, and yet I can't stop myself from wanting you. It's not fair."

He flashed a cheeky grin. "Now you know how I felt when all of this first started. The more youfight it, the stronger it will grow until it consumes you whole."

Naturally. Gazing at him, she decided to test a small theory she had. "I could remove our connection anytime I wanted..."

His brow shot up. "Then why haven't you?"

She waved a hand nonchalantly. "I'm missing a key ingredient. Your blood."

Damon's face scrunched, his lips drawing in tight. "Are you asking for it?"

The witch traced a finger across where his pulse should have been jumping. "If I was would you give it to me?"

He was quiet for a moment. "No."

She had to smile. "I figured that."

"You do know me well." He teased. "But I wouldn't give it to you just to be a dick though yeah, that would be half of the reason. I just...I need you and without our link you'll be less inclined to give a shit about me."

Bonnie swallowed hard; she wasn't so sure of that anymore. "The scary part is that I don't know if that's the truth anymore. Maybe at first but now? It's more than lust."

"I'm sorry." His voice was but a whisper.

"For what?" She inquired softly.

"If I end up hurting you before all of this is said and done. I'm sorry." Sighing, he rested his chin to her shoulder. "I don't want to but..."
Searching his gorgeous face, she nodded and kissed his forehead. It's funny; she and Damon were more alike than either of them had wanted to let on in the beginning. They were both strong, stubborn people who liked to be right. His problem however is that he had trouble stopping even when a giant flashing stop sign glowed before his eyes. He was always trying to prove something to someone, or perhaps just to himself. At first it was that there was no hope for him, and then it was that his love for Katherine shined above all else. She had no idea what he was trying to prove now or who he was trying to prove it to.

*I don't even wanna think this but maybe it's Elena. Maybe he wants to prove to her that he's not a demon. Then again I already know he can be good so I guess that's okay.*

"Do you mean that?" Her eyes focused on his lips. "Are you really struggling to be good for me?"

"If not for you then for who?" He mused, tucking black locks behind her ear. "Katherine wanted me—well she pretended to want me fucked up like she was. Stefan wanted me far, far away from him. Hell my own father wanted me out of the way. The only person who's looked deeper than anyone else is you." He kissed along her jaw. "So yeah, gonna keep you anyway I can."

Not able to make eye contact, she fiddled with the string on her pajamas bottoms. *God when he says things like that...* "You can't expect me to stay if you—if you keep flirting with Elena and treating me second. If I mean so much to you, show it."

Caressing her smooth cheek, he turned her face to his. "Telling you all of this is me showing it. You think I get all deep and poetic for anyone?" Before she could answer, he kissed her deeply, drawing her words out into a diminutive moan.

It was wrong; she shouldn't be rewarding his past behavior with smooches but she couldn't stop herself. His cold energy tugged at their link with both hands and she had to give in even if it were just for a moment. She had to let it comfort her and surround her, remind her of the times before when they were so caught up in each other they didn't care about the rest of the world.

As usual his kiss was hot and powerful with promises both of them knew he wasn't the best at keeping. Yet if he was attempting to take her mind off all of the bullshit, he was slowly succeeding. She always lost herself in the gentle suction of his mouth and the way his tongue flicked and swirled without being completely dominating.

Gathering all her strength, she slowly pulled back. "Sto—we can't."

"Why not?" He sucked at her earlobe. "I've apologized for being a jerk—I just wanted you to kill me. I didn't mean any of that shit I said. Obviously. I mean if I really just wanted sex, we'd be having it already. And I'm not settling for you. I'm choosing you."

Her body shivered at his actions, the traitor. "You're not off the hook this easy, you know that right? You're on...probation."

Damon smirked and offered her his wrists. "Wanna tie me up and spank me? Might be fun."

*Great. Now I'm going to have visions of him handcuffed and shirtless in my head for the rest of the night. I would but I think you would enjoy that too much.*

He pouted. "Just a little."

She went to chuckle but it came out a yawn instead. "I gotta get some sleep. I was up early this morning making breakfast for my dad and tomorrow he insists on taking me on a shopping spree."
"Want me to hang around until you doze off?"

"Only if you want to."

Standing with her in his arms, he maneuvered back onto her bed and settled her next to him. As she laid her head on his chest, he threaded his fingers through her silky hair. "Sweet dreams, Bonnie."

She sighed. "We'll see."

~*~

Damon Salvatore had found Mason Lockwood to be annoying and amusing until the asshole tried to have him and his brother killed. Yeah it was one thing to go after him—he was used to it because he as a dick and often rubbed people the wrong way. But Stefan had been sincere in his little plea for peace and look where it had gotten him? Not to mention the whole situation was now a giant cluster fuck because Liz knew the truth about them…thanks to Mason.

He has got to go.

Killing her would have been easier but he honestly considered her a friend. He honestly felt bad about draining her or snapping her neck and putting her in a shallow grave. So he was going to compel her into forgetting but that wouldn't help Caroline unfortunately. Poor girl, always knowing how her mom really feels about her being a vampire. Reminds me of my father. Damn Council idiots can't see past the end of their own nose.

And yet he considered the fact that maybe—just maybe—he was growing as a person or thing or whatever he was. Old Damon would have killed Liz for torturing him but new Damon had the foresight to realize how wrong that would be. The witch was clearly having a good influence on him. The most shocking part of all was that he didn't mind. It was almost comforting to know that he could be an ass and a good guy when he so chose to be.

Frowning, he stepped out of the cellar and closed the door behind him, leaving the nervous wreck of a Sheriff to her own thoughts. He could hear Elena and Caroline talking about Katherine upstairs and it made his frown deepen. Just last night he'd told his psycho ex that he didn't get jealous over her anymore and…he didn't. The thought of her with Stefan made him angry but not because he was jealous, but because he felt robbed for all the years he'd lost pining after her stupid looking ass. He could have been having some real fun, not playing a game to get her back. And now she was moving them all like chess pieces under the guise of wanting his little brother back.

I don't believe that for a second. That bitch is after something...

While the thought of her with someone else did little to raise his temperature, picturing Bonnie with Mason's pup nephew caused the veins in his neck to protrude. Well this will not be turning into that crappy sparkly vampire book. I'll get the girl and kill whoever tries to stop me.

Glancing to his left, he watched as Stefan clenched his teeth and slowly put the bag of human blood back into the freezer. "Not even gonna try it?"

"Elena doesn't want me to." He said lowly. "And to be honest, I'm scared of how I'll react."

Damon shrugged. "What's the worst that could happen? You go crazy again and bite the prom queen? That's nothing compared to what Katherine will do to this town and the people in it if we can't take her down."

His brother leaned against the wall, his fingers scraping at the stone. "I know…I know."
Poor bastard. Strolling up the stairs, he rounded a corner and found himself in the living room watching Elena cover Caroline with a throw from the couch. She brought her finger to her lips and sighed. "Caroline's sleeping on the couch."

He nodded. "I heard. What about you?"

She arched a brow. "I'm going home." She started for the door and stopped when she reached it. "What you did for Caroline's mom? That's the Damon who was my friend."

His eyes squinted but he accepted her words as a compliment. It was more than he expected to get from her after the things he'd said to Jeremy about Anna the night Katherine screwed him up. That night had been a night of bad choices all around; hurting Bonnie, killing that girl, going off on Jeremy and all because he could. However he was through being the dynamite to her fuse.

A shudder ran up his spine and he smiled. "Bonnie."

The cute brunette blinked. "What? Where?"

Knock! Knock!

Elena opened the door, surprised to see her friend on the other side. "Bonnie, hey."

The witch pulled at her gray cardigan. "Hey. Is—is everything okay? Earlier today my dad and I were at the mall and I got this weird feeling in my stomach. I wanted to call but I didn't wanna blow him off since he was trying to be involved dad."

Stepping to the side, the other girl motioned for her to come in. "There was trouble but it's been taken care of."

"What kinda trouble?" She questioned as she walked inside.

Damon spoke up first. "Mason put a hit out on Stefan and I. There was shooting and blood and death. Or as I like to refer to it, a normal Thursday."

She was in front of him in an instant, touching his chest. "You were shot? Are you okay?"

He placed his hand over hers. "I'm fine. Thought you only knew I was in trouble when you were sleeping..."

Bonnie gazed up at him. "I have visions when I'm sleeping. Today it was a weird prickling that didn't make sense but I knew it was related to you. Sorry I couldn't help."

"No worries. We took care of it." He explained. "I'll fill you in later." He kissed her pouty lips, and then turned his attention to Elena. "Hey. Stefan didn't drink the people blood; if you were curious. But he needs to, and deep down you know that."

He noticed the way her big brown eyes locked with Bonnie's big green ones. They'll be discussing this...later. Taking the witch's hand, he pulled her towards the stairs and up to his room.

"Is that Caroline on the couch?" Her slender fingers slid over his wrist.

"Yeah. Her mom is in the cellar." Pausing, he closed his door and wrapped his arms around her from behind. "Mason told her what we were and they tried to kill us. However instead of killing her, I'm gonna compel her in a few days so that she forgets everything."

"Does she know about Caroline too?"
"Yes. Didn't take it well."

"I'm gonna have to talk to her later and make sure she is okay."

*Not a bad idea.* "I'm not usually one to say this but I doubt the support would be the worst thing to give her right now."

Giving an exasperated groan, she moved over to his bed and leaned into one of the large posts. "Is this ever going to end?"

"When Katherine is dead…" He offered. "Or when she leaves town, whatever happens first."

"Leaves us with the collateral damage you mean." Her voice was quiet. "I know she hasn't bothered us but…maybe I should take Clarissa's powers anyway. I'll need to be strong to fight her."

*Also not a bad idea.* "This isn't something you're doing alone, Bonnie. We all want her gone."

Taking off her sweater, she watched him. "I could leave too. After everything is calm I could just drive and not look back. I've thought about it."

His brows narrowed. "Why? You know what? Nevermind. You can't *leave*. You know I won't let you."

Her expression told him that she did. "That shouldn't comfort me but it does…a little. Even if your reasons are purely selfish."

*I'm convinced selfish motivation is the only reason anyone does anything.* "Why don't we talk about something else for a change? All this death and backstabbing stuff isn't good for the blood pressure." Throwing himself onto his bed, he held out his hand for her. "Let's pretend to be a normal couple for a few hours. Tell me about your day with your dad."

She stared at his hand like it was a foreign object before slowly taking it and stretching out next to him. She began to talk and he listened, ignoring the other thoughts that swam around in his brain. After what he'd put her through the last couple of weeks, he *owed* her a night of regular conversation and interactions. A night where she wasn't idly wondering if he was thinking more about her best friend than her. A night where she could snuggle up to him and not be a witch, but just a teenage girl.

Of course he owed her *way* more than this but he was Damon Salvatore after all. So…baby steps.

~Fin~
Love's Deeds Done

Chapter Summary

For some people, there isn't anything they wouldn't do for someone they love.

Chapter Notes

This takes place during 2.06 (Plan B).

Love's Deeds Done

Bonnie Bennett grabbed up her purse and car keys, taking the steps two at a time as she hurried downstairs towards the front door. Her hand was on the knob and twisting when her father's voice floated from the couch. She hadn't even seen him—that's the head space that she was in. Fixing him with a smile, she drifted over to stand in front of him. He was a tall man, at least 6'2 with smooth brown skin and kind dark eyes. Usually dressed in a suit and tie, today he'd opted for jeans and a simple button down shirt.

"Where are you rushing off to?" He inquired as he put his newspaper down.

She thumbed to the door. "Jenna asked me if I would help out at the Lockwood estate for their annual masquerade ball."

He nodded and watched her for a moment. "Oh yeah I had almost forgot about that. Your Grams loved that thing; she loved to see what people were wearing. Fashion was probably one of her only normal hobbies."

She chuckled softly. "Yeah. She'd always help me with my outfit and the accessories to go with it. But Elena agreed to go shopping with me this year. It's not the same but…"

Patting the cushion beside him, he smiled when she sat. "I know you miss her a lot. I do too." Pause. "But I think she would be proud of us for how well we are handling everything."

"Before or after she found out about my slumber party with a vampire? "Yeah."

Smoothing a hand over his close cut black hair, he cleared his throat. "Who's Damon Salvatore?"

If she'd been drinking she would no doubt be slightly choking right now. "Um he—he's Elena's boyfriend's brother."

"And how old is he?" He asked.

"Why? "I—I'm not sure. Twenty something probably. Why?"

Mr. Bennett shrugged nonchalantly. "I hear you have been seen around town with him."
Her mouth dropped but she played it off as a yawn. "Who told you that?"

"Carol Lockwood." He said simply. "She said she felt it was her duty to inform me that my teenage daughter was possibly dating a man far too old for her."

Yeah I so bet that was her intention. She's just looking out for poor little old me against the gorgeous guy. "I see. Well Damon and I aren't dating."

He eyed his child suspiciously. "Are you sure? Because Bonnie I know you are an intelligent, talented girl but from what I have been told about his guy, he's not someone you should be associated with. Not to mention he's too old for you."

Sighing, she fiddled with her keys. "Just what have you heard? Because if it comes from Carol Lockwood then I can say without a doubt she's just jealous that he's not interested in her."

A brow rose. "So you are seeing him?"

Bonnie made a face. "It's complicated."

"Explain it to me then." He requested, folding his arms over his chest.

God this is almost as painful as pulling teeth. "I'm not sure what to tell you. I mean, Damon and I met because his brother and my best friend are together. We—we hang out sometimes. And you know I will be eighteen soon and it's not like he lured me into his car with the promises of candy. I can handle him."

Her father didn't seem convinced however. "Are you exclusive? And how long have you been hanging out with him?"

"Yes." It was mostly the truth. "Um well he arrived into town at the start of the school year so a few weeks after that until now."

He nodded, rubbing his chin. "How come you didn't tell me about this?"

"Because I knew you would freak out. Do you remember what you did to my freshman dance date? You made him sit on the couch and watch as you cleaned your gun collection." And Damon's an ass to most people.

He smirked at the memory. "Yeah but that kid was a little punk; I could tell that. Either way though I want to meet this Damon Salvatore."

Ugh. I was afraid that would be the next thing to come up. "Daddy I—Damon's kinda rough around the edges with most people. You won't like him. You'll probably hate him and wanna shoot him. Sometimes I do too."

Chuckling, he patted her thigh. "Be that as it may, if you want to keep seeing him then I would like to meet him."

"Why?"

"I just want to talk to him."

"You wanna grill him."

"That too. It's my fatherly right. Besides I should meet the guy my kid is seeing."
"So you're not gonna yell and tell me to stop seeing him?"

"I'll wait until I've met him. However do I think he is too old for you? Yes. College boys prey on high school girls all the time and from what Carol said, he's got quite the reputation."

"Whatever he did before we met has nothing to do with me. And since I know you're dying to know—even though it literally kills me to say it—we're not having sex."

"That kills me too. And makes me wish your Grams was here because I am not prepared for any of this."

"I think you'll do okay. You're a good dad."

"I had a good mom."

Bonnie smiled but lowered her gaze. *Wish I could say the same thing.* "Anything else?"

"No." He waved his hand. "Except that you will be inviting your boyfriend over for dinner next week. I won't take no for an answer."

___

*Ugh! How am I going to get out of this? Crap I'll think about it later. "Alright if you insist. And now I really gotta go before Jenna freaks out."*

They said their good-byes and she hurried outside and into her car, leaning her head back to the headrest. Her father wanted to meet Damon which meant two worlds that were never supposed to exist at the same time were possibly going to crash together. She had no idea how he was going to take the vampire though she feared for the worst. True he didn't know about a lot of the more horrible things that went on in the town, but she wasn't worried he'd find out Damon was a vampire. She was worried he'd find out Damon's a dick.

Speaking of him, she didn't see any way to get him to be on his best behavior. Use that nonthreatening voice he had for people like Sheriff Forbes and the others who didn't know his secret. Sure she could ask him nicely but he tended to do...well...whatever he wanted to do. *This is a nightmare. Stupid Carol Lockwood; I wonder did she tell him this before or after the Mayor died. I might just have to get her back somehow.*

Shaking her head, she started her vehicle and drove towards the Lockwood manor. Once arriving and finding a park, she exited and made her way inside to find Jenna. The pretty young woman gave her a task and sent her on her way seconds later. The house and grounds were buzzing with different people that were helping to set up for the upcoming ball. Like always they were going to go big or not bother at all. And for some reason even though the Lockwoods weren't the most pleasant family, nearly everyone had turned out to pitch in.

Picking up a box of candles, she made sure she could carry it before swerving around people and strolling outside to a large decorated table with several bottles of expensive wine. She looked around at the pretty white and red satin tent, smiling when someone tapped her on the shoulder. "Hey."

Elena Gilbert returned her smile. "Hey. You're here."

Bonnie nodded. "I'm here."

Her best friend peeped into the box, and then began to take the white candles out. "So Caroline isn't here. I know you're kinda wiggy because she's a vampire now, but you're gonna have to talk to her sooner or later."
The other girl nodded again. "I know. It's just weird to think that Caroline is a vampire. It's gonna take some adjusting too."

"True. She's trying to handle everything but I really think it would help her to have her friend supporting her." She shrugged. "Even if it's weird and awkward at first."

*I remember when we were all normal.* "I'll make more of an effort, I promise."

Placing the candles on the table, she arched a brow. "You okay? You look kinda distracted."

Bonnie groaned. "Just got something on my mind to be honest."

Glancing around, the brunette grabbed her friend's hand. "Come with me."

"Where?" Her friend questioned as she was pulled along.

"Some place quiet." Elena led her away from the hustle and bustle of workers to an area away from the house, on the other side of the expansive lake. They sat down on a small stone bench barely big enough for one person, but with them both being petite they managed to fit. "Okay, spill."

Tugging at her small gray jacket, she sighed. "My dad knows about Damon and me. He wants to meet him."

Elena's eyes stretched wide. "H—how did he find out?"

"Carol Lockwood told him." She revealed. "What am I going to do? It'll be like oil and water trying to have chicken together. Not to mention Damon will probably be inappropriate and I'll be grounded for the rest of my life."

The brunette giggled. "Bonnie, maybe it won't be so bad. We both know Damon can play human when he wants to. And he cares about you so it's not like he'll wanna do anything to hurt you."

*Hurting me and annoying my father are too very different things though.* "Maybe. I just—I never saw him as the take home type. Grams knew and that was enough because she also knew he was a vampire and slightly insane. My dad is different. He has no idea about vampires and whenever Grams said she was a witch, he'd just say she'd had too much to drink. He's like…"

"Jenna?" Elena offered and her friend nodded. "I know how hard it is to hide things from your family but it's for their own good. Just…tell Damon to be nice or threaten to hurt him. He knows you can."

She laughed softly. "Damon meeting my dad makes us more real."

"Isn't that a good thing?"

"Yes and no. I'm still guarded when it comes to him. That's why I haven't slept with him yet."

"I get it. But if you keep holding back, you'll never be truly happy."

"Yeah but what if I get truly happy and then something comes and screws it all up?"

"I guess that is just a chance you'll have to take. Broken hearts aren't fun but they do heal."

"I've had my heart broken once already when Grams died and that almost destroyed me. I don't know if I could take another."
"Hey, you're not alone in this." The brunette gave her shoulder a squeeze. "You're my best friend Bonnie. I'm always gonna be here for you."

_That's such a relief._ "Thanks." Hugging her quickly, she blinked against the bright sunlight. "Suppose we should be getting back before Jenna or someone yells at us."

Elena echoed her sentiments and they stood, trudging back into the thick of the crowd. Breaking off to return to their chores, Bonnie ran her fingers through her silky hair. _I should go see Caroline later to make sure she is alright. I mean it's not her fault she is a vampire. And I need to tell her about Damon and me, unless she already knows. Super hearing and all._

She'd only been to the Salvatore manor for a few times since finding out about the Sheriff in the basement. She didn't want to complicate things further by being seen or upsetting Caroline with the knowledge that she and the vampire that had abused her were now a couple. _Man, when said like that it makes us appear really selfish. Makes me appear crazy to be with him._ Not that all of the blonde's boyfriends had been winners either; she'd had a bad boy on motorcycle phase right after her dad came out. He was in jail now. Did that beat murdering vampire? Probably not.

Snorting at her own thoughts, she jerked when a strong shoulder slammed into her side. "Oh!" A flash of black and white images exploded rather suddenly in her brain and she looked up to see Tyler's Uncle smiling at her, holding her hand.

"Excuse me." He apologized before releasing her and walking off.

Frowning, she stood stock still trying to make sense of what she had seen. She was still getting used to being an unwilling conduit to shocking visions that usually made no sense. _What the…"

Stefan Salvatore, who had seen the entire exchange, folded his arms over his chest and moved over to her. "What's the matter? Are you okay?"

She exhaled deeply; to be honest she wasn't sure. "When I touched him I…saw something."

His brows shot up. "What do you mean? Like a vision?"

_Ooh yeah._ "I saw Elena."

If possible his brows got higher. "Elena?"

"He was…" She shrugged. "Kissing her."

"What? Elena wouldn't kiss…" Trailing off, he put his hands on his hips. "You didn't see Elena… you saw Katherine."

_Oh great. As if I didn't have enough going on right now._ "Katherine? Why would Katherine be with Mason Lockwood if he's a werewolf? I thought they were enemies or something."

"Good question." He scowled. "I gotta go find Damon."

She watched him walk away, her mind whirring with different thoughts. The only thing that Katherine had ever done _right_—and that was stretching the definition of the word—was cut Damon off the short leash she'd always had him on. Yes it had hurt him and caused him to try to hurt others, but at least he was over her. His love was now wrath and it worked out well, except for the psychotic episodes that he was prone to because of her harsh words. Still with Damon seeing the truth it meant another ally against his murderous ex and they obviously needed all the help that they could get.
Well if Katherine kills me at least I won't have to introduce Damon to my father.

~ * ~

Thirty minutes later she was on a ladder, helping to hang gorgeous colored globe lanterns that would cast an eerie glow onto the wall. She could hear Matt and Tyler a few yards away talking about Caroline and it made her smile to know that Matt still cared about her. Caroline didn't trust herself around him but she knew from experience that it was hard to stay away from someone you loved. You could fight the feeling tooth and nail but in the end it always won. Whether that was good or bad you'd have to just wait and see.

Sighing she reached up as far as she could, extending her arm to slip the string over the small silver hook on the ceiling of the tent. Why aren't the tall people doing this? After a few annoyed misses, she finally managed to get the hoop into place. A young boy with two boxes on top of each other that was being badgered by an older man, probably his boss, found himself stumbling into the ladder and knocking it off balance.

Bonnie yelped and she lost her footing, falling backwards as her sneaker got caught between two metal rungs. Strong arms caught her before she hit the ground and she blinked, expecting to see Damon holding her. She was quite surprised to find Tyler as her savior instead.

"Whoa there." He chuckled. "Don't want a lawsuit on our hands."

"Thanks." She blushed as he put her down. "I…lost my balance or whatever. You moved pretty fast to catch me."

"Yeah well I uh…had to shove Jeremy out of the way but I think it was for a good cause." He flashed a charming grin. "Guess it's a good thing you don't weigh much."

She laughed. "Not for a lack of trying—all those Grille burgers I eat."

He opened his mouth to reply when slender fingers wrapped around her upper arm and Damon Salvatore stepped into view. He directed his words to Bonnie. "I need to talk to you." And then without waiting for a reply, he dragged her away from Tyler and the pretty tables to a more secluded area near the back of the patio.

Wrenching her arm free, she frowned at him. "Okay this is as far as I go. Rude much?"

He shrugged. "About as rude as you in that dog's arms."

Her eyes rolled. "He caught me before I broke my neck. It's not like we were snuggling."

He grunted in response. "I need a favor."

"Don't you always?" She smirked, admiring the way his shirt hung on his body.

He mirrored her smirk and wrapped his arms around her waist, pulling her closer. "Yes but this one is not the least bit sexual unfortunately so no worries." He leaned down and nuzzled her, smoothing his lips along her skin.

Stefan clearing his throat off to the side made them both glance over. "Is it possible that we can talk without you groping her in front of me?"

His brother's face scrunched as if he were thinking. "Honestly? Probably not. She's just so…grop-able."
Bonnie snorted. "What's up?"

Younger Salvatore wet his lips. "I know how you feel about everything but since you're the one who linked Mason to Katherine, we finally have an opportunity to get an upper hand on both of them. We'd really appreciate your help."

"Pretty please." Her boyfriend mused, slapping her on the ass.

The cute little witch shoved him without any real desire to harm him. "I'm listening."

Before Stefan could reply, his cell phone chimed and he looked to the number on the screen. "Look I have to fill Elena in on what's happening. Can you keep your hands to yourself and stick to eye sex, please?"

Damon's eyes squinted at the corners. "Yes." Of course the minute Stefan was occupied; he stepped into Bonnie's space, his lips hovering over hers. "Do you have any idea how cute you look right now? How about we blow all of this off and go some place quiet?"

*Man he smells good.* "I thought you promised to keep your hands to yourself…"

The vampire caressed her cheek. "I lied. Besides it would be much more fun to be off making you blush than dealing with all of this Mason, werewolf crap."

"True." Going with her first instinct, she rested her cheek to his chest. "But play time is over apparently. It would be nice though if it were weeks ago and my only problem was my growing attraction to you."

"Hey…" His voice was soft. "This will all blow over soon and we'll be back to me trying to get into your pants."

*Funny how I would take that over drama.* "You're so generous sometimes."

"It's my one flaw." Snickering, he cut his icy blue eyes to his brother and his brows narrowed. "You know, all you have to do is touch Mason Lockwood again and see if he gave Katherine the moonstone."

She pulled back to see his expression. "My visions don't work like that. I don't get to ask questions."

"How inconvenient." He replied, his body rocking with the word. "Although, let's talk more about your little witchy juju for a second. That thing you can do that makes vampire's brains burst into flames. What is that?"

"It's me giving them an aneurysm." She explained simply. "Your blood vessels go pop but you heal quickly. So I do it over and over again."

Damon fell quiet for a moment, his mind working. "Hm. Is it vampire specific?"

*I do not like where this is going.* "It'd work on anyone with a supernatural healing ability."

"Good good…" He said softly, lips pressed.

Oy. "Damon. I'm not gonna help you hurt him."

"He's a werewolf and Katherine is evil. They're the bad guys." He pointed out, hands on his hips. "Really? You're gonna play morality police with me right now?" When she didn't answer, he continued. "Okay let me put it another way. They're a threat to Elena…and me. So if you don't want
me or your best friend dead, you're gonna get over being the good girl for once and help us."

Bonnie blinked up at him, anger rising in her chest. "I don't have to do anything for you. Especially not when you ask me like you're my Master and not my boyfriend."

Twitching, he tugged on a strand of her hair. "You know I don't mean it the way I say it. But this is the first in Team Good Guys has had since that bitch came back into town. If we don't act on it, who knows what she might do?"

_That's true._ "I just—he's never did anything to me."

"He tried to kill your incredibly handsome boyfriend and his...okay looking brother. Oh and did I mention Elena said he threatened her? Stefan and I can look out for ourselves but..."

"You're a bastard for playing that card."

He nodded. "Did it work?"

The witch nibbled on her bottom lip but she already knew she was going to agree to help. She just hoped she didn't have an attack of a guilty conscious in the meantime.

~*~

Using her powers to incapacitate Mason so that Damon and Stefan could get to him had been hard but she'd powered through it. Even gave a small _sorry_ knowing that he couldn't hear it. While riding in the front seat of the Jeep and watching Damon drive like a maniac back to the Salvatore home, she'd secretly wondered if she'd did the right thing. Mason was a werewolf but he'd wanted peace before Damon stabbed him and made an enemy. There was a good chance that Tyler's Uncle wasn't a bad guy, just a victim of circumstances. It seemed wrong to do this to him. Of course he was unstable during a full moon, and she loved Damon too much to see him hurt or dead. In the end she realized she had to side with the monster she knew.

_I don't know how I am going to be able to look Tyler in the eye from now on however._

Walking behind said monster as he carried Mason into the study and dumped him into a chair, she hauled the heavy black bag the best she could. "Here's his bag." _What the hell is in there? Rocks?_ "As requested."

He motioned to the tarp on the floor. "Grab that corner."

Even as she did it, a sick feeling arose in her stomach. "Wh—why are we doing this?"

Damon as usual was entertained by the situation. "Because I don't wanna stain the carpet."

She sighed but helped him spread it out. "I knew you were gonna say that."

He chuckled. "You're judging again."

"You're being an ass again." She shot back. "Cut me some slack. It's not every day I help kidnap someone."

The vampire moved over to Mason's bag. "Yeah but you're doing it for a good cause." Pause. "Looks like this guy is used to being tied up. It would be kinky if it weren't disturbing."

"An evil deed done for the purposes of good is still evil." She whispered. "He's not gonna be out for much." Shaking out her fingers, she pressed the tips to the werewolf's head and closed her eyes.
Her boyfriend tilted his head to the side. "What are you doing?"

She studied him as he tied up the oblivious man. "You're looking for a moonstone and I'm trying to help you find it."

"Oh good, yeah. Find out if he gave it to Katherine. Find out where she is and what they're gonna do with it once they get it." The chains rattled as he moved around.

Exhaling, she focused on the task at hand, seeing deep into Mason's brain. A rush of pictures invaded her consciousness; different views of the woods, the moon, Katherine and a fuzzy image of something she was certain she'd seen before. "It—it's somewhere small, dark. There's water…"

He stared at her. "Like a sewer?"

"No like a…" Trailing off, she concentrated harder. "Well? That can't be right… Yeah, it's a well."

"Why would it be in a well?" He asked with a touch of disbelief in his voice.

Geeze. "I told you I only get what I get."

Suddenly Mason groaned, his hand snapping around her wrist unexpectedly. She gasped and stumbled back as Damon freed her, wrapping his arms protectively around her chest and waist. Her heat was thudding against her rib cage in panic, her breath coming out in short pants. She shook her head and stepped away. "I'm done. I—I can't stay here and watch you do whatever you're going to do."

He didn't seem shocked by her admission. "Of course not. Why don't you go look into this well thing."

Her big green eyes drifted to the bound man as her hands wrung. Damon sensed that she was having a bout of a guilty conscious, so he wrapped his fingers around the back of her neck and kissed her passionately on the lips. She tensed before melting against him, letting her tongue be coerced into flicking against his. The action drew a rough sound from his throat and she smiled a little, biting his lip.

Not fair.

Smirking, he rubbed his nose to hers and then steered her towards the stairs. "I'll see you later. Oh and thanks judgy."

Mouth still tingling, she ignored his teasing and quickly exited the room, trying to block out any thoughts of what he was going to do to Tyler's Uncle. She was going to convince herself it was needed to stop something even worse from happening. Though if he was in league with a raging bitch like Katherine, he couldn't be the good guy she wanted to believe he was. I mean look at Damon. Stefan seems to be the only one to escape her unscathed.

"Hey." A gentle voice broke her determined stride.

Caroline. "Hi. How's your mom? Elena filled me in on everything."

The blonde appeared happy that she'd asked. "Um, I'm gonna take her home tonight."

"Caroline I—um—uh—" She had no idea what to say to her. There was too much guilt on her part; she felt like she had no right. "Never mind I gotta go."

"Did you find the moonstone thing?" The other asked, obviously stalling.
"Not yet." She inhaled. *Why is it strange to be talking to her? She's still basically the same person that I know.* "Hey do you remember that old well where we used to play when we were kids?"

The blonde smiled. "Yeah."

"It's in the woods. Do you remember where?"

"On the edge of the old Lockwood property. Why?"

"I think that is where Mason is keeping the moon stone. I gotta go."

"I could come with you!"

"No that's okay."

Caroline pouted and Bonnie eyed her before pushing her guilt and uncomfortable-ness aside. "You know what? Sure." *If the other vampires in my life don't wig me out, I shouldn't let her either.*

Five minutes later and they were in Caroline's car. She'd texted Stefan about their plan and figured he would meet them there. The silence was heavy with tension because neither girl knew what to say. Caroline was most likely walking on eggshells and Bonnie was too in a way. It was odd to see the girl she'd been friends with all her life as this creature of the night now. It was difficult to process that Caroline Forbes had *killed* people.

"So um, I bet the masquerade ball is going to be fun." The blonde tapped her fingers on the steering wheel. "I wasn't gonna go but I'm a lot better at controlling myself now. Plus I've always liked playing dress up."

Bonnie giggled lowly. "Yeah. I think the masks will be a nice touch." A beat. "Uh you know now that it's just us I—I have something to tell you."

"What's that?" Her friend questioned.

*Just say it. She deserves to know.* "I—Damon and I are together. And I know he did horrible things to you, I'm totally not excusing them or saying he found God because he hasn't. It's a long story actually."

A smile. "I know. I mean I've heard you guys in his room. I'm not spying it's just…super hearing."

*Figures.* "You can hate the idea if you want."

She shrugged. "Damon is a jerk but he can be a good guy when he wants to be. I'm really grateful for what he's done for my mom—not killing her and everything. Besides from the sounds of things, you and him are pretty into each other."

"Yeah. It's scary." Bonnie admitted. "I try not to let my guard down that much because I'm scared a wrecking ball might come in and fuck everything up."

"That makes sense. But if he's showing you the side I've seen in the last few days *all* the time, I think you'll be okay." She responded lightly. "And even though he was a total prick to me, I can confess that he's gorgeous. And good in bed."

"Caroline." The witch laughed. "Let's just pretend you didn't sleep with him for the sake of my sanity."

The grin on her face was contagious. "Okay but if you need some pointers on his hot stops, I'm here
to help! Now tell me how you guys got together in the first place.”

~*~

_Falling For You_ by Jem was drifting from Bonnie's speakers as Damon climbed into her room through the window. He could hear her father in his bed sleeping down the hall. The girl in question was sitting at her vanity, pulling a red handled brush through her long dark hair. Their eyes met in the mirror and he collapsed onto her bed, flexing his fingers. He could still feel the gush of Mason's blood between them as he'd ripped out his heart. That shit had been _hell_ to get out from under his nails but at least he had the moonstone.

At least _he_ was able to do what needed to be done. And yet he felt sorry for the bastard. He understood what it was like to _love_ Katherine; to want her and need her and feel like nothing would ever be right unless you had her. Of course the bitch was just using him but he couldn't see that. Died protecting her stupid little secret and she hadn't cared not _one_ bit about the man, only the fact that he was a wolf. And she _needed_ a wolf.

_I hate when we find out what her plan B is._

And yes. Yes he was stupid to provoke her but who would he be if he didn't? He'd never meant for Jenna to get hurt—though he was half sure that had more to do with Elena and Stefan sneaking around than him. Surprisingly enough he was also a smidge upset that Elena had broken up with Stefan to keep her family safe but because she'd been devastated. Okay and maybe a little because Stefan was too.

_All this sharing feelings crap is really starting to annoy me. If I didn't know any better, I'd say Bonnie is making me a better man even if she isn't trying._

Elena was wrong however. Katherine hadn't won…not by a long shot. He was going to see to that.

"You're usually quiet." Bonnie observed. "What's wrong?"

He hunched his shoulders. "Nothing. Just tired of _that bitch._"

She didn't have to ask whom he meant. "I think we all are." Getting up, she took the steps to stand in front of him. Her fingers carded through his hair. "But hopefully the moonstone will give us the upper hand."

"Yeah." Smiling he hooked his arms behind her, pressing his face against the fabric of her tank top. He felt her stomach muscles twitch in response. She smelled like fresh soap and lilac body butter. "When she is dead, we should celebrate by getting naked."

Chuckling, she eased onto his lap with a leg on either side of him. "I'll think about it." Pause. "So um this is going to sound extremely crazy but my—my dad wants to meet you."

Damon was thoroughly interested. "I thought you said that would never happen. You told him about us?"

She snorted. "No. Carol Lockwood did and I…came clean. You don't have to—in fact I don't think you should."

"Why not?" He wiggled his brows at her, his fingers inching under her shirt and up her sides. "Think I'm gonna tell your daddy what a naughty girl you are?"

"No but I do think you're gonna make him wanna stab you and he won't even know you're a
vampire." She smirked with a shiver. "Unless you can play the innocent human, you guys can never talk face to face."

Clicking his tongue against the roof of his mouth, he slid her top off in one clean movement. "I can play nice if you want."

"You—you'd do this?" She frowned a little. "Just like that? Isn't it out of character for you?"

_Everything concerning us is out of character._ "Maybe I enjoy the game of it." He snapped her pink bra strap. "Fooling the unsuspecting humans into trusting me. I'm good at it."

"That you are." She looked down to her lap. "We'll see then. He said next week for dinner but maybe we should hold off on that until this other drama is taken care of."

Damon nodded, more fascinated by how supple her skin was and the goose bumps that had broken out over her flesh. He could hear her heart as its' pace quickened the more he licked and nibbled along her collar bone. Vaguely he questioned himself how he was able to be so close with someone and _not_ screw them, and honestly he didn't have an answer. Maybe he was too caught up in master plans and dastardly deeds. Or maybe he didn't wanna push because he knew she'd drop him like a fly when he overstepped a balance. But it was there in the back of his mind; her scent and her taste and her sounds. If it weren't for the sex dreams he'd probably be flipping out.

They weren't real but his body didn't always get that. Sometimes he'd wake up flushed and sticking to the sheets. That's why he'd taken to sleeping naked when alone.

Smirking he reclined backwards and pulled her with him. "We've come a long way from that night in the woods, huh?"

She propped her head up, her chin resting to his chest. "Extremely."

"Good or bad?" He inquired curiously.

She wet her lips. "Both. Sometimes you still worry me but it's nice to have someone in my life that loves me."

The vampire snickered but not teasingly. "Even a vampire prone to _homicidal_ tendencies?"

"You're less homicidal these days though." Shifting, she pushed herself into a sitting position. "The things you did today were to protect yourself and those you care about. It's brutal but I understand."

Arching onto his elbows, he sighed. "You _do_ understand, don't you?"

She simply nodded quietly in reply so he drew her down and just listened to the music playing. His fingers traced different designs along her back; words and sentences that had no logical order just to feel her tremble.

Now that he could _feel_ he recognized that it was perhaps a bit wrong the way he'd turned her life upside down. The same way Stefan had done Elena's. But what were you gonna do? The heart tended to want what the hearted _wanted_…even the ones that didn't beat.

~Fin~
Façade

Chapter Summary

Sometimes you have to look behind the mask to know what's real.

Chapter Notes

This takes place during 2.07 (Masquerade) and 2.08 (Rose).

Façade

Damon Salvatore was not a man who saw life in terms of boundaries and limitations. He didn't have to because when you were a vampire you could literally do whatever you wanted. Even the sunlight couldn't touch him as long as he had his sparkly ring on his pale finger. It should have been an amazing time in his undead life; hot girlfriend, semi hospitable relationship with his brother and killer good looks all added up to a perfect ten. And yet all he could focus on was his annoying as hell ex and her plans for the town he was currently calling home. He wasn't exactly sure of the precise moment he stopped giving a flying fuck about Katherine but needless to say he didn't anymore. Probably when she wasn't in the tomb or the numerous times she made it clear I was always second fiddle. Probably.

It was as if a veil had been ripped from over his eyes and now he could see her for what she truly was—a bitch. A bratty bitch that slashed and burned until nothing was left. She didn't feel or care or exist for anyone other than herself. Yeah she claimed to love Stefan but he had a feeling she would fuck him over in a heartbeat if it suited her needs. Best to fuck her over first before she got the chance. He owed her pain and he was ready to deal.

He could hear the diligent chatter coming from Alaric Saltzman as he displayed all of his weapons on a table in the living room. Caroline Forbes was lingering near the couch, watching with rapt attention and big innocent eyes. Never did he ever figure he'd be hanging out with a prom queen and amateur male Buffy wannabe, but it wasn't like he had a choice in the matter. Katherine was strong and as much as he didn't want to admit it, he wasn't able to take her down by himself.

I wish I could. I deserve it after all that whore put me through. Continues to put me through...

Strolling down the stairs, he smirked and motioned to the handmade devices. "You really went all out here, huh Rick?"

Alaric managed a smile. "Well if you do it half assed, you're dead. Or at least I would be."

He nodded. "So we're supposed to use your toys to take down Katherine? If it were that easy I'd stab her with a Ken doll."

The other man snorted. "You weren't talking trash about them when they were saving your ass out in
the woods that day."

Touché'. "Hm. Those vampires were kittens compared to Katherine. Hell she turned half of them so that should tell you what we're dealing with here."

The teacher shrugged. "Still wood in the heart should work."

Damon grinned and glanced to the door when a familiar perfume danced its way up his nose. He watched as Bonnie Bennett hurried into the room, clutching the grimoire to her chest. He watched her like a hawk, grunting silently as recognizable feelings flowed through his stomach, heating it. Sometimes he found it very hard to focus, especially when she was looking as cute as she was looking today. Curly hair, soft skin, shiny full lips and wide eyes framed by fluttering lashes; she was the poster child for that type of beautiful girl that would only end up driving you crazy because the more you couldn't have her, the more you wanted her. Most times he wasn't sure if he wanted to fuck her or eat her...heh or both. So not the time to be thinking dirty thoughts.

His ears picked up the conversation he was supposed to be listening to as Alaric explained how each mechanism worked.

"For you I recommend this." He picked up a modified wrist band with small yet effective wooden spikes and slipped it on, most likely talking to Stefan. "Fits nicely under a jacket sleeve, use the trigger when you are ready." He demonstrated how it worked, catching the sharp spear in his hand with an uhn sound. "You wanted me to show you how to kill a vampire so…"

Damon migrated away from them and over to the object of his…affection? Obsession? He wasn't sure of the correct term but he also wasn't sweating it. She was his and that is all that mattered. "Hey. Come to help the men folk?"

Bonnie was obviously less than thrilled with the whole situation. "You know this is crazy, right? Your plan."

He shrugged. "It's this or let her kill everyone."

She frowned up at him. "What about you? What if she kills you?"

"She won't." Pause. "The cavalry here is going to have my back. Besides it's not like we have any other options."

"True but…" Trailing off, she pulled at her necklace. "I don't want anyone to get hurt."

"Even me?"

"Especially you."

"I'm always so touched by your love for me." His arms wrapped around her tiny waist. "But I'm not worried because we have a plan and if anything goes wrong, you'll ride in and save the day."

The witch snorted lightly. "This isn't a joke Damon. Katherine is immune to the aneurysm thing that I can do. Who is to say that she won't be immune to anything else?"

Damon made a face, running his fingers through her hair. "Look this is the bottom line, sweetheart. Either we strike first and kill her or suffer more of her insane bitchy behavior. Think of it like this, when Katherine is dead it'll be just you and me and no more life or death situations. And Elena will be safe—and Caroline."
Sighing, she nodded slowly. "You're right. I'll do what I can."

Smiling, he kissed her nose. "I know you will because you always give one hundred and ten percent."

Rubbing the back of her neck, she surveyed the other people in the area. "Well if all of this goes wrong at least you don't have to come to dinner soon."

Before he could reply, his baby brother whisked her away to give her the moonstone and talk spells. He folded his arms over his chest and swirled on his heels, tapping his finger against his lips. Things weren't exactly uncomplicated with Bonnie but they also weren't insane either. Still intense for sure but that was because of their surroundings. However he would be lying if he said he didn't enjoy the thrill of danger. He didn't like his loved ones being in trouble but he liked playing hero. Surprising considering his earlier outlook when he'd first arrived to Mystic Falls.

Have I really changed so much from that man? I mean I'd still be happily killing if I didn't have to keep the Council off my back. Or if I wasn't blood bonded to a powerful witch that could make my brain ooze out of my ears. Really when you look at it like that, I'm being forced to behave by forces way beyond my control. Yeah. Yeah I can live with that.

Arching a brow, he felt his eyes crinkle at the sides. "Yeees?"

Caroline looked like the cat that ate the canary. "Nothing. I just…think it's cute the way you are around Bonnie."

Stoic. "And how am I around her?"

She waved a hand. "Less douche-y for a start."

"Uh huh. Hey why don't you worry less about me and more about your part in all of this." He pinched his nose.

The blonde snorted lightly. "I can do this. I know I may not be the strongest person in the world but trust me, this I can do."

He didn't reply, he honestly didn't feel like it. Pep talks had never been his strong point and he wasn't about to try with someone who usually got on his nerves. Though Caroline the vampire was much easier to deal with than Caroline the annoying human; the fact that she seemed mellower alone spoke volumes to what the inner magic did for her personality. It was different for everyone.

Stefan had turned evil and confident for a short time—a fun time—taking what he wanted and never worrying about the consequences. And he'd…well he'd decided to shut off and lose himself to instinct because it was better than grieving the woman he loved. That bitch.

Well hopefully he was going to have the last laugh tonight.

~*~

Bonnie was nervous. No strike that. Bonnie was terrified that something was going to go wrong. Even though she had Damon and Stefan's assurances that nothing would, she couldn't help but list all of the cons in her head. Katherine was a very strong vampire—stronger than both Salvatore brothers put together and she was not above using her power to get what she wanted; more like completely in favor of it. And what she currently wanted was stuck deep down in the pocket of her fancy dress. A simple white glossy gem that apparently held untold power.
The mask over her pretty green eyes itched but was beautiful. She wished it was just a normal night at the Lockwood mansion like it was last year. She and Elena had danced and laughed for hours before returning to the Gilbert house for popcorn and sodas. Everything was so simple back then. No vampires or witch powers, just teenagers taking pleasure in their lives. Now they weren't sure they were going to make it to next year let alone have time to be normal.

The party was in full swing around her and everyone looked amazing in their fancy outfits. She'd caught sight of Damon when he came in and he looked beyond gorgeous in his suit. All she wanted was to dance with him. To pretend for one more moment that they were a regular couple. She was hesitant about him meeting her father but also intrigued because it was just so ordinary. It happened all the time. Yeah it would probably be a disaster but that too happened all the time. If tonight went off without a hitch, she'd probably be amused at the mess of her vampire boyfriend meeting her human father.

Exhaling deeply, she shifted in her seat out on the patio and tried to get comfortable. Just minutes earlier she'd spelled one of the rooms upstairs so that the brothers could trap Katherine and hopefully kill her. Either way they weren't getting out anytime soon. Of course I just locked my boyfriend in a room with his homicidal ex, possibly signing his death warrant. Why can't we have normal dates?

Jeremy Gilbert wandered over and plopped down beside her, his cell phone in his hand. He seemed happy to be included in their twisted plan. He also had a lot of questions about witchcraft. "So I've been wondering, can you do like a hocus pocus to ace a test?"

She blinked at him. "I don't know that spell."

He grinned. "That'd be like the first spell I'd learn. Or maybe like a…sex spell. I dunno."

What?

"Hey you wanna dance or something while we're waiting?" He inquired, completely serious.

She chuckled disbelievingly. She was way too wound up for any of that. "No." A beat. "I mean no thank you."

He smiled and slouched more in his chair. "Are you really dating Damon?"

She could hear the doubt for her sanity in his voice. "Yeah I am."

"How did that happen?"

"Actually it's kinda a long, strange story."

"Not surprised. I mean the guy's a dick. No offence."

"None taken. I tell him that all the time."

"Heh you just seem so different."

"We are but I think it works for us."

"And you trust him?"

"As much as I can."

"Yeah. Wonder what is it about vampires that got to you, me and Elena?"
I've often asked myself that question. It seems logical to do the opposite; to find out there are vampires and run away screaming. So why didn't we? "I don't know. I suppose even though we don't want to be, we're entranced in some way by what they are. Maybe it's the danger that keeps us coming back."

His big puppy dog brown eyes slid over her features. "Maybe we should try something different though."

Bonnie was about to ask what he meant when his phone buzzed, ending the conversation. Damon's text of Now showed brightly on the screen and Jeremy sighed but got up to put his part of the plan into action. She watched him go and sighed, nibbling on her bottom lip. The more things changed the weirder they got. She was sure that was the longest conversation she'd had with Jeremy in months.

Speaking of weird, I wonder why that woman from earlier gave me an odd vibe? She isn't a vampire, that is for sure.

Suddenly she couldn't seem to keep still. She got up and walked around a little, stretching her legs, trying to shake off the feeling that something awful was going to happen. She wasn't cut off for this sort of thing—she wasn't strong enough to be taking on ancient evil. Perhaps if her Grams was still around but she was basically flying by the seat of her pants with the spells. And each time she did one, she felt more and more of the old Bonnie Bennett slip away. Soon there would be nothing of her left.

What will I become then? The answer scared her.

Of course she didn't have time to dwell on that because Jeremy was over near the bushes and trying to get her attention. No rest for the wicked...or the weary. Without a word she started over, wondering what else the night held in store.

~*~

Everyone had a reason for wanting Katherine dead. There were probably people who didn't know her that still wanted her dead. It would make perfect sense honestly. And he'd had her. He'd had her twice but he couldn't kill her or Elena would suffer the same fate. He should have known it was too easy to be true. Trapping the bitch for once and actually getting the upper hand with Stefan's help. It all just seemed to cookie cutter clean to work and yet he'd hoped. Maybe even prayed a little though he didn't believe in that sort of thing. But as usual Katherine had pulled through because she was a resourceful little vampire slut.

Yet as he had stood over her with the stake in his hand, ready to strike, he'd felt nothing but the wisps of freedom nipping at his heels. One clean shot and he was truly free of the cloud she'd put over his head for almost one hundred and fifty years. Free to spend his time being a jerk and trying to coax Bonnie into having sex with him without worrying about what was around the corner.

I thought I'd hesitate. I thought I'd chicken out at the last minute; look into her eyes and not be able to do it but that never happened. Huh.

The sounds of the night buzzed all around him in the form of crickets chirping and owls hooting. He pulled at the knot of his tie and watched as a disheveled Katherine stumbled towards him. He'd practically tossed her through the opening just a few seconds earlier. "Hello Katherine."

She clung to the side of the cavern wall, barely able to stand as she continued to fight off the effects of the spell that had put her down. No doubt she was cursing her so called witch friend. "Where am
His shoved his hands into his pockets. "Where you should have been all along." Pause. "I thought you would have learned your lesson by now...messing with a Bennett witch."

She glared at him. "Well look at you. All hot and cold hearted—maybe if you had been like this earlier I wouldn't have been in such a hurry to get away from you. Are you like this with Bonnie? Does she get off on you being a bad boy?"

"You'll never know." His face was blank of emotion. "And you'll never screw with anyone else either."

"You should have killed me." She growled. "Because if I get out of here, I'm going to find your little witch and skin her alive. Or better yet...I'll make her like me and spend the rest of eternity making her my bitch."

Damon's eyes darkened around the edges. "And I'll be there to finish what we started upstairs. Death would have been too kind for you. This is what you deserve." Without another word, he began to push the large stone door of the tomb closed, ignoring her pleas for him to stop.

"Damon, don't! You need me, Elena is in danger." She said vehemently.

He paused. She was lying, she had to be. But what if she wasn't? "No. You're always lying."

She laughed but it lacked humor. "Why do you think I haven't killed her? Because she's the doppelganger—she needs to be protected."

"Then I'll protect her...while you rot in hell." She continued to beg but he ignored her. He ignored the slight twinge in his heart and pushed the door closed; exhaling deeply once it was done. He was shocked by the weight that lifted itself from his shoulders. He was also shocked that there wasn't an all encompassing agony at locking her away.

He supposed that meant that he was truly over her, which boded well for all parties involved. Especially where he and Bonnie were concerned. He was not going to think about Elena or his left over feelings for her. Naturally he wanted her safe he reasoned because she was Bonnie's friend and his too in some capacity or other. And now that he and Stefan were closer than they had been in years he didn't want to see his little brother devastated by her death or whatever.

So yes he would help keep her safe. After what he'd did to Jeremy and everyone else in her life, he owed her that much at least.

Satisfaction slithered through his limbs as he walked out of the woods and hopped into his car, speeding down the road as the wind ruffled his hair. Locking her away forever wasn't as good as killing her but beggars couldn't be choosers. She was gone and that is all that mattered. This way she would waste away to nothing. Spend years and years trying to claw her way out or sit at the door knowing even if she got it open, she couldn't take one step outside.

It was so very cruel. Good.

He came to a stop in front of Bonnie's house just as Jeremy arrived. He got out and was at the witch's door before she could reach for the handle, pulling it open for her. She smiled and accepted his hand. "Thanks for the ride, Jeremy."

He nodded. "You're welcome." He cast Damon a look. "Take care."
The vampire gave a sarcastic wave as he drove away. "I don't think he trusts me."

"Or likes you." She teased. "So it's done? Katherine is gone?"

"Yup!" He wiggled his brows. "Threw away the key myself. In a few months she'll be completely desiccated and unable to hurt a fly."

"Good." She breathed. "I gotta say, tonight was crazy. Between Elena getting hurt by proxy and meeting Lucy, I'm not sure what I feel. It's nice to know I'm not alone but it seems no matter what I do, I'll never be able to be out of the middle. It's like vampires seek out witches or something. Bennett witches at that."

"It's not surprising Katherine had a witch in her pocket. She probably set up saving Lucy so that she would be indebted to her." He explained. "Either way she's gone and everyone is okay." Well except for Amy Bradley. "Now I think we should go up to your room and get you out of his darling dress."

Laughing softly, she gave his fingers a squeeze. "I wanted to dance with you tonight. I know it's stupid but…"

Why is she so damn adorable? I mean really. "Wait here." Jogging to his vehicle, he turned the ignition switch back, making the radio flare to life. After fiddling with it for a few, the soft sounds of a jazz song slowly started to flow from the speakers. "May I have this dance?"

Bonnie blushed but placed her silk wrap and mask on the ground before walking over to join him. She slipped her arms around his neck, her fingers immediately carding through the hair at the nape. His arms winded around her waist and he swayed them from side to side. It was a little corny but… nice. Just the two of them under a bright street lamp with the sounds of Midnight Serenade crooning from his vintage car, and her eyes shining brilliantly.

"You are so smooth when you want to be." She smirked. "You're gonna get me into so much trouble."

Damon grinned and spun her, dipping her dramatically. "Count on it."

It had been a long time since he'd experienced anything remotely like peace, but he figured tonight—this moment—was pretty damn close. So what if it wasn't his usual thing. So what if it made him seem a little soft and not the badass he always portrayed himself to be. If he couldn't shed that mask in the bubble that they had created, what was the point of holding onto her in the first place?

Besides after the staggering reality of earlier, they both deserved a little fantasy.

~*~

The next day found Bonnie in school and humming. That jazz song had been stuck in her head all night; it even drifted in her dreams where she and Damon had continued their dance but in a more era appropriate situation. It was incredible what the mind could come up with; things it had never encountered before but somehow knew. Like Damon in a fedora in a smoky room, puffing on a cigar until she waltzed in dressed in white with a gardenia in her hair.

They'd swayed and swayed in the hazy dreamscape for what seemed like forever, and she'd woken up with a cute little smile on her face. Sometimes he made her feel so warm inside that for a brief moment she would forget how much of a bastard he was before. That he'd ultimately tried to kill her when he hadn't got what he wanted. It always came back though and she was okay with that because it helped her to stay grounded. Losing herself completely to Damon Salvatore was a risk she just couldn't take right now.
Smiling at her thoughts, she opened her locker and traded her books, blinking when a hand latched onto her bicep and pulled her across the hall into a doorway. "Wh—Stefan? What's wrong?"

"Elena's missing." Were the first words out of his mouth. "She didn't come home last night and—and we think it has something to do with a message Katherine gave Damon. She said Elena's in danger. Now I need you to open the tomb so that she can help us. Damon said she won't talk but I think we should try."

She blinked at him; is he for real? "I can't undo the tomb spell, Stefan even if I wanted to. It took both me and my Grams to do it the first time."

He nodded. "But you can open the door right, and talk to her?"

"Yeah but...Damon's right she's not gonna tell you anything." She responded. "Not without something in return."

Shaking his head, he hugged his waist. "I know but I have to do something. I have no idea who has Elena. I have no idea where she is."

With his brows furrowed and his soulful eyes imploring her for help, she wet her lips. There was no way she could say no...after all Elena was her best friend as well. "What if—what if there was another way to find her?"

"How?"

"Is—is there somewhere we can go? Some place quiet?"

"Um sure yeah, go to Alaric's room and I'll give him a head's up."

"Okay." Hiking her bag onto her shoulder, she hurried down the hallway and into the history teacher's vacant classroom. Jeremy was unexpectedly already inside, pacing back and forth in front of the blackboard. "Hey."

He stopped when he noticed her. "Hey. What are you doing here?"

"Helping Elena." She said with a little smile. "I'm gonna do a tracking spell to find her. Can you um, get me a map and some candles?"

"Sure." He jumped to fulfill her request.

Finding the items that she wanted in a cabinet along with school supplies, he quickly brought them to a table and helped her arrange them in the order that she liked best.

Bouncing on his toes, he gestured to the items. "How does this work?"

She lit the white candles. "I'll use your blood to draw the energy for the tracking spell. You're blood related; it'll make the connection stronger."

The door opened and Stefan made his way into the room. "Alright Alaric said we gotta clear outta here in ten minutes. I got weapons...he stocked me up."

Bonnie bit her lip hard, her nerves on edge. "Are you ready?"

Her best friend's little brother nodded and held out his hand. Picking up the small silver knife, she
sliced a gash across his palm deep enough to bleed. Droplets of red fell onto the map and Stefan swallowed hard, averting his gaze and white knuckling a chair. Closing her eyes, she began to focus her energy, pushing her power out as if it were a solid object. It settled onto the blood and made it slither down the paper, leaving a bright crimson trail in its wake.

When it stopped, she sighed, feeling more exhausted than she had in a long time. "There…she's there."

"That's 300 miles away." Jeremy replied incredulously.

"No Bonnie we need a more exact location than that." Stefan sounded frantic.

She shook her head slowly, her vision slightly askew. "That's as close as I can get."

"We can make it. Aerial view; it'll show us what's around there. Help us narrow down the area." Jeremy explained, happy to be helping.

Stefan was already heading for the door. "Perfect. Call me with whatever you find."

She heard the vampire's response but suddenly their voices faded into the background. Tightness appeared in her temples before blooming into a sharp headache that rested behind her eyes, making the bright overhead lights almost too painful to withstand. She placed both hands on the table for support and tried to steady herself, blinking when more blood fell onto the map. With a start she realized her nose was bleeding and wiped it away quickly.

Well that's new. No need to panic though. I'm okay.

"You can't do this alone!" Jeremy complained as the fuzz finally lifted.

The door to the classroom opened again and Damon appeared at the threshold. "He's not."

His brother arched a brow. "You're coming with me?"

He shrugged. "It's Elena." He locked eyes with Bonnie, his brows narrowing. "Are you okay?"

Crap. "Yeah I—I'm fine. Why?"

The older Salvatore was beside her in an instant, his hands cupping her face. "I smell blood."

She didn't want to lie to him, but right now finding Elena was more important. "I—it's Jeremy."

Damon's strange blue eyes bored straight through her. "I know what your blood smells like, Bonnie. You can't fool me."

Exhaling, she placed her hands over his. "I promise I'll tell you everything but right now we have to help Elena. She could be in real danger."

Annoyed, he relented. "Fine, but this isn't over."

It never is.

~*~

She was burning.

*Her insides were sizzling and boiling but on the outside she appeared completely fine. Inside her*
brain was threatening to pour out of her ears and puddle around her head. She could hear voices—
screaming for help—a maniacal laugh dancing on the air as she tried to get some type of relief. But
none came. She was surrounded by shadows but blazing bright and it was going to kill her.

The shadows were going to kill her and everyone else. There were too strong. She couldn't stop
them. She'd be the first to go in a hail storm of broken glass.

"Bonnie! Bonnie can you hear me!"

With a groan the little witch blinked slowly and opened her eyes. "What—where am I?"

"Jesus." Jeremy huffed from where he was hovering. "Are you okay? No, wait here."

Forcing herself to sit up, she leaned against the headboard of his bed and watched as he left the
room. *God that was so stupid. I can't believe I passed out like that.*

Returning, he handed her a glass of water. "What happened? You scared the hell outta me."

She shrugged nonchalantly. "It's nothing."

He begged to differ. "It wasn't nothing Bonnie."

*I so don't wanna get into this right now.* "I've been doing a lot of magic lately. It wears me down."

A snort. "When I'm worn down I take a nap. You were—you were unconscious."

"Witchcraft…has its' limits." She said carefully. "If I push too hard it pushes back."

Shifting in front of her, Jeremy brought a leg up onto the bed. "How do you know all of this?"

She gestured to the grimoire. "It's all in here. It's…like a reminder that I'm not invincible." Hugging
her knees, she gazed at him. "Please do—don't tell anyone."

"Why not?"

"Cause it's a weakness and I don't want certain people to know that."

"Oh certain people, you mean Damon?"

"I mean anyone that could hurt me…not that he ever would of course. He'd just—he'd get all weird
about it and I can't afford to be put on some no magic lock right now. Yeah it scares me but it helps
those I care about."

"If he really cared about you back he'd try to get you to stop."

"If he finds out…he will. Please, don't tell anyone. I need to be doing this."

Frowning, he nodded. "Okay I won't tell anyone. I promise."

Smiling, she patted at an invisible spot on her pants. "It's been kinda hard without Grams around to
help me. My dad doesn't wanna talk about it and hasn't since my mom left. If it weren't for Elena and
Damon I'd be pretty much alone in all of this."

Pause. "You're not alone Bonnie. Whenever you wanna talk I'm here."

*O…kay. Never seen that sort of look from him before.* "Thanks…"
For as long as she could remember, Bonnie had been the friend that didn't get noticed. Caroline was the sexy one and Elena was the popular one…and she was just the one left behind. However suddenly she had people looking at her the way Jeremy was starting to—the way Damon already did—the way Tyler sometimes did. It's like I'm in an alternate universe or something. And it's given me a major migraine.

Shuffling down, she placed her head gently on the pillow. "I'm just gonna rest my eyes for a moment. I just…need a moment to…" She was out before she could finish her sentence.

~*~

"I'm sorry." Stefan stated. "What I did was selfish; I didn't want to be alone. I guess I just needed my brother."

"I love you, Elena. And it's because I love you that I can't be selfish with you. Why you can't know this? I don't deserve you…but my brother does…"

To be quite honest he felt like a bastard right now. Confessing his love to Elena in the middle of a good deed because he'd finally got over his hatred for his brother, and yet here he was watching Bonnie sleep afterwards. Idly he wondered if this was ever how Katherine felt while she was in the middle. Probably not since she was an evil skank who wanted Stefan all along.

He realized that it was possible to love Elena and Bonnie at the same time. It wasn't some big mystery he would have to solve; it just was what it was. But the difference was that Bonnie loved him back, and he would be massively stupid to give that up just to chase a dream. Stefan and Elena weren't together at the moment but they'd find their way back to each other…and that is how it was supposed to be. It hurt but that was life. It wasn't roses and raindrops—it was pain that ultimately made you stronger in the end. Or that led you to the path you were supposed to walk.

Elena wasn't his path and she'd never been. Sometimes I wonder if it's all superficial anyway. Just me wanting what Stefan has.

Pursing his lips together, he smoothed his cold fingers on the witch's cheek. Right now he had to concentrate on making sure Bonnie didn't over do it with the magic. He knew what could happen to a witch that didn't let her batteries recharge. Back in the day he'd promised to protect the Bennett line and he was going too, especially now so that Shelia could come back and haunt his ass.

A hand on his cheek brought him out of his thoughts. "Hey. How long you been here?"

He shrugged idly. "Not long enough for it to be considered creepy."

Bonnie chuckled through her yawn. "I know you wanna talk and that's cool. I'm ready. I'm glad you're here."

Smiling, he kissed her forehead. "Me too."

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

Love is ever changing, but that's the problem.

Chapter Notes

This takes place around 2.09 (Katerina).

Nullus Ordinarius Amor

When things got to be too hectic within the confines of Mystic Falls, Bonnie found herself retreating to either the cemetery or the woods near the park for a little peace and quiet. Sitting at one of the old rain worn picnic tables, she scraped the bottom of her tennis shoe back and forth along the grass, watching as the blades gave way to brown dirt. After an uneventful day in school where Elena was AWOL and Caroline constantly munched on Chex Mix, she'd ventured to the Grille for a milk shake to help her unwind and to cure her boredom. There she had met Luka—the new kid in town—and his lacking of subtle father who almost immediately questioned her about her heritage.

Even though afterwards Luka had shown his own powers, she didn't trust him and didn't see herself attempting to any time soon. She was done with random new men who took an interest in her. She'd learned her lesson with Ben and was not in the mood to be taken hostage ever again. Friendship was a possibility if he proved to be not evil but she wasn't even going to hold her breath. The past few months had made her jaded where people were concerned. She'd learned that not everyone was who they always claimed to be.

At the very least she would hope that Lucy would return someday soon to help her with her powers, and to teach her about their family's history.

Yawning, she glanced around the area that was so familiar and yet seemed like she had not seen in years. She could still remember the party where Elena and Stefan became more acquainted with each other. Where Vicki Donovan was attacked by some animal and left for dead in the woods. Back then things had appeared to be so terrible with no signs of ever getting better. If only she had known then what she knew now; that life would become harder as the days went on. That she would morph into this new person that she wasn't entirely sure she liked or respected to be honest. And always in the back of her mind she wondered if her Grams approved of the young woman she was turning into.

She was trying so hard to keep everyone safe but they kept making horrible decisions concerning their own well being. She didn't want to just stop caring but it was hard to continuously give a damn while the world continued to crumble around her. More importantly however she did not want to reach the point where she had nothing left to lose and just lost control of everything.

Herself.
Her powers.

Her life.

Yet she wasn't above seeing the small glimmers of good side that peaked from the clouds every now and then. The insane crazy witch Clarissa hadn't made another appearance since trying to kill her and Damon, and for that she was grateful but she wasn't naive enough to think she'd never show up again. The girl was hurting and beyond the point of no return. She felt the only thing that could cure her itch was seeing Damon dead…and maybe in some odd way she was right. She wouldn't judge her for her reasons because however strange, they were right in their own way. Damon had murdered her best friend in cold blood to fuel his own evil agenda. Bonnie could only imagine how she would react if he hurt Elena for the same reasons.

Of course he'll never hurt Elena period so I do not have that to worry about. A fact which is both comforting and concerning all at the same time.

While she was happy that her vampiric boyfriend would never kill her best friend, his actions for not doing so were never fair from her mind no matter how fucken hard she tried to push them away. The most difficult part was not blaming Elena for their "close relationship" although a part of her wanted to. A part of her wanted to tell the brunette that perhaps if she didn't bat her lashes at him when she needed something done he would be less inclined to consider her needs. A part of her wanted to tell Elena that she was being a tad selfish and indecisive with Damon and her emotions related to him; that she either didn't want him around her anymore or she did. It wasn't fair for her to try to have it both ways or to pull him back to her when danger crept upon them.

Because as much as it sucked to say out loud or anywhere else, danger was as much a part of their lives now as breathing. Vampires were death and they carried it everywhere they went. It had been a hard lesson for her to learn in the beginning but she knew it now—held onto it tightly so that she wouldn't forget. Sometimes it was the only thing that grounded her.

Elena was at first by proxy a character in her drama with Damon because of her exterior but now that wasn't even a blip on the radar screen and she wished it still was. When Damon was drawn to Elena because she looked like Katherine she knew how to handle everything. Katherine was supposedly in the tomb and Elena wanted Stefan and everything had been all right with the world…until it wasn't anymore. Yet she could blame Katherine for the developments that were occurring. Her rejection of Damon had opened his eyes more to Elena and their differences.

So there really was no way to win when you thought about it. Either way she was fucked and though she loved Damon, she was getting very tired of his mixed loyalties. Yes she didn't want him to be able to save Elena and nor but she also didn't want him seeking out ways to save her just to gain more "friendship" ground.

Frowning she rubbed at her temple and stood, brushing off the back of her jeans before heading over to the trail that disappeared around an overgrown curve leading into the woods. She listened to the sounds of the birds chirping and jumping from tree to tree, rustling the otherwise quiet leaves. Christmas would be upon them soon and idly she allowed herself to wonder what she would be getting her friends. Last year for the holiday there had been some party followed by caroling for the neighbors and hot cocoa at the Grille. Elena and Matt were joined at the hip while Carolina ripped open her brightly wrapped gift to reveal a pair of earrings she'd been hinting at for three months prior. Everything had been so normal and easy.

Now I get to look forward to so many first holidays without my Grams. It doesn't seem right. The world should acknowledge the difference or something.
Her stylish sneakers crunched over dead twigs until she was walking onto the bridge that connected in the clearing. The water rushed underneath and she leaned, watching as it made the tiny rocks below shine. Holding her hand over them, she exhaled and six floated into the air, swirling around as if they were dancing to some unheard music. Faster and faster they twirled until they were nothing but a blur of polished colors. She could feel her powers pushing them; oozing out of her fingertips like clay from those old children clay dough machines that she used to play with. Her wrist tingled, her palm itchy and her back straight. It was so intoxicating knowing that with a thought she would send them hurling anywhere she wanted. Intoxicating and scary, nevertheless she didn't stop.

It was clear that she couldn't stop. Witchcraft like so many other things was an addiction.

My addiction.

A curse and a gift if she was being completely honest and here alone in the woods with her thoughts, why wouldn't she be?

The nose bleeds were becoming an issue but she wasn't sure how to stop them. She didn't do major spells every day or every week to be honest, but they were starting to be more frequent. She wasn't certain how she needed to rest to stop them besides not doing any witchcraft for a month. Which was not an option of course and probably would never be an option as long as she resided in Mystic Falls where her powers were needed to keep people safe or solve some mystery.

Or bring the world to its' knees.

Bonnie had a sinking feeling that before everything was said and done with the moonstone drama, she would be burning. Maybe alive or just figuratively but she couldn't shake the sensations from the back of her brain. Whatever happened however she did know that it was going to be ten times worse than the Founder's Day party.

Ten times worse.

~*~

"You're not my keeper, Damon." Bonnie leaned against her kitchen counter, watching as he chopped a carrot into tiny pieces. "Besides if I don't use my magic, we never find out anything or get anything taken care of."

The handsome vampire in question huffed, his shoulders relaxed as he brought the knife down in a methodical tap tap tap sequence onto the cutting board. "What do you think is going on inside of your head when you push yourself too far? You're going to end up as a head of cabbage if you keep it up."

She sighed. "I'm being careful I just—things have been sort of crazy lately. What was I supposed to do? Let Elena never be found?"

He glanced to her out of his peripheral vision. "No. But trying to keep it a secret doesn't help the situation either." Gathering up the carrot bits, he dumped them into the sauce pan on the stove. "No one wants anything to happen to you, Bonnie. You're an integral part of Team Stay Alive."

She shrugged. "So people keep telling me. Is that why you are here by the way? Cooking dinner so that I don't have to magic some in?"

Smirking, he wiped his hands on a dish towel and pecked her lips with a soft kiss. "I'm here because…because I think meeting your father is just what our relationship needs." And what my guilt needs to smooth it away. "It's so normal and you said you wanted normal. So I'm cooking and
"Heh yeah I'll believe it when I see it." She mused. "Still I feel like we should have some sort of script or whatever."

Damon snorted and turned his attention to the raw chicken breasts that needed garnishing. As he dipped the wooden spoon into the sauce and gave it a taste, he couldn't help but think about his reasons for showing up on her doorstep a few hours earlier with an environmental friendly grocery bag full of food. Over the past many years of his undead existence, Damon was aware of the fact that he was a total dick to everyone he encountered. He didn't have one single friend and now that he was feeling more he was able to realize just how wrong that was. How wrong he was.

See in reality he wasn't the sociopath that everyone made him out to be—that he made himself out to be. He knew the difference between right and wrong but he made the conscious decision to bend the rules to get what he wanted. And he hadn't given a shit for a long while because all he wanted was Katherine by his side. And honestly, being bad was so much more fun than being good. Anyway though now that he had people in his life that he honestly gave a damn about, he'd been thinking more and more about random shit and…feelings.

No matter how hard I try not to I can't stop myself. It keeps happening more and more and it's fucking annoying me. Oy.

In a word he felt like a total asshole for telling Elena that he loved her, even if parts of it were true. He felt something for her and he wasn't sure why because honestly in the grand scheme of things she wasn't that memorable. And she'd been mean to him and chose Stefan time and time again; obviously it mostly had to do with her face and the fact that she had been able to see through his bullshit act and know he was in pain underneath it all. After years and years of people taking you at face value and never caring to look deeper, he'd been surprised by her and now it was translating itself into love. Of course I could just want her because Stefan has her…

Either way there was love there and…well…what were you gonna do?

He had the common sense however to realize that it was wrong, especially when he had a perfectly good girlfriend willing to do anything for him. Bonnie was still warmth that flowed through his veins whenever he thought about her. An explosion simmering just below the surface that could burst and consume him whole any moment; one that he would completely welcome by the way. So why had he been treating her like a consolation prize or whatever? Well he was a dick…plain and simple.

I blame the media.

No. The long version was that he was stupid enough to think he could have it all. Somehow take Elena from Stefan and manage to keep Bonnie around as well. It was one of the dumbest things he could ever fathom, but some part of him thought he could pull it off because he was the master of manipulation. He'd never expected to actually fall for Bonnie—to actually start to care about her and love her. It complicated things. It had complicated things the moment he realized there was truth to the thoughts in his head. Caring about someone meant opening yourself up for the chance of pain if something happened to them. No matter how much he may have wanted to, he couldn't shake the feeling that he shouldn't let himself be that open.

I suppose one hundred years of denial will do that to you.

Anyway now he felt guilty for confessing shit to Elena while he's Bonnie's boyfriend. Bonnie was sweet and honest, and she deserved a lot better than someone like him. I told Elena I wasn't going to be selfish and yet here I am, being exactly that. I should send Bonnie packing for her own good but
"I'm not because I want her to stay. I need her to stay with me."

"Don't worry; I'm going to be on my best behavior." He winked at her. "Your dad should like me."

Her brow arched in surprise. "Really? Why?"

He frowned but it lacked edge. "Cause it'll make things easier if your dad doesn't forbid you to see me. Not that I won't just sneak around with you anyway but it's the principle of the thing."

"Since when do you care about the principles of things?" She asked teasingly.

_Since I emotionally cheated on you?_ "Hey I'm trying to be a better person here. Believe me when I say it's slowly twisting me up inside, but I'm doing it. Trying something new after the whole evil thing."

"It's not that I don't appreciate the change of attitude that you are trying to do, I'm just curious as to the why? Usually when you switch modes you have an ulterior motive." Pause. "Like when you wanted to get information about the Council or whatever, you went human."

"I can understand how you would be reluctant to believe my new softer, cuddly side considering the way I've behaved in the past but I try to be different with you." He admitted. "It's not easy and sometimes I don't want to be, but I'm not stupid Bonnie. I get it—we're different with each other. I'm…different than I was when I first came back to Mystic Falls."

Her big green eyes watched him. "Are you happy about that or not?"

_Good question._ "I'm…conflicted. I did what I thought I had to do to get to Katherine, and I killed because I was silently sticking it to Stefan. Well that and because I love the taste of human blood. Old habits are hard to break."

She nodded. "Yeah. Still I'm proud of you for trying. Especially the whole no killing thing and this relationship stuff."

The metaphorical knife twisted deeper in his chest and his brows narrowed before he could stop them. "Not sure I deserve that. I've killed since we hooked up. You know that."

Another nod. "I do but if I put that up against all of the times you've saved my life or been there for me—well it's not something that would make me leave you. I understand you better than you think, Damon. I know what it's like to have something inside of you that you can't control or that you don't wanna control. There are times when the power takes me and I don't want it to let go."

"If it doesn't your brain will bleed out through your nose." He was stoic even though they both knew the thought disturbed him. "Seriously, you need to be more careful from now on. We don't know if this is normal or—or someone doing something to you."

"The grimoire said it's normal." She explained slowly. "If I use my powers too much then they start to drain me. I always knew I wasn't invincible however."

Picking up the bowl of sauce, he started spreading it across the chicken. "You should chill on that then until they are really needed."

Stretching her arms high over her head, she hopped up onto the counter. "Something tells me in the coming weeks, they will be."

Damon was quiet as he fixed up the chicken and then put it into the simmering pan but his thoughts
were shifting in his brain like rusty razor blades, leaving stinging cuts in the form of her death. Images of her lifeless body on the forest floor flashed behind his eyes and he sighed because at one point he'd wanted them to be real. Funny how time changes things, one moment you want a mouthy little witch to die and the next you want a mouthy little witch to get naked. He was royally fucked up.

"Either way, I got your back." He winked and bit playfully at the side of her neck. She squirmed and he smirked, nicking her skin so that a tiny dot of blood bubbled to the top. He closed his lips over it and sucked lightly, delighting in the way she sighed and melted against him.

He was so entranced by the taste of her blood and how much he'd missed it, he didn't hear the footsteps he should have heard until a deep voice was being cleared.

He stepped back quickly with a look on contriteness and turned his attention to the stove. *Time to play Mr. Human.*

"Daddy!" Bonnie smiled a little. "Hey um, what are you doing here? I thought you weren't getting here until after five."

Charles Bennett looked fairly amused by the situation, yet he had an imposing demeanor about him as well. It was probably his size and all around *don't fuck with me* attitude. "I got off work early and thought we could go out to dinner."

Sliding off the counter, his daughter gestured to Damon. "Daddy this is Damon Salvatore. My... boyfriend."

Slipping on his *I'm totally harmless* guise, Damon washed and dried his hands quickly before moving to shake the other man's. He gave just the right amount of pressure so that it was a solid shake. "Hello sir, it's very nice to meet you. Bonnie has told me a lot about you."

Charles shook his hand leisurely. "And here I thought I wasn't going to ever meet you."

The vampire grinned. "I know it's taken a while but when Bonnie said that you wanted to have dinner I thought it was a wonderful idea."

"And you're cooking?"

"Yes sir I like to cook. I cook for my younger brother all the time."

"I see. And Charles will do just fine."

"All right, Charles."

About thirty minutes later they were all sitting around the square table in the dining room, with Charles at the head and Damon sitting across from Bonnie to be polite. His first impression of her father is that he was a good man who liked to take care of his family. He also wasn't a warlock and probably didn't know much about the supernatural side of life. Yet he was bad ass in a way that he couldn't put his finger on.

"So, Damon..." Charles began as his fork stabbed into his potatoes. "Bonnie tells me that you are a college student?"

"I was. But after our parents died I took a leave of absent to watch out for Stefan," He replied casually. "I was going to go back but then our Uncle Zach took an indefinite trip to Europe so I hope to finish after Stefan graduates."
The "older" man nodded as he chewed. "What were you studying?"

"History." He smiled at Bonnie. "I'm fascinated by the past."

Charles took a sip of his lemonade. "What do you plan to do with a degree in history?"

"Daddy…" Bonnie said in a warning stop badgering him tone.

Damon used his knife to cut into his chicken and took a bite. "I was thinking historic preservation actually. I've been told that I'm charismatic so I thought I'd make a good tour guide or perhaps work for some historical society here in Virginia. Considering everything that has happened in this town alone I shouldn't have trouble finding a job."

Mr. Bennett smirked but seemed pleased. "Well I hope that works out for you." A beat. "I have yet to meet your brother but I knew your Uncle. He's a good man."

"The best." Damon related. "Stefan and I are very grateful that he's letting us stay in his home while he's away."

"Hm. Are you working?"

"No I…haven't really had time to find a job."

"How do you and your brother support yourselves?"

"We have a trust."

Bonnie sighed as she ate. "Helping Stefan with school and everything takes up a lot of his time, daddy."

Charles sent her a look but it was playful. "Yes I am aware of how hard it is taking care of a teenager."

And now for the sincere eyes and earnest expression. "Mr—Charles I understand that you heard some discouraging things about me from a source that will remain nameless, but I can assure you that I have only the upmost respect for Bonnie. We should have told you sooner that we were dating but I think she was scared you wouldn't approve because of my age. But I'm not just some college guy looking for a high school girlfriend to further my reputation. I really like your daughter." Most truthful thing he'd said in a long while.

Charles regarded him critically before continuing to eat. "And I suppose she really likes you too. You're the first boyfriend she's had over in a long time. And I hear our Shelia got to meet you before she passed away. The fact that you are still standing means she liked you I suppose."

"I liked her too." It wasn't a complete lie; she had spunk.

The rest of dinner went on with more idle conversation as Charles continued to ask Damon about his life and his goals. All in all it was exactly what the vampire had expected and he was pretty sure he passed the oral exam with flying colors. By dessert the tension in the room wasn't as thick, but he figured Charles would try to keep him wound just a little because it's what fathers did. Afterwards he'd helped clear the table and even done the dishes while pretending not to listen as Bonnie ask her dad what he thought.

"He seems okay." Mr. Bennett remarked. "Whether it was all an act for my benefit for not, he's all right."
She snickered lightly. "Yeah I notice the shotgun didn't come out once."

He kissed her forehead. "I'm gonna turn in—gotta get up early for work tomorrow." He poked his head into the kitchen. "It was nice meeting you Damon."

Damon flashed a smile. "You too, sir. Goodnight."

Bonnie waited until he was up the stairs and around the corner before she ducked into the kitchen and pulled Damon's head down for a kiss. She flicked her tongue against his lips and then inside when he parted them, sliding it against his slowly, caressingly, enjoying the feel of their mouths pressed together. She tasted like the spicy sauce from earlier and he enveloped her quickly, drawing her as close as he possibly could; chest to toes. Her warmth surrounded him like walking into a hot room from out of the cold, and he sighed. Yup, royally fucked.

"Thank you." She whispered against his lips, catching the bottom one with her teeth and giving it a little tug. "For being nice to my dad."

"If your thank yous are always along this line, I'll quack like a duck." He murmured with a smirk. "Your dad is all right. Really."

Chuckling, she stepped back and smoothed her hand down his chest. "I thought tonight was going to be a disaster but it was actually kinda nice. Made me feel like a normal teenage girl."

"You're welcome." He put the last dish away and dried his hands. "Tomorrow I'm gonna try to find out more about this Klaus dude. Rose claims she has a friend who is a good place to start."

The pretty witch just "mmm'd" in response and lifted his shirt, drawing her fingers along his happy trail. He twitched and backed her into the space by the door that would hide them from view. She hit the light switch and the room was shrouded in darkness except for the lights from the dining room. Her eyes were staring up at him, shining with just a hint of naughtiness that he only saw on rare occasions that weren't in his dreams. At least recently anyway since they seemed to have less time to fool around because of all the stupid danger always lurking around the corner.

Damon searched her expression absently. "Something on your mind, little witch?"

She bit her lip in that irresistible way. "I just—I want to do something nice for you to say thank you. Not just for tonight but..."

He tilted his head to the side, his interest beyond piqued. "Such as?"

Her delicate fingers were shaking as they brushed his zipper but he knew exactly what she was getting at. It was wrong, so so wrong and yet Damon couldn't honestly remember why it was wrong because the next second he was cupping the back of her hand as it molded to his hastily hardening flesh. A layer of jeans and boxers were between her touch but he could still feel the heat of her palm as it started to rub him, slowly at first. His entire body shuddered from the contact, his skin warming. Her actions were tentative but what she lacked in experience she made up for with a sincerity of wanting him to enjoy.

It had been a while to have the sensations so real and done by someone else. Damon pressed into the actions and rested his forehead to her shoulder, trying to keep the pleasurable noises that were rising in his throat from coming out. His hips canted forward of their own volition and he heard Bonnie gasp, felt her squeeze him so that he would only jerk again.

Feeling that she had the hang of things, he grasped her face with his hand and kissed her, let her swallow his moans of satisfaction. She was stroking him through his jeans and grinding against him
like a cat, and it was utterly amazing to behold. He couldn't even get a handle on his own disjointed thoughts because all revolved around the bliss hammering inside of him like a drum beat and sent a steady stream of more more more through his brain.

When he finally came it was glorious and bittersweet at the same time because it meant it was over. His body flushed, he grunted and his eyes exploded black with lust as he twitched in his pants before his release flowed through him like water, leaving him hot and panting with a wet spot that would have been quite noticeable if not for the black fabric.

His legs were slightly shaking and he leaned to Bonnie for support, their kiss long having dissolved into a soft motion of lips moving for the sake of moving. He pulled back with a little grin after a moment. "You just keep… surprising me, you know that?"

Her cheeks were totally red; it was a good look for her. "I had an idea."

"Ugh, fuck." He cursed with a laugh. "I haven't came in my pants since I was human."

"You're welcome." She chuckled.

He snorted. "What am I gonna do with you?" That is such a loaded question.

She shrugged as if it were obvious. "Just… love me and I think we'll be okay."

Damon's face went blank but he tried to keep it pleasant. It was easy and simple what she wanted and he was already there, but she couldn't have said anything more complicated as well if she tried. Why did she have to ask the hardest of him?

~*~

Bonnie wasn't certain why she was tired the next day as she attempted to spend time with Elena, but she could hardly keep her eyes open. When the brunette scampered off to get popcorn so that they could watch movies and talk about everything Katherine had told her, Bonnie found herself drifting off on Elena's bed seconds after she was out of the room. At first her dreams were simply blank water colors of normal things; her going to school or hanging out with her friends like everything was right in the world. Tyler was even there with Matt but their relationship wasn't stilted, it was like it was before.

And then things began to change—to shift. She found herself in Elena's room, standing at the door and looking around. She ran a hand through her long black curls, feeling like there was something she was supposed to be looking for. Something she was supposed to find. She made a move to the dresser to go through the drawers when suddenly two shady figures began to materialize. At first they were just blobs of color but the more she stared, the more they started to resemble people she knew until Damon and Elena were standing before her.

"Guys?" She called but they didn't response. They couldn't see or hear her.

Elena was dressed in her blue plaid pajama bottoms with a matching tank top. She looked weak and fragile, and there were bruises on her upper arms. She sighed when Damon held up her silver necklace and reached for it, blinking when he pulled back. "Please give it back."

He watched her and stepped closer. "I just have to say something."

"Why do you have to say it with my necklace?" She asked slowly.

He seemed to think of his answer before giving it. "Because what I am about to say is… probably the
most selfish thing I've ever said in my life."

"Damon, don't go there." She warned.

As he stepped even closer into the brunette's space, Bonnie frowned and tried to wake up but she couldn't. She could only watch.

"I just have to say it once. You just need to hear it." He gazed into Elena's wide brown eyes. "I love you Elena. And it's because I love you that I can't be selfish with you. Why you can't know all this? I don't deserve you…but my brother does." He placed a gentle kiss to her forehead and stroked her hair. "God I wish you didn't have to forget this… but you do."

Bonnie woke up so forcefully that she lashed out with her arm, striking the lamp and sending it crashing to the floor. Through the grace of God it didn't break and she gasped for air, her eyes burning with tears that she refused to shed.

It's not real. It was just a stupid dream. Even as she thought it she knew it was a lie. She could feel it and her feelings had never been wrong before.

Damon confessed his love to her best friend, and then erased her memory.

Damon confessed his love to her best friend, and then erased her memory.

Damon confessed his love to her best friend.

Damon confessed his love to her best friend.

Damon confessed his love.

Wiping frantically at her eyes, she felt the anger swell in her chest and the room warmed dangerously. Wisps of white smoke were conjured out of thin air, threatening to light the bedspread and it was all she could do to keep them from doing so. She jumped off the bed and hurried over to the window, throwing it open and leaning out so that the cool would calm her. But every time she closed her eyes she saw it and felt like such a fool. Such a stupid fucking fool for not discovering the truth sooner.

Or maybe I knew but I just didn't want to actually believe he'd…

She wanted to fall to her knees and sob but she kept her back straight; dug her nails into her palm to focus on that pain instead of what was currently breaking her heart. All of this—all of this started because of Emily and for that Bonnie would hate her until she died. She was innocent and unaware until Emily decided to turn her life upside down. Until Emily decided to bind her to someone unable to treat her the way she warranted being treated.

In the beginning it was nothing but a game to him and now…now I have no damn clue what it is.

Well no more. I won't be his second place prize. I won't be his crutch. I won't be his anything.

Closing her eyes, she sniffled as a single tear escaped and fled down her soft cheek. She was trembling with rage, disappointed and the strength it took to not let everything around her be engulfed in flames. The small trinkets on Elena's vanity shook rapidly from side to side like they were in the grips of an earthquake; one perfume bottle cracking down the middle to leak onto the makeup sponge beside it.

A hand clamped onto her shoulder and she whirled, the shock making her forget herself for a second. Jeremy flew back moderately to the wall, his eyes large and round. "Whoa, Bonnie it's me."
Exhaling deeply, she didn't even try to hide anything. "I—I'm sorry I gotta go." She started for the stairs but he grabbed her wrist.

"What's wrong?" He whispered.

"Do you really care?" She snapped.

He blinked, his fingers tightening. "Of course I care. What's happened?"

She wanted to tell him about the awful thing that Damon had done, but she couldn't get the words out of her mouth. They were stuck in her throat like a giant ball of clay that wouldn't be moved. "I—everything is just all fucked up. I feel like I'm losing my mind…like my skin is crawling and I don't know how to stop it."

Frowning, he pulled her into his room and shut the door. "Can I help?"

No. No one can help me. I'm beyond help.

"I…" And then she had an odd idea. "I need some of Damon's blood. He won't give it to me but I—I need it."

Jeremy bit his bottom lip. "I could get it for you. Probably. We're on kinda good terms now and I could tell him it's for—well I'll make something up. How much do you need?"

"Just a few drops." She said softly. "Jeremy you don't have to do this. He could hurt you."

He snorted. "I'm Elena's brother, he wouldn't hurt me. Besides I'm wearing my ring of invincibility."

"Why would you help me?"

"Because you're always helping keep Elena safe. I guess I just feel like you should have someone watching your back too. And if this helps you out of some kinda jam then…I wanna do it."

Touched by his sentiment, she squeezed his hand. "Thank you. Don't tell your sister about this. I…not yet."

He nodded. "Sure."

Elena calling out to her snapped Bonnie back to attention and she headed to the door. Jeremy related that he would have the blood as soon as he could and she thanked him again before rejoining Elena in her room.

One way or another all of this is going to be over shortly.

Four hours later Jeremy returned with a slightly soiled handkerchief stained with red. He didn't ask questions, he just handed it over to Bonnie with a rather charming smile. Said he'd accidentally stabbed Damon with one of Alaric's weapons while practicing at the manor and then stole it when he wasn't looking. She hugged him before she could stop herself and then folded it up into a neat square, tucking it into her pocket.

"Thank you."

"You're welcome. I hope it does whatever you want it to do."

So do I, Jeremy. So do I.

~Fin~
Like A Ghost

Chapter Summary

Now it was her turn to disappear.

Chapter Notes

This tags episodes 2:10 (The Sacrifice) and 2:11 (By the Light of the Moon).

Like A Ghost

Usually when Bonnie Bennett had a problem that she couldn't figure out herself, she went to her best friend and they hammered out a solution together. However this time that just wasn't possible. Sure she could tell Elena what Damon had done but it wouldn't so much as solve anything as it would make their entire dynamic explode into little bitty pieces. Not to mention it would probably implode the steadily mending Damon/Stefan relationship, and for as angry as she was at Damon she didn't want to hurt Stefan. So she was basically suffering in silence and her magic was suffering because of it.

Since finding out that her so-called boyfriend confessed his love to her best friend, she'd found herself extremely agitated to the point of being on edge. She'd already accidentally broken several small mugs in the kitchen when her powers spiked and made them fly off the counter top to mash against the wall. Thankfully she'd been alone in the house at the time. At school it was even harder to control herself because every time she saw Elena she also saw Damon saying things to her he never seemed to be able to admit to the person he was supposed to be admitting them too. The fact that yes, Damon had told her he loved her didn't matter as much when he appeared much more sincere with Elena.

While she still didn't trust Luka she did find him easy to talk to about witchcraft. At least he is forthcoming about his knowledge in that if nothing else. He understood what her body was going through—she'd lied and said it was just from doing too many spells—and he'd suggested channeling another witch. Or in his case warlock and had shown her how to do just that. It reminded her of trying to open the tomb with her Grams except not as draining.

Whatever his angle, she could own up to the fact that it was nice to have someone to go to with her questions.

Now if only I could ask someone what I should do about Damon.

Tucked between her mattresses in a plastic bag was the handkerchief with his blood on it, and to be honest she was trying to gather up the nerve to remove their blood bond. But it wasn't as easily as anger made it out to be. She was so hurt and so betrayed by him but there was also the part that still loved him. Not to mention she couldn't help but wonder what happened after they weren't connected anymore. Would all of their feelings just go away Would he return to his asshole self where she was concerned? Would he try to kill her? All of those questions ran on replay in her head, and when she
thought about him sauntering off like they'd never shared anything it spiked white hot inside of her body, shaking anything that happened to be around at that moment.

The look on Alaric's face had been priceless when his classroom rocked and everyone thought it was a small earthquake.

The icing on the fucked up cake however had to be the fact that throughout all of her own personal drama, she was knee deep in whatever was going on with the moonstone as well. Oh how she longed for the days when Elena wasn't constantly in danger and the biggest decision she had to make was whether to get highlights in her hair. It was exceptionally hard not to blame Elena for anything—not to be mad at her for her part in this ongoing saga. Naturally she realized that the brunette couldn't control who fell for her, but she wasn't exactly innocent either. Where Damon was concerned she never exactly stuck to her guns either. If she said that she was done with him, in a weeks time she'd be back talking to him or saying that she cared about him.

 Doesn't explain how he's just decided that he loves her though. I keep trying to understand how it happened and I'm really drawing a blank here. Maybe it was George. Maybe Georgia planted the seeds for this love that he has for her.

Maybe he just wants her because she doesn't want him.

Maybe it's real and true and more than what he feels for me.

Closing her big green eyes, she exhaled deeply and counted to five, gripping the table behind her hard with both hands. The voices of three handsome men floated back to her ears and she blinked to see Damon, Stefan and Jeremy across from her discussing ways to—what else—save Elena. Right now the plan was to get the moonstone from Katherine and then destroy it, and that is of course where she came in. Where she always came in.

If I wasn't a witch I would probably be as clueless as Jenna on everything that is going on in this town.

Her body slouched more and she stared at Damon where he stood in his trademark black, sipping from a small elegant glass of human blood. Her muscles twitched with the effort it took not to slap him or kiss him or both; overhead one of the stylish lights flickered as the bulb grew about two times brighter. Surprisingly—or rather not really—no one noticed it except for Stefan.

His arms were folded over his light gray shirt and he glanced up, and then fixed his penetrating gaze on her. He lifted a brow and she shrugged. How very astute of you Stefan Salvatore. For some reason he had a way of reading people and she was not excluded from the list. He didn't know what was wrong with her but the fact that he could tell something was at all intrigued her. Made her wonder just how much time he'd spent with witches in his lifetime.

Of course the one person who she shared an actual secret with was Jeremy. He knew about Damon's blood even if he had no idea what she intended to do with it. Lately he'd become or was attempting to become more of a confidante to her and she idly wondered if she just looked that hard up for a friend. Most likely however he just wants to be on Team Supernatural Crap.

"So what are we going to do? There is no way Katherine will just give us the moonstone." Damon replied and leaned against the banister. "She's a bitch like that. And since we can't just waltz in and get it or give in to her demands, we need a third option."

And this is the part where everyone expects me to pull a rabbit out of my hat.
Sighing deeply, Bonnie couldn't hide her slight disinterest. "I might be able to lower the tomb spell long enough for you to get in there and grab the moonstone from Katherine."

The conversation took off from there with Jeremy seeming to be the only one caring about her welfare, not that she was exactly stunned by it. She felt like she was on autopilot as she listened to them talk about being stronger than Katherine and being able to easily overpower her. Normally she would have been questioning the validity of the statement but she couldn't be assed to care. She gave her input when it was needed and requested something of the bitch vampire's for her spell and that was it. She was going to perform the magic to help Elena and wash her hands of it.

Soundlessly she took the items offered and arranged them on a table, taking the worn photograph from Stefan and staring at it for a second. *It was so much easier when Damon cared because Elena looked like Katherine. I could hide behind that and then push past it. Now I can't do that anymore.*

She placed the picture in an ornate metal bowl and stuck her fingertips into a glass of water, letting the droplets slowly fall. When they hit the photo it erupted into flames and she felt that familiar pull from down deep, coaxing her powers to fill her every pore. She closed her eyes and uttered the incantation that she now knew by heart, raising the temperature of the flames.

"What will this do?" Damon inquired lowly. There was a Salvatore flanking her on both sides.

"I can melt the metal to ash. Blow the ashes on her and it'll incapacitate her for a minute or two. Long enough for you to get the stone and get out." She explained slowly. The fire continued to crackle and she jerked, wiping at her nose as a small trickle of blood leaked out. Great. Just what I need.

It didn't take long before the metal began to buckle in on itself, the bowl shriveling up like a raisin before turning black, sending wayward sparks up to the ceiling. The heat was warm on her face and she tried to focus on making it hotter so that it would burn faster, happy when another nosebleed didn't happen. She could see Damon staring at her out of the corner of her eye in concern, but she ignored it. This had to be done.

Five minutes later and she was gesturing to the pile of ashes. "There you go."

Stefan smiled and squeezed her shoulder. "Are you okay?"

_No. I'll be fine."

He didn't seem convinced. "Are you sure? I noticed your nosebleed. You're pushing yourself too hard, aren't you?"

"I told her the same thing." Damon reached up and tucked her black curls behind her ear. She flinched before she could steady herself. "I'm fine. Besides it's not like I have much of a choice right? If I don't do this kinda shit then who else is going to?"

"We don't want you to hurt yourself." Stefan responded. "If at any time you can't do magic, then we'll find another way."

Bonnie forced a smile. "I'm good. I'm gonna go get a bowl. You should...do whatever it is you gotta do." Without waiting for a reply, she swerved around him and strolled into the kitchen.

Reaching up into a cabinet, she pulled down a simple black bowl and turned, visibly jarring at finding Damon in front of her. As usual he hadn't made a sound. "What?"
His piercing blue eyes were hard as he studied her. "What's up with you? And I don't mean the nosebleeds either."

By the grace of whoever she hadn't seen him in a few days since the revelation because he was preoccupied with everything that was going on. Any other time she'd have called him or stopped by but she'd been mysteriously absent. "I don't know what you are talking about."

He snorted and boxed her in, putting a hand on either side of the counter. "You're lying. What's wrong?"

Well you told my best friend that you loved her and then erased her memory so that she wouldn't remember, which meant you totally meant it. But other than that I'm peachy! "I guess I'm just tired."

He nodded. "Why aren't you resting? I thought you were going to take it easy with the magic shit until we could figure out why it's affecting you the way it is?"

She arched a brow. "How can I take a break when I'm needed to help Elena? What am I supposed to do? Say no and let something happen to her?" Pause. "I doubt that would go over well with... people."

"Yeah well, you passing out or exploding your brain wouldn't go over well with people either. Mainly me." He said, flicking her necklace. "I don't want anything to happen to you."

Before she could reply and hopefully move away from him; having him this close never did anything for her willpower or brain power, he closed the distance between them and kissed her. His lips were soft and his hands were firm on her waist where he held her. She tried to remain stagnant but butterflies sprung to life in her stomach and she sighed, letting his tongue slip past her lips when it begged entrance.

It only lasted a moment but it did nothing to quell the voice in her head saying she shouldn't do anything about their link. That she should just push aside what he said to Elena and work on them.

Wrapping her up in a big hug, he squeezed and then took the bowl from her hand. "I'll get everything straight. Why don't you go sit down or something?"

Gazing at him, she caressed his cheek. "I can't. I have to go home and get the grimoire for the spell. I'd rather keep going and then rest later or whatever."

"Fair enough." He winked at her. "We'll make up for lost time later. Let's get this show on the road then."

She watched him walk out of the kitchen and had to bite the inside of her cheek hard to keep her eyes from tearing up. She was shaking so badly that she was surprised her teeth weren't chattering. Memories so vivid of all her time with Damon flooded her brain and she sniffled, wondering if she was strong enough to do what needed to be done. She didn't want to break up or disconnect but she had to. She owed it to herself not to be his crutch or his pit stop on the way to bigger and better things. She was a wonderful person and she deserved someone who wanted her and her alone.

And if leaving Damon got her that then...so be it.

"You okay?" Jeremy's voice entered the kitchen.

"Everyone keeps asking me that." She whispered. "Do I look that bad?"

He smiled. "No. You look gorgeous, you just seem kinda sad."
She shrugged. "Things are really intense right now and I just—I wish I could go back in time to months ago when they weren't."

He nodded in agreement. "How are you and Damon?"

"Twitch. Why do you ask?"

The young man waved a hand. "Well you did have me steal some of his blood for you."

Frowning, she hurried over and peeped out of the doorway. "Keep your voice down. I don't want him to know."

"Are you in trouble? Has he been threatening you or something?"

"No. It's nothing like that."

"Then what is it?"

"Look the less you know the better off you'll be."

"C'mon Bonnie. I might not be as good as Elena at girl talk but I'm not an idiot. You're upset over something and maybe talking about it will make it better."

"Even if that was the case, I can't do it here. Let's just get the fucken moonstone and then…maybe."

"I still think they should let me do it." He nibbled on his bottom lip. "I'm not incompetent."

She grinned and hit his chest lightly. "No one thinks that. Where Katherine is concerned it's best to leave it to Stefan and Damon. They know her and what she is capable of."

Jeremy appeared only mildly convinced. "I guess. Anyway I'll meet you at the tomb. There is something I gotta do first."

They said goodbye and Bonnie wandered out into towards the front door, jogging to her vehicle and climbing inside. She drove home quickly and grabbed the spell book from under her bed, and then hurried back to her car. Thirty minutes later she was trekking through the woods towards the ruins of the old church, listening to the sounds of the birds as they tweeted and hopped from tree to tree.

Stefan and Damon were already there with their weapons at the ready. Damon asked, "Jeremy chicken out?"

Her brows narrowed in confusion. "He said he'd be here…"

"Let's go." Stefan was already heading down into the crypt, ready for all of this to be over with.

The witch started behind him when Damon's cell rung and he answered, speaking nonchalantly to the person on the other side. His voice however turned hard when they related whatever information they had, and he hung up with a curse. "I gotta go."

"Where?" Bonnie inquired, clutching the book to her chest. "I thought we were going to get the moonstone?"

"Change of plans. Elena has done something stupid." He said vaguely.

*What else is new?* "Is she in trouble?"
He nodded. "Possibly."

She mirrored his nod. "Then we should tell Stefan so that he can go help her while we get the stone."

Damon tucked his phone away. "I'll do it."

Sighing, he pocketed his phone. "What difference does it make who goes? Besides Rose called me."

_Rose. The vampire who kidnapped Elena. "If it doesn't matter, why don't you let Stefan go?"

"I don't have time to stand here and _debate_ the issue." He started walking off. "Elena is in danger and I gotta do what I gotta do."

_Twitch._ "Okay. I'll do what I have to do too."

Turning on her heels, she entered the tomb without another word.

~*~

It was late the next night when Bonnie dried off from her shower and dressed before sitting down into the dim quiet of her bedroom. She was exhausted from linking with Luka to destroy the moonstone and beyond pissed at Damon for being an utter asshole. He'd called her after Elena was okay but hadn't answered the phone and made it a point to be elsewhere if he decided to stop by her home. Everything was upside down with Stefan now trapped in the crypt thanks to Jeremy's faux pas and Elena basically on house arrest so that she wouldn't do anything else stupid. Why she was in such a hurry to play the martyr Bonnie didn't know, but she was tired of having to clean up her friend's messes. She loved Elena but sometimes she behaved as if she didn't have a brain.

_I'll figure out a way to help Stefan though. He's already been nice to me and I hate the thought of him wasting away in there with her. Maybe I can convince Luka to help me. Or maybe there is another spell in one of those many grimoires that he has._

_Gonna hide mine better just in case._

She hadn't heard from Caroline in a while but she knew that the blonde was currently helping Tyler with his werewolf problems. It was so weird how just a year ago all of them were human and enjoying a carefree existence, and now they were creatures with super strength or able to manifest things from thin air. They had it worse than she did, especially Tyler. Every full moon he would turn into something he couldn't control and be on the verge of hurting someone.

_Damn vampires ruined everything._

Her hand went to the necklace around her neck and she slowly took it off, smoothing a finger over the beautiful stone. All of the good times with Damon didn't outweigh the bad or the fact that he was still keeping secrets from her. Of course she wanted her friend safe by any means necessary but she had a sneaking suspicion that if it came down to Elena or her, he would save Elena every time. Perhaps he would count on her being able to take care of herself—either way she wanted to be the center of his universe. She wanted him to tell her that he loved her without making a joke out of it or acting as if it pained him.

_We aren't real. We're make believe and it's time to stop the fantasy._

She didn't want anything to change but it had to. She couldn't _live_ like this anymore. It was as if she was drowning and there was no one to help her. And she knew the longer she let it go on the harder it would be to sever ties. She'd miss the closeness and the very hot dreams but it just wasn't enough
any longer. Maybe once Damon felt that disconnect that she was currently feeling he would wise up and stop treating her like she would always be around. And if he didn't well…she'd be okay.

Wiping at her wet cheeks, she yanked the small bag from between her mattresses and pulled out the white cloth stained with red. She picked up the big purse she used when she had to carry a lot of things and headed downstairs, sneaking easily from the house because her father was dead to the world. Instead of driving, she crossed the street and continued walking into the woods, pulling her blue sweater tighter around her arms. The moon was luminous and full, lighting the way and chasing away the dancing shadows that usually hid behind the trees.

By the time she reached the area where all of this had begun, she was shivering and not all of it was due to the cold. She cleared a spot with her shoe and dropped to her knees, setting out her ingredients slowly.

I'm doing this. I'm really doing this. No turning back now.

Her hands were shaking as she lit the candles. "I get that you were trying to look out for me Emily, but in a way you just caused me even more heartache. I love Damon but—but I can't let this go on. I have to know if it's real or just a mirage you created." A brief breeze stirred and sent the leaves twirling around her. "I'd say I don't wanna lose him but I feel like I don't have him anyway. Not all of him. And I deserve all."

Using a stick, she drew the symbols from the book into the dirt and then sat a little bowl in the middle. She added the herbs and oils, laying the fabric inside. With a swipe of the knife she'd brought to her finger, she watched the droplets of red hit the material soundlessly.

"Cruor vinculum. Ego effrego…" She spoke softly, watching as the flames of the candles doubled in size and radiance. "Cruor vinculum, Ego discerpo."

The contents inside of the bowl exploded and she jerked back, swallowing hard when they swirled into mid air, turning to a ball of pure white liquid light. It pulsed slowly a few times and she bit her lip as gentle whispers seemed to rustle through the treetops. Before she could contemplate on what it all meant however, the ball slammed into her chest and she screamed, doubling over as it pushed and shoved until it was filling her so completely she was glowing. From her head to her toes; it immersed itself into her veins. She wasn't exactly in pain but it was a strange feeling that paralyzed her and threatened to steal her breath away. The last thing she saw before all encompassing white was a crow tilting its' head at her pointedly.

~*~

Damon didn't know when to leave well enough alone, that was pretty much obvious to anyone who knew him. He kept pushing no matter the situation and now Rose was sporting a werewolf bite that was probably going to end up killing her. It was his fault for goading Jules…a friend of Mason's. People just continued to get hurt or end up dead because of him and he was wondering when he would truly give a damn. Yeah he didn't want Rose to die but in the long run he wouldn't give a shit. She'd kidnapped Elena and tried to use her for her own gain, and if she was hanging around now it was just because she was too scared to run anymore.

In a way he was pretty sure she was finally getting what she deserved.

Besides he didn't have time to worry about her, he had bigger fish on his plate. Klaus was coming to town and if Katherine was a bitch then he was the grand dick supreme. Stronger than all of them put together—I hate when other vampires are stronger than me. Makes it much harder to kill them. While he understood the mechanics of what Klaus wanted and perhaps at one point would
have been down for it, he couldn't let anything happen to Elena. Hell he was even becoming kinda fond of Caroline at this point so he didn't want her to die either. Unless she got on his nerves again.

But Elena is safe for now so that's good. All parties involved are happy.

I should give Bonnie a call.

Getting up off the couch, he meandered over to the bar and poured himself a glass of whiskey. He brought it to his lips for a sip when a sudden burning sensation rippled in his chest, causing him to drop the glass and send it shattering to the floor. He yelled and clawed at his heart, feeling like his entire body was on fire.

Rose took the stairs two at a time to reach him. She was tired and the bite was hurting but she'd promised to be his friend and she wanted to help. "Damon? What's wrong?"

He clawed at his shirt, feeling like he was choking on ashes. "I…don't know." He coughed. "Something is wrong. Something is…" Narrowing his dark brows, he growled as his eyes turned black. "Bonnie."

The female vampire's question of Bonnie who was lost as he sprinted out of the house with his superhuman speed and down the street. He found himself careening into Bonnie's window, nearly tripping on the curtains. The witch herself was lying on her side on her bed, cuddling a pillow to her chest.

"What did you do?" His voice was laced with venom.

"What I had to do." She replied softly. "Feels empty doesn't it? Like someone ripped your soul from your body or something; maybe not that drastic. Cold. It feels cold."

He was beside her next, latching onto her arm and dragging her so that she was standing in front of him. "What did you do?"

She gazed up at him. "I took it back. I broke our link."

"Bullshit. She'd need my blood for that. "You're lying. You'd need my blood for that and I'd never give it to you."

"I found another way to get it." She explained, eerily calm. "And I used it. I did the spell earlier, surprised it just affected you."

"Why? Why? would you do it?" He inquired. "I thought we were…good…"

Sighing, she yanked out of his grasp. "Apparently you thought wrong. Really, Damon, did you think I wouldn't find out what you did? That I would let you continue to use me as your back up plan?"

"I'm not using you as anything."

"You were still lying to me."

"About what?"

"About the fact that you told my best friend you love her."

Damon visibly jerked; how in the hell did she find that out? "Look I—that was—"

She held up a hand to stop him. "I don't want your excuses, what's done is done. You know I realize
we didn't start out in a normal way. That we were both forced together by something we couldn't control. But you agreed to be my boyfriend. You agreed to treat me with respect and to always be there for me. And that's not what you've done. At least not where Elena is concerned. And then you—you tell her that you love her so freely and I have to find out with a vision."

Running a hand through his hair, he wet his lips. "It was just something I had to say."

Bonnie shook her head. "You meant it."

Groaning inwardly, he dragged his knuckles along his neck. He had meant it, that's why he'd felt so guilty afterwards. "I mean it when I say it to you too. You don't know what breaking our link could have done to us. I feel...wrong. Did it ever occur to you that Emily did it for a reason that goes beyond saving your life?"

The witch shrugged. "I figure whatever happens has got to be better than watching you pine for someone else."

He was happy when his emotions shifted on a dime from anxiety to anger. How dare she do this without consulting him first? What if she'd killed herself or him in the process? How dare she take this from him? Just because he was rough around the edges didn't mean that what he'd said to her wasn't the truth. "So now what, witch? You've taught me my lesson and I'm supposed to heel like a good boy?"

"No. This was for me not you." Pause. "I need to know that you want me for me, if you do..."

*I do. I want the connection back. I want the heat and the intensity back. I want all of it back. "Maybe I don't."*

Bonnie lowered her head. "So it was all a lie then? A fabrication?"

"Yes." Even as the words left his mouth he had to compel himself not to take them back. If Bonnie was so desperate to get peace of mind that she resorted to breaking something so special, he wouldn't be selfish and attempt to keep her. He wouldn't weigh her down with the fact that he still cared about her, still wanted her, still needed her. If he could be unselfish with Elena then he could do the same for the one person who honestly loved him. "I just hope the side effects taper off soon. Don't wanna feel like I have a gapin' chest wound for the rest of the week. Might put a damper on the festivities."

"Can you go now?" She turned away from him, noticeably upset. "I think we're done."

*Either way she'll end up hating me. Might as well go all out. "Oh Bonnie, we aren't done by a long shot."* Smirking, he stepped in front of her and kissed her cheek. "I'll be seeing you."

It wasn't until he was outside and in her yard that he heard her quiet sobs. He wanted nothing more than to go back and console her but he didn't. Asshole Damon didn't try to make you feel better; he poured salt in the wound. And for her to get over him and move on with someone who wasn't fucked up, he would have to be asshole Damon to her. It was not what he wanted but it was necessary especially now with everything getting heavier day by day. She needed to focus on being a hero, not what he was or wasn't doing as a boyfriend.

Perhaps time a part would be good for both of them. Get their—note his priorities in order. He just hoped he didn't lose her completely in process. He had a tendency to fuck the world up when things didn't go his way.

~Fin~
**Why Me?**

Chapter Summary

Damon tries to get to the root of his problems.

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**Why Me?**

Damon Salvatore had to be in control or he didn't know how to function. Time and time again he'd poked the beast or taunted the guard just to cause a reaction that would put him on top. It was a natural part of his personality since becoming a vampire; being the boss or destroying what he couldn't dominate. Things were so much more simple when he was totally evil instead of trying to do the right thing. Killing people was possibly the easiest thing in the world to do when you didn't have a conscious in the first place. There was so much blood on his hands and pain in his past that there was no way to reconcile all of it. Even if he wanted to which he wasn't sure if he did.

Anyway the point was that the only time he hadn't cared much about manipulating every situation was when he was with Bonnie. Maybe it was the spell or maybe he just honestly liked her, either way it hadn't been horrible to sit back and let life lead him wherever it wanted him to go. Unfortunately it kept steering him towards Elena. *How am I going to fix this? Is there any fix to it?*

Without the link to Bonnie he didn't know if she was in danger and he hadn't dreamed about her once since she'd removed it. He was surprised how much he missed being able to share those with her or just feel her energy simmering underneath his skin. Going without—it was like quitting smoking cold turkey—he didn't know if he could do it. More importantly he didn't want to do it. So the only logical explanation was to somehow get the bond formed again, and to do that he had to make Bonnie forgive him.

_This would be so much easier if I could just compel her._

Of course he was only attempting to think of things in an asshole/practical manner to hide what he was really feeling. It was like being back in the woods and realizing Katherine wasn't in that tomb all over again, but maybe worse because Katherine hadn't given a fuck about him while Bonnie did. He'd just been too stupid to realize it or to hold onto it tight enough.

There was the possibility that he sabotaged his relationship with Bonnie on purpose because he was…scared of it. He'd deny that fact until the end of days but it made sense. The witch was—she was pure and good and offered him something with no strings attached. She saw into his heart and the man he could be, the man he was and she loved him because of and in spite of those things. Never had he felt devotion like that before, at least not from anyone who wasn't a family member.

_I'm such a stupid fuck up. I should have told her how I really felt instead of making it worse. Now she hates me and I don't blame her. But I'm gonna fix it. Somehow. Maybe I could get crazy witch who wants to kill me and strike some kinda deal. A new blood bond for a pound of my flesh or something._

Frowning, he pushed off the stone wall and forced the large door open, disturbing the otherwise calm earth. He glanced into the darkness of the tomb and leaned against the threshold. "Knock knock, bitch."
"Well well well. To what do I owe this honor?" Katherine swaggered out of the shadows. "Lemme guess, the fair Elena is in trouble again and you're here to play her knight in shining armor."

Damon smirked at her. "No. Actually I just have a question for you. Answer it and I'll leave you alone to pull the wings off of flies."

She folded her arms over her tattered black dress. "Of course. Whatever I can do to help."

He ignored her sarcasm. "When you were playing the innocent human all of those years ago and compelling Stefan to be your little love muffin, why did you go after me too? If he was always the one?"

One of her perfectly arched brows rose. "That is an interesting question. I don't know, Damon. I guess I just wanted to have my cake and eat it too as they say. Not like you weren't gorgeous and noble in your own way. But where Stefan was sweet and sincere, you were trying so hard to make daddy notice you. I suppose I found your desperation endearing."

Twitching, he dug his nails into his palms to remain calm. She thrives on this shit. "So that's what it was about? I was cute and the bad boy?"

She nods. "Well you weren't nearly as bad then as you are now. Also I liked that you accepted me even after you found out what I was. You got off on it and I really responded to that. Most people run the other way when you show them you're a vampire, but not you. Not Damon Salvatore."

All signs are pointing to the fact that I should have ran the other way. "Huh."

Sighing, she flopped down to the ground and crossed her legs demurely. "What is this about, Damon? You and the little witch have a tiff?"

"Something like that." He admitted.

Katherine chuckled. "I told her you would only end up breaking her poor little virgin heart. Of course at the time I thought it would be for me but for her best friend instead? Now that's poetic justice."

"Oh shut up. You don't know anything about anything." He bristled. Except you do…

"Right. Do you remember that day at the Lockwood estate when I first met her? I could see she was so sweet on you. She said that she gave you the one thing I never could." Her big brown eyes danced with amusement. "Considering all of the things I gave you, that really intrigued me. She was so adamant that you returned her affections. I told her you didn't."

"Yeah cause you know anything about love." He snorted. "The only person you've ever loved is yourself."

"I do a good job of it too."

"You're stuck in a crypt waiting for some vampire to come gank you. Great job."

"And you're here pouting because your little teenage girlfriend left you. Who is more pathetic, Damon? Me or you?"

Anger nearly made him step across to her but he forced himself to stay where he was. "But the beauty of this situation is that I can get Bonnie back. You can't leave any time you want."
She glared at him. "She's not gonna take you back. I can't stand the little do good-er but if there is one thing I can respect about her, it's that she's a strong chick. You blew it. Game over." Pause. "How does it feel, Damon? You screwed over the one girl who actually picked you over your brother."

Done with her, he grabbed the door and started shoving it close. She just chuckled and watched as the daylight began to fade. "You know where you find me when you wanna talk some more."

Her soft laughter was the last thing he heard before the sounds of nature overtook everything. He wanted to slap himself for thinking that she would be of any assistance, even though she had raised a few valid points. Bonnie had always been a champion for their relationship and he'd sort of just shrugged and pretended it never mattered more than some fleeting fling that could be over as quick as it began. Now it was over and he was going to go insane dissecting all of the ways he fucked up.

Why couldn't I leave Elena alone? Why can't I leave her alone? I mean okay, I care about her because she's a friend and...and she seems to care about me on occasion. I've screwed with her life; I turned her mother into a vampire and used her friend as my own personal blood bank. I owe her.

So why do I think I love her? She's hot and fiery but so is Bonnie. She's smart and loyal but so is Bonnie. She's willing to sacrifice herself for those she loves but so is Bonnie. She doesn't want me...

Maybe I'm just a glutton for punishment, wanting what I can't have.

I want Bonnie. So I'm gonna do whatever it takes to prove it.

Idly he figured that he should be at home watching Rose expire, but it wasn't like he could help her. He didn't know of any cure for whatever was happening to her and he really had more important things to do. Even if Bonnie were okay, using too much magic was having an effect on her and he would be damned if he let her kill herself for their misguided cause. He was going to look out for her even if she didn't want him to.

A part of him wanted to act like a dick and drive her further away to protect her. It really pointed as the right thing to do considering what was probably going to happen once Klaus arrived into town. She should hate him so that she wouldn't put herself into danger trying to save him if it came to that. But he just—he was too fucken selfish to do that. He could try and yeah he could revert back to old Damon but one look into her big sad green eyes and he would most likely break. He didn't wanna see her in pain, and he wasn't sure he could without helping.

He knew what it was like to hold her in his arms and comfort her now. To hear her secrets and to tell his own; to feel her warmth surrounding him in ways he never knew possible. Fuck Damon, you've messed around and fallen in love for someone again. Didn't you learn your lesson the first time? Least there is no chance of her saying she was just using me to get to Stefan.

So what was he going to do? Leave her alone or pursue her?

She's mine. Case closed.

That didn't solve the Elena problem but it was nice to have a goal in mind.

~*~

Bonnie didn't understand why Damon appeared to revert back to form now that the link was broken, while she was still very much in love with him. She figured that once it was severed it would be like before the night he attacked her when he was just Stefan’s cute older brother. Maybe not that flip since she knew what he was capable of, but at the very least she thought she’d be a blank slate where
he was concerned. But she wasn't.

She still wanted him, she still cared about him, she just knew the truth now. She didn't feel him lurking around her even if he was. Unfortunately that is something she actually missed about not having their connection anymore. It was cold without Damon's essence swirling around her, seeping into her pores to remind her that she wasn't alone. The nights were so routine without him popping into her dreams to turn them filthy or extravagant. She had effectively isolated herself from him…and it hurt.

*And he doesn't even care. Our entire relationship was a lie and I was stupid to believe otherwise.*

*How can he love Elena and not me? I risked my life for him. I was there for him when he needed someone. I chose him.*

*Why didn't he choose me?*

The jukebox in the corner of the *Mystic Grille* flared to life on its own, scaring several people inside. She looked to it, smirked and continued tapping her nails on the table. When trying to decide whether she wanted to sit in her room sobbing into a small tub of ice cream or pretending like everything was alright, Bonnie ultimately chose to get out of the house and check on the people she cared about. So far everyone seemed to be fine, even poor Tyler who'd had this first transformation into a wolf—Caroline had told her. He wasn't *fine* but he was dealing like the rest of them.

*Times like this I wonder what could have been between Tyler and I. Would he had been better for me than Damon? Would he still be a wolf if I'd asked him out?*

However there was really no use in playing the *what if* game. Everything followed the course it had and now…now they all had to live with the consequences of their actions. *Some of us more than others.*

Exhaling deeply, she rubbed her forehead and tried to keep her emotions under control. When she lost it—even for a moment—things tended to break or explode. The scary part was that she wanted to cause a little destruction. She wanted to let loose and see what she could really do. How many windows she could crack or how many buildings she could shake. If she could make the top of a fire hydrant burst into the air and send water raining down onto the street. Maybe a little mindless vandalism would make her feel better.

*Doubt it could hurt.*

"Bonnie."

Glancing up, she locked eyes with Stefan Salvatore. "Stefan. What's up?"

He sat down across from her. "Nothing. Just in the neighborhood and I thought I would see how you are doing."

She tilted her head to the side. "Why?"

He shrugged with a little smile. "Damon has been harder to live with than usual and that *usually* only happens when he has a fight with you."

"We didn't have a fight. We broke up." She said softly. "I…the spell…I removed it."

Surprise was written clearly all over his handsome face. "I…why?"
Eying him, she leaned back to her chair. "Because he has feelings for my best friend and everyone seemed to know but me."

"Bonnie..." He gathered his thoughts. "Damon loves you. What he feels for Elena is just—it's not real. And even if it is it doesn't mean anything. Damon will convince himself that he loves Elena because I love Elena and no matter how close we get, there has to be some sort of tension between us. First it was Katherine and now..."

She snorted in disbelief. "You're lucky. You know Elena only wants you. She might care about Damon but it's you she loves." A beat. "You don't have to share her heart with anyone else. From day one I've been sharing Damon and I'm tired of it."

"I can understand that. I can but maybe you should have let him explain."

"There was nothing to explain. It wasn't real anyway. I removed the connection and it was like he never gave a damn about me."

"You know that's a front right? He's just acting like that to protect himself."

"Well he's good at it."

"Yes, he's had years and years to perfect shutting down so that he doesn't have to feel any emotional pain. But trust me; he's hurting just as much as you are."

"Good." She whispered, and the salt shaker trembled.

It of course did not go unnoticed by Stefan. "I know that you are in a volatile place right now, Bonnie. If your powers are unstable you could hurt not only yourself, but someone else as well."

"I'm fine." She lied. "And my powers aren't unstable."

"They're reacting to your pain." He reached out and placed his fingers over hers to stop them from moving. "Emily once told me that a witch's power is much stronger when she's unhappy because she is not in full control. You're hurting and you need someone to talk to."

"I can't talk to Elena." That was an understatement. "I just can't. Part of me is struggling with not being angry with her."

He looked intrigued. "Why are you mad at Elena?"

Good question. "Because she—I know this isn't her fault but she's not completely blameless. There were times when she turned to Damon when she couldn't go to you and maybe that's what affected him so profoundly. I'm not enraged at her, just acknowledging that she's not totally innocent."

"That's okay. I don't think it would be healthy to completely separate her from this." He rubbed his chin. "This isn't about her anyway or her feelings. It's about yours. How do you feel?"

Bonnie wet her lips slowly. "Do you—do you promise not to tell Damon?" He nodded and she continued. "I'm—it hurts more than I thought it would. I've never loved someone before and I've never had a broken heart before. For the first time I can understand why vampires are so fond of shutting off their emotions."

"I think you should talk to Damon." The younger Salvatore related. "I know he's not the easiest person to understand. He doesn't want to seem weak so he postures and he lies, but I know that he cares about you. I know that he loves you and the only thing the spell did was open a door for all of
that to happen. You're entitled to be angry at him and maybe punishing him isn't the worst idea, but just…don't write him off entirely. People have been doing that since we were human."

No. I will not cry in front of Stefan. "Why do I have to be the one to save him? Why me?"

"Because you're Bonnie Bennett." Stefan replied simply. "I don't think anyone else can save him but you. Not really. I can only do so much—he'll only let me do so much because of our history. But with you it's different."

"We'll see." Was all she committed to. Gonna think about myself first for a while. "So, what else is going on?"

"Rose is in bad shape." He looked around at a few of the customers. "So far we can't think of any way to help her. All signs point to the werewolf bite being fatal."

Excuse me if I can't muster up some sympathy for the person who kidnapped my best friend. "Sucks for her. Sounds like you and Caroline should be more careful though. Especially her since she's hanging out with Tyler now."

Stefan fiddled with his ring. "True. But the wolf that attacked Rose was after Damon. I don't think she'll go after Caroline."

Bonnie frowned at the thought of some rogue wolf terrorizing the town. She was angry at Damon but she didn't want anything to happen to him. "Well maybe she'll lay low now that she's gotten her point across."

"At least we don't have to worry about the moonstone anymore. Thank you for destroying it by the way."

"No problem. This way I get to keep everyone safe, including myself."

"Hm I should be going but I meant what I said. If you ever want to talk, I'm here."

"Thanks Stefan…for looking out for me."

He smiled and stood, squeezing her shoulder before strolling towards the door. She sipped her tea and watched the ice swirl in the glass idly. She knew that she was going to have to tell Elenasomething as to why she broke up with Damon, but the truth wasn't an option. She didn't remember his declaration of love and it would only complicate things more if she brought it up. So perhaps she would just say they grew apart or that he cheated with Rose. The latter was probably something she would believe, and although it wouldn't make Damon look good it was the least painful of all the options.

And of course she currently didn't give a shit about how Damon came out in all of this.

"Hey." Luka popped up from around the corner. "I was hoping to see you today."

She plastered on a fake smile, not really in the mood to socialize. "Hello. What's up?"

He sat down in front of her. "Nothing much. Can I buy you lunch?"

"I already ate but thanks." She tried to tie her straw paper into a bow.

He nodded. "So I was wondering if maybe you wanted to try some more spells together? Just something small."
"I...don't think so." Pause. "I'm trying to limit my use of magic until it's necessary or something."

"You know Bonnie, keeping it pent up inside of you can be just as bad as letting it all out." He explained lightly. "You need to learn to manage it so that you'll stop getting nose bleeds and stuff."

Thank you oh great and powerful Oz for your input. "Yeah." She didn't want to be rude but she wasn't in the frame of mind for any sort of lesson from someone who considered themselves more advance than she was. Maybe her distant cousin Lucy but not him. "Actually I need to be going. I'm supposed to go visit Elena."

Luka was disappointed. "Oh. Well maybe we could hang out later."

"Maybe." She slung her purse onto her shoulder. "Bye."

Hearing him echo the same, she left the restaurant and dug out her keys as he made her way to her car. She stopped dead in her tracks at the sight of Damon leaning against it and dressed in black with dark shades over his eyes. He was pale as usual but stoic, none of the bravado that she usually received from him. Steeling herself, she gripped the strap of her bag and tried to keep herself composed.

"You're in my way." She gestured to the handle that was obscured from view.

"Wow no hello?" He smirked a little. "You must be really mad at me. And I totally understand why. I've been a bastard to you."

"And you've said this all before." She reminded him. "It was cute then but considering what you did, now it's just annoying. Please move."

Sighing, he stayed where he was. "We should talk about this."

"I don't have anything to say to you." The witch replied. "We're over, Damon. You're free and that's how you've always wanted it."

"Bullshit." He snapped. "Maybe in the beginning but you know we became so much more than some stupid ass bond. I made mistakes and I fully realize them but you had no right to break something that concerned us both. You could have killed us."

True. "But I didn't. We're both fine..."

Removing his sunglasses, he hung them from the collar of his shirt. "You don't seem fine to me. And fact of the matter is, I miss you. I never lied about loving you."

"You just loved someone else too, right?" She sighed. "Why Elena? Why my best friend?"

Damon stared at her, his expression revealing nothing. "I don't know. I just—she's—different. I was—there was something before there was an us and I should have told you about it, but I never expected to want you. I thought it would just be superficial and by the time it wasn't it was too late to just come clean."

Bonnie glanced off across the street towards the park. "Excuses, excuses. I'm tired of your excuses, Damon. I've always been honest with you and I thought we were on the same page, but we're not. Maybe we never were. Now we can both just stop kidding ourselves."

His jaw twitched. "If you think I'm just gonna stop then you don't know me at all."
"If you cared about me at all you'll walk away." She frowned. "Cause you're not changing my mind. We're over."

He reacted without thinking, reaching out to grab her upper arm. "Now you know how focused I can be when it comes to getting what I want."

She flinched in surprised. "Let. Me. Go."

"Or what?" The vampire challenged. "You gonna drop me right here with your witchy mind juju? You'd really do that to me?"

Swallowing hard, she could feel the urge to pop his blood vessels rising in her chest but she forced it down for whatever reason. When the power didn't get the out it wanted, it started seeking another exit. "Da—Damon I'm warning you…"

Grinning, he stepped into her space. "I still like it when you play hard to get…" He leaned as if to kiss her and she jerked back so hard that she nearly stumbled.

Heat erupted from her body unseen but the force of it was definitely felt when nearly every windshield within range cracked and bucked up from its metal, sending shards of glass spitting high into the air. Damon jolted and covered his head, looking at her as if she were a goddess he was laying eyes on for the first time. Car alarms were blaring loudly and people were standing around dumbstruck as they tried to figure out what had happened.

She shook glass out of her hair, thankful that it hadn't got into her eyes and groaned. *Maybe meditating will help.* Meeting Damon's astonished expression, she wet her lips and swerved around him, happy that her car wasn't damaged. She opened the door and crawled inside, directing her next words to him. "Who's playing?" Next she was starting the engine and pulling away from the curb.

~*~

Damon wretched out of his shirt and hauled it onto his bed as if he were trying to expel it from him forever. He was grumbling under his breath and checking his flawless alabaster skin for cuts, finding a few fading red scratches on his neck from the flying glass. It was wrong that Bonnie all unpredictable and fiery made his blood boil even more so than when they were sneaking around. He was angry that she'd rejected his-okay his somewhat half assed apology—but he was also turned on by how strong she continued to be. Anyone else would have fallen into his arms at the flash of his baby blues and yet she hasn't. Not even if she wanted to.

*Fuck she smelled amazing today. And the power…no wonder vampires are so attracted to witches.*

*I have to get her back or I might start killing again.*

*Maybe I should do that for fun anyway.*

*No…she'd be all judgy if I did.*

"Damon?" A deathly ill looking Rose hobbled into his room and all but fell into a chair. "Are you alright?"

He spared her a glance. "You said you were my friend right? So that means you'll listen to me bitch or whatever?"

She smiled softly. "Yes. Is this about Elena?"
He had to admit he liked the way her accent said Elena. "No. You know not everything in my life revolves around Elena." Huffing, he sprawled out on his bed. "This is about Bonnie."

Her head canted to the side. "Ah, yes, the witch you told me about. What about her?"

"She broke up with me. Like hardcore." He licked his bottom lip.

"If you had a girlfriend, why were you chasing Elena? Better yet, why are you in love with Elena?" She questioned with a cough.

*I keep asking myself that and it's starting to not make any sense.* "It's complicated. Bonnie and I were forcibly linked so that I wouldn't kill her, and we sorta fell for each other."

Rose smirked. "And you didn't take it seriously and now she's left you?" He nodded and she continued. "Well she seems like a smart girl to me."

"Hey whose side are you on?" His brow was furrowed.

She chuckled. "Yours but I give credit where credit is due. No one wants to be on the back burner or feel second…"

*Great more chick logic.* "Okay so how do I fix it? I mean I can't just force her to come back to me unfortunately. And if she starts seeing someone else I'm gonna have to kill them."

"Oh?"

"It's who I am, Rose."

"Perhaps you should settle your feelings for Elena before you attempt to reconcile with Bonnie."

"What's the point? Elena is with Stefan and that's how she likes it. I have no chance with her, and it's widely known."

"Yes but do you really think Bonnie cares about that? You hurt her Damon, and I might be an old vampire but even I remember what that feels like. You can't just snap your fingers and make everything alright."

"So what do I do?"

"Prove to her that she's the only one you want. Stop being at Elena's beck and call."

"I can't just let something bad happen to her…"

"No one is asking you to. But you need to get your priorities in order or you'll never get Bonnie back."

"Yeah. That's easier said than done with big bad Klaus darkening our doorstep." Tapping his foot onto the floor, he suddenly wanted a drink. "What I need is a witch to spell us again."

Rose arched a brow. "There are some situations where you can't take the easy road. I think this is one of them. I'd say prepare for a long road ahead with much groveling. Until you can show Bonnie you're over Elena, don't expect a miracle."

Hissing, he stared up at the ceiling and tried to rationalize that with the person he was and what he was used to doing. She was right—she sounded right anyway. If he wanted Bonnie to be his again then he had to find a way to make her believe that he was over Elena. *Or you could just get over*
Elena. He had to be there to protect her. Well he didn't *have* to but he'd promised and he owed Stefan so… Fuck. How did he get himself into these situations?

"How you feeling?" He inquired.

"Like crap." She mused. "I think it's gonna get worse before it gets better."

*Most things do.* "Well don't worry. If there is a cure we'll find one. Maybe I could get Bonnie to come take a look at you. Or get Stefan to lay on the brooding to get her to come."

Rose grinned at him. "That would be nice if you think she could help. But if the wolf bite is truly fatal I'm not holding my breath."

Damon stood and picked her up, carrying her downstairs to lay her on the couch. He then fixed them both nice, stiff drinks and then rubbed at the bridge of his nose. In the grand scheme of things, pining for some chick probably wasn't what he needed to be doing right now. Elena included. He should be focusing on making sure Stefan had enough people blood to be able to fight if it came down to that. But he couldn't stop harping on the fact that Bonnie wasn't in his life and the consequences breaking their bond could have on their futures.

What if she was in trouble and he didn't know? How would be save her? Or hell vice versa.

What if this was permanent and not just a way to teach him a lesson? What if they went back to the way they were before? Or worse became mortal enemies… He didn't think he could handle one more person hating him, especially not *her*.

"I think I should have a little talk with Elena." He announced. "Try to get to the bottom of some shit in a roundabout sort of way."

"Or make everything worse." His houseguest replied. "You should be smart about this. Give Bonnie time alone to process."

"Considering that we all could be dead in a few weeks, the last thing we have is *time.*" Downing his beverage, he grinned slowly. "No I think I'm gonna handle this the *Damon Salvatore* way."

She rolled her eyes and snuggled the pillow under her head. "This should be interesting then."

~Fin~
Enjoy The Silence

Chapter Summary

Sometimes you have to enjoy the quiet while it lasts.

Chapter Notes

This installment tags episodes 2.12 (The Descent) and 2.13 (Daddy Issues).

Enjoy The Silence

The ground underneath the blanket was cool to Bonnie's behind but she didn't pay it any notice. Her eyes were closed and her hands were resting loosely on her knees as she tried to slow her racing mind. She'd read somewhere that meditating was a good way of centering yourself, and that is exactly what she needed right now. If her brain wasn't buzzing with thoughts of the upcoming danger, it was drifting into the past and thoughts of Damon. Stefan's words still hung heavily over her head and she didn't know how to reconcile them with everything else she was feeling.

A part of her wondered if she would always have such a love/hate relationship with Damon. Probably, he was so infuriating.

"Bonnie?" A shadow fell across her face and she cracked open an eye to see Elena Gilbert smiling down at her. "What are you doing?"

Bonnie slipped over on the blanket to give her some room to sit. "Just, meditating."

The brunette nodded. "I haven't seen you in a while. Everything okay?"

Sighing, she ran a hand through her hair and weighed her options. She could tell her friend everything and hoped that she understood, or she could lie and hoped the truth never came out. However in her experience lies were never the way to go. Damon lied and look where that got us... "Um, not exactly. Damon and I broke up."

"What? Why?" Her friend inquired, shocked. "I—I thought you two were doing great."

"We were but—well he's—" Gazing into Elena's big soulful brown eyes, she knew that she couldn't just come out and say Damon is in love with you. It would possibly make their friendship and her relationship with Stefan imploded. "He—he slept with Rose and then lied about it. Pretended it was nothing but a slip."

"Oh Bonnie." She reached over and pulled her into a hug. "I'm so sorry. I can't believe he would do that to you! He was—well he was doing so well being normal."

A nod. "Yeah. I don't know maybe it was because I hadn't put out yet but whatever. Anyway I was so mad at him that I removed our bond. Needless to say that didn't go over well with him."
"Naturally." Elena snorted. "Are you okay? I mean it didn't like hurt you did it?"

Not on the outside. "No. I just miss it sometimes though. Being that connected to another person and always feeling that safe? I'd gotten used to it."

Her friend folded her legs under her. "Have you talked to him since?"

"Yeah but not by choice. I'm basically trying to avoid him and he keeps popping up. It's like when we first met all over again." She smiled a little. "Except instead of being terrified I'm angry. Sometimes I don't even think he realizes what he did is wrong."

"Maybe he doesn't. Damon hasn't been on the straight and narrow for a long time now. He's used to getting away with a lot of stuff." Elena pointed out. "I think it's good that you're taking a step back and showing him that his actions have consequences. Though removing the bond—I don't know if that was such a good idea considering all that is going on."

True. "Yeah but it needed to be done. He needed to know I was serious."

Picking up a random leaf, Elena twirled it between her fingers. "As long as he still protects you it's okay. Man..." She sighed deeply. "I thought the worst was over after what happened at the Founder's Day party. But now with this Klaus guy and Elijah willing to deal… I don't know who to trust."

"Trust those that you've always trusted. Caroline, me, Stefan...even Damon." She said softly. "Elijah might be playing ball now but who knows what he'll do later on. If he's powerful enough to have witches working for him, he's capable of anything."

"Hm. It must have been tough to find out about Luka, huh?" The brunette asked. "That his dad is working for Elijah."

Totally. I can't believe I entertained the idea of being his friend and trusted him to help me destroy the moonstone. Who knows where it is now? It's rough that most of the witches I've met besides Lucy have been evil, but whatever. I'm getting stronger and if they want a fight, I'll give them one."

"I don't want you going up against him. Luka's dad is very powerful. He got Stefan out of the tomb alone."

"I know. Believe me I don't want some freaky witch/warlock face off but I'll do what I have to do to keep this town safe. To keep my friends safe. I owe it to Grams."

"Be careful."

"I will be. So um, where are you headed?"

"I'm going to see Stefan and see if maybe we can't get lunch or something. I just want some quality time with my boyfriend."

"Sounds like a romantic time is about to be had."

"Maybe...if I can drag him away from his crusade to protect me. Being a vampire and living through the whole girl power revolution, you'd think he'd know better."

Bonnie laughed. "Yeah but he's from a different time when it was all the rage to pull out chairs and help girls outta their carriage. Besides if he didn't care, you'd be pouting."
"Heh maybe a little." She admitted with a big smile. "Bonnie, about Damon, I know you're royally pissed at him right now and you have every right to be so, but don't push him away completely. He loves you. He screwed up but I bet he's very sorry and he'll probably try to make it up to you in some way."

Maybe it's too late for feeling sorry. "We'll see. I'd rather focus on everything that is going on."

"Okay." Pecking her on the cheek, Elena stood and gathered up her things. "Hey, call me any time if you need to talk, okay? I'm never too busy for my best friend."

The witch smiled and waved to her as she walked away. Huffing, she gave up trying to clear her head and watched the people as they went about their day. At seventeen she already felt so old because of everything that had happened. She missed her Grams terribly and honestly felt like she didn't have anyone to talk to. Everyone had their own drama and issues to worry about; her included. She didn't think it was right to burden anyone with her problems, especially not where Damon was concerned.

Caroline was still dealing with being a vampire and having to hide that fact from everyone except Tyler, who was trying to cope with being a new werewolf. Matt was too busy wandering around like a lost puppy because Caroline wasn't talking to him—for his own good of course—and although Jeremy was a nice guy she couldn't see herself confiding in him like she could anyone else. He wasn't a little boy anymore but he was still Elena's little brother.

The best thing I can do is move on from Damon. Just smile and nod whenever people mention hearing him out to placate them. Not like there is any real hope for us. Not while he still wants Elena and possibly not even if he gets over her.

In all honesty she needed to focus on controlling herself and her powers. But it was so easy to accidentally make something explode and then feel a little better because of it. She was even getting a kick out of scaring the people around her whenever it happened. Of course she didn't wanna go all dark side and hurt someone, but whatever helped. Right?

It just sucked to think that Damon was her one chance at happiness and now it was gone. Surely he wasn't her one true love but sometimes she really wondered if anyone else would understand her like he did. For all of his many, many faults he did have a way of getting into her head and being able to relate to what she was going through. If the Elena bullshit hadn't happened, he'd probably be coaching her on how to release tension without making a deep crack in the middle of the street.

Yet it was hard to think of him in a good way because she kept seeing it flashing before her eyes like a neon sign. She kept hearing it like a soft whispered caress in her ear no matter how hard she tried to shut it out.

"I just have to say it once. You just need to hear it. I love you Elena."

Twitch.

"I love you Elena."

The tree behind Bonnie groaned and the branches literally stretched up towards the sky, the leaves rustling angrily. A few people jerked in surprise but then wrote it off as the wind simply being the cause. She knew the truth however and slowly she stood, placing a hand to the hard bark of the trunk. It shuddered under her palm, sending a rush of energy down her arm and across her chest. The grimoire told about using nature for spells but she hadn't gotten that far. Perhaps now it was time she did.
"Is there any reason you're giving me the stink eye?" Damon inquired, folding his arms over his black shirt. "Obviously I couldn't have offended you this quick since you just got here like what? Fifteen minutes ago."

Elena snorted and continued meandering around the living room, picking up books to put them back on the shelves. "Bonnie told me what you did, and I'm trying to decide if I want to stake you or not."

He arched a brow; she suddenly had his full attention. There is no way Bonnie would tell her about the whole incident between them because she believed in friend loyalty and all of that other crap. Better play this one close to the vest. "Oh? And what did the little witch have to say?"

"She said that you cheated on her with Rose." She looked towards the stairs. "I can't believe you Damon. Do you think this is some kinda game? What? Messing with Caroline's head wasn't enough; you had to go for Bonnie too?"

He frowned, ready to deny the lie but realizing a second later that he couldn't. Not unless he wants to tell the whole truth. "I—it was an accident."

Big brown eyes glared at him. "You accidentally slept with someone else? Did you slip and fall into her?"

Giving a low chuckle that lacked humor, he shrugged. "We were drunk and angesting about our issues and it just happened. Bonnie overreacted. I apologized and told her that I love her but she didn't believe me."

"Yeah no kidding." Elena shook her head and sat down. "And I don't think she overreacted at all. You were her boyfriend and you slept with someone else. Just because you're a vampire doesn't mean you're stupid. If you honestly thought she wouldn't be upset, you need to get your head checked."

"Regardless of how I fucked up, I do plan to make it up to her. That is if I can get near her without bursting into flames to do so."

Her head canted to the side. "What are you talking about? She's mad but I don't think she'd kill you."

"I doubt she'd be able to control herself." Pause. "Our little witch is very volatile when she's hurting. Her powers are fucking up and she doesn't seem to care."

The brunette scratched at her forehead. "Bonnie is in control of herself. Maybe what you're seeing is her way of telling you to back off."

I suppose the message got lost in translation. "Be that as it may, if I give up now she'll never forgive me."

"Who says she is going to forgive you anyway?" Her voice was soft. "You know, you're like the first real boyfriend Bonnie has ever had. I think she put a lot of trust into you and... well... you didn't take very good care of it."

Damon's eyes squinted at the corners and his lips pressed into a tight line. He wanted to pretend that he was upset because she was saying these things but he knew that wasn't the reason. He was pissed off because she was right. Because he'd said things to Bonnie and done things to Bonnie that no one else had done, and now she felt tainted in some way. Rejected. Like she wasn't good enough.
And it was *all* because of him.

He really was a good for nothing asshole even when he wasn't trying to be.

Rubbing his chin, he conceded. "How do I get her back? She's your best friend."

Elena opened her mouth and then snapped it shut. He could see the wheels turning behind her head. "I—you have to prove to her that you're one hundred percent sorry. Not just some blanket statement with sarcasm thrown in. It has to be genuine."

He made a face. "What if I can't *do* genuine?"

"Then you might as well just leave her alone because whatever you're doing now? It's only hurting her more." Picking up a pillow, she swerved around him and headed upstairs to check on Rose.

Damon's hand balled into a fist and he thumped it against the table, tempted to use more strength than was necessary but decided against it at the last minute. This time a few years ago and all he'd have to worry about was where to hide the bodies, and where to get his next fix. However now he was *concerned* about Rose—who was literally scabbing a part in front of his very eyes—and of course Bonnie who wanted nothing to do with him. *Chicks. Sometimes they aren't worth the paper they are printed on.*

On the other hand what was happening to Rose was his fault and he felt obligated to try and help her. She was being a friend to him and it would be the civil thing to do. Would probably also be easier if he could just admit he felt guilty, that he liked her and didn't want her to die somewhere besides the deep, dark pit inside of himself. Baby steps though.

*None of this would have happened if Katherine hadn't fucked up the plan. We'd be drinking from Parisians and this stupid town would be in the rearview. God I hate that bitch!*

But first things first, he'd find a cure for Rose, send her on her way and then work on Bonnie. The first was clearly going to be easier. At this point facing a crazy werewolf chick was a cake walk compared to getting Bonnie to talk to him for more than five minutes. He'd *try* it the normal way though…just to see what happened. Share his feelings and all of that crap. And if that didn't work he'd hunt down the witch who tried to kill him and force a favor from her.

After all, Damon could be *very* convincing when he wanted to be.

~*~

*Women are bitches. Annoying, manipulating bitches that deserved to have their throats ripped out and their spines used as tinsel for Christmas trees.*

Growling, Damon wanted nothing more than to follow *Jules* out of the *Grille* and rip her head from her body. He could probably do it too but it wouldn't exactly help the situation. It'd make him feel better; that was something, right? Anyway if there was a cure for Rose she was not being forthcoming about it, and why would she? She was a fucken werewolf who got off on messing with people. She was like him but *much* more infuriating and not nearly as pretty. Still he didn't think she was lying.

Rose was basically a no one to her; a speed bump that had gotten in the way that night. If she died it's not like anyone would avenge her death. He maybe would just to kill some wolves but not out of any misguided loyalty that would bring some kinda war down upon the town. No Jules was just asserting her power, letting him know that she meant business. Unfortunately she did not know who she was fucking with either.
"Wow, you certainty have a way of getting rid of women."

Lifting a brow, Damon turned to see Jeremy Gilbert smirking at him from where he leaned against a pillar. "Shouldn't you be at home playing with your action figures?"

Jeremy grinned and shrugged. "Hey I'm just saying. You seem to have real problems when it comes to keeping a girlfriend."

"Mouthy little shit..." I'm sorry have I stumbled into an alternate universe where we trade witty banter back and forth? Because if I have just kill me now. Otherwise I have grown up things to do."

The younger man shoved his hands into his pockets. "Alone though, right?"

Damon studied him, obviously he was hinting at something. "What's that supposed to mean?"

"I heard Bonnie left you." He appeared really happy about it. "I think she made the right decision."

"Who the hell asked you?" "No one asked you."

Jeremy kicked off from the column and came to stand directly in front of him. "Maybe Bonnie did. Either way whatever happened between you two, she's came to her senses now so you should leave her alone."

The vampire felt the vein in his temple begin to throb. "You don't tell me what do to. Just because I won't kill you doesn't mean I won't rip something off you'd need later."

He stood his ground. "You're a real jerk, Damon. Bonnie is beautiful and she's smart, and funny and you treated her like crap. You don't deserve her."

"Aw does Jeremy have a little crush? That's cute but let me give you some advice, stay away from Bonnie. She's mine and I get very possessive when I think something of mine is being coveted." A beat. "Besides didn't you just try to kill yourself over Anna? Fickle, fickle."

"Shut up." Jeremy's expression turned dark. "I'm not scared of you."

"Ah cause of the ring? We've established I could get that off you and have you near death before you could blink." Damon growled lowly. "I have too much shit going on right now to worry about some boy scout trying to steal my girl. Try it and I will end you."

Without waiting for the no doubt snarky reply, he turned and strolled out of the building. Would he really kill Elena's little brother? Honestly...he wasn't sure. He wanted to say no but the thought of him with Bonnie or touching Bonnie did strange things to him. He wouldn't want to cause Elena that type of pain but sometimes he acted rashly when he wasn't focusing. Maybe he'd just maim him a little though.

A person could function without all their fingers. Just ask Jonathan Gilbert.

~*~

Bonnie yawned and slowly turned the page of The Picture of Dorian Gray, tapping a yellow highlighter against her dark bedspread. They were reading it for school but she'd elected to buy her own copy so that she could make notes and basically write all over it if she wanted to. While classes were the last thing she wanted to pay attention, she figured doing something normal would help mellow her out. In her house, in her room she was just a regular girl with homework that needed to
be done.

*Who sometimes floats notebooks to herself when she's too lazy to get up and go to her bag.*

Luka was still attempting to talk to her but she shot him down every time. She didn't care for anything he had to say. He looked hurt but that wasn't her problem. *She* had not lied after all.

Shifting, she pulled her plaid fleece throw tighter around her shoulders and streaked through a passage that she would need for the report she had to do later. Dorian reminded her of Damon, or perhaps it was the other way around. Both were handsome young men who'd at one time been… ordinary. Gorgeous but ordinary before being seduced by the darkness around them and forced to yield to horrible fates. Possibly there was a painting somewhere of Damon Salvatore, gnarled and tainted with his sins.

*It would make sense. Not like they are written on him.*

Suddenly her windowsill creaked and she jumped, sitting up quickly. A dark figure pushed up the sill and climbed in, and she recognized it immediately as Damon. *Speak of the devil.* "What are you doing here? We don't do this anymore."

He nodded slowly, standing stagnant. "I know I just…I didn't have anywhere else to go."

She frowned at him and then cursed herself for what she asked next. "What's wrong? You look… weird."

He blinked. "Rose is dead. She kept getting worse and worse so I killed her."

"I'm sorry." She whispered. "I—Stefan said that you two were friends."

"Yeah well, being my friend got her killed. That should be a lesson to any other potential friends." His brows narrowed. "I don't even know what I'm doing here. I buried her body and then I just—I thought about going home and having a drink. Yet here I am…"

Staring at him, she motioned to the bed and tucked her hair behind her ears. She could be hurt and angry at him while listening to him. "I guess if you wanna blame someone, you should blame that Jules person. Or Mason since he and Katherine started all of this."

Damon sat down heavily. "I taunted Mason; that's why he came after Stefan and I. Hell I taunted Jules too because I didn't believe in the legend. And we both know I got under Katherine's skin so badly she turned Caroline into a vampire. I…destroy everything and it sucks because now I actually give a fuck that I do it."

She smiled briefly. "Life is what it is though. If I hadn't told you to give Caroline blood, Katherine wouldn't have been able to turn her. We make decisions and sometimes they backfire. Those are consequences and they're supposed to teach us lessons for the next time."

The vampire snorted. "I've had a lot of lessons taught to me over the years, Bonnie and to be honest I don't think I've learned a damned thing."

Biting her lip, she bookmarked her book and placed it to the side. "You learned how to feel again."

"Yeah and it fucken sucks. What *sucks* even more is that it was supposed to be *me*. Jules was coming after *me*." His nostrils flared. "I goaded her and Rose paid the price."

Her big green eyes gazed at the side of his flawless face. "There is nothing wrong with experiencing
He scowled at her. "That would be human of me wouldn't it, and I'm not human. I'm a monster, a freak of nature roaming around in a dead body."

*That is very true. You haven't been human for a long time. "Monsters come in all shapes and sizes. Humans have done terrible things to each other since the beginning of time. Turn on the television right now and you'll hear about people killing for religion or civil rights, or just because they were bored." Pause. "It's what's inside that makes you give a damn. You feel guilty because of your soul."

His head jerked up at her words. "You still think I have a soul after all I've done?"

"I do." She replied honestly. "People can change. Some go good and some go bad. You shouldn't push down the feelings just because they hurt. If you block out the pain you'll only end up blocking out the pleasure as well."

Damon fell silent, his jaw clenching in thought and she clicked her tongue against the roof of her mouth. She was livid at him for hurting her but she realized he was struggling with so much more right now. He was trying to decide his very nature and she had a sneaking suspicion he wanted nothing more than to revert back to the murderous asshole that had attacked her in the woods all those months ago. *All that progress down the drain…*

Swinging her legs and putting her feet on the floor, she flexed her fingers and slowly placed her hand over his, giving it a little squeeze. His icy eyes followed the movement and his body shivered from her warmth. He swallowed hard and she could tell he was trying to hold back tears; his dark lashes fluttering with the action.

She couldn't be sure she'd ever seen this much raw emotion from him before. It was un-nerving but also refreshing that he could open up to her like this. "You…wanna just sit here for a while?"

He nodded mutely.

"Okay." Her voice was gentle, and she allowed him to change the position of their hands so that their fingers tangled together.

Here she was with the man who'd broken her heart and for the first time, nothing moved or exploded or cracked. All was quiet and she actually didn't mind one bit.

~*~

The following day found Bonnie making a stop by the manor to check on Damon before heading to the memorial. She felt stupid for even giving a shit but it wasn't a big surprise that she still had feelings for him. That she loved him—if she didn't it wouldn't hurt so much how he'd betrayed her. However he'd been there for her when her Grams died and she felt compelled to return the favor. It didn't mean all was forgiven or that anything had changed. She just figured being a bitch right now wasn't what the situation called for.

Letting herself into the grand home, she glanced around the living room. "Damon?" She smoothed her hand along the banister as she made her way upstairs, checking Stefan's room and then his. "Damon?" Peeping around the corner of the expansive space, she noticed the rumpled bed and then…Damon.

Naked, wet, in the shower currently staring into space Damon. Her eyes stretched twice their size and she tried not to *look* but it was ultimately a failing effort. She couldn't get her brain to send the
message to her feet to move because it was too busy cataloguing each droplet of water that cascaded
down his naked chest and abdomen to the patch of dark hair below.

The volume on the flat screen tv spiraled loudly and she startled, thankful for the distraction. She
swirled around and touched her face, her cheeks were practically on fire "I um, the door was open
and I—I just... hi."

By now Damon had snapped out of his dream world. "Hey. What are you doing here?" He turned
off the water and grabbed a towel, wrapping it around his nimble waist. It clung to the jutting hip
bones.

"I...wanted to see how you were doing." Idiot. I am an idiot. "I guess I should have knocked."

He smiled at her. "No worries. Not like you haven't seen it all before."

"Not in real time." She smirked. "Anyway, are you okay?"

"Define okay." He strolled over to his dresser. "Willing to share my feelings with the world or
Sure, we can go with that if you want."

Bonnie rolled her eyes and leaned against his large bed. "If I recall you showed up at my house last
night needing to talk."

He yanked out a pair of jeans. "So? That was last night."

Sigh. "Alright if you're gonna be a dick to me then I'll just go."

She started for the door but he grabbed her arm. "Wait. I just—I'm curious as to what your motives
are. That's all."

She pulled away gently. "They aren't shady if that is what you're thinking. You want me to be
honest? Okay I'm still really hurt and pissed at you. You broke my heart and you have me feeling
like I'm on edge most of the time." A beat. "But, you needed someone last night and I suppose I'm
just glad you came to me instead of going to..."

She didn't have to finish the sentence.

Damon ran a hand through his slick hair. "You know me."

I don't think I do. "Do I?"

"Better than you think." Stretching, he turned his back to her and dropped the towel. "But thanks
for...caring."

Bonnie bit back a grin at seeing his naked ass and looked up to the ceiling inside. "You're welcome."

"You know it just makes me feel worse for what happened, right?" He slipped on his jeans.

"Oh?" The thought had crossed my mind. "Would you rather I tell you to go to hell?"

He chuckled. "No, even though I'd deserve it." Tossing his towel onto the counter, he watched her.
"Look Bonnie I—I know I'm not your favorite person right now. I screwed up and I'm sorry. You
didn't have to listen to me last night or talk me down, but you did. And if I had any common sense at
all I'd make you leave and never see you again. You're too good for me, and I know that."
The witch averted her gaze. "Damon—"

"Just let me finish." He stepped closer, into her personal space. "We both know I've never made the smart decision before. So yeah, you can expect me to hound you and annoy you, and protect you because it's like...shit...I love you. And to be honest it scares me. People I love end up dead or worse, and I don't want anything like that to happen to you."

The bottles on his vanity trembled and she blinked her suddenly wet eyes. "Nothing will."

He looked to the clinking of the bottles before touching her shoulder. "We'll see. Anyway I know this doesn't make up for what I said to Elena. But I will, make it up."

Wetting her lips, she inhaled and stepped to the side, her head swimming with the smell of his fresh skin and body wash. She had to get out of this room; it was just too much too soon. "I should be going. I'm gonna swing by the memorial and then hang out with Jeremy."

He didn't try to hide his disdain. "He wants you, ya know? As a snuggle buddy."

She snickered. "He's Elena's little brother. I remember when he used to eat dirt."

"Well like you said baby, people change." He smirked. "He wants to eat something, but it's not dirt."

"Whatever!" Laughing, she waved him off and opened the door, nearly bumping into Stefan.

"Whoa. Hey Bonnie." He looked pleased to see her. "I thought that was you."

"I was just leaving." Glancing back to Damon, she ducked around his brother and hurried downstairs.

_Please do not let me regret letting my guard down for a moment._

~*~

_So Doctor Martin keeps Stefan, Caroline and Damon safe because of the deal Elena made with Elijah. Comforting but it still doesn't make me trust him. They all have some type of ulterior motive and until we find out what that is, we're not safe._

Elena snuggled her pillow to her chest and nudged Bonnie's foot, breaking her out of her thoughts. "So this news lady chick hit on Damon and he turned her down. He was rude about it."

The witch shrugged. "Oh?"

She nodded. "Stefan said he's at home right now being broody. That's how you know it's serious."

Bonnie chuckled lightly. "Things with Damon and I are complicated, and it's not something that can be fixed over night if it's fixed at all. I'm glad he's okay though. If we were linked I would have felt his distress..."

Caroline sniffed and wiped at her eyes with a tissue. "Boys, suck! Vampire, wolf, dog...they all suck. So far Matt is the only guy who hasn't let me down. Technically anyway, and I can't even be with him because I'm scared I'll eat him. Well Stefan doesn't let me down but that's a friend way of course."

"Caroline, you're not gonna hurt Matt." Elena rubbed her ankle. They were all piled onto the blonde's bed in their jammies. "You're extra careful with the person you love."
She pouted. "Maybe for an *old* vampire. I'm still getting the hang of everything." A pause. "I wish I could tell him the truth but that would just be putting him into more danger. And I—I thought maybe Tyler and I—but now I don't even wanna *look* at him."

The brunette frowned. "It's like battle lines are being drawn in the sand. At least we have each other."

"Always." Bonnie chimed in. "Whatever happens we're gonna face it together. As sisters."

The blonde burst into tears again and her two friends chuckled, pulling her in for a big hug. All of their problems wouldn't be solved by too much ice cream or popcorn and bad movies, but at least one would be taken care of. At least now they knew who to trust and where their loyalties were.

~Fin~
What Fuels Us

Chapter Summary

Everyone seems to have a motive.

Chapter Notes

Installment that tags episodes 2.14 (Crying Wolf) and 2.15 (The Dinner Party).

What Fuels Us

With a groan, Bonnie slowly opened her eyes as Elena's cell phone chimed loudly. She heard Caroline mumbling and then a thump which signaled that Elena had just fallen out of bed, most likely because Caroline had kicked her. She chuckled and rolled over, glancing to the small clock on the bedside table as one of her best friends disappeared to talk to her boyfriend. It was cute to be honest, Stefan calling to check up on her.

Of course they'd simply spent the night eating junk food and talking about guys. It was so normal and for a moment she'd felt bad about feeling weird around Caroline. When you got down to it she was still the same girl she'd always been, just heightened. Her feelings for Matt and even Tyler were so confusing to her that she wasn't sure which way was up. While she didn't want to have anything to do with Tyler anymore, she was still desperately in love with Matt and terrified of hurting him. Bonnie felt that she would relate to the situation if she ever dated someone human.

As it was she had two people giving her very different forms of advice. Elena thought she should give Damon another chance while Caroline wanted her to set him on fire. Both made valid points.

"Ugh, what time is it?" The blonde murmured, putting a pillow over her head.

"About eleven I think." She replied with a yawn. "Time to face the day."

"No thank you." The other girl said sleepily. "I was tortured. I deserve to be able to sleep in."

Smiling, Bonnie patted her shoulder and sat up, gazing out of the window. The sun was shining brightly through the satin curtains, flooding the room with brilliant rays. It looked like a lovely day outside which made her feel a bit better even with everything that she was going through. She vowed to not have any magic hiccups—to take a deep breath before breaking something.

A chirping sound brought her attention to her purse and she dug inside, pulling out her phone. There on the colorful screen flashed that she had a new text message. She accepted and bit her bottom lip.

Damon: Morning sunshine. Heard you had a lesbian pillow fight party last night.

Snorting, she found herself replying to him. It was a sleepover to make Caroline feel better.

Damon: Sure sure. Whatever you say. What are you doing now?
Just woke up.

Damon: Have good dream? Preferably about me?

Hah. I didn't have any dreams actually. Just a nice good sleep.

Damon: I miss dreaming with you. Miss sharing dreams with you.

Staring at the small screen, she debated on what to say. In truth she missed sharing dreams with him as well but she figured it would be a disservice to herself to let him know. She was still mad at him after all. Yeah well, we can't all get what we want.

Damon: I usually end up getting what I want.

And what do you want, Damon?

Damon: You.

For starters?

Damon: Enders too. And everything in between. Anyway what are you wearing?

LOL regular pajamas. Not like I would wear a sexy nightie to a girl's sleepover.

Damon: Of course you would. I've seen movies where that happens all the time. :)

Heh yeah I'll bet. Complete with an NC-17 sticker on the front.

Damon: Yeah. ;) We should make one of those movies.

Dream on.

Damon: I plan to. *sighs* Okay gotta go. Got things to do, an ancient to try to kill.

That made her nervous. Be careful, Damon. I don't think you should mess with Elijah.

Damon: Love to know you still care. Don't worry I'll try to play nice. Can I see you later?

I'm sure even if I say no; you'll find a way to stalk me.

Damon: Heh yeah. Later.

Later.

Putting her phone aside, she exhaled and ran a hand through her hair. Nothing wrong with a friendly chat I suppose...

"You're still so sprung on him, aren't you?" Caroline mused beside her. "Not that I can really blame you. Damon is handsome and sexy and he's got the whole bad boy thing going on. And I'm guessing he was sweet with you in a way I figure would only happen in a movie."

Bonnie shrugged. "You don't just get over someone."

She nodded. "Naturally. But is this really about him cheating? Or…something else."

Pulling at the strap of her cami, she waved her off. "What do you mean?"
The blonde shifted. "I—since becoming a vampire I've spent a lot of time with Damon and Stefan. A lot. When my mom found out about me and had to be compelled we lived there for a few days. You know. So I've seen and heard some stuff."

*Crap I'd forgotten all about that.* "What are you saying, Caroline?"

Her friend sighed. "About Elena—Damon having a major jones for her." Pause. "That's why you broke up with him, isn't it?"

Rubbing her cheek, she looked down at the blanket. "It's more than that but yes. Elena doesn't know however and I—I don't think she should. It would just make her feel guilty."

Apparently the other girl did not agree. "So? Don't get me wrong I love you both but I think she should know. Maybe she could have a talk with him and tell him it's *never* gonna happen, and then he'd get a clue."

The witch chuckled softly. "I think he already knows it's *never* gonna happen. To be honest I don't know why he wants her. I mean guys usually do but she looks like his bitch of an ex and she's in love with his brother. Maybe I just wasn't enough."

"Bonnie, no. You were an *awesome* girlfriend." Caroline responded. "Damon's just—he's just stupid and didn't realize what he had. Now he does like any other stupid guy and he wants you back. I say either shut him down completely or play so hard to get that he ends up with whiplash."

Sometimes she has some pretty good ideas. "We'll see what happens but I'm not really—I'm trying not to think about that."

"Think about what?" Elena asked as she hung up with Stefan and climbed back into bed. "Lemme guess, we're talking about boys again…"

"Should we start calling them men?" Caroline wondered aloud. "Stefan and Damon are *really* old."

The brunette chuckled. "Yeah but it's not something I think about until he goes all vamp on me." A beat. "When I'm like thirty he's still going to look seventeen. I'll officially be called a cougar or something. It's really weird to think about. The future…"

"Yeah." The blonde echoed. "I mean on the one hand I'm gonna be young and hot forever, but on the other hand I can't have kids and if I lose this ring I can't go out in the day time."

Bonnie tilted her head to the side. "You could always adopt. And I saw this spell about reanimating a vampire for twenty-four hours so that could help with Stefan's issue maybe of being dead and unable to procreate."

Elena's eyes stretched wide. "Really? Wow that would be wild. Honestly I don't like to really think about the future because it's so—it's so far away. I'm happy with Stefan and I wanna be with him forever. I wish it could always be that simple. Or as simple as us going to the lake house for a weekend away like we're doing this afternoon."

*I know the feeling. I wish I could always be in a good place and not have to worry about what might happen tomorrow.* "I think if you're meant to be then it'll happen."

"Right. Just like if I'm meant to be with Matt then I won't end up eating him." Caroline joked to lighten the mood.

The three girls laughed and then reluctantly forced themselves out of bed to get ready to go about
their days. Bonnie found herself packing up her things and idly wondering about what Damon would be getting up to with Elijah. She didn't like the thought of him tempting fate as he was prone to do because it always ended up backfiring. Like it had done with Mason. Even if he ended up needing her help, she wasn't sure she'd be able to do anything of substance. A young werewolf is one thing whereas an ancient vampire was a whole different can of worms. It was possible that Jonas had some type of protection spell over him.

*Which brings us to the question of why is a powerful witch like him working for a vampire anyway? Could be outta some debt like Lucy had with Katherine? Or maybe he's just evil and likes the thought of causing trouble. I should be sneaky like he was and find out just what the master plan is.*

*My powers are strong because of my emotional turmoil, now would be a good time to put them into action.*

Frowning, she grabbed Caroline's wrist before she could follow Elena into the kitchen. "Hey, I'm gonna need help with something later. Magic stuff. Meet me at the Grille later?"

She nodded. "Sure. I take it this is something we don't want Elena to know about?"

"Right. She has enough on her plate right now." Bonnie said quietly. "We'll figure out what's going on with Elijah and have answers for her when she returns. Hopefully."

~*~

So Damon Salvatore had a habit of not knowing when to pick his battles because he assumed that whatever the fight, he would win. Sometimes he did and sometimes things ended up going in a direction that not even he would have guessed. For example, once upon a time he wanted Alaric dead and had even *tried* to kill him. Now he and the history teacher/vampire slayer were—well they were going in on schemes together. Saving each other's lives and shit. Never had he figured *that* is how things would end up between them.

Just like he never guessed Katherine would be someone he wanted dead, or that he and Stefan would ever find some type of common ground.

Life liked to throw him curve balls and keep him on his toes. Especially where Bonnie Bennett was concerned. He'd confessed his love to her best friend and yet she'd been there for him the other night; held his hand while he cried like a little bitch over his dead vampire friend. If he ever had someone so sincere. All I do is fuck up and I should be with someone just as fucked up as I am. Yet if the saying was to be believed then the heart wanted what it wanted…and he *wanted* Bonnie.

Getting her had been easier than keeping her.

However her being his shoulder to lean on was perhaps a step in the right direction to regaining her. Their relationship was in such a weird ass place right now. She hated him but apparently couldn't stay away from him; *I like that part.* He loved her but apparently couldn't get her best friend out of his mind; *yeah that part, not so much.* Though lately it was more about protecting Elena than wooing her which he was kinda glad for. His mind was clearer when he focused on the keeping her alive aspect.

Still when he'd needed someone to keep him from the edge, Bonnie had been that person. Sure Elena may have talked him down but it wouldn't have been as genuine. Just a way to keep *him* from hurting someone *else.* Some innocent person he no doubt would have killed to get rid of his rage and guilt.
But there was something else entirely that he wasn't even considering. He could be the most vulnerable he'd ever been with Bonnie and not feel like a weak sack of crap. Sometimes the human part of Damon Salvatore came so natural around the witch that it freaked him out times ten. Because if he were human and doing terrible things, didn't that make him even worse? Even less of a catch for her?

*You couldn't be less of a catch after what you've done unless you slit her father's throat.*

Bright side?

Shaking his head to get back in the game and forget about big green eyes for a while, he meandered around the Lockwood mansion looking for Elijah. According to his sources he was going to be here today for some historical thing or other, and he wanted to meet him. It was *past* time to have a nice long talk with this asshole who thought he was *so* bad ass. He wasn't expecting a fight but he felt secure enough to reckon that Alaric had some type of vervain or something up his sleeve just in case.

As he put on his human smile for the posh crowd, he thought back to the confrontation with the wolves in the woods. He didn't exactly want to admit it, but he hoped they didn't have to deal with them again. Jules and her ilk were strong fighters—hatred did that for you however. And they were outnumbered. *I should start carrying around wolf's bane in a flask. Might come in handy.*

Smirking to himself, he noticed the man of the hour and strolled right up to him, letting Carol Lockwood introduce them. They played nice while she was around, making idle chit-chat about his book and the historical society until she had to waltz off and play hostess. When she was out of sight, they disappeared into the study for a talk.

"What can I do for you Damon?" Elijah inquired, holding a regal confidence that you didn't see anymore.

"I was hoping we could have a word." He said easily.

The other man looked around the room. "Where's Elena?"

*Oh look how he pretends to care. *Safe with Stefan. They're laying low ya know? Been having a little werewolf problem."

"Yes I heard about that."

"I'm sure you did since it was your witch that saved the day."

"You are welcome."

"Which adds to my confusion on exactly why you're here…"

Elijah grinned at him. "Why don't you just worry about keeping Elena safe and leave the rest to me."

He turned to leave when suddenly Damon was in front of him. "Not good enough."

With a rather bored, stoic expression, Elijah grabbed him around the throat and slammed him against the wall. "You young vampires. So arrogant. How dare you challenge me?"

*Fuck,* Damon thought as the original bent his wrist back at an odd angle. *I should have thought this out more.* "You can't kill me, man. It's not part of the deal."

"Silence." The older vampire's voice was so calm, so soft. Without even looking behind him, he
yanked up a pencil and stabbed it into the side of Damon's neck, making him scream in pain before tossing him carelessly towards the large desk. "I'm an original. Show a little respect."

*Fuck! I hate this guy! I hate this guy so much that hate isn't a strong enough word. Fuck that hurt.*

Grunting, he still took the white handkerchief that he was offered and pressed it to his wound. *I hate not being the bad guy.*

Adjusting his suit jacket, Elijah smiled at him. "Why don't you just ask me what you're dying to know the answer to, Damon? This is about your little witch, correct?"

Silence.

"Ah. Now you have nothing to say?" He chuckled mellifluously. "Yes I know about your…attachment to her. I find it interesting that you're in love with her and yet pining away for Elena. If you had to choose between the two in a life or death situation, who would you pick? Who would you save and who would you let die?" Without waiting for an answer, he continued. "If you don't want to be tested in that way, I suggest you mind your attitude. The moment you cease to be of us to me, you're dead. So you should do what I say. Keep Elena and your little witch safe."

Damon gritted his teeth and watched him leave, fighting the instinct to try to stab him with something. Before returning to Mystic Falls he had always been the big dog. Now he was getting slapped around left and right and it made him so fucken angry. He'd find a way to kill Elijah now somehow just for the satisfaction.

Though threatening Bonnie also did the trick to get him to react.

He was going to be careful however and not think about what he'd said. If it came down to Elena and Bonnie—he wanted to pretend that it would be a hard decision to make. That he didn't know who he would go for but that was a lie. No matter what he felt for Elena, it would be Bonnie every single time. Yes he'd try for them both but if that wasn't possible he'd save Bonnie.

Maybe even if it meant sacrificing himself.

*Ugh I cannot be that whipped.*

~*~

Slumping to the side, Bonnie pushed black strands of hair out of her face and watched as the candle flames died out. She didn't feel good about tricking Luka into a trance and probing his mind but she had done what was necessary to protect the people she loved. And now she knew that Elijah still had plans to kill Elena to kill Klaus, and that Luka's sister was being held hostage to get his father to play nice.

While that makes me feel sorry for them, what they're doing is wrong. Killing an innocent girl to save someone in their family…how can they think that is right? I know all about being desperate but I'd never go to that level.

"Are you okay?" Caroline inquired. "You look wiped."

"I'm good just…shocked I guess about what we found out tonight." She admitted. "I need to call Damon and let him know that Elena still has to die."

Pursing her lips together, the blonde bent down and tossed an unconscious Luka over her shoulder. "I'm gonna get him back to the Grille before he wakes up or whatever. Lock up when you leave?"
"Sure." The witch stood and began gathering up the candles. "Thanks for your help."

Jeremy picked up the bowl of water and dumped it into the nearest plant. "That was some pretty wild stuff you did. You're getting more powerful."

Every day it seems. "Yeah. But it's helping people so…it works."

He smiled a little. "I think it's really cool. Everyone…can do such interesting things and I'm just me."

She looked at him. "Nothing wrong with being who you are. There are times when I wish I didn't have powers—that I was still ignorant to all of this. But this is my destiny."

A beat. "I just wonder what my destiny is."

Reaching out, she rubbed his arm. "You'll find it. And besides you're going a good job of helping keep Elena safe. Maybe your job is to be her little brother and look out for her."

A broad grin broke out across his handsome face. "Maybe. Would still be nice to have a super power though."

Chuckling, they both fell into a comfortable silence as they headed towards the front door. Once there, he turned and gazed at her, taking the chance of pushing dark locks from her forehead. She blinked in surprise and barely had time to press a hand to his chest when he leaned down for a kiss, his lips dangerously close to her own.

"Jeremy, hey…" Pushing him away gently, she sighed. "I—we shouldn't do that."

He frowned. "Why not? I mean c'mon, you gotta know I think you're amazing and have for a while now."

I had an inkling, yes. "No I—I thought maybe you did but it just wouldn't work out between us. You're sweet but…"

He rolled his big brown eyes. "This is about Damon, isn't it?"

Busted. "I'm not over him…which is probably obvious."

"He's a jerk. You know that right? He thinks of you as his property or something." Pause. "He doesn't respect you or deserve you. He doesn't love you."

For some reason that angered her and she folded her arms over her chest. "Damon is a lot of things, but he does love me. He's not perfect, in fact sometimes he can be downright horrible but he's been there for me in some very tough spots. I'm not excusing his behavior but some things I know and this is one of them."

"What is it gonna take to make you see him the way I do?" He questioned. "For the monster he is."

"I know you don't like him but bashing him isn't really the best way to get me to get over him. Things like that take time and we have more important stuff to worry about." She related. Shaking her head, she stepped around him and out the door. "Night Jeremy."

She was thankful that he didn't try to stop her or call her back. She understood that he meant well and wanted her with someone who appreciated her, but judging Damon on the bad things without taking the good into consideration just wasn't fair. Sure he'd fucked them up but there had been times where he was almost a prince. Those times were the main reason it was so hard to just write him off.
Climbing into her car, she huffed and dialed his number. Might as well tell him the news.

"Hello?"

"Damon hey, it's Bonnie." She said. "I have some information for you about Elijah and his plans."

"Ooh I like the sound of that." He cooed. "How did you manage to get this when I couldn't?"

Heh. "I took the less threatening approach and used magic."

"Ah, that's my sexy little witch." He smirked. "So what's up?"

She smiled despite herself. "He still plans to sacrifice Elena. She has to die for Klaus to be vulnerable enough to kill."

Damon grunted in disdain. "Got it. We should have known it wouldn't be easy where everyone lives and gets a pony."

Very true. We are not that lucky. "Yeah. But at least now we have some idea of what's going on."

"We know that Elijah needs to die." He says matter of fact. "A lot. And very painfully. I don't care that he basically rescued me from torture earlier."

She blinked. "Wait, what? Who tortured you?"

"Jules and her band of merry wolves." He snorted deeply. "They wanted the moonstone. Surprise, surprise Elijah has it. Anyway they tried to do the lame torture thing and he showed up and ripped most of their hearts out."

Bonnie slumped back to her seat and remained quiet for a few. It was odd to think of Damon in danger and yet not feeling it. "Are you okay?"

"Never better." He replied in his usual flip manner. "It'll take more than some wooden spiked collar to get rid of me. I should call Stefan and let him know what's up…"

"Okay. Bye."

"Goodnight Bonnie."

~*~

Lunchtime the next day found Bonnie at the Grille, pushing the cucumbers in her salad from one side of the plate to the other. Her fingertips were slightly tingling from the spell she'd performed on Luka but she decided it was better than breaking out all of the windows when her emotions got the best of her. Perhaps if she focused more on doing more spells—even just to clean the house or whatever—she'd get a better grip on things.

Not to mention if I try hard enough to not think about what I haven't been thinking about lately I seem to do pretty good. It's bad to say but all of this Elijah drama has done wonders in the form of a distraction.

I haven't thought about what Damon said to Elena in…crap.

Grumbling under her breath, she felt the salt shaker as it started to shudder on the table. "Stop it." Of course that just made it tremble harder. "I said stop. it."
"Do you usually talk to the condiments?"

Startled, she looked up to see Damon smirking down at her. "You scared me."

He sat down across from her. "Naturally. You were too busy chastising the salt. It did not pour the way you wanted it to?"

"No I—I'm having some control issues when I think bad thoughts." She said honestly.

"Hm. So if you were to think dirty thoughts would people's clothes start flying off?" He wiggled his brows.

"Shouldn't you be coming up with master plans or something?" She countered. "What are you doing here anyway?"

"Looking for Jenna's friend, Andy Starr. I have a job for her."

"Will she survive it?"

"She should. I don't plan to kill her."

"That's...good I suppose."

Stretching out his long legs, he winked at her. "We should have more little chats like this. I miss our witty banter."

She opened her mouth to reply when Luka strolled up to their table, leaning intimidatingly into her space. "You wanna tell me what the hell happened yesterday?"

Bonnie canted her head to the side. "I'm sorry?"

He frowned, obviously in no mood for games. "Don't play dumb. You and your friends were here and—"

She shrugged. "And what?"

"And all I remember is one minute I'm playing pool and the next I'm waking up in a bathroom stall." Luka snapped.

_Oh you poor thing._ "Sorry Luka but everything seemed normal yesterday. I brought you coffee and we played pool."

Wetting his lips, he looked around and then got closer, his face inches from her. "See, I think you're lying. Now either you tell me what you did to me or I'm going to—"

Damon stood abruptly. "You're going to what, exactly? Because if the next words out of your mouth are a threat, I'm gonna be forced to get involved." He smirked. "And believe me junior, you do not want me to get involved. I'm sure your daddy has told you all about me and what I'm capable of. You threaten her and you might as well be prepared to double it."

Presumably knowing that he couldn't possibly have the upper hand in this situation, Luka exhaled but had the common sense to walk away. Bonnie watched him go with wary eyes, getting a bad feeling in the pit of her stomach. She didn't believe that he would hurt her but considering what he and his father were willing to do to get his sister back, she couldn't be completely sure.

Damon sneered at the teen's retreating back. "If he gives you any trouble let me know and I'll eat
him."

She chuckled a little. "Wow that—that's your definition of sweet. Nice." She motioned with her head over to where Jenna's friend was. "Your date's here."

Grinning, he pecked her cheek before she could stop him, laughing when the salt shaker literally jumped off the table. "Later."

*Insufferable son of a…*

Damon groaned as he shut the cellar door and locked Elijah away. He could hear Stefan and Elena ascending the stairs towards his brother's room, probably to talk more about not keeping her in the dark. Whatever.

Today had been action packed with murder, intrigue and some pretty tasty food. The best part of course was getting to watch Elijah be killed twice! That totally made up for being stabbed with a pencil and treated like a toddler having a tantrum. Now all they had to worry about was Klaus and something told him that would be harder than anything he's ever dealt with before. However with Tyler Lockwood gone from the town there wasn't a wolf to sacrifice. Maybe that would be enough to get him to give up his crazy ass plan.

*Yeah even I don't believe that.*

He wasn't exactly exhausted but he wouldn't turn down some nice warm people blood and then maybe a glass of wine to take the edge off. He'll worry about possibly killing Jonathan Gilbert tomorrow. *Should have known he had some kinda agenda when he agreed to help. Can't believe I let my guard down with him for a minute. Well he's gonna pay just like all of the others.*

With those happy thoughts dancing in his brain, he went through the manor flicking off some of the lights. A hurried knock on the front door made his brow lift, and he swaggered over to pull it open.

He had a smart alec reply all ready until he took in the sight of Bonnie more closely. She was visibly shaken, her eyes wet with tears and her usually warm brown skin pale.

All of his bravado disappeared. "Hey. What's wrong?" He stepped to the side and let her in.

"I—I'm sorry for coming over like this." She whispered. "I just…Jeremy didn't really understand and I—I didn't want Elena to come home and find me there like this."

Damon shook his head as he closed the door. "Did Jeremy do something to you?"

"No. It…” Next she was sobbing quietly. "My powers. He—he took them."

"Twitch. "Who? Elijah?"

"Luka's father. Jeremy and I were…trying some basic channeling stuff and he—he just burst in." She explained, wiping at her face. "He was angry over what we'd done to Luka. Next thing I know he's grabbing me and—and it—it felt like he was… Like he took something without asking. Like he hollowed me out." Her voice dipped lower. "Like I was violated."

Damon didn't know a lot about witchy powers but he understood that taking those of another was an unpleasant experience for the take-y. Especially if it were against their will. The thought of some strange asshole rooting around inside of Bonnie's essence without her consent made him see *red.* Filled him with a rage he didn't feel lightly. "I'll kill him." He started for the door when she grabbed
his arm.

"Damon, don't. He—he's very strong. He'll kill you." She pleaded, not letting him go.

"You think I'm just gonna let him get away with what he did to you?" He growled. "No fucken way. I'll rip his heart out of his chest and beat him with it."

Bonnie gave his bicep a squeeze. "Just...stay with me. Please? I—I don't feel so good."

Clutching his jaw, he stared at her. "If we were still linked I could have helped you."

She flinched at his words. "Or ended up dead while trying."

_Fuck. Fuck this town and its issues, and outsiders thinking they can come in and push us around. Fuck them all._ "We're going to get your powers back, okay? I don't care what we have to do."

Swallowing, the little witch turned away from him and wrapped her arms around her waist. "God, I hate this. I hate that I can be so fucken angry at you and still want to run to you when things get out of control. It's not fair! I—I shouldn't still need you."

_Ouch. Cut me to the quick._ "Yeah but you do. That should tell you something..."

She nodded. "It tells me that I'm stupid."

He snickered. "No baby, it tells you that we're for real here. I mean I say I love Elena but who did I go to when I needed someone? Who do I always go to when I need someone? You."

"Because I'm easy."

"Because you're you."

Bonnie gripped the back of the couch, her knuckles turning white under the pressure. "Maybe but that doesn't change what happened. It doesn't change the fact that Jeremy is right. You don't—you don't respect me. Deserve me. Love me."

He was in front of her so suddenly that she gasped aloud. "Jeremy doesn't know what the fuck he's talking about. I might not deserve you but I know what you're capable of. I knew before you got all strong and self-assured of your magic. I once said that you're the only chick that matches me step for step." Pausing, he fenced her in with an arm on either side of her small waist. "I meant that. I've meant everything that I've said to you."

She refused to meet his penetrating gaze. "But you meant what you said to her too."

"This isn't easy for me either, little witch. I wanted to kill you after you destroyed the necklace. Hell I tried to kill you and would have succeeded if it hadn't been for Stefan. I struggled with everything that I started to feel for you to the point where I would have did anything not to feel it anymore." He explained gruffly. "I thought it was a cancer, that it was eating me from the inside out. And the more I tried to stay away, the more I wanted you. Now I don't know how not to want you."

Crystal clear tears rolled down her soft cheek and she made no move to get rid of them this time. "I can't do this." She ducked from under him, moving away, stumbling when he seized her upper arm.

"Why do you keep running away from us?" He inquired, barely shaking her. "You can pretend all you want but we both know the truth. No one else understands your pain like I do. No one understands mine like you do. We might not be connected anymore...but we're locked together."
Her fingers curled into the material of his shirt no doubt scratching the skin underneath. "I can't forgive you. Not without you earning it. I don't care how it—I refuse."

Damon pushed her up against the wall near the fireplace and invaded her bubble so that she couldn't get away. Even without her magic she was still glaring at him with eyes of jade fire as if to say go ahead and try me. You'll be sorry afterwards. "I guess I'm gonna have to earn it then. Aren't I?"

His lips were precariously close to hers when someone clearing their throat made them both look to the left. I'm hallucinating. Jenna put something in the food.

Standing very naked without a single shred of remorse or self-consciousness, with droplets of water streaming down her body from her wet hair was Katherine. She looked quite pleased with herself. "Hello Damon. Not that I want to break up this touching scene right out of a teenage vampire movie, but do you have a robe?"

Speak! Say words now. ". . . how did you get out?"

She grinned, hands on her hips. "I knew that if I begged you not to kill Elijah that's exactly what you'd do. Little known fact; originals can compel vampires but as soon as they die, compulsion wears off."

"And you knew?"

"And I'm still here. I didn't run. I meant what I said Damon, I'm going to help you. So . . . how 'bout that robe? Then you and the witch can get back to audio fucking."

Damon's brows narrowed and he shifted his attention back to Bonnie who was just staring as if she couldn't find the words or strength it took to move at the moment. And here I thought today was interesting. Something tells me tomorrow is gonna blow it out of the water.

~Fin~
Broken Strings & Fixed Things

Chapter Summary

Sometimes holding on hurts too much, and sometimes it's just enough.

Chapter Notes

This tags episode 2.16 (The House Guest).

Broken Strings & Fixed Things

Leaning against the cold metal of the pale colored lockers, Bonnie Bennett sighed and stared down at her shoes. It had only been a few days since she'd lost her powers and while she felt more stable, she couldn't shake the lethargy that not being a witch caused. The usual current of something that ran underneath her skin was missing and without it she was just like everyone else. It shouldn't bother her but it did. She was too used to being able to float objects or control nature and now she couldn't even rattle a small packet of salt across the table.

All those days I wished to be normal…what the hell was I thinking? I'm not normal. I'm the product of nearly two hundred years of magic. I should have been careful of what I wished for.

The only thing worse than losing her abilities had to be Katherine slinking around the Salvatore mansion like a praying mantis waiting to mate and eat someone's head. Although it gave Bonnie something else to focus on besides her current situation, she hated Katherine and figured anything else would have been better than dealing with the snotty vampire bitch. Especially since she took every opportunity to remind her how small and insignificant she was.

'Without your witchy mojo you're even more of a loser' she'd delighted in saying.

It was all Bonnie could do not to hit her over the head with a vase. Of course hanging around the manor wasn't her idea in the first place. Damon insisted and…well…she'd relented for a bit because his presence made her feel safe in those first few crucial hours. Her father was presently away on business and staying with him was better than being home alone, waiting for the nightmares to start. And they had, naturally. Phantom shapes in her dreams reaching for her; grabbing her and holding her down as they dug inside and took what didn't belong to them.

However she was okay now. Not one hundred percent but it was better than staying in bed all the time.

Sighing, she leaned her head back and watched her peers as they hurried towards their morning classes. She had no desire to even attempt to learn and planned to just doodle until she could leave for the day. It seemed stupid to have to go to school when around the corner could be a life or death situation that things like algebra couldn't solve. She should be out living her life instead of doing homework. And none of them even know how close they've all came to death. How close they still are until Klaus is taken care of.
She shivered and wrapped Damon's leather jacket tighter around her. *If I don't get my powers back I'll be in the same boat.*

Stefan and Elena approached her a moment later, arms locked together and looking relatively happy despite their circumstances. Bonnie knew for a fact that Elena wasn't thrilled to have her clone hanging around either, yet she supposed they were making the best out of the time they had together. Alone. "Hey guys."

Her best friend smiled. "Hey. How are you doing?"

She shrugged lightly. "I'm okay. What about you?"

The brunette made a face. "Perfect except for the house guest from hell who takes pleasure in pretending to be me. I don't know why she won't just leave."

*That would be too easy.* "Probably because she's a horrible bitch."

Her friend nodded. "Yeah that sounds about right."

Adjusting his bag, Stefan matched their smiles. "Don't worry, Damon and I will deal with Katherine. But right now I wanna get the Martins on our side. Wanna figure out a way for us to all work together now that Elijah is out of the picture."

She frowned at him. "That's impossible. They hate us."

"Yes but we have to win them over or someone is going to end up dead." He said softly. "Do you think you could get them to have a civil conversation?"

*I'd rather fight a pit bull.* "I could try."

That seemed to be enough for him. "Thanks. Keep me posted." Giving Elena a gentle kiss to the corner of her lips, he squeezed her arm and headed off down the hall.

"I don't mean to be vulgar but this has 'clusterfuck' written all over it." Elena mused dryly. "The Martins aren't gonna want anything to do with any of us. They don't trust us."

Bonnie chuckled lowly. "Yeah well we don't trust them either. But I commend Stefan for trying to call a truce or whatever. If we can at least get Jonas to give me my powers back that'll be a step in the right direction."

Biting the inside of her cheek, the brunette glanced around as a few people walked by. "If—well when you get your powers back I think you should redo the link you had with Damon."

**What? Why?**

She waved a manicured hand. "For protection of course. I—I mean something big is obviously coming and we're all gonna need all of the help we can get. You play a key role in the spell that Klaus has to work just like I do. At least with your bond with Damon he'll know if you're in trouble or not. And vice versa."

"Yeah but you know it's not that simple." The witch explained. "I—it's not like I removed it just because I was in the mood. I had a valid reason."

"Right and I'm not saying you weren't totally right to do it but, Rose is dead." Pause. "Damon made a slip up—maybe he felt bad for her because she was dying. Either way he cares about you and I
know you care about him."

"I never said I didn't. But it's complicated."

"You're scared he'll hurt you again."

"Among other things, yes."

"Bonnie, you need this connection with him. He needs to be one hundred percent in your corner like Stefan is in mine."

"Elena I—"

"Won't you even consider it? I know you miss him."

Bonnie made a fist and let it thump down next to the combination lock. She did miss him—sometimes she missed him like crazy but this wasn't about missing him or whatever. It was about showing him that she wasn't second best to anyone. That he wasn't above reproach when it came to their relationship and his behavior with other people. Would he really learn anything if she just waved it off as water under the bridge so she could have the tingle of him back in her bones?

Eh. "Do you remember when you were staying away from Stefan for your own good? Well that's how I feel about the situation with Damon right now."

Big brown eyes studied her skeptically. "Except you're not staying away from him and I didn't stay away from Stefan. Not really… He was the first person you went to after losing your powers. He makes you feel safe and—and I understand that. I was terrified of Stefan and yet I couldn't stay away because he—because I love him so much."

Sometimes I hate how perceptive she is. "Damon is a powerful vampire; so yes I did feel safe to a certain extent. And you know I never said I didn't—that I didn't have strong feelings for him. I do. We were almost perfect."

A nod. "You could be perfect again if you just forgave him."

This would be the point where the windows would be rattling and everyone would be gasping in horror, hoping they weren't caught in the midst of a soon to be powerful earthquake. Instead everything remained still and quiet; un-natural. "God it's so easy for you to say that when you—you don't even know—" Breaking off she turned away and pressed her lips shut tight.

Elena placed a delicate hand onto her shoulder. "What don't I know?" Her voice was soft yet inquisitive.

Caroline's words from their slumber party swirled like angry wasps in her brain and she exhaled loudly. Maybe it was time to come clean, stop protecting her friend from everything and let her take some of the weight where their situation was concerned. She didn't like people lying to her after all. "I—Damon didn't sleep with Rose. I lied."

"He…has feelings for you and he lied to me about them. So I left him."

The brunette blinked in confusion. "What? Why would you do that?"

"Because the truth of why I broke up with him and removed the bond is kinda worse." She rubbed at her collarbone. I won't tell her about the dream or the memories she lost. That would be too much. "He…has feelings for you and he lied to me about them. So I left him."

The expression on the other girl's face would have been comical if the circumstances weren't
anything but. She opened and closed her mouth like a trout, obviously trying to find *something* to say. "Bonnie I—you know I would *never* do anything with Damon. I care about him yes but I love Stefan."

Bonnie wet her lips with the tip of her tongue. "I know. But it didn't change anything. For whatever reason he started to have more than friend feelings for you and I refused to be the person he turned to because you didn't want him. Or because he knew he couldn't have you."

Frowning, she dragged her slender fingers through her long brown hair. "I remember him playing games when Stefan and I first got together. And I remember us becoming closer after Katherine wasn't in the tomb, but I don't think I led him on in any way."

*That is debatable I am sure. I love you but running to him with your issues when Stefan wasn't available didn't help anything. Also does Georgia ring a bell?* "I'm not blaming you, I'm just being honest. First it was Katherine and then it was you."

"And now it's you." Elena sounded so sure. "Okay so how about I try to be more conscious of stuff when I'm around Damon? I'll talk to him too if you want. Make sure he knows that he has no chance with me what so ever."

*I think he knows but perhaps hearing it again wouldn't be the worst thing to happen. If you want you can. Right now though I'm less concerned with Damon and more with getting my powers back."

"You do realize Damon is alone with Katherine right now…? I doubt they'll be canoodling any time soon but she has a way of getting under his skin." The brunette pointed out. "We all have to look out for each other even if we're pissed at one another."

Smoothing her hand over the slick material of his leather jacket, Bonnie knew that Elena was right. No matter how she felt about things of the past, right now she had to watch over Damon because for all his posturing, he was *awful* at really taking care of himself when it honestly mattered. The she devil with bouncy curls knew every single button of his to push and she would because she—for some reason—liked seeing him in pain. It wasn't enough to hurt anyone and everyone; no she saved the best for him.

And although she didn't want to think about what the future held or what Klaus would do to all of them, it was very evident that *both* Salvatore brothers would be needed to help keep the death toll down. As much as it gutted her, she'd rather see Damon ride off into the sunset with Elena…than dead.

~*~

Damon prided himself on being able to school his emotions, a feat he'd learned over the many, many years of turning off his humanity. He could be perpetually aloof in the face of danger as well as sadness, while internally raging like a hurricane. So it was easy for him to look Katherine in the eye after she informed him that *of course she knew he would die* and not bat an eyelash. Naturally in his mind he fired up that blow torch and burnt her to a black crisp ten times before she could sashay out of the room. But to her face he just stared with that blank indifference all *oh* at having his question answered.

She saw through him though; stupid bitch. So his next move was to ignore her the best he could and focus on finding the witch burning grounds or whatever Elijah had been so interested in. Yet Katherine being who she was, she couldn't stop herself from violating his space or taunting him about Bonnie. Especially after learning that when a witch dies violently they release a sort of mystical energy marking the place of their death.
“Maybe we’ll get to actually see it when Klaus fillets Bonnie like a catfish.” She’d grinned at him. “I wonder if it looks like fireworks?”

He’d wanted to drop a house on her.

The more Damon learned about witches and their part in this whole sordid tale, the more he wished he could kidnap Bonnie and move to some deserted island where clothes were banned and people showed up just so that he could feed on them. It doesn’t matter that she doesn’t have her powers right now.

Lounging on his couch in the elegant living room with one of the Gilbert journals in his hand about an hour or two later, the gorgeous vampire let his sharp eyes scan the pages for anything that could be of use. His bitchy ex had fallen quiet as she did the same thing, determined to help because it benefited her. It made him wonder would he be the surly asshole he was now if he’d found out sooner how she really saw him?

Maybe.

Probably.

It was fun.

Digging his phone out of his pocket, he composed a short text to send to Bonnie; Still in one piece, judgy?

There was a beep a minute later with the reply; So far. Enjoying another girl’s night. What about you?

He mulled over her question and then typed; I haven’t killed her yet so that’s something I suppose. Maybe I’m growing as a person.

Another beep; Aw I’m proud of you. I wadaewhregreg OMG YOU ARE SO HOT! DO ME NOW! ELEVENTY ONE!

His brows shot up in confusion but he grinned and another message quickly followed; Caroline is evil and asking to be staked. That was her.

So you don’t think I’m hot and wanna do me?

:P Not having this conversation with you.

Later?

…maybe. Gotta go. Going to the Grille. Be careful…

You too.

"Wow, Damon Salvatore texting like a normal human being… What is the world coming to?" Katherine taunted from her place slung across one of his chairs. "Checking in on your little witch? Oh I’m sorry, former witch. You know she’s basically as helpless now as all of those people you used to kill."

Twitch. "Are you smart enough to read and talk at the same time?"

She laughed, clearly enjoying herself. "You know I think it’s kinda sexy how protective and possessive you are of her. Reminds me of how you used to be when I’d ditch you for Stefan. Always
wanted to be number one, and not wanting to share me with anyone."

He re-pocketed his phone. "Yeah well, we didn't have TiVo then."

Smirking, she gazed at him. "Fucked her yet?"

*I can't believe Stefan left me here with this whore. I thought he feared for my sanity and shit. A few more hours of this and I might stake myself. "And how is this helping us find a way to defeat Klaus?"

"Ooh so that's a no." Katherine dipped her head coyly, chewing on her thumbnail. "What are you waiting for? You could just...take her. I'm sure you want to. I mean she's annoying as hell but she's beautiful. Smooth, soft skin and full lips—I bet she's a screamer. Slick and sticky like honey..."

"Dear Penthouse..." He replied; trying not to picture any of the images she was beaming into his brain.

"Okay so answer me this then. You...seem to have found some sort of respect for her since you're not bending her over the nearest sturdy object and fucking her stupid. But, why aren't you out playing with other girls?" She appeared genuinely interested. "Aren't your balls as blue as dark denim jeans by now?"

Damon gritted his teeth. "Not everyone needs more than one toy, Katherine. I want Bonnie...plain and simple."

She hummed and he frowned slightly as an odd prickle of something spiked against his temples. Shifting, he glanced behind him to where she sat and looked out into the foyer but saw nothing. *Great. One evening with her and I'm already losing my mind. In a week I'll be a babbling idiot."

Swinging her legs around, the brunette tossed the book in her hands down onto the table and pouted. She slinked over to the sofa and draped herself over the arm, her head right next to Damon's. He blinked in quick succession, resisting the urge to flip her ass into the floor. "Can I help you?"

She smelled like fresh peaches in the spring. "I'm bored." At his aggravated sigh, she leaned closer and pointed to the words on the page he was reading. "Emily Bennett was taken by the Council today. They kidnapped her from her home and took her to the same location that her ancestors were burned a hundred years ago. So Emily died on the site of the massacre too." With grabby hands, she clamored for the journal. "Does it say where?"

He yanked it out of her reach. "Nope." A beat. "You know this whole friendly, cooperative thing? I don't buy it."

Katherine put on her best innocent face. "I have no reason to lie to you Damon."

"Lies."

"I'm hungry." She announced a second later.

He snorted. "You're the unwanted house guest. Feed yourself."

Waiting until her footsteps were retreating down the hall, he sighed and dropped his head forward. It was beyond weird to be spending time with her again and to not feel anything other than extreme disdain. Once upon a time she'd been his reason for living and now he was contemplating suicide to get away from her. Had she always been so fucking irritating? Was it really necessary for her to tease
him on every aspect dealing with Bonnie? Did it bother her that he'd moved on or did she just like ruffling his feathers?

Honestly he had no idea. The Katherine he knew was nothing more than a beautiful figment of his imagination; something to hold onto while he waited for the comet to pass so that he could open the tomb. This girl was possibly the most horrible woman he'd ever met in his entire life…and he'd met a lot of people.

It was amusing to think that he was ashamed of loving her the most instead of the many other appalling things he'd done.

*I'm gonna need a serious shower later to scrub the bitch germs off me. Maybe I can convince Bonnie to get my hard to reach places if she's a little tipsy from her thing. God I miss her hard to reach places. Even the dream ones.*

Suddenly Katherine's voice rang out from the cellar. "Damon!"

Grunting, he forced himself to stand. "What now?"

~*~

*I feel...shiny.*

Resting her forehead against the cold brick of the Salvatore mansion, Bonnie swallowed and tried to make her legs work but everything was so heavy. It was like getting her powers back filled her up to the brim; made it hard to function. In the back of her mind she was sad that Luka and his father had to die because it was so...senseless. Jonas had pushed his son too hard and now they were both gone, leaving Greta at the mercy of Klaus. *We're all at the mercy of Klaus.*

*So powerless earlier. So human.*

*I couldn't help anyone with the fire. I couldn't get anyone to safety. They all could have died.*

Her thoughts were disjointed, like random puzzle pieces struggling to fit. And through the sideshow of images in her mind replaying over and over the events of earlier was the song Caroline had sung to Matt, like a poppy soundtrack or something.

*My head feels three sizes too big. Why am I here again?*

Rubbing her big green eyes, she pushed on the door and slowly walked inside. Her feet moved on their own volition as she ascended the stairs towards Damon's room. She just needed to see him. To touch him and smell his skin that wasn't dusted with smoke. *It's like I'm high or something. Everything is dancing.*

She reached his room and leaned against the threshold, blinking slowly at the scene of a half dressed Katherine crawling up to him like a big pampered cat. *She fooled me. I thought she was Elena but she isn't. I don't really know who she is.*

"You were mean, and very rough. And monstrous." She was saying. "I like this Damon."

Damon pushed springy curls from the female vampire's face. "Katherine, there are six other bedrooms in this house. Go find one." He shoved her roughly away from him and continued leafing through his book.

Shocked and probably just a teensy bit hurt, Katherine huffed and climbed off the bed. She shook her
head and strolled to the door, fixing Bonnie with a furtive expression. "He's all yours."

The witch chuckled softly and walked past her. "I know." She hopped onto the bed, minding all of the leather bound journals and smiled. "Hey."

"Hello to you too." Dropping his reading material, he returned her smile. "You okay? I heard about the fire, and I knew about Katherine's plan for daddy dearest."

Flexing her fingers, she slid her palm up his toned stomach to his chest, her nails scratching at the fabric of his black shirt. The lights flickered on and off and she shivered, drawing in a refreshing breath. "Jonas gave me my powers back before Katherine ate him. He kinda showed me how to kill Klaus but it's fuzzy. Maybe I dreamed it."

"Nice to see at least one thing went right tonight. " He tilted his head to the side. "Again though, you okay? You look kinda…stoned."

"You feel nice." Her fingers traced across his lips and along his nose. "I think—I'm just a little foggy. It was a real rush when he zapped me. It's like my cells are settling."

Damon snorted and shifted against his large pillows. "Glad you thought to let them come settle here."

She giggled and shrugged out of her jacket. "Jeremy wanted me to stay with him. He likes me ya know?" Her eyes were slightly dazed as she looked at him. "Maybe more than you."

"Not if he knows what's good for him." Smirking, he tugged on the bottom of her shirt playfully.

Slipping closer, she placed a hand on either side of his shoulders and leaned down. "Damon…" Her voice was low, whispery, and needy. "Show me how much you like me."

His lips twitched but his expression was playful. "Don't do this to me. I've been such a good boy where your virginity is concerned…"

Bonnie laughed. "I'm not that 'stoned'. But I feel…light. And tomorrow I'll wake up and remember why we broke up and it'll be gone." Pouting, she dropped down onto his chest and nuzzled his throat, kissing his Adam's apple. "Can't we just…pretend that we're both dreaming for a while?"

"And what happens when we wake up? You explode my brains for molesting you?"

"I wouldn't do that to you."

Damon's brows narrowed but he eased her into a sitting position gently so that she was straddling him. He tucked her hair behind her ears and searched her face with his cool blue eyes before brushing his lips across hers. She shuddered, attempting to press for more but he pulled back.

"Ask me again when you're all you. Ask me then how much I like you and I'll prove it to you for hours until you have no doubts." He winked.

Good guy. Sweet guy. Sometimes. "Okay. Can I try something though?" At his nod, she stuck her hands under his shirt to touch chilly flesh and closed her eyes, swaying more into his space.

A ripple of electric pleasure shocked them both and he gasped, grabbing her sides to steady her. Her lashes fluttered as she pushed heat into him, warming him up from head to toe, making his chest rise and fall more quickly. And then she was exploring that which made him Damon Salvatore; poking and prodding lightly until the magic embedded in his pores reached out for her like a lover seeking a soothing caress.
It was a heady experience, something that couldn't exactly be put into words. The vampire part of him responded to the witch in her, two supernatural beings twisting together like the stripes on a candy cane.

Damon surged up until they're pressed together, his arms winding around her petite waist. "What... is this?"

"Me finding you." She whispered, panting lightly. Small beads of sweat formed at her hairline. "The darkness, the light, the humanity—I can feel it all. It's beautiful. You're beautiful."

"Feels like you're inside me, which is very kinky but surprisingly pleasant." He licked a wet line over her pulse point, feeling it jump rapidly.

She purred and the two halves of his window blew open, sending the curtains flapping to the floor as a warm breeze swirled into the room, catching on their hair and anything that wasn't nailed down. The pages of the journals flipped, the light bulbs threatened to circuit out and the lovely paintings in their ornate frames rocked from side to side on the walls.

"Damon..." She murmured. "I'm sleepy."

He laughed, the impressive display of witchy juju slowly dying down. "C'mon I think you deserve a nap after your adventure today. We'll talk more later." Easily he manhandled her to his left side, wrapping his arm around her shoulders.

She cuddled up to him, her leg between his and her arm across his chest. She tucked her face into the hollow of his neck and sighed, her nose dragging along his striking jaw line. "I'm sorry."

"For what?" He inquired, rubbing the back of her neck with one hand while the other picked up the diary he'd been reading.

Bonnie closed her eyes, feeling sleep overtaking her. "Tomorrow. If I—if I'm all difficult and stuff." He smells amazing. I never wanna leave this spot. Why do I have to again?

His lips brushed her hair. "Go to sleep, Bonnie."

So she did.

~Fin~
Chapter 31

Chapter Summary

Decisions, decisions; they are never easy.

Heads Or Tails

The remnants of what used to be the Grille were charred black and still smoky in a few places with tumbling ashes floating over the sidewalk like gray snow whenever a breeze stirred up in the area. Even though the fire department had managed to save a few walls, it was obvious the place would have to be torn down and perhaps built all over again. It was odd to drive down the street and pass nothing but a burnt fossil of a building that everyone had hung out inside at one point of another.

Sitting on a small park bench, Bonnie ran a hand through her black curls as she chewed on her bottom lip. Her thoughts were orbiting one central subject; Damon Salvatore. Even though it hadn't been that long it was odd to think of a period in her life when she didn't know Damon. When he wasn't annoying her or saving her from the dangers of kiss-less nights. And yet sometimes she felt as if she didn't know him at all—which he would say is a total lie. That she knows him better than anyone else. Still he always managed to surprise her when she least expected it.

Like not even making out with me when I was hopped up on magic.

Waking up in his bed as the sun shined through his window practically on top of him had been amusing and slightly mortifying but she'd managed. He'd taken the whole encounter in stride and disappeared to make her breakfast. It was almost a shame that he could be so good when he wanted to be because then it would be that much worst when he was bad.

However she wasn't focusing on any of that though feeling him hard and warm underneath her put certain ideas into her brain that she did not want to deal with. How can the best and worst place in the world be in his arms? It would just cause more un-needed complications to an already complicated situation.

Right now she was thinking about her conversation with Elena concerning their bond. The spell to renew it wasn't that tricky and she was confident she could do it, but she didn't know if she wanted to or not. Was it worth the heartache she might come to feel later on? His feelings for her best friend were still there; possibly forever. So why should she put herself back into the frying pan?

Interesting analogy since obviously I never left the fire. I try to stay away from him and I just...can't. It's like some unknown force keeps shoving us together no matter what I do. If it turns out he's my soul mate I'm gonna kick destiny in the face.

It was highly possible that she just considered him to be familiar but she had a feeling it was more than that. The scariest thing however was believing that he considered her to be more than the one that got away or uncharted territory. The one thing she knew about him was that when he was truly in love, he would do whatever it took for the object of his affections. It was intense... maybe too intense.

Yet Elena had been wrong about one point. Damon had her back no matter what either way; even if
she never reconnected them. It was comforting to know actually.

Dry leaves crackled softly as footsteps made their way over to her. When she glanced up she discovered Stefan Salvatore smiling down at her before he joined her on the bench. Her relationship with him had always been somewhat friendly though she wasn't sure why. He just had that way about him.

"Hey." He said, still smiling. "You look very deep in thought."

She nodded and pulled her sleeves down over her knuckles. "I really am but I don't want to burden you with my issues. I know you have a lot on your plate."

He chuckled softly. "What's up?"

Looking at him, she narrowed her brows. "You've known Damon your entire life and there was a long period where you wanted nothing to do with him. Would you say your relationship is better now?"

Stefan placed his hands in his lap. "Yes. However much Damon claimed to hate me, I don't know if I honestly believe he actually ever did. He could have just killed me anytime he wanted because he's always been stronger thanks to human blood. Or he could have let me die when I was in danger… but he didn't. I think he was very, very upset with me but we're family, and deep down he never forgot that."

She nodded again. "Does he care about me the way he cared about Katherine?"

He tilted his head. "No. What he feels for you is inherently different than what he felt for Katherine. With you it's about mutual respect and the fact that you don't bow to his whims. With her it was about passion and the threat of peril."

Bonnie snorted. "Great. I can't compete with that."

He grinned slowly. "That's not what I meant. You make my brother crazy to be honest. And besides with you it's real. There are no games or compulsion or lies. He wants you and you want him."

*Isn't that half of the problem?* "Do you think it's real? His feelings for me I mean."

"Yes." He replied without hesitation. "I do."

"You're probably wondering what's with all the twenty questions." Off his look, she continued. "I—I'm considering doing the spell to link us again…"

His brows eased up towards his hairline. "I think that would be a good idea."

*Naturally. *"For my safety?"

"And for Damon's. And because I know you miss it; so does he." He revealed. "I know you have your reasons for removing it and I could probably guess what they are, but my brother has only loved two women in his entire life. But only one loved him back and trust me, he's not taking that lightly. I'm not saying you should forgive his indiscretions but it's totally possibly to be connected to someone and mad at them at the same time."

She laughed lightly. "Very true. I'll give it some more thought though."

"Good." He squeezed her knee. "So Elena called me this morning—Isobel is back in town."
Yikes. Just what we need. More vampires. "That can't be good."

He shook his head. "Right. So you should be careful. I doubt she'll come after you but with her and Katherine in town one can never be too sure. They have an angle and I want to find out what it is."

Is there anyone in this town who doesn't possibly mean us harm? "I'll be careful. And thanks for listening to me."

"Anytime." Taking his phone out of his pocket, he nodded and stood before walking away.

The lie she could tell herself over and over again was that she would be re-linking with Damon for their joint safety and nothing else. Of course that was just the smoke screen she would hide behind to keep her heart safe. Truth of the matter was she missed their bond probably as much as he did. She missed him even though she couldn't shake being angry at him. But…couples fought all the time. That's how it was.

He loves Elena. You heard him say so. Set him on fire!

Good points.

But he's not focusing on getting her to love him back. He's not giving her puppy dog eyes or going to her with his serious issues. Now you can go over the pros and cons until you're blue in the face but you already know what you wanna do. Flip the coin for heads or tails and make a move.

It was time to talk to Damon.

~*~

Elena Gilbert exhaled deeply and made her way into the Salvatore home, hoping beyond hope that Katherine was out doing whatever she did so that she could talk to Damon in peace. She was nervous but she knew this had to be done. She knew she had to set the record straight because she loved Bonnie and she didn't like to see her in pain. And as weird as it looked from the outside, Bonnie and Damon were actually kinda sweet together. It was also amusing to think such a little chick could rein in someone with such a big personality like Damon.

She was going to be honest with herself and admit that yes, Damon was handsome and she'd had fun with him in Georgia but she didn't love him. She wasn't in love with him and she never would be. He could be sweet and he wasn't a jerk with her—most times anyway—but he didn't have that spark that Stefan had. When she looked into his eyes—no matter what he said—she didn't see love. She saw regret and friendship and a misplaced loyalty because of her appearance.

After all, she looked exactly like Katherine but she wasn't Katherine. She could get how that could be tempting considering the circumstances.

Glancing around with her big soulful brown eyes, she made her way into the living room and dragged her fingers over a stack of journals someone had left on the table. "Hello? Damon?"

The man of the moment strolled out of the kitchen with a towel over his shoulder. "Elena. To what do I owe this honor? My baby brother isn't here…"

She nodded slowly. "Yeah I know he's with Alaric. Isobel showed up at my house last night and Jenna is three shades of confused. But surprisingly enough I'm not here to talk about my vampire mother."
He canted his head to the side. "What are you here to talk about then? I'd think Isobel being back in
town—while Katherine and John are here no less—would be a top priority. Naturally whatever they
come up with won't be good."

Sighing, she sat down on the couch. "I know. I just don't want to deal with any of that right now.
Besides I know the drill. My so-called parents are just trying to protect me because I can't make
decisions for myself. I'd love to know where all of this concern was when they were giving me away
but whatever." She rubbed her palms on her jean clad knees. "I wanna talk about Bonnie."

From his expression she could tell he didn't wanna talk about Bonnie. "What about her? I know she
wants her powers back."

"And what would that be?" He inquired, ever stoic.

"Me." She said. "She said you had feelings for me and lied about them."

Damon's jaw flexed. "I didn't lie...I just omitted the truth a little."

Frowning, she shook her head. "Damon, I—I consider you to be a good friend. I know we've had
our disagreements in the not so distant past but you've also been there for me. Protected me and put
yourself in danger to make sure I was okay. And I appreciate it I really do, but I love Stefan. He—
I'm sorry if I did anything to lead you on. I realize that coming to you with my problems when I
couldn't go to him was selfish." A beat. "I just honestly had no idea I was screwing things up for you
and Bonnie like that. If I'd thought for a second I was I'd have backed off."

Folding his arms over his chest, he rocked on his heels. "Why are you telling me all of this?
I'm very aware of your feelings for Stefan."

Standing, she faced him. "This isn't about Stefan. This is about you and Bonnie. You're losing her
and I don't think that is what you want. She's—we've been friends for longer than I can even
remember and it upsets me that she's in pain. That she's doing all she can to keep me safe while I'm
the apparent cause of her grief. So now I'm returning the favor."

He snorted. "Bonnie can take care of herself."

Elena didn't appear too sure. "Yeah she's strong and amazing, but you don't know her like I do. She's
good at hiding what she's really feeling so that she won't alienate others. Like how sad she used to
get when my mom and I would do stuff because she didn't have a mom. Or how she'd always be
game to help me with outfits for my dates with Matt, but I could still tell she felt left out because she
didn't have a boyfriend. She doesn't like to see people hurt so she hides her own."

The handsome vampire meandered over to the table of alcohol. "I'm past the point where hurting
people is fun. Well okay that's not true but I'm past the point where hurting Bonnie would be fun. If
things had went the way I planned she would have never knew about my...thing for you."

"Right cause lying to her is so much better." She rolled her eyes. "You know she's basically perfect
for you, right? And considering how she stuck by you with the whole tomb thing, and is still hanging
around even now, maybe you should show her more respect. Stop chasing a dream, Damon. Reality
is so much better."

Smiling, she headed for the door.

"Hey." He called out and she turned. "Whatever happens with Klaus, I'm gonna make sure Bonnie is
okay."

Elena grinned at him. "I know you will." Waving, she stepped outside and closed the door behind her.

~*~

As Damon lounged on his bed an hour after Elena's saintly visit, there were several thoughts looping through his mind as he scanned another one of the Gilbert journals.

*Jonathan Gilbert had horrible penmanship.*

*The more Elena hangs around my brother, the more he rubs off on her. That little speech was vintage Stefan.*

*I can smell Bonnie all over my sheets. It's like a cruel joke by the perfume company to make me slightly aroused at an inopportune moment while reading about dead witches and mystical energy.*

*Stefan has lecture face.*

"Shouldn't you be consoling the fair Elena now that her mother is back in town?" He asked without looking up from the book in his hand.

Stefan smirked from his position against the threshold. "We're working on our strategy to get her and John out of town. However she thought it would be best if she questioned them without me…"

"Hm." Damon murmured. "Fascinating."

"Actually…I thought we could talk for a moment." He ventured more into the room.

*Yes because I do so love our talks. "About what?"*

His little brother folded his arms over his chest, his trademark tell. "Bonnie. I saw her earlier."

A snort. "I often see her…because she lives in this town…and often needs to go out for food. And perfume. Your point?"

"You know you could stop with the smart alec routine for just once."

"Yeeeah but where would the fun in that be?"

"I just want to say that if you're not serious about her, then you should really think about backing off."

"What are you—"

"But if you are, then I think you should go after her."

"Exactly what do you think I've been doing all this time? Faking it?"

"No. I think you've been being Damon. I think you have been pretending like none of it matters and then getting upset when she acts accordingly. You need to remember the person you used to be—I know it's hard because it's been so many years—but that man is still in there somewhere. And I know how you honestly feel about Bonnie. I know you care about her, love her, want to be with her. You're just scared."
"Of what Dr. Stefan? What am I scared of?"

"What everyone is scared of...being hurt. Being rejected. Falling without someone there to catch us."

"Uh-huh."

Tapping his fingers on the soft coverlet, Stefan eyed his brother with scrutiny. "Okay. In the end you're going to do whatever you want because you always do, but I hope you at least take my words to heart. That whatever you've been looking for—for almost one hundred and fifty years now—Bonnie is it. If you've never believed anything I've said, believe that." Hitting his foot gently, he left the room.

Damon watched him go and then huffed, dropping the journal onto his stomach. He was tired of Stefan always trying to save him and make up for the evil shit he'd done back in the day. Honestly the Katherine deal wasn't his fault. Her not being in the tomb wasn't his fault. Hell her choosing him over Damon wasn't his fault either. Stefan acts like he's the older brother. If we survive Klaus maybe I'll take him out for a beer.

It was begrudgingly sweet that he wanted his big brother happy and so very Stefan to realize Bonnie Bennett was his way to that happiness. But it was a shaky road with them. When they were good they were awesome and when they were bad they were catastrophic. Perhaps that is just their way though. Two levels of extreme with sugary gooey goodness in the middle.

He wouldn't lie and say that he didn't miss her because obviously he did. He missed her judgy little face when he did something "horrible" and her bright smile when he surpassed her expectations. It was easy to say he wanted her back; it didn't erase the other shit however. And that is what she was focusing on...the other shit. At this point the only thing he could do was wear her down until she believed he was being truthful.

_I had to go and fall for a witch. The sick irony is that I can compel everyone but witches._

He smirked at his own thoughts. Bonnie is the one person he'd never try to compel anyway.

The doorbell downstairs chimed and he waited, figuring Stefan would answer it if he were still around. A few moments later a familiar perfume drifted up the stairs and he grinned, but quickly wiped it away before Bonnie's small knuckles rapped on his open door.

She smiled softly as he looked over, the purple of her sweater bringing out the color of her lovely skin. She looked gorgeous but then she always looked gorgeous. He could smell the cold air on her flesh, giving her cheeks a healthy dose of crimson. "Hey. You busy?"

He gestured to the bed. "Not for you. Still feeling groovy?"

She groaned but climbed up onto the edge. "No. Thankfully the flower child thing I had going on has run its' course."

Bright blue eyes danced with amusement as they scanned over her slowly. "That's a shame. I rather liked touchy-feely Bonnie. She petted me while she slept."

Bonnie snickered. "Kinda glad that's all you let me do. Thanks for that..."

"You thanked me earlier for not taking advantage of you." He pointed out. "I never would have."

"I know." Her voice was quiet. Pleased. "That's probably why I came here. You make me feel safe,
Damon. I knew you'd take care of me."

*Interesting I can cause that reaction among all the others I've caused since becoming a vampire.*

His brows knitted together but he said nothing. Sometimes he had no idea how to reply to the things she said to him, especially when they were so *naked*. He was used to games and flirty intrigue meant to keep him on his toes. Or outright brutality that was *supposed* to make him feel better because it was the *truth*.

Exhaling, Bonnie dragged her fingers through her hair. "I need to talk to you. And I know how much you *love* that sort of thing but I—I need you to be—I need to you hear me out. Okay?"

He nodded silently.

Nibbling on her bottom lip, she played with a fringe on her jeans to probably calm her nerves. "I—"

She tried again. "Everything is spiraling out of control. If it's not wolves attacking then it's Katherine with some *master plan* that we know nothing about, or an ancient vampire trying to kill us. Or witches overhauling every situation. This is nothing like what happened on *Founder's Day*. It's gonna be worse—so much worse and we need all the help we can get." Pause. "So for the good of staying alive and *helping* each other stay alive, I've been thinking about renewing our connection."

Damon blinked at her slowly, giving her his undivided attention. He could see through her; he knew it was more than *safety in numbers*. Of course it was! "Purely strategic?"

"...yeah." She shrugged. "I mean it's not like your feelings for Elena have changed. Right?"

He could hear the hopefulness in her tone that maybe—just maybe—they had. "I could so lie to you right now but... I have feelings for Elena but I don't need her. I *need* you." She turned her face away and he sat up, taking her chin in his hand. "I'm not a saint here, ya know? Actually I'm so far from a saint that it's possible I've circled sinner-hood three times over. But you're the one person who's stood by me anyway...besides Stefan and he has to because we're blood." A beat. "I'm not perfect and I fuck up, but yeah it would make me feel a *lot* better if I could know when you need me. And I'd feel safer with a hot witch watching my back."

A smile pulled up the corner's of her mouth. "True. Okay we'll see how it goes. How...*we* go. But one more declaration to my best friend and I'll remove *much more* than our bond."

*Ouch.* "Ten four. So does this mean we're a couple again?"

"I don't know yet. Let's make it through the next few weeks alive first." She explained.

"Fair enough. Am I gonna have to bite you again? For the spell?"

"No. It's all transferring energies and stuff. Though us touching is required."

"Good cause I *like* touching you." To emphasis his point he wrapped his arms around her waist and yanked her over onto him, burying his face against her neck.

The pretty witch laughed and pried herself from his embrace but lay out beside him. She picked up a diary and flipped through it. "Have these been any help?"

Fearing that Katherine might be slinking around, he nodded but replied, "Not really. We haven't been able to find the witch burning ground that Elijah was looking for."

"Ah. Well that's too bad." She winked to let him know she understood. "Want me to help you keep
"If you want." He replied nonchalantly. "Though you should be honest and just admit you wanna lay here with me because I'm so sexy."

She hit his chest lightly with her open palm. "Shut up and research."

He kissed her temple and tried to do just that.

~*~

The rain was pouring down by the time Bonnie left the Salvatore mansion from a freak storm cloud that had come out of nowhere. Her wipers were on full blast but she could see pretty well thanks to her 20/20 vision. In a way she felt as if nothing were solved when it came to Damon, but she knew these things didn't just happen overnight. She believed him when he said that he needed her and if she were being honest, she had a small inkling that whatever he was feeling for Elena was slowly dissipating. Like it'd done for Katherine.

Though she helped that along by being a total bitch. I don't see why Elena isn't helping it along by being totally devoted to Stefan. Maybe it is…

Her nimble fingers reached for her stereo and she fiddled around with the dials until she found a station she liked. Idly she reflected on whether it was the right decision to renew the link. It felt right but sometimes she could be a horrible judge of situations. Removing it had been a way to prove to Damon that she was serious about them being over and he appeared to get the message. Didn't it make sense to put it back into place now so that if something bad happened, he'd know where she was? Perhaps even see it before it happened? Didn't some people deserve a second chance to make amends?

It's not like we're this normal boy and girl who exist under normal circumstance. So it's either put it back into place or just never do it.

"Ugh why am I stressing this so hard?" She wondered aloud. "Connecting us doesn't mean I have to drop to my knees and service him."

That particular thought made her flush beet red and giggled. Someday she did hope to have a hot and heady sexual relationship with Damon. It was weird because she was so good at rebuffing him and acting unaffected like it was simple but it wasn't. She lusted for Damon Salvatore in a way she'd never lusted for anyone before. It was just easier to pretend otherwise to worry him. And well being a girl she could hide it better.

She was so lost in her thoughts that she didn't notice the figures in the road until she was slamming on brakes to keep from hitting them. It was a man and a woman, soaked completely through, standing in the middle of the road as if they didn't have a care in the world. She swallowed hard and cracked her window, not wanting to drive by if they needed help.

"Are you guys okay?" She yelled out when the female came around to her side. "Did your car break down or something?"

The female—a pretty red head—smirked. "Actually no. We were on our way out of town when William got hungry. Guess this is our lucky day."

Before Bonnie could ask what she was talking about, she shoved against the door hard; so hard that the car skidded violently on the wet road over into the large ditch, tilting completely onto its' right side. Bonnie screamed as her seatbelt snapped and she was thrown against the passenger window,
hitting it roughly, enough to open a small gash on her forehead. Her purse tumbled down on top of her and she fumbled inside of it, pulling out her cell phone.

She pressed speed dial four and Damon's voice flowed over the line a second later. "Hello?"

"Damon!" She shouted. "I—I'm being—there are vampires!"

"Where are you?" He inquired quickly.

"Um a—about a mile from your house." She said. "They pushed the car into the ditch and—" She screamed as an alabaster fist slammed into her window, sending glass flying. The door was wrenched off its' hinges and tossed into the field.

"Like shooting fish in a barrel." Red chuckled and latched onto the witch's ankle, tugging her unceremoniously out of the vehicle and onto the cold, wet cement.

Bonnie's back gave a deep twinge but she forced herself up, gasping as she was drenched with cool liquid. Red's companion lunged at her and she focused on him—inside of his brain—watching as he groaned and grabbed his head, sinking to the road.

"William!" Red cried. "What are you doing to—" Guttural noises escaped her lips and she slowly looked down, reaching for the thick wooden stake shooting out of her chest.

"Word of advice, never try to eat something that doesn't belong to you." Damon peered around so that she could get a good look at his face before she petrified and dropped dead.

"Candace!" William screeched.

Damon was on him in a minute, slamming him back onto the rain soaked road. "Ah yeah, sorry about that. But you and your girlfriend should know Mystic Falls isn't the vampire club party it used to be. Not to mention my witch isn't on the buffet."

"Fuck you!" The other man sneered.

"Sorry but you're not my type." Smirking, Damon drove the stake deep into his heart and kicked him afterwards for good measure. "You okay?"

Bonnie wiped a hand across her face. "Yeah. This would only happen to me or Elena huh?"

He chuckled and pulled her closer, gently running his thumb over the cut on her forehead. "I'm just glad you called me and didn't try to play Xena, Warrior Princess."

She shrugged, wincing lightly and just stared at him. Droplets of clear water ran down the sides of his face, mixing with his long lashes before chasing each other down his nose. Strands of hair were matted to his forehead and curling around his ears; only Damon could make being wet so sexy. "Thank you for coming to my rescue."

Hmimg in response, he glanced to her car before scooping her up into his arms. It seemed as if one minute they were in the rain in the middle of the street and the next they were in his room where warmth was seeping through her clothes and making her shiver. He broke away and returned with a towel, draping it across her shaking shoulders.

Damon stripped off his jacket and shirt while he talked. "I'll get you something dry to slip into and call a tow truck for your car. Wouldn't want someone to think you got thrown into the woods and stage a man hunt."
Oh, right! They'd think I had a serious accident. Man they ruined my car! Growling, she lifted the wet hair off her neck and watched a shirtless Damon root through his clothes to find something suitable for her. She smiled at the way fate kept throwing them together even though most times it annoyed her. Still she supposed it didn't matter as long as he continued to be there for her when she needed him.

Like tonight. "Can you get me some candles?"

"Fireplace would warm you up better." The vampire mused, lifting out one of the only white t-shirts that he owned. "Not as good as me but…"

She snorted. "It's not to get warm, duh. They're for the binding spell."

Damon advanced on her so quickly that she didn't feel her feet move until they were hitting the wall behind her. His body stole what little heat hers had as he pressed close and kissed her. She seriously considered pushing him away but then decided she'd earned this. That didn't exactly make sense but his teeth were biting her bottom lip and his tongue was painting the colors of the rainbow. Focusing on anything else wasn't needed until later.

~Fin~
Pulse

Chapter Summary

It's the thump, thump, thump that really matters. You'll miss it when it goes away.

Chapter Notes

This bit tags episodes 2.17 (Know Thy Enemy) and 2.18 (The Last Dance).

Pulse

Damon’s bathroom was modern extravagance mixed with old world charm that was expected from people born into money. Bonnie wasn’t exactly sure how the Salvatores went about paying for all of the things that they have, but she assumed Zach must have had cash and as his relatives it diverted to them when he…died. Either way the room was brightly lit and smelled a mix of Damon’s preferred cologne and body wash. A small bowl of marble soaps rested on the granite counter and she found herself amused by them, wondering if the vampire himself purchased them from Bed, Bath & Beyond.

Looking at her reflection in one of the square bronze mirrors, she exhaled deeply and clutched at the fluffy white robe she wore. The room was warm and surrounded by candles; their flames a dancing sway to the music drifting from the expensive stereo. While she would have been content simply doing the spell in the living room in front of the fire place, Damon thought it should be more romantic with the candles.

Should have known it was just a way to keep me naked.

She chuckled softly at her own thoughts and turned, staring at the white bathtub. "Just because I agreed to do this doesn’t mean you get to see anything."

Damon laughed as he checked the temperature of the water. "Bonnie, you forget I’ve already seen everything." He dropped a blue sponge into the mass of bubbles and turned down the lights before invading her space. "Every little…secret place you think this robe is hiding? I’ve seen it. Touched it. Tasted it."

She shivered at the tone of his voice; heat creeping up her neck. "In our dreams, maybe. But not in real life. Not face to face."

He nodded. "True. I'm sure as I've been told many times before that reality beats fantasy any day. If it'll make you feel better I promise to be the perfect gentleman."

Bonnie snickered. "We're gonna be naked in your tub together…I think you can see how I might not believe you."

Blue eyes danced with amusement. "Considering you have the power to turn me into a fish and then
let me wash down the drain, I think we're on the same page." He leaned in and nuzzled her throat, placing a delicate kiss behind her ear before whispering into it. "I won't touch you unless you want me to."

Swallowing audibly, she sighed and managed a coy smile even though she knew what he was implying. She wanted to tell him that she wouldn't ask that but at this point she wasn't sure. It was surreal to be so close to him again. To feel the chill of his smooth flesh or scratch her nails on his skin, watching marks fade before they were even really made. They used to dream in unison almost every night about making love. Vivid dreams with ultimate surround sound that more often than not left her twisted in her sheets in the mornings after with damp panties and an urge to finish something he'd started.

After weeks without so much as a tingle from him, she kinda felt the need to gorge herself on his presence. To let herself drown in everything that made him Damon Salvatore. It was naturally the grace of self control that had kept her from asking for something she wasn't ready for just yet after that earlier kiss. That and probably nerves at taking the final step in our relationship.

Pushing tendrils of black bouncy curls out of her face, she poked him in the chest. "Keep talking dirty and I won't even let you kiss me again."

"But you love it when I talk dirty." The vampire mused. "You get all red and squirmy when I say words like wet and tight and slick."

_Ooh boy_. She pushed away from him and strolled over to the tub. "Dirty birdy. Now close your eyes while I get into the water."

Slumping back to the counter all shirtless poise and cocky grin, Damon tilted his head at her. "Are you serious right now? C'mon Bonnie, don't be such a prude. I'll show you mine if you show me yours."

Laughing, she itched at her cheek. "You'll show me yours even if I _never_ show you mine." Pause. "And I'm not a prude! Tonight is about reconnecting with you in spirit and energy, not happy naked fun time. Besides…to be honest I don't want to get you all riled up and then not deliver."

His face took on a soft quality it hardly ever did, only when he was upset or honestly trying to be nice. "Don't worry about it, jugdy. Sometimes getting riled up is better than the finish."

Her expression was doubtful. "Really?"

"No." Grinning, he unbuckled his belt and pulled it off, tossing it to the floor. "But it's not like I'm gonna spontaneously combust from seeing you naked. Though what a way to go."

Bonnie giggled and fiddled with her robe, smoothing her hand over the soft fuzz of the fabric. _Why not bend the rules a little?_ Unlatching the belt, she opened the sides and dropped the material to expose the smooth expanse of her bare back. Damon grunted behind her and she bit the inside of her cheek, her whole body feeling pleasantly warm at the unequivocal fact that he _wanted_ her so powerfully. The candle flames fluttered and dimmed so completely that the room was barely lit at all.

_That_ was when she dropped the robe entirely and settled comfortably in the hot water.

"Tease!" Damon said as the candles righted themselves. "And yet, bravo." Winking, he undressed without a shred of self consciousness and climbed inside in front of her, tickled at the way she averted her gaze. "How are we ever gonna have sex if you can't see me naked?"

_Sex with clothes on? _"I can see you naked. I just choose to give you some respect."
He shrugged. "Don't bother. I'm old enough to not need it anymore."

Tugging her knees up to her chest, she rested her chin on them. *I'm naked in a tub with Damon Salvatore. There is a sentence I never thought I'd utter. I mean shouldn't I still be mad at him or something? "So um, are you sure you wanna do this?"

His brows narrowed and he reached under the mass of bubbles, grabbing her ankle and extending her leg until her heel rested on his chest where he proceeded to rub. "Yes. Having second thoughts?"

"No." She replied, trying to relax the best she could. *Aren't there pornos that start this way? Gah stop thinking about sex. Spell, you're here for a spell. "But I was serious about what I said. You make me regret this and—and you'll regret a lot too."

"Noted." He smiled mildly and kissed her toes. "What do I have to do?"

Waving a hand, she gripped the sides of ivory. "Nothing. Just keep touching me and I'll work the mojo."

"Maybe you should be closer. Last time I was feeding from you." In his usual way, he was able to make something relatively innocent sound completely filthy.

*Right so that this can turn into an episode of Red Shoe Diaries? And yet… Shifting slowly, she extracted her foot and edged closer, her knees bumping his thigh as he stretched out. For a moment she just looked at him. His hair was still damp from the rain, and now soapy suds stuck to his shoulders and biceps. He flashed her a crooked grin and she snorted but returned it with one of her own.

Putting her hands on his chest—one over his heart—she began to focus. In her mind she said the words of the spell over and over again; *Evinxi abs cruorem, evinxi per morsus. Sigillum, iunctus insquequo mors mortis* until the candle flames doubled in size, reaching up for the ceiling. The water in the tub started to boil but without the sweltering heat that would have scalded their skin. At first she felt nothing and considered the fact she'd somehow made a mistake. And then she noticed that Damon was staring at her intensely, more so than usual; his normally ice blue eyes reddish black with blood lust.

"Blood." She whispered. Apparently it was needed. "Go ahead. I—I trust you."

It wasn't hard to remember the first time he'd ever bit her because it was the beginning of their whole entire thing. The piercing sting of his teeth driving down into her flesh was something she hoped to never feel again. Yet it had been different every time after, none more so than right now. His lips were soft and velvet as they flowed down along her neck, stopping to suck a red bruise against her jumping pulse. The thumb of his right hand grazed across her chin so that he could cup her cheek, hold her steady and sink his fangs past skin to the vein below.

In the woods she'd been too scared and out of it to recognize the moment their bond solidified but tonight was a different story. It was warmth and shadow wrapping themselves around her like a blanket, burrowing into her pores. The magic filled her blood to the brim and he swallowed it down—swallowed her down until there was no possible way they weren't connected.

Damon pulled away with a gentle grin and licked his lips, staring with gazed eyes at nothing in particular. "It worked."

She nodded slowly, feeling light-headed. "Yeah…"

Blinking, he ripped into his wrist and offered it to her. "Make ya peppy."
This should be weird. It is weird but at the same time, it's not. That is why she could bring it to her lips and feel herself being healed without thoughts of ew or what am I doing?

"So we're back to being all in each others' heads?" He inquired when she was done.

Making a face at the metallic taste, she nodded again. "Yeah. It might take a few days like last time but things are back to…normal. Normal for us anyway."

Grinning, he wrapped his arms around her waist and flipped her expertly into his lap, her back to his chest. Her squeak of surprised made him grin harder, and he picked the sponge out of the water to run it across her bloodstained shoulder. "Good."

His…is against my back. I can't wait to tell Elena this! She's gonna call me a slut again. Exhaling, Bonnie let her limbs go loose and plucked at the bubbles. "Damon?" At his hm she continued. "Do you ever think about the future?"

The handsome vampire peeped at the side of her pretty face. "Like about Klaus or in general?"

Well him too…"I mean our future. Elena looks into the future and she sees herself with Stefan no matter what. Caroline looks and she's uncertain because she doesn't know how Matt will react to the fact that she's a vampire. What do you see?"

He rested his chin to the top of her head. "We're rich and sexy forever. I mean, I suppose as long as you can stand me I'll stick around." He winked. "But our life won't be the white picket fence with the two point five children."

Her voice was peaceful. "I know. I don't think I've ever really wanted that anyway. I mean kids yes but it's been kinda hard to see myself married without the proper role models to feed into that desire. At most I just wanted someone who'd love me."

Strong arms wrapped around her chest, above her breasts, and a kiss was planted to her cheek. "I love you."

Smirking, she bit her bottom lip. "So, you'd marry me and gimme babies?"

He snorted. "Marry…maybe when you're thirty. Or ninety. Babies? No can do unless you know something I don't know…" Pause. "Which you probably do since you're a witch. How about this? We're together now and for the foreseeable future."

I can live with that. "Okay. Not like we don't have to first live in sin and then get engaged…" She laughed as his fingers dug into her sides, effectively tickling her and derailing her train of thought. "Stop it! You're making me get the floor wet!"

"We can start with the floor then."

"So dirty. Is your mind always in the gutter?"

"No. But you're a hot naked girl who's in my lap. If it wasn't in the gutter I'd seriously be questioning my sexuality."

"You're almost one hundred and fifty years old. Pretty sure you've did that at least once already."

"Well there was that one time in Vienna."

Bonnie chuckled and kissed his chin. "Shut up and…tell me about one of the places you've been.
One of the eras you've lived through. We got all night you know…"

~*~

Good moods were rare for Damon because a lot got on his nerves, but he was happy the next day. Maybe it had something to do with waking up with Bonnie sprawled across his chest and mumbling for eggs, or just the fact that they were bonded again. He didn't feel any different yet but just knowing that it would happen already had him anticipating sharing dreams and experiencing her like before.

In fact he was so stoked to experience her that he was finding it hard to concentrate on the tasks at hand. Honestly it was hard being as sexy as he was with so many pretty ladies around and not get laid. He wasn't sure why he was letting Bonnie give him a serious case of blue balls but, well, okay so sex was awesome and felt amazing. Really amazing. But he figured it would feel ten times amazing with Bonnie and if he slept with someone else she'd see it as cheating and then he'd never get in her panties. So he was basically holding out with the expectation that once he got some, it would make up for all the days spent not getting any.

It was also tricky to think about fucking when a giant douche-nozzle of a master vampire was due into town at any minute to kill everyone. Yet somehow I manage.

So after going with Bonnie and Jeremy—why he's tagging along on our outings today I don't know—to the Martins' and finding the book that Bonnie needed to channel her witchy juju, he found himself burying Luka's body at her request and then meeting them in the woods. Jeremy had a few questions about their destination, like an eager kid on a field trip rather than a kick ass vampire hunter like he was pretending to be. But Damon was forthcoming; admitting that the only reason he knew about the witch burning grounds was because he'd tried to save Emily so that she could help him get Katherine back one day.

Seconds later they were standing before a large white dilapidated mansion with peeling paint and moss overgrowth at the boarded up, broken windows. An odd tingling sensation throbbed at the back of his head and he frowned but grabbed Bonnie's hand and trekked across the yard to the front door. It swung open after he turned the knob and he strolled inside, his nostrils burning at the scents of dust and decay.

"We could make this our summer home. What do you think?" He joked, motioning with his hand.

"I think all the Mr. Clean in the world wouldn't be enough to get me to live here." The witch fanned away a bug. "But I'll bet it was beautiful back in the day."

"That it was." He snickered when Jeremy jerked, spooked by a loose floorboard. Smooth move, slick.

Damon ventured over to a window and peered out. "So..." He went to say more but found that he suddenly couldn't move. Great. "Whatever witchy prank you're playing, don't cause it's not funny."

Bonnie looked very amused. "I'm not doing anything."

Shit. I figured that."I can't move." He winced when the beam of sunlight he was standing in began to burn the skin off his face. "Ow...my ring's not working. Do something."

Hilarity gone, Bonnie focused and a minute later he was able to stagger away from whatever was holding him hostage. "Fuck. And here I thought dating a witch would pull the stick from up their ghostly asses."
Smoothing her palm along his cheek, his girlfriend flashed him a sympathetic smile. "I don't think the witches like you being here."

He grunted. "Or maybe they're just pissed I had you in the tub last night."

"What?" Jeremy balked.

Blushing, Bonnie gave his hand a squeeze. "Why don't you just wait outside until we're done? I'll be fine. Jeremy's here…"

"Eh..."Okay but if you need me, yell. Ghosts be damned." Huffing, he stalked back outside and parked himself on the porch.

"Stupid spirits. Don't they know I'm trying to help their little great grand witch? Don't they know we're like in love or whatever? Chemically connected is as good as a common law marriage in the eyes of some people.

Sighing, he folded his arms over his chest and listened as they moved around inside of the manor. He was impatient and just ready to get home and get Bonnie semi nude again, and to especially get her away from Jeremy Gilbert. Okay so deep down he knew the teenager wasn't a threat but he didn't like the way he kept lingering around. It's like he was just waiting for him to fuck up so he could swoop in and make it all better for Bonnie. Like he's already tried to do several times.

Damon didn't wanna give the kid a reason—or anymore reasons—but playing by the straight and narrow had never been his strong suit. And yeah he realized that Jeremy wanting what was his was one motivation to not be a dick with Bonnie but what was he supposed to do? Give up? Roll over? Play dead?

"Heh.

Whatever twisted emotions he had inside for Elena didn't compare to his actual feelings for his little witch. Elena had Katherine's looks and a caring personality, but Bonnie had his energy and she was never scared to call him on his shit. He loved that she did that by the way. All her moxy and power and untapped sensually were just a few reasons why he couldn't leave her alone. The deeper ones… he didn't let himself go there a lot but he knew they existed. He loved her. Wanted her. Craved her. He didn't need to sing it from the rooftops. As long as she knew it things were good.

This time he was going to make sure she realized how important she was to him. And not just because he believed that she would in fact shrivel off his penis if he fucked her over again. In the end they needed each other because yeah he had Stefan, and she had Elena but who else did they have? Her dad was often AWOL and people couldn't stand him so…yeah.

Really hope I don't end up slapping Jeremy or something. Elena and Stefan would probably frown on that.

Checking his watch, he folded his arms over his chest. "Wanna hurry it up in there?" He could be putting the moves on her right now. Or trying. Ugh what is taking so long? He stepped up to the door only to have it slam in his face. "Screw you too. Emily. You do know I'm like basically your grandson in law now, right? No need to get petty because I couldn't pull you off a burning pyre."

Whispers floated out through the wood saying words like vampire, traitor, evil but he wasn't impressed or scared. His brows narrowed and he listened as they shifted, talking about some kinda warning that he couldn't make out. A chill ran down his spine as the voices got louder, all of them mingling together but they weren't meant for him anymore.
"Hope you're holding it together in there, judgy." He said to the light breeze. His skin was crawling from all of the supernatural energy suddenly in the air. Guess things are in full swing.

I should be in there.

The meaning behind that sentence was tripled when a scream echoed from inside the house. Bonnie. Kicking at the door and slamming his shoulder against it, he tried to force it open but it wouldn't budge. "Fuck, Emily let me in! I don't know what you're doing in there but if you hurt Bonnie I'll bring you back to life and set you on fire myself!"

The screams probably only lasted a few minutes but they were long enough for Damon to become worried. He was just about to try going through a window when the door opened and Jeremy emerged, carrying Bonnie in his arms.

"What the fuck happened in there?" He demanded, all but snatching her away from him.

Jeremy frowned. "I guess it hurt; the spirits helping or whatever."

"You guess?" He rolled his eyes and slowly stood the witch up, trailing his knuckles along the tear marks on her cheek. "Hey, you okay?"

"I did it." She murmured, swaying into him. "It was just a—a little overwhelming."

"I would never let anything happen to her." Jeremy said watching the two of them.

Strangely enough, Damon let the snarky reply on his tongue die for once. "I know. Thanks..." Turning his attention back to the her in question, he smiled. "Next time though, I'm coming with you. Screw the spirits."

She chuckled and wiped her eyes, the color coming back to her cheeks. "I'm okay, really."

"Are you going to tell them about the chanting?" Elena's little brother asked. "I couldn't really make out what they were saying but I'm pretty sure it was important."

"They were just telling me to be careful." She shrugged like it was nothing.

I know better than that however. "Right. Well we'll talk about that at home..."

"Damon..." She started but his cell phone rang.

"Hold that thought." Digging it out, he answered it with a cheery hello. "Liz? Yeah sure I can be there in a couple of minutes. Alright, bye." Hanging up, he wrapped an arm around Bonnie's waist. "C'mon. I gotta go to the Lockwoods but I'm taking you back to the manor first."

She smiled as if understanding some unspoken thing between them. "Go. Jeremy can take me. I promise not to run away with him while you're gone."

"Ha ha." He shot the boy in question a dirty look. "Fine. But watch out for Katherine and make sure you don't tell her what we've been doing. The less that bitch knows the better."

And then, just because he could, he tipped up her chin and kissed her passionately, sliding his tongue along the softness of her bottom lip. She melted against him like ice on a hot day, her fingers gripping his shirt for purchase as she returned his kiss with much enthusiasm. She tasted like candy and summertime and he quickly found himself ready to say fuck John Gilbert if it meant he could stay right where he was.
But naturally Bonnie had the clearer head. "Go. Before you get distracted."

He grumbled in response. "Too late." Pecking her mouth again, he smirked at Jeremy and walked off. "Behave yourselves!"

~*~

"Were you and Damon arguing last night?"

Bonnie met Elena's gaze and hunched her shoulders. "Not really. He just um—he thinks Jeremy has the hots for me."

Her friend smiled. "And he's jealous? Good."

That was a lie of course. Well not a lie because Jeremy did like her but that is not what she'd been sort of fighting with Damon about. After Elena returned safely from being kidnapped by Isobel and relating that she was now dead and Katherine gone missing, Bonnie had retreated to Damon's room content to never leave his bed again. But the small peace was short lived when he asked about the ghostly chants from earlier.

She'd explained that ultimately they were warnings that using too much power could kill her, which they already knew. And that logically it would take all of her power to defeat an original like Klaus. Hence the argument. They both knew she had to do it but he didn't want her to and she wasn't keen on the idea either, but how else was she supposed to keep Elena safe? Or the entire town for that matter.

"No fucken way are you going on a suicide mission." He'd snapped. "You're not playing a martyr here, that's Stefan's job. I won't watch you die."

"I have to do this Damon." She'd whispered, grabbing the sides of his face. "And we both know you'd never let me die."

He had clenched his jaw so tight afterwards that she'd worried he'd crack like stone. Of course they both grasped what she'd been implying. It was a screwed up situation but in the end they would both play their parts and try their damnest not to get killed in the process.

Step one to making everyone safer was turning over the Salvatore mansion to Elena so that no random vampires could walk in. Elena had already signed the papers and tested having her name on the deed—everything worked nicely. It wasn't a lot but it was a start. Being able to relax without having to worry about Klaus or anyone else barging in was a small victory but a victory nonetheless.

"So, you're totally gonna stay here with me, right?" The brunette asked. "It'll be like we have our own apartment and are roomies or something."

Bonnie smirked. "My dad would flip out if he knew but yeah. I don't think Damon would let me go home anyway." Pause. "I—I—we're bonded again."

Elena blinked. "That's great!"

"Yeah it is." She agreed. "After everything we've been through it feels nice to know soon we'll have that connection again."

Her best friend poked her shoulder. "As long as you two don't keep Stefan and I awake with loud obnoxious sex noises."
"Oh whatever! I should be telling you that." She laughed. "Damon and I are still…orbiting foreplay I guess you could say."

**That** got her undivided attention. "Just how far have you two gone?"

*And here comes the blushing.* "We took a bath night before last but besides that night in the woods, nothing else. Shit happened."

The other girl nodded. "Well you do whatever when you're ready."

Nibbling on the inside of her cheek, she sighed. "It's hard not to be ready when he's shirtless. I just hope I don't mess around and wait, and die without ever getting to have sex."

Elena frowned. "Do not say that! We're all gonna be fine and have lots of sex."

Chuckling, the witch shook her head. "Okay, okay. Just…don't say that so loud again. If he expects I'm near to cracking I'll never hear the end of it."

"Yeah. He really is a teenage boy that way."

"Sometimes it's hard to remember he's so old."

"We're jail bait and they don't care. Should we be worried?"

"Only if they start taking the engines out of our cars and sparkling in the sunlight."

Giggling, her best friend groaned and forced herself off the couch. "C'mon or we're gonna be late for school."

~*~

Climbing out of Damon's vintage car, Bonnie stared at him from over the hood. She understood that he had mixed feelings about letting her and Elena go to the 60's dance, but after Klaus' little barb about saving him the last dance, everyone had reluctantly decided it was a good time to hit him unaware. He didn't know that she had her powers back or that she was very strong. And all it took was throwing Damon across the room for Stefan and Elena to be convinced that she could take out the original.

Alaric had looked a little iffy however.

Damon was wearing leather pants but she couldn't drag her eyes away from the expanse of chest that he was showing. Pale as the moonlight with a dark necklace resting against it; all she wanted to do was press her face to it and pretend the world was a good place. Pretend all she had to worry about were exams and what to wear for prom.

"You're quiet." She said instead.

His face was blank when he acknowledged her. "Are we waiting for the others or what?"

Tucking her hair behind her ear, she stepped in front of him, red knee-high books clicking on the pavement. "I know you're mad at me and I don't blame you. But we have a chance to beat Klaus tonight. I thought you'd want me to take it."

He clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "I do. I just don't want you to die trying. And we both know it'll take all your power to kill him. What am I supposed to say to that? Good job dying?"
She took his hands and entwined their fingers. "There is a chance I'll make it; even I can't tell the future. But if I die at least it'll mean something. I know I wasn't given these powers to float feathers and light candles. I'm not going in there to sacrifice myself but if it comes to that then…"

The vampire frowned, giving her a brutal piercing look. "You can't die. I won't allow it."

Smiling, she squeezed his fingers. "I know. Damon, I don't wanna be a—"

"Well tough." He interrupted. "Life doesn't end because Klaus is dead. It begins."

"I love you."

"I love you too, but you're still not dying."

Cracking a grin, she traced his lips and then kissed him. "Elena, Stefan and Jeremy are here. C'mon."

Vampire witch. Witch vampire. Is there even such a thing?

She didn't want to be a vampire but she knew Damon. He'd pump her full of blood before he let her die and as odd as it sounded, she was warmed by it. However she didn't think she could handle it if it came to that. Caroline was doing okay and she had Stefan to help her, but Caroline was a different sort of person. She adapted easily to her surroundings. Would I be so lucky? Could I drink from a little bag or hunt bunnies in the woods? Would my powers still work?

The five-some moved on autopilot into the brightly decorated gym. The party committee had gone all out this time with streamers, balloons, even a bus covered in peace signs and other graffiti. Everyone was in costume and dancing, laughing and having the time of their lives under the shimmering disco ball.

It would almost be pretty if our moods weren't so ominous.

"And this next song goes out to Elena. From Klaus."

Okay…that just makes it worse.

"He's fucking with us." Damon snorted, not impressed. "We need to blend in."

Bonnie nodded. "Good idea. How do we do that?"

He took her hand. "Well we act like we're having a wonderful time." Before she could reply, he pulled her out onto the dance floor. Stefan and Elena took notice and joined in accordingly.

"I think Jeremy might ask me to dance later." This ought to change subjects. "You don't care, do you?"

Damon eyed her as their bodies rocked in unison to the music. "No I don't mind. But you're only feeding into his obsession."

She snickered. "I hardly think what he has could be classified as an obsession." "I don't know. You're easy to get obsessed about." He wiggled his brows. "I tried to fight it and look what happened to me."

"You had help though. Emily."

"Yeeah but it all worked out. We're back to where we're supposed to be. I think I would have wanted
you either way. You're so spunky."

"If I'd saw this side of you, I might have come to want you to."

"You're just saying that because my shirt is flashing so much skin."

He spun her away from him and back, his arm around her neck. He pressed against her from behind and slid his free hand along her waist, down to the hem of her short dress. They undulated like waves crashing against the shore and she pasted her hand over his, feeling his nails scratch against the skin of her thigh. Her body trembled lightly; God I'm gonna miss this if I die. Guess I should try really hard not to.

"You know, I think it's sweet how you're willing to lay it all on the line for Elena." He turned her to face him but kept their rhythm. "A little psychotic but sweet."

"Yeah well..." Her big green eyes jumped from face to face. "She'd do the same for me. We all have to look out for each other."

"She's gonna be pissed when she finds out." He responded.

"I know." Her voice was low. "But this is necessary."

Damon's face scrunched in disagreement but he didn't dwell. "I'd do it for you...if I could."

Wow..."You're a good man, Damon. You're stubborn and annoying and an asshole sometimes, but you're a good man when it counts. I'm glad you're on our side."

"Hey, have you guys seen Jeremy?" Elena inquired as she walked over. "I told him he needed to stay close but I can't find him anywhere. Stefan went to look for him but..."

"I'll go find my baby brother. Maybe find yours too." Smirking, Damon kissed Bonnie's hand and pushed his way through the crowd.

The brunette grinned and poked her best friend in the side. "I love how he's all Sir Lancelot with you. It's like he just flips a switch and becomes a whole different person."

The witch snorted playfully. "That's Damon. He has like ten faces and sometimes I get to see all of them."

Elena watched her for a moment, and then tugged her closer for a hug. "Thank you for—for what you're doing tonight. I don't remember if I ever said it but I—you're—well I care about you a lot, Bonnie."

Make me cry why don't you. "I care about you too. I meant it when I said we're like sisters. And if I can do anything to keep you safe, I'm gonna do it. I know you'd do the same for me."

Their hug lasted a few seconds longer, only interrupted by Alaric. "Guys, I think Klaus has Jeremy."

"What?" They said in unison.

He nodded. "C'mon, I'll show you where he is..."

~*~

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me.
The Carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality
(Emily Dickinson)

When you couldn't die you didn't exactly give death a lot of thought, at least Damon didn't. Why bother? Usually he was the biggest, baddest thing around so he didn't have to worry about death. About maggots eating his corpse or being put in the ground, never to be seen again. And to be honest after finding out that Klaus was possessing Alaric and that he wanted Bonnie dead, he figured the next thing to do was to give him what he wanted. Give Klaus Bonnie dead.

There hadn't been time to explain the hows and whys to Stefan or Elena. Even he didn't know how it would work. It wasn't until he walked into the room to find Elena sobbing and Bonnie dead that he realized the importance of the situation. And he'd had to put on his best performance ever and pretend it didn't matter. He could still see it so clearly in his mind—like a live action nightmare.

"I'll deal with the body." He said. "We don't need the Sheriff asking questions about anymore unexplained deaths."

"What do you mean 'deal with it'? This is Bonnie!" Elena shouted.

"Get her out of here so I can clean this up." He instructed.

The look his brother had given him; he'd seen it once before after killing Zach. It was a mix of revulsion and confusion.

Things had only gotten worse when he'd entered the manor to get a quick shower and grab some clothes. Elena confronted him and held nothing back, trembling in anger with tears of grief rolling down her cheeks.

"You knew—you knew didn't you? You knew that if she harnessed all that power that she would die. Didn't you?" She demanded.

"Yes. Yes I knew." He replied.

Her fury unleashed itself with a slap to his face so hard; it rocked his head on his shoulders. But she had not been done. There were things she needed to say—had to say.

"How could you let her do this! You said you loved her! That you'd keep her safe! Why are you acting like she's nothing!" She yelled, shoving at him. "Bonnie is dead and you—you threw her away like she was trash. It was all a lie, wasn't it? Just a—a way to mess with her mind. If you felt anything for her at all you'd be just as upset as I am but you're not. You never loved her. You don't know what love is."

Of course after he'd explained everything she'd felt horrible for her words and for slapping him. Even apologized about fifteen minutes later once everything sunk in and she saw Bonnie in the flesh with the help of Jeremy's computer.

Frowning, Damon took a deep breath and entered the darkened mansion, tightening his hand around his flashlight. He made his way downstairs into one of the more kept together rooms to find Bonnie and Jeremy talking; the place surrounded by candles.

"I um—I'll see you later then." Smiling, Jeremy stood and headed for the door.

"Thank you." Damon told him as he passed. "For taking care of her."
Younger Gilbert nodded and disappeared out of sight.

Bonnie took off her earrings. "You don't have to stay down here with me, ya know?"

He huffed. "Are you kidding me? Like I'd let you stay in a haunted house all by yourself. Let them do their worst."

She shook her head, kicking off her boots. "They won't hurt you Damon. I've made sure of that."

Sitting down beside her, he sighed. "Tonight was fucked up beyond belief. I mean I knew you weren't dead. I knew it was the plan but still...didn't like seeing you like that. Acting like it didn't matter to me at all."

Leaning over, she kissed his cheek. "I know it mattered. But hey, I'm okay. Klaus thinks I'm dead and we have the upper hand again."

Until when? "What about next time? What about when you need to really use all of your powers to stop him?"

Pause. "You'll be there to help. To either save Elena or me...if I can be saved at all."

He gazed at her and ran his fingers through her hair. "No matter what happens, I will always choose you."

Her lashes fluttered with fresh tears but she forced them away. Shifting on the scratchy blanket, she stretched out and pulled him down with her. Their lips met—a soft press that quickly turned into more. He poured his frustration and torture into it, letting her soothe him and feed on her relief and affection. Both hands tangled in his hair before one moved down, gliding across his shoulder and past his elbow to where his right hand rested at her waist. Very slowly she gripped it and dragged it between her thighs.

There was no need for words or explanations. Damon knew what she wanted, what she needed and he whole-heartedly agreed with her. They needed to touch each other, to just be close for the sake of being close. To experience something other than pain and death. He wanted to make sure that she was truly okay; that she was here and not lifeless in his trunk.

She was hot and slick beneath his fingertips, her eyes closed and her cheeks flushed. He felt as if he should probably be gentle with her, but he wasn't, exactly. He rubbed and twisted and pinched until her hips were bucking off the floor and her moans were bouncing off the walls. She didn't seem to mind the slightly rough treatment at all. She pushed towards him, clawed at him and held on like she never wanted to let him go.

"Damon...Damon..." Her voice was breathy, strained.

"I'm right here. I've got you, baby." He sucked a bruise under her jaw. Shuddered and grinded against her thigh, loving the friction it caused to his erection.

He wasn't sure whether it was magic or just being overly aroused, but when she came—chanting Damon oh God, Damon—over and over again, he followed suit a moment after. Grunting into her shoulder and resisting the urge to bite. Letting her heated skin warm his cool flesh and her fluttering muscles try to trap his fingers in place.

There was silence before she chuckled and began to rub the back of his neck. "Think Emily and the others enjoyed the show?"
Damon grinned, fixed her dress and kissed the swell of her breasts. "Nah. Emily didn't know how to have any fun."

She *hmm'd* and yawned. "We should get some sleep. Who knows what tomorrow will bring."

"Yeah." Reluctantly rolling away, he kicked out of his jeans and boxers, pulling on a clean pair of pajama bottoms. Bonnie cuddled up next to him and closed her eyes, most likely exhausted from her ordeal.

He watched her for a bit before pressing his fingers to the jumping pulse in her throat, leaving them there. Just to make sure.

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

Many don't believe in fate. Doubt however doesn't change it's course.

Chapter Notes

I had a slight difficult time with this installment. I tried to include certain parts of the episodes but then decided to just go AU. So Bamon goodness abounds. However it still fits into the realm of episodes 2.19 (Klaus), 2.20 (The Last Day) and 2.21 (The Sun Also Rises).

No Escape

The old mansion wasn't as scary to Bonnie Bennett now that she'd spent an entire night underneath its' roof. Maybe it was because Damon had stayed with her and kept her safe and warm, but the creaking walls and soft whispers drifted to the back of the mind instead of making the hairs on her arms stand on end. In a way everything trapped within the cool space was the legacy left to her—her heritage. She knew there was no need to be afraid but still…ghosts. One tended to freak out when something dead came back around.

Cuddled up on the soft sleeping bag and staring up at the ceiling with Damon's leather jacket spread across her midsection, she gazed at the moldy wood with calm green eyes and sighed. She wished that she could be with her friends right now, helping them figure out a way to stop Klaus but it was too dangerous. She needed to stay hidden so that he would be none the wiser come game time. She was secure in the notion that she could defeat him, but in reality she was terrified that she would in fact *die* trying. Being brave and standing up for her friends aside, she wanted to live too.

*But I have to do this. I have to protect Elena and the others because—because it's what Grams would do.*

She was pretty sure that her grandmother was quite proud of her and would say as much if she could. Bonnie had gone from a scatterbrain teenager who drunk too much at parties in the woods to a kick ass witch that stood up to evil forces twice her size. She didn't let her fear stop her from doing what was right. Though she wasn't stupid enough to think that Klaus would be the final threat to those she cared about. First Katherine had shown up to wreak havoc and then Klaus, naturally something *else* would follow. Their small town was a Mecca for the supernatural.

*And more evil than fluffy bunny. Isn't that always the way?*

Sighing, she rolled onto her side and ran her hand through a beam of fading sunlight that broke through a cracked board. The grimoires from the Martins' home were skewed around her, their pages crusted and dusty with knowledge but nothing so far that would really help the situation. And yet the simple words made her feel powerful. She'd learned a lot from Luka and his father, and she promised herself that she would never forget them. In the end they hadn't been evil people…just tied to their
circumstances. She understood what that felt like because of one Damon Salvatore.

Meeting him, nearly dying because of him was a memory she didn't dwell on anymore; it was pointless to really. Still on the odd moments when she did remember that night in the woods she frowned even now. How could such a violent act give birth to what they had now? It didn't make sense but nothing made any sense at this point. She was a witch and her best friend was a doppelganger made to break some stupid curse.

_It sounds like something from a television show. I wish it was because then I know we'd win._

Her fingers itched above her cell phone but she didn't pick it up. It was hard being dead! She couldn't even go outside or risk someone seeing her. She was completely isolated and it was not a feeling she liked. Bonnie was a social creature at heart and she liked to have her friends and family around her. But no one could chance coming to see her—except Damon—lest they lead Klaus or one of his minions to her. At this point she was _dying_ to hear some of Caroline's inane gossip.

The downstairs floorboards whined under the strain of someone's weight and she sat up, staring at the open doorway. It wasn't Damon—that much she knew even though their bond was not functioning yet. He would make himself known so that she wouldn't set him on fire thinking he was the enemy. Balling her hand into a fist just in case, she watched as a brown head popped around the corner.

Jeremy Gilbert flashed her a bright smile and she relaxed. "Hey. Hope I didn't scare you."

She shook her head. "Nah just, you know, didn't know who would be coming to see me."

He nodded and sat down beside her, digging into his backpack. "I thought I would come and keep you some company since Damon wasn't here."

She arched a brow. "How did you know he wasn't here?"

He shrugged, handing her a yellow snack cake. "I saw him with that Andy Starr while I was checking on Elena. What is he doing with her anyway?"

Taking the treat, she smirked. "Probably nothing good. He…well before I _died_ he used her to get to Elijah so that they could kill him. If he's with her now then he's probably got a _human_ job for her."

Jeremy bent his knees, resting his arms on them. "And you're okay with that?"

_Not exactly._ "I don't think he should be using her or putting her in danger, no. But if you mean do I mind him being with her, the answer is also no."

"How do you have so much faith in him?" He inquired. "I mean I get the whole 'spell' but he's—he's so _Damon_. He doesn't seem to have any of the qualities that Stefan does. Or that Anna did for that matter."

"I think a lot of people don't know the Damon I do. Except for maybe Elena…" She let that thought die. "He _wants_ to be seen as the asshole that doesn't give a shit because it's the only way he thinks he can protect himself. Not to mention he's fucked up over Katherine never loving him and spending all that time chasing after something that wasn't real. He's not perfect but then who of us is?"

"You seem pretty perfect." He grinned widely, all straight white teeth.

"Hah." She laughed. "Jeremy I am _far_ from perfect. I'm human just like you are."
"Mm no you're a beautiful witch that is willing to risk everything for the people she cares about." He said, twisting his ring on his finger. "That's pretty extraordinary."

"I don't know if I would be so quick to do it if I didn't have any powers." Honestly sometimes I wonder..."You and Alaric are the ones who are really extraordinary. You're both in this with us until the bitter end even though you don't have super speed or magic juju."

Jeremy fixed her with his puppy dog brown eyes. "Someone has to look out for you." Before she could reply, he continued. "I know I know—Damon. I don't think I'll ever really like him."

Bonnie chuckled softly. "Fair enough. Not many people do."

He poked her leg. "You do."

That I do. "Yeah but it didn't happen overnight. The spell linked us but it's what we did with it that mattered. I could have resisted and he could have ignored it, but we didn't. Truthfully I think for him it was more of a game at first; one that he wanted to win. For me it was the pull and the peel. Slicing back his layers until he was bare and I was looking at the man, not the vampire."

Running his fingers through his hair, he sighed. "You talk about him like you love him."

Her response was automatic. "I do."

"And he loves you?"

"I think he does."

"What about Andy or how he acts? Like you're his possession, not his girlfriend."

"Andy is a means to an end...as bad as it sounds to put it that way. And he gets jealous easily."

"Yeah. If I wasn't Elena's brother he'd probably have killed me already."

"Nah I wouldn't let him do that."

"You think you could stop him?"

"I can take Damon. No problem."

Smiling, Jeremy bumped her shoulder with his. "So what have you been doing all day?"

"Reading the grimories, trying to find something that might help us. So far no dice." She frowned deeply. "But I'm learning other stuff so I guess that helps too in a way."

"Would you mind if I thumbed through a few?" He asked, and she shook her head no.

In truth she didn't mind Jeremy hanging out with her. He was good company and it was nice to be kept up to date on what was going on. She wanted to call Damon and tell him to play nice with Andy but she didn't figure it was needed. He wouldn't hurt her or put her in any real danger cause he knew if he did, she would drop his ass so fast his head would spin. Not that he appeared to miss being bad that much anyway. He was too preoccupied these days with winning her back and attempting to find a way to break the curse without killing Elena. Or her.

She knew he didn't want her to go up against Klaus; he was very vocal about it. He was desperate to find another way. She didn't like desperate Damon—he often did things without thinking. Or put himself into needless peril. And unfortunately until their connection was reestablished, she wouldn't
be able to feel if he needed her help.

*Man it's hard being everything to everyone. But I suppose it's better to be this than nothing at all. I'll take knowing all the horrible details than being in the dark like so many others of this town. Just prey to the wild things.*

Smoothing her delicate fingers over his jacket, she chewed on her bottom lip lightly. If she survived the upcoming battle, perhaps she could focus on the normal things like prom or whatever. Her, Elena and Caroline could all go dress shopping together like they used to for silly little dances, and then have a slumber party to go over hair details. She really missed hanging out with her girls. She missed cheerleading and partying for the sake of partying.

*I miss having less responsibility.*

Yet she was going to play the hand she was dealt and go for broke. She couldn't go back in time; she could only look towards the future. Graduating and maybe college, getting married and having babies—*and where does Damon fit into your plans?*

Good question.

"Jeremy? When you were with Anna and wanted to be turned, what was your reasoning behind it?"

He blinked. "Um, I—I don't know. I was still messed up over Vickie's death and I guess I thought becoming a vampire was the way to go. I wanted the pain to stop. Why?"

Pause. "No reason. Just thinking about the future."

"Yeah. Your future with Damon..." He stifled a yawn. "I suggest putting all of that on hold until high school is over. We're too young for forevers."

Bonnie thought about that for a moment. True she was too young to be planning her entire life, but sometimes you just realized when something was meant to be. A part of her felt that Damon was a passing fancy she would eventually get bored with, but the other part told her she was kidding herself. That Damon Salvatore was running through her veins like blood and no mattered what happened, she would always have some kind of connection with him. Whether it be magic or simply love, it didn't matter in the grand scheme of things.

*Is death better than becoming a vampire though? That's the rub of the matter. So far I can't think of one vampire who probably wouldn't change back if they had the chance. Maybe not Damon though only because he likes the super powers.*

"Some of these spells are ridiculous." Jeremy mused. "While others are just downright scary."

"The zombie one?" She offered up and he nodded. "Yeah I don't know what the point would be to raise the dead like that. Undead army would only blow up in your face."

He snickered. "Oh yeah." A beat. "Ran across any sex spells yet?"

Rolling her eyes, she snorted playfully. "What is it with you and sex spells?"

"Just curious!" He winked. "What's the point of being able to do magic if you can't have like hour long orgasms?"

Her cheeks tinged pink. "Who has that kinda time?"
Jeremy threw his head back and laughed. "Oh I don't know. Lazy Sundays maybe. Speaking of orgasms..."

She folded her arms over her chest. "Nope. Not talking about that with you."

He just laughed again and kept on reading.

Idly her mind drifted back to last night and she ducked her head to hide her grin. Whenever Damon touched her she couldn't help but think about it for days afterwards. He was being so good—almost too good for his age, not to mention his vampire libido—and not pressuring her for sex. It was almost like reverse physiology in a way though she knew that wasn't his plan. She'd simply asked and he'd delivered, like always.

_I miss our shared dreams. Can't wait to get back to them._

In a way it was asinine to be nervous about sleeping with Damon when he'd had her every which way in their dreams. But that was fantasy and it came without consequences. Real life wasn't so cavalier where those were concerned. _Yet I'm thinking about this like I don't already know that I've made up my mind on the situation._

As the sun lazily eased itself behind the trees, she exhaled and the candles in the room flared to life. Jeremy smiled at her show of magic and continued reading, not bothered by the chirping crickets or hooting owl in one of the trees outside. _He's such a good friend. I should try to help him find someone to be with. After everything has calmed down of course._

The front door thumping back against the wall jerked her out of her thoughts and she caught Jeremy's eye, wetting her lips slowly. Heavy footfalls sounded and next Damon was walking into view, his expression growing even tighter at the sight of Jeremy sitting in the corner. He looked angry, vengeful and pissed all at the same time, and she reached for him without a word.

His lips thinned but he went to her, sitting down and pressing his face into the hollow of her neck. "What's he doing here?"

"Keeping me company." She explained. "What's wrong?"

Damon growled, his voice muffled. "Nothing except the fact that I'm dealing with _idiots_. Do you know what your best friend did? She removed the dagger from Elijah so he's up and walking around again."

Bonnie was confused; why would Elena do that? "Why did she do that? I—I thought we wanted him out of the picture."

He sat back. "Cause she is insane. She thinks he's gonna _help_ us and Stefan is going along with her. I feel like the _only_ one using my brain. I don't trust Elijah. _None_ of us should."

"Maybe he'll surprise us." She squeezed his thigh. "I think the fact that you and Stefan aren't dead, considering what you did to him, at least means he's willing to help. Either way he'll watch him. What else?"

Damon's eyes flashed as if he still couldn't believe how easily she could read him. "I gave Katherine vervain so she would owe me one. Klausaric made a move on Jenna and now she knows about vampires. Took it well..." Sighing, he glanced at Jeremy. "Oh and did I mention there _is_ no sun and the moon curse. It's all a pipe dream."

"Wait, what?" Asked Elena's little brother. "What are you talking about?"
The vampire smiled but it wasn’t friendly or humorous. "Yeah. Apparently Klaus and Elijah made the whole thing up to troll history. The real curse is on Klaus himself. He wants to be able to access his werewolf side."

*Okay. Did not see that coming.* "That is actually worse than wanting vampires to walk in the daylight I think. I mean a werewolf/vampire hybrid would be pretty damn powerful. Perhaps even unstoppable."

"That's why he wants it." Damon flopped back petulantly. "Elijah wanted an apology for trying to kill him and I told him to go to hell. But of course Sir Stefan stepped up. I love my brother but more often than not I wanna strangle his self righteous ass."

Bonnie giggled softly and rubbed his chest. "And Andy? Is she still alive?"

Icy blue eyes stared up at her. "Yup. Sent her home in one piece after she helped me with Katherine." Pause. "Junior over there tell you I was playing with her?"

She nodded with a smirk. "Yup."

Damon lifted onto his elbows. "Of course he did. You can go now you know… I'm here."

Jeremy appeared as if he were going to argue but then thought better of it. He grabbed up his bag and stood, stretching his arms over his head. "I'll come back tomorrow Bonnie and check on you. Later."

"Bye." She waved as he walked out. "Damon I—"

She was caught off guard by his lips pressing against hers; his tongue running across the crease until she gasped and he could slide it inside. His hand held to the back of her neck and he slicked his tongue across her teeth before delving deeper, ravishing her mouth as if his life depended on it. Tiny whimpers escaped her throat and she clutched at his shoulders, letting him take whatever he wanted until she was breathless.

He flowed on top of her like water and she let him, running her fingers through his hair. And when his lips cascaded to her neck in silent questioning, she nodded, and moaned when he bit into her. The sound of his throat working as he drank from her was both disgusting and erotic, and she really had no idea why. But it didn't matter. It caused the usual reactions; her body shuddering compliant under his and her power spiking, making the candle flames arch until they were almost grazing the ceiling. The added boost made Damon groan in approval, and he pulled away with a tiny inhuman growl.

"God, I could eat you alive sometimes."

She smiled, dazed but comfortable. "I'm sure you will one day."

Chortling, he rolled onto his side and watched her, drawing designs on the exposed skin above her tank top. "Promises, promises." Wiggling his brows, he walked his fingers down to her breast, tracing the nipple until it visibly hardened.

"Feel better?" She asked with a shiver.

"Yeah." He was preoccupied suddenly with the drawstring to her pajama bottoms. "Until tomorrow when there will no doubt be more bullshit."

He looked so melancholy and despondent—and she *hated* seeing him that way. She'd rather he was making wisecracks or being annoying, anything other than having the weight of the world on his
shoulders. I should do something nice for him."Lay back."

He lifted a brow but did as she requested. "Gonna give me a massage or something?"

The witch chuckled and unbuttoned his shirt, spreading the sides open like black wings. She climbed on top of him and settled, rolled her hips downwards against him until he grunted and began to thicken. "I…well I found something in one of the books that I think you'll like."

He interest was piqued. "Oh? What makes you think that?"

She grinned, put his hands on her waist and then put hers on his chest. She closed her eyes and sighed, muttering in Latin. Heat blossomed from her palms and Damon gasped, surprised at the feel of it. It spread quickly like wildfire through his body, coiling in his stomach and opening like an unfurling fist to all parts of him; especially one part in particular. Warming him, giving his usually pale flesh a slight pink tint.

And then Bonnie was grinding down on his lap, her nails dragging across his nipples as he arched up to her. She leaned her head back, her eyes on the ceiling as desire coursed through her like a raging flood. It tugged itself from her pores and raced downwards between her thighs, slicking her and seeping through her skin to Damon's erection. Made him fall into her rhythm. Made him grasp the cotton fabric of her tank top and rip it straight down the middle.

His strength aroused her even more, and she began to tremble as the magics grew. "Damon…"

"Wanna see you." He ground out, jerking the destroyed material from her arms. Her bra followed the same fate seconds later. "Fuck you're beautiful. C'mon. Wanna feel you."

She nodded quickly and he rolled, pinning her underneath him, pressing flat so that her nipples brushed his chest. She wrapped her legs around his waist and bucked; could feel him hard and pulsing even through his jeans. There was a low mantra chanting foreign in her mind but she managed to pick out the word more. More more more. Always more.

Invisible lips were kissing her all over—she could tell by Damon's expression that he was feeling the exact same sensations. He was rutting down against her, the rough denim of his pants giving delicious friction to her clit. His right hand was squeezing her thigh so hard she was sure she would be bruised but she didn't care. Her mind was foggy with pleasure—nothing else mattered.

When she came the feeling erupted throughout her system scourging every inch of her, making her cry out in delight. It triggered Damon's orgasm—forced it if he wasn't ready and left him shuddering on top of her, breathing curse words into the soft skin of her shoulder.

"I—I don't know what the fuck that was, but I loved it." He panted. "Fuck. Felt like sex…"

She let her legs fall open around him. "Mm just a sharing need spell." Her voice was raspy. "It's usually used when—when two people can't be close but wanna feel each other."

"Heh." Moaning, he threw himself to the side, chest still heaving. "Fuck, I love you."

Smiling, she turned to face him. "I love you too."

~*~

Damon sat quietly before the burning fire in the manor, staring at the dancing flames. He just—he needed to get his shit together before he turned into a valiant knight or whatever. He still wasn't sure how he'd went from waking up with Bonnie to saving Caroline and Tyler from certain death to
getting bit by the damn werewolf. That hadn't been a part of the plan, naturally. But then again neither was trying to steal a bit of Elijah's magic resuscitating elixir for Bonnie just in case, taunting Klaus, or getting Jenna kidnapped to be the vampire in the sacrifice.

_Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck!_

There was no time to focus on himself because all of the cards were falling into place. Elena had already been taken by that stupid fucker, and Stefan was on his way to get Bonnie. He'd entertained the idea of going to see her earlier and opening a vein, making her drink but that was pretty much useless to him now. His blood was tainted; he couldn't save her. He just had to hope she didn't blow a fuse and that Elijah kept up his end of the deal.

If things went the way they were supposed to go, everyone lived. Except him.

But he couldn't think about how upset Bonnie would be when she found out about his condition. How she'd have to suffer another blow like she had with her Grams. It wasn't fair but hey, life often kicked you when you were trying to do good. _Least Gilbert Junior will probably take care of her_. That wasn't a comforting thought.

When he thought about all of the time he'd wasted denying his feelings or chasing Elena or just being a fucken _dick_ he wanted to stab himself in the face. Of course being immortal he figured he had all the time in the world to make nice. To repay Bonnie for never really turning her back on him even though he deserved it. It'd be funny if it wasn't so goddamn tragic. He was going to go rabid and someone was going to have to put him out of his misery.

He didn't wish that on anyone. Not even Stefan.

_Get a grip, Damon. Feel sorry for yourself tomorrow. Right now you gotta help the team. Help Bonnie._

_Bonnie._

How could he leave Bonnie?

~*~

Her skin was tingling, a low throw humming in the back of her head at the base of her skull. All of the preparation and the training and the worrying had come down to one pivotal moment, and she'd been successful. She'd broken Klaus into pieces like a jagged puzzle, watching as he cried out and cursed her, wondering why she wasn't dead. Everything would be perfect if Elijah hadn't double crossed them in the end.

_Damon was right. We shouldn't have trusted him._

But they had set out to do what they wanted…in the end. Elena would be okay—hopefully—though the causalities of their small war were big ones. _Poor Jenna; she never got the chance to find out if she could live with being a vampire. And poor Alaric, another loved one lost to violence._

The battle was over and she was exhausted, but her body didn't want to come down from its' magical high. So much magic used last night; defeating Klaus, the spell to link John's life force to Elena and the one to trap Jeremy and Alaric in the mansion so that they wouldn't get hurt, it was a wonder she wasn't floating or something. Yet standing beside Caroline right now in the bright warm sunlight and watching her other best friend put flowers on the grave of her loved ones, she couldn't help but be somber.
It didn't feel right that Jenna and John died when she could have sacrificed herself and saved them all. It was as if her life had been traded for theirs. Elena and Jeremy had already lost so much. How would they cope now with all of their family basically gone? Who would take care of them?

*I'm sure Stefan will help out, and hopefully Alaric. But what happens now?*

Frowning, she sighed and glanced up as Damon slipped his arm around her shoulders, an action he'd mirrored as Stefan had carried Elena away to safety as they looked on, expecting Elijah to kill his brother. He was the only one not wearing a tie or a white shirt, and that little fact made her smile to herself. She grabbed his hand and gave it a squeeze, entwining their fingers together.

*He looks so dejected; nice to see he's letting himself feel all of this.*

Back in the woods she hadn't really let herself *think* because she'd needed to be in the moment. Seconds before diverting to take out Klaus and Greta, she'd gazed into Damon's eyes and mouthed *I love you.* And here she was alive and able to say it again and again. Still everything was so bittersweet. She couldn't help but feel the loss of those around her.

Times like this it seemed stupid and pointless to dwell on the past. To hold onto anger just to have some sort of protection from future pain. Maybe trusting was the only way to be *truly* protected.

Their little group broke up ten minutes later, and she watched Damon walk over to Stefan. They talked lowly and she found herself wondering what they were saying. Would have probably stayed to ask but Elena needed her support. Besides she'd see him back at the manor anyway. They needed to have a serious talk.

~=*

Using the back door of the manor, Damon jogged up to his room and inside quickly before he was seen. Yeah he felt bad about Jenna and…well a *little* about John but he wasn't in the mood to be collectively sad. He didn't feel like offering his condolences over and over. He especially didn't feel like sitting there while Stefan gave him puppy dog eyes because he was dying. Why add more fuel to the depressing fire?

*Can't a man just die in peace?*

Shrugging out of his jacket, he tossed it onto the bed, wincing as his arm gave a twinge of pain. It *burned* and throbbed and was a constant reminder of how even when he tried to do good, he just ended up screwing himself.

"Damon?" His door open and Bonnie stepped in, closing it behind her. "You hiding in?"

He nodded. "Just not in the mood for coffee and tea cakes. How did you know I was up here?"


He gazed at her; being alone was the *last* thing he truly wanted. "What's up?"

Licking her lips, she crossed the room to him and cupped his cheeks with her soft hands. They smelled like lavender soap. "I—God Damon last night was terrifying. I didn't know if I was going to die or if Elena was coming back. And even though I feel horrible for what happened to Jenna and John, I can't help but be glad that we're okay." She smoothed her thumbs on his skin. "We've had a real rollercoaster ride of a relationship. You hurt me and I hurt you and, after all this shit I don't care anymore. I love you and I believe that you love me. And I just—I want more."
"More what?" He asked softly, blinking when his vision blurred.

She smiled rather adorably, playing with the collar of his shirt. "Of you. I—I'm ready. To be with you. I think we should...have sex."

*It's official. The entire goddamn world is against me. This has to be karma or something, seriously.* "Um, Bonnie you know that 95% of the time I'm thinking about you naked but I—ah—don't think that would be such a good idea. Just not right now."

Her lashes fluttered rapidly in confusion. "I don't understand. I'm *ready.* Like honestly, thought about it and want it, ready."

"Maybe it's just the adrenaline from everything that happened."

"Why are you trying to talk me out of this? Is it Elena?"

Frowning, he shook his head. *No. I don't want you to see my diseased riddled arm.* "No. Trust me it's not Elena. You have no idea how much I wanna rip this dress off of you, but it's the timing."

"If you're worried about the others hearing us, I can put a dampening spell on the room." She explained lightly. "C'mon Damon, I know you. What's the real reason you suddenly don't want to have sex with me?"

His expression shut down; *not gonna rain on her parade with this bullshit.* "I need a drink."

Swerving around her, he headed for the door and stumbled a little as the world tilted. "Wow."

Bonnie gasped and leaned against his bed for support, her energy shaking the contents on his dresser. "Damon..." Swallowing thickly, she looked at him and he *knew.* He knew their connection was back, and what it had told her. "I—son of a bitch..."

"It's gonna be okay." He replied nonchalantly.

Even as he said the words, he didn't believe them. And he had a feeling she didn't either.

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

No one ever said having free will was easy.

Chapter Notes

This is basically totally AU from 6.22 (As I Lay Dying) because...to be honest there was a lot I didn't feel like I wanted to deal with over the summer. Mainly Stefan being off the rails and Elena possibly running to Damon for help/comfort.

Ardeo

Sitting outside the door of the Salvatore mansion with her back against the cool brick, Bonnie exhaled deeply and tried to keep her hands from shaking. After two days of conjuring and researching she'd finally found a spell to help Damon but she knew for a fact he'd resist it. He always resists. But she didn't have the luxury of coaxing him into it or placating him with the words that everything will be okay. She wasn't sure everything would be okay. She'd never exactly attempted a spell of this magnitude before. It was even bigger than opening the tomb.

But there didn't seem to be any other option at this point. Emily pretty much refused to help and Stefan wasn't any closer to a cure than he'd been before. It all appeared to rest on her shoulders once again, and she was going to come through. No matter what.

Wetting her lips, she glanced around and smoothed a hand across her forehead. She wasn't experiencing any of Damon's symptoms—thankfully—except the heat. The fever. It wasn't hurting her or damaging her, but it made concentrating more difficult. And her powers were a bit wonky because of the spike.

What else is new? This is my life now.

Blinking slowly, she glanced up to the sky and watched the puffy clouds shift into different shapes. It was such a nice day—it wasn't fair really. She thought she'd be having a sex marathon or something with Damon, not holding back tears at the thought of slowly watching him lose his mind and die. She'd nearly gave her life to protect her friends and the town, and this is how karma repaid her? What was the point then? What was the point of trying so hard to defeat Klaus when she would end up losing the one thing that truly mattered to her?

No.

She wasn't going to let it end this way. She was going to do whatever she had to do to save Damon because she knew without a doubt he would do the same thing for her.

"Hey Stefan."
"Bonnie. What's going on?" He leaned out of the open doorway.

She shook her head. "Just thinking. How's Damon?"

He motioned inside. "I had to lock him up. He tried to kill himself earlier."

Frowning, she stood and brushed off her jeans. "Doesn't he know that I am trying to save him?"

"He knows. He just—I don't know. This is Damon we're talking about. He doesn't want to end up like Rose." He explained softly. "And he has a thing for the dramatics."

She smiled a little. "He won't end up like her. I—I've figure out a way to save him."

Stefan's face lit up like a Christmas tree. "You did? A spell? Did Emily help you?"

"No. It was in one of the grimoires from the Martins." She nibbled on the inside of her cheek. "I can do it tonight if he can make it. The power of the stars would be a great asset."

He nodded slowly. "What are the side effects?"

Stefan, always so smart. "Do they really matter?"

His thick brows narrowed. "Of course they matter. Damon won't let you put yourself into danger for him."

Naturally. "That's why you're not going to tell him anything."

Folding his arms across his chest, he tilted his head at her. "You know secrets like this just end up hurting people in the long run. If you die and he lives, he'll never forgive himself." Pause. "So, what are the side effects? I'm guessing death is one of them…"

Tucking back strands of hair, she yanked on a few absently. "Yes. I have to burn the infection of out him and there is a chance I'll die. But there is always a chance I'll die when using magic. It's connected to me and too much could kill me. It's just—it's just a little more possible this time because of our link."

Stefan stared at her intensely. "Are you saying you're feeling the effects of the wolf bite with him?"

"Not exactly." She responded. "I'm just a little feverish but not enough to stop functioning. Besides if it wasn't for our connection I probably wouldn't have known about his condition until the last minute. He was keeping it from me."

"Sounds like him." He admitted. "Look Bonnie, you know I want to save my brother but I don't want you to get hurt in the process. Maybe I can find another way."

"We don't need another way. I can do it." Removing her jacket, she strolled past him and into the manor. "I'm gonna go see Damon."

She tossed her coat onto a chair and made her way downstairs to the cellar, standing on tippy toes to peer through the barred opening. She swallowed hard at the sight of Damon on the dusty floor, leaning against a large boulder with sweat collecting on his forehead. He looked miserable. "Damon."

Very slowly his head lolled to the side, his eyes seemingly struggling to focus on her. "Judgy. Shouldn't you be out doing something fun?"
"This is fun." She teased lightly. "How are you feeling?"

He made a face. "Like I'm slowly being hollowed out by a wolf disease. But I guess it could be worse. I could have hemorrhoids."

She chuckled softly, her fingers wrapping around the cracking iron of the bars. "Stefan told me that you tried to kill yourself earlier. Do that again and I'll stake you myself."

Damon managed a tiny grin. "You—you should do it anyway. I'd rather it were you than Stefan. His—his hands are cold."

_How can he manage to keep joking at a time like this? I suppose that's just Damon for you._ "No one is staking you, baby. I know a way to save you and I'm going to."

"Yeah..." Grunting in pain, he rolled up the sleeve of his black shirt to show off the horrid looking bite that was spreading its poison through his veins, turning them a disgusting greenish color. "There is no cure."

"I found one." She whispered. "You knew I'd come through for you."

Exhaling, he fisted his fingers in the soft Earth until they were covered in sandy colored grits. "Where was this spell when Rose was in trouble?"

_Who knows? Who cares? _"I don't know. I didn't have the Martin books then."

"Convenient for me then I suppose."

"Perhaps."

"Or maybe you just didn't care about saving her."

"I care about saving you."

"Why? Why Bonnie? What makes me any better than Rose?"

"I didn't love Rose."

Licking his lips, he turned his attention to her again. "Heh you shouldn't love me either. The worse I feel, the more I realize this is my punishment."

Bonnie rested her forehead to the door and the metal groaned under the force of her powers, threatening to tear it from its hinges. "Can we skip the parts where you beg me to kill you, try to piss me off to kill you or talk about how much you should die? I really can't take them right now. I know your past, Damon. I know how much of a son of a bitch you were. You did fucked up things and you killed people—I get it. And I care, I do, but at this moment all I wanna do is make you better so that we can get back to where we were."

Damon forced himself to his feet and over to her, threading his fingers through the bars. "I don't deserve you."

She smirked, rubbing his knuckles soothingly. "You don't. But I'm here anyways." A beat. "I have to get the things I need for my spell, and then Stefan is gonna take you to the woods."

"Why the woods?" He asked, squinting his eyes to focus.

_Because I don't want to accidentally set the house on fire._ "I'm going to be drawing power from the
stars and it'll be better if we're outside."

Nodding, his knees buckled and he cried out, sinking to the floor. "Fuck thi—this hurts. But I—I guess that's the point huh?"

"You're gonna be okay, Damon. I promise. Just hold on." Turning, she hurried back upstairs nearly smacking into Alaric when he appeared from around the corner.

"Whoa." He said steadying her. "Where's the fire?"

"Inside." Waving off his confused look, she slipped on her jacket. "What are you doing here?"

He wiggled the bottle of alcohol in his hand. "Figured I can't cure him but I can get him too drunk to feel the pain. Found anything that will help?"

"Yes. Which is where I'm hurrying off to. Tell Stefan that as soon as it's dark, to bring him to the woods where he attacked Emily." Without waiting for a reply, she ran outside and to her car.

What if I'm too late? What if he doesn't make it? I mean there are only a few hours until the sun sets *but the virus might get worse before then.* She gripped the steering wheel tightly and tried to breathe through the spike she could feel coming on. It wouldn't be good to put her car out of commission and then have no way to get around. A level head was needed and she was going to attempt to have one, no matter how hard it was.

*Going up against Klaus had been easier than this.*

Bonnie had no idea what she would do if Damon died. Probably attempt to bring him back to life but she wasn't certain. She was already dealing with pretty dark magics as it were; bringing the dead back to life most likely called for an ingredient she'd never be able to get. Such as the life force of another or something. But she wasn't going to focus on that until it was the only option. Right now she had herbs to buy.

~*~

Damon Salvatore was dying, and that in itself was rather amusing to him. He figured if he didn't laugh at his predicament he would no doubt curl into a ball from the nearly debilitating pain that he was experiencing. People often thought of him as a dick and hey, they weren't wrong, but the real kicker was that even when he was trying to do the right thing, he ended up fucked. Maybe it was his reasoning behind such acts. Sure he'd saved Caroline and Tyler for Bonnie and Elena, not expressly because he gave a damn about Caroline or Tyler but it still should count!

Yet here he was...barely able to stand, sweating like a dog and being haunted by his subconscious. It wasn't surprising that Katherine was playing a major starring role in his mind right now. That whenever he drifted off into a state of hallucination, she was there mocking him. He was reliving his past like an outsider watching a show and it was quite eye opening.

*My love for her was genuine. Fat lot a good it did me but it was genuine.*

From the moment he first saw her, he'd wanted her. And every day after for nearly one hundred and forty five years. She'd never compelled him or coerced him—it'd been all *him.* That is why it felt so fucken bad when she revealed she'd never gave a damn about him. Maybe—maybe if she'd loved him and Stefan equally it would have been better but nope, only Stefan.

*I tried twice as hard to give her affection and she didn't care. Stupid bitch. I was just a plaything. Stefan was her true prize.*
Even now he didn't exactly understand what her motivations had been. Damon Salvatore of the past was sweet and caring; isn't that usually what girls wanted? It took him many years to switch off and become a bastard. People would probably be shocked to learn Stefan embraced his dark side much, much earlier.

Blinking slowly, he stared up at the ceiling and watched as the lights began to blur. *I wonder where I'll go when I die? Maybe there's a nice little vampire Heaven with all the blood you can drink.*

*Yeah right.*

Scuffling sounded at the door. Seconds later Alaric was greeting him. "You look like shit."

Damon grinned a little. "Feel like it too. What are you…doing here?"

The other man shrugged. "Stefan called me and told me what happened. Thought maybe you could use a stiff drink." He sat a glass on the small platform and filled it with a dark liquid. "Getting drunk helps."

The vampire tilted his head to the side. "Does it really?" It took a great deal of strength for him to get up and stumble over to the offered beverage.

His friend snorted. "No. But it's better than being sober right now."

*I'll drink to that.* Plucking up the glass, he did just that. "You should hate me, ya know? Not be here…trying to make me feel better."

Alaric took a swig from his bottle. "What good would hating you do? Won't bring Jenna back. Won't change anything."

True."Might give ya peace of mind. Not to mention I also killed your wife."

"Yeah. You did." The teacher said somberly. "So anyway, Bonnie seems to think she can save you."

"She always does." Damon coughed and doubled over in agony, holding tight to his stomach. "I'm dragging her down with me. Every day and she—she knows it but she won't leave. It's like she has a death wish."

"Or she *loves* you. Idiot." The tone was affectionate despite the barb. "You spent all that time searching for the one you thought cared about you, and now you're trying to run from the one who actually does. I thought you weren't scared of anything…"

"Just one thing." He slid down the wall to the floor. "Getting Bonnie killed."

"I'm sure she understands the danger she is in." Alaric explained rather matter of fact. "But—when it comes to love sometimes it's crazy and unsafe. Hell, sometimes that even makes it *more*intense. Besides you can't just pat her on the head and send her off to keep her safe. She could leave you and get hit by a bus. Death isn't always supernatural."

True. "Yeah. But being with a homicidal vampire who's made a lot of enemies doesn't exactly come with brakes. A bus does." Shaking his head, he fell to the side with the dry heaves. "Blood. I—I need blood."

Sitting his bottle to the side, Alaric disappeared around the corner to where the small fridge was kept. He yanked out a packet of blood and turned, blinking to find a gun thrust into his face.
Sheriff Forbes glared at him, flanked by two uniformed officers. "Where's Damon?"

Alaric sighed, irritated. "You know now is not a good time Sheriff. Trust me." As she glanced behind her, he held up both hands. "I wouldn't go in there! I wouldn't go in there!"

Naturally she didn't listen. She backed up slowly and grabbed the wooden door that led to the small room, closing and locking it behind her, effectively trapping Alaric. She ignored his calls and warnings, rushing into the small adjoining cell, ready to fire but finding no one inside.

Damon was pressed to the far wall, not hiding simply waiting. He spoke her name and with as much control as the virus allowed, shoved her into the brick to knock her out. When he was sure that she was live and just unconscious, he blew past her co-workers like a shadow and outside. The night air was cool to his burning skin; the bright lights hurting his sensitive eyes. He didn't know whether he wanted to fall on a stake or seek out something to eat.

In the end the choice was quite easy however.

Bonnie.

Bonnie.

I have to find Bonnie.

~*~

The showing of Gone with the Wind was in full swing when Alaric called and alerted her that Damon was missing. Well…not so much missing as in not locked up safely where he couldn't hurt anyone and where no one could hurt him. Thanks Sheriff for not keeping your nose in your own business. The last thing Bonnie felt like she needed was more stress. She was already at her wits end and even the cool night air wasn't helping. She just wanted all of this to be over.

Traipsing around the crowds that had gathered to watch the movie, she kept her eyes peeled for anything out of the ordinary but so far everything appeared to be going off without a hitch. Everyone was enjoying themselves; especially the people in their period costumes. Any other year and she, Elena and Caroline would have totally dressed up too.

If Damon hadn't been bitten; perhaps he would have come with me. Dressed in something from his past, looking dashing. And we would have danced and the girls would have badgered me for details about our night together.

Focus Bonnie.

Pushing away those thoughts, she continued with her search and hurried towards the alley behind the Grille. Of course they would rebuild one of the only good restaurants in town quickly. She could hear giggling coming from the darkened corners and she smiled, retreating soundlessly so as not to disturbed the young couple making out. She caught sight of Caroline who signaled that she hadn't found Damon, and as she turned she noticed the Sheriff with a few of her men skulking around as well.

This won't end well if they find him before we do.

Beep!

Yanking out her cell phone, she read the text from Jeremy aloud. "Found him! We're over near the dumpsters at the edge of the park."
Without bothering to reply, she made sure that no one was watching her and broke into a sprint, keeping in the thick of the crowd until she was rounding the large brown dumpsters that had been brought in especially for the night. Wetting her lips, Bonnie fought off a wave of dizziness from the heat inside her chest and stepped softly so she wouldn't spook the vampire.

She found Damon leaning heavily against Jeremy—who looked worried and slightly un-nerved. He was soaked with sweat and panting, his usually bright blue eyes glazed. He was babbling; his sentence interjected with apologizes to people she didn't know, her name and Katherine's.

"Damon?" Holding out her hand, she slowly touched his wrist. "C'mon. We have to get you to the woods."

"Bonnie?" He blinked and pulled away from Jeremy, grabbing her upper arms. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry for—for trying to kill you. All this time I've been blaming Katherine—hiding behind Katherine when—when it was all me. My decisions. My choices."

She nodded slowly. "Hey, it's okay. You thought she was something that she wasn't."

He groaned, his hands tightening to make her wince but she didn't push him away. "No. I knew…I knew and I didn't care. I was in love."

Biting her bottom lip, she felt her heart ache for him. She just wanted him wrap her arms around him and solve all of his problems, but she'd never actually get the chance unless she could cure him. "We have to go."

Damon whimpered, the veins rippling under his skin around his eyes. "I'm hungry. I feel like I haven't eaten in weeks."

The witch broke loose and ran her fingers through his damp hair. "Hey, hey. We'll get you something to eat, I promise. But right now we have to get you to my car. I'm gonna make you feel better."

The vampire allowed a small smile to grace his lips. "You know all those years I blamed Stefan, but no one forced me to love her. It was my own choice." Pause. "I made the wrong choice."

I wonder did his whole life flash before his eyes? Swinging his arm around her shoulders, she held him close and slowly started for her car with Jeremy trailing behind. "We all make stupid choices."

He coughed violently. "Tell Stefan I'm sorry. Okay?"

"You'll be able to tell him yourself." She whispered.

He continued to ramble seemingly just needing to talk. "I've made a lot of choices that have gotten me here. I deserve this. I deserve to die."

"No."

"I do it's okay. Cause if I had chosen differently I wouldn't have met you. I'm so sorry. I've done so many things to hurt you."

Tears blurred her vision as she opened the passenger door to her vehicle and helped him slump inside. "Don't you dare say your good-byes to me. I'll kick your ass right here and now, I swear."

Damon let his body go lax, melting into the cool interior. "You should've met me in 1864. You would have liked me."
She kissed his forehead. "I like you now."

Jeremy nibbled on his thumbnail as she secured his seat-belt and jogged around to the driver side door. "Do you need any help?"

"No but thanks. Tell Caroline that I found him, okay? And that I'll call her later." She didn't wait for his reply.

~*~

By the time Bonnie half dragged Damon to the ruins near Fells Church, Stefan and Elena had already set up everything the way she'd requested. She'd also requested that they leave—something she'd made Elena promise when she'd given her the herbs and candles—but apparently the brunette was not good at following directions.

Easing Damon down into the center of the charred symbol leftover from her possession by Emily, she frowned at her two friends. "You were supposed to leave."

Elena shrugged. "We're not letting you do this on your own, Bonnie. Besides Damon is my friend too and I wanna help."

How will you do that though? "Look he's out of his mind right now, or getting close. What if he mistakes you for Katherine and tries to kill you?"

Her best friend pointed to her boyfriend. "That's why he is here. We're staying."

"Fine." She didn't have time to argue. "Just stand on the sidelines. Do not come into the area no matter what happens."

Rubbing the back of her neck, she sat down between two candles in front of Damon. Dipping her hand into the bowl of mixed herbs, she smoothed her fingers on his forehead and cheeks and exhaled deeply. Closing her eyes, she recited the words of the spell she'd practiced diligently since finding it, feeling a shift in the night air as the wind picked up. Storm clouds rolled in from nowhere, sending streaks of purplish lightning darting across the sky. Thunder boomed and crackled loudly, signaling a downpour that would never come.

Suddenly the design of the pentagram cracked around the edges sending a smoky red mist into the air. Damon called her name and she looked at him, watched as the fog settled onto his body like a second skin.

Damon screamed and his back arched off the ground, his hands digging futilely into the dark earth. Bonnie could hear Stefan and Elena asking if everything was okay, but she couldn't answer them. She couldn't tell them that essentially the toxins were being burned out of Damon's body, purifying it of the werewolf virus. She couldn't assure them that everything was going to be alright because honestly she wasn't sure that it would be. He'd most likely survive.

She on the other hand was a different matter.

Her skin was tingling and not in a pleasant way. Heat, heat, heat choked off the desperate breaths that she tried to draw in. She was trembling with a tiny trail of blood leaking from her nose. It was if as she was being burned alive—as if her energy had turned on her and was now trying to scorch every part of her.

Stefan stepped forward and she cried out, raising a barrier that he crashed into when he tried to reach her. Elena shouted her name but she ignored her and switched her fading sight onto Damon. He was
writhing and panting; gasping and kicking out at some invisible assailant. His wide eyes met hers and she smiled.

"I love you." She mouthed and then the world went dark.

~*~

Damon wasn't in the habit of watching people sleep. He could be creepy but he wasn't that creepy. However he felt like if he didn't make sure that Bonnie's chest rose and fell quietly that it would stop. It was stupid but considering all that they'd been through, not without its merits. The last few moments before the pain stopped were hazy but he came back to himself much like someone getting over a major flu. Struggling to sit up on the cold ground and crawl over to where Bonnie laid motionless while Stefan patted him down. Yanked up his sleeve to find the grotesque bite mark gone.

Then it had just been the matter of getting back to the manor…to wait.

Why are people so fucken ready to sacrifice themselves for me? Stefan and now Bonnie—I'm not worth it. I've said it time and time again. I don't deserves their loyalty but they keep giving it. Why?

He was weak but growing stronger. He'd already drained three blood bags and could really go for a fourth, but he didn't want to call on Elena to bring him another. She was enough of a wreck over both her friends and he didn't mean himself. Seems Liz confronted her daughter on being a vampire and it'd taken a while to convince her that she wasn't a threat. That she was still Caroline. Damon had a feeling he was still public enemy number one though. Cross that bridge when I come to it.

Sighing, he trudged into the bathroom and re-wet the soft white cloth before bringing it back and smoothing it on Bonnie's face. Her lashes twitched rapidly before slowly opening. "Look who's back among the living. Took ya long enough."

She grinned. "Hey." Her voice was raspy. "Are you okay?"

He nodded. "Thanks to you. What you did was incredibly stupid. You know that right?"

"Yeah." A beat. "Sometimes I'm stupid."

He snorted and kissed the back of her hand. "Are you okay?"

She appeared to take a mental inventory for a second. "I think so. Just tired."

His lips brushed her hair. "Well you sleep for as long as you want, and we'll talk more later."

She snuggled against him, totally on board with that idea. "Okay."

He'd said a lot of things to her when he thought he was going to die. When he was in pain and his brain was becoming ravaged by the virus, but in the end perhaps it was for the best. Now she knew that while yeah—he'd made horrible choices over and over again because he could—that if they were necessary for him to be with her, then he'd do them all over again. He wasn't sure what that said about him but, well, it was the truth.

In his life of bad decisions and horrible regrets, going after Bonnie was the best thing he'd ever done.

~Fin~
Bonnie knew it would come to this. Damon well, Damon hoped.

After sleeping through the next day and letting her body recover from all that she'd put it through, Bonnie woke up feeling rested and relaxed. She ate a late sort of lunch with Elena and then got a call from Caroline saying that everything was okay. She could hear Tyler in the background asking if the blonde wanted more lemonade, and it made Bonnie happy that her second best friend wasn't alone anymore. That she had someone who could understand what she was going through. Jeremy was the next to call and check up on her which was very sweet of him. She knew Damon didn't like it but she was going to keep him as a close friend anyway. He'd earned to be in their little creature feature club.

Damon was back to his old self in the sense that he wasn't dying anymore. He'd devoured three bags of blood and said he never felt better. She wasn't the type of person to think that all of their problems were miraculously fixed but she was happy they all appeared to be getting a reprieve from the madness. Katherine was still out there, as was Klaus but they weren't gonna focus on that for a while. Hopefully both of those assholes would just leave them alone, even if just for a little while.

Elena and Stefan were out on a much needed date. They hadn't had a real one since getting back together—not really anyway. Something always came up or danger always interrupted. Tonight however they were going to be so normal that it bordered on boring for couples where one half wasn't a vampire. Dinner, a movie and then a nice slow walk through the park. Elena was so excited she'd changed clothes like five times even though she knew Stefan would love her in jeans and a t-shirt.

It was just nice to be a regular teenage girl for a few hours with regular teenage problems.

Sighing, Bonnie glanced around Damon's room at the black votive candles that she'd sat on his vanity and bedside table, waving a hand to make the wicks catch flame. She bit her bottom lip and moved over to his window, opening the curtains to let in the clear last quarter moonlight. There wasn't a cloud in the sky—it's as if Mother Nature was being pleasant for once. She couldn't remember a night so quiet that hadn't happened before everything started to change.

I seriously hope this is not the calm before the storm. We all need a break.

She remembered that Damon said they would talk when she felt better, but she didn't think it was necessary. Naturally she risked her life for him because she loved him and past bad deeds aside she felt he was worth it. And she was quite sure that he would do the same for her if in a similar situation. She was tired of questioning the hows and whys; she just wanted to focus on the now.

Right now she wanted to spend time with her boyfriend and enjoy the silence. They had the house to themselves and she didn't want to squander that time with discussion number forty-six. What more could they really say to each other than hadn't already been said? No need for him to tell me how dumb it was…I know that already. And yet I did it anyway. Why? Well apparently you do dumb
things for the one you love. Pretty sure it's been that way since the beginning of time.

Strolling into the bathroom, she looked at her reflection in the mirror and smoothed down a few strands of hair. She washed her hands and dried them on a towel before moving back into the bedroom and climbing up onto his bed. The sheets were crisp and clean and gave off a subtle floral smell that flared up whenever she punched a pillowcase.

She could hear footsteps on the stairs and a moment later Damon swaggered through the doorway, barefoot with the sleeves of his dark shirt rolled up to his elbows. He arched a brow at the state of his room and smirked at her.

"If I didn't know any better I'd say you were trying to seduce me."

"Maybe I am." She smiled and sat on her legs. "What took you so long?"

He shrugged. "Washing dishes."

O...okay that's new. "Well now that you're done I was hoping we could spend some time together."

He clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth and was suddenly in front of her, delighting in the fact that she didn't startle. "What did you have in mind?"

With trembling fingers, she reached for his shirt, pushing the soft material up until it was flowing off of him and hitting the floor. "I'm sure you already know the answer to that question."

He shrugged again. "Figured you'd changed your mind. Almost dying doesn't exactly put one in the mood for sex."

"True. But surviving does," she said honestly. "And I don't wanna talk. I don't want to answer questions or go over again and again why I do what I do for you. You know why. You—you do the same things for me. We fight it and then we let it in, and then we fight it again. I'm tired of fighting, Damon. I wanna let you in…"

The vampire hissed as he wrapped his arms around her waist, dragging her into his space. "Are you sure?"

She nodded slowly. "I'm sure. Are you sure?"

Damon laughed softly. "Baby I've been sure since that first dream I had about you. A lot has changed since then but not...certain urges."

"Urges huh?" She teased. "I thought maybe you didn't want me anymore like that considering. Everything."

"That's you being kinda stupid again." Tilting his head to the side, he dragged his fingers down her arm. "If you wanna do this then I'm on board. Not much of a surprise but, ya know it's your decision."

Bonnie raked her nails on his shoulders. "I know and I have decided to have sex with you."

Apparently that was enough for him. He cupped her cheeks and kissed her, his tongue flicking against her lips until she sighed and parted them, her fingers wrapping around his wrists and squeezing. Her heart was thudding almost painfully against her ribcage and she knew that he could hear it or feel it but he didn't say anything about it and for that she was thankful. It was natural to be nervous considering what was going to happen. Considering she'd never let it happen before.
However she'd always enjoyed everything else Damon did and she figured she would enjoy this too.

At first there was nothing but sweet kisses. Deep, sensual kisses that made butterflies flutter in the pit of her stomach before they became a bit more intense. A bit more ravishing with each sweep of his tongue burning her nerves and causing a tiny moan to sound before she could pull it back in. Shivering, she pulled back and sucked in air, hitting him when he flashed her with a shit eating grin.

She moved backwards so that he could join her and slowly took off her tank top and tossed it to the floor. Next she removed her shorts, her eyes big and round as he flowed out of his jeans to stand before her in nothing but black boxer-briefs. *God he is so beautiful.* She couldn't stop herself from reaching out and touching his hip bones, her slender fingers ghosting over the V shaped dips and scratching at the beginnings of his happy trail.

Damon crawled onto the large bed and kissed down the side of her neck, nipping at her soft skin and sucking at her pulse point. He reached behind her and unclasped her lacy pale green bra, sliding it off her arms to let it join the rest of their clothes. His hands were surprisingly warm as they caressed her breasts, squeezing and twisting the nipples until they were hard and she was blushing red.

A part of her just wanted to let him do all of the work because it was easier on her nerves but he was so gorgeous that she couldn't help herself. She pressed against him. Ran her fingers through his hair and tugged when he bit particularly hard at her collarbone. Left tiny red scratch marks that faded before her eyes when his lips trekked lower and his breath tickled across her nipples. His mouth was cool around them, the suction perfect and she was sure had she not already been on a flat surface she would have hit the floor.

Suddenly she was on her back and he was hovering over her, eyes bright and warm. "You're stunning."

"Thank you," she whispered.

He hooked his thumbs under the band of her panties. "Can I?"

She nodded quickly. "Please."

When they were gone he looked at her, like really *looked* at her and she couldn't stop herself from squirming. But there was nothing in his gaze but desire and love and lust. Nothing that said she wasn't what he wanted or that he was just along for the ride. No. He wanted this just as much as she did. Perhaps even more.

He kissed her again as the fingers on his right hand trailed low, fell between her legs and rubbed. She closed her eyes and kissed back. Held onto him when one finger, then two slipped inside and stroked in a gentle fluid motion. Her hips twitched before taking up the rhythm and when his thumb pressed against her clit she moaned loudly, pressing her head back to the fluffy pillow.

Bonnie's thoughts were a kaleidoscope of *want, need, more* at a degree she'd never experienced before. She felt so wanton and free; shuddering and gasping as he scissored his fingers and plunged them in deeper. Even the slight twinge of pain wasn't an unwelcome sensation. In minutes she was hot, panting with a slight sheen of sweat glistening on her flesh and trembling thighs that flushed dampness.

Damon was hard in his underwear and the loss of all rational thought is why she fumbled at the black band, sticking her hand inside and squeezing. He groaned into the hollow of her neck so she did it again; swiped her thumb along the wet crown and decided to wonder where all of *this* behavior came from later. She liked touching him—maybe that was the only explanation that was needed.
"Fuck." Moving back, he discarded the briefs quickly and sucked his fingers into his mouth as she let her eyes rake over him.

Over his amazing abs and pale skin to the erection that stood out proudly amongst dark hair.

"Damon..." It was just one word—his name—but it meant so much. The tone of her voice and the longing in it caused the veins around his eyes to wrinkle but he pushed them away. Tonight wasn't about that.

Tonight was about her.

"You're so fucken hot." He said crowding her. "God, do you have any idea..."

"Damon." She nuzzled his chin with her nose. "Please."

"Please what?"

"I..."

"Say it. I wanna hear you say it."

"I—I want you inside of me."

Grunting, he grabbed her hips and slowly started to push his way inside, stopping when she closed her eyes. "No. Look. Watch."

His voice was rougher than she'd ever heard it and she swallowed hard, whimpering but doing as he requested. It was—she couldn't put it into words so she didn't try. She just watched with a heaving chest as he slipped inside of her. As he joined them together in a way she'd never been joined with anyone before.

It was—she felt like her body was on fire. Like it could explode at any moment and rain flames down onto the house. There was an odd painful sensation but she tried not to focus on it, instead opting to kiss Damon until her lungs were screaming for air.

He knew exactly when it was okay or at least he seemed to know because after waiting for a moment, he slowly began to move his hips. Her body gave a little lurch towards him, obviously having some buried knowledge of what to do even if she had no clue. And the more he thrust the better it felt until she couldn't do anything but feel.

Don't stop. Don't stop. Don't stop.

She lost all sense of time as they made love. The only thing she could concentrate on was Damon. Always Damon. Forever Damon. The pleasure was powerful and she didn't have to wonder if he was experiencing the same thing because he was saying her name repeatedly and his hands were all over her. From her sides to her thighs to her butt, lifting her to take more of him if it was even possible. Grinding down onto her clitoris and jerking when she cried out.

It seemed like an eternity before she finally came with pleasure coursing through her veins and muscles. Her nails dug into his skin and she shouted his name, totally unconcerned with whether her friends were back and if they would hear her or not. She had to be loud; she couldn't help herself. It was incredible and she was pretty certain she'd never come this hard in her life.

The flames on the candles spiked so violently that the wax was melted down in a matter of seconds, dripping sticky and black onto the hardwood floors. Least nothing broke...
Damon’s thrusts grew more rapid before losing their rhythm and focus. He pressed her down into the mattress and moaned, sealing his lips on her neck and sinking his teeth in. She yelped but allowed it, going pleasantly limp as he rode out the remains of his own gratification.

When it was over she felt sated and dazed but in the best way possible. Damon collapsed on top of her and she grinned, resting her cheek to the softness of his damp hair. *Sex is awesome!*

"You okay?" He asked a bit later.

"Mm," she purred. "Sore but…good. Really good. You?"

The vampire chuckled and lifted his head to gaze into her eyes. "I'm awesome. That…was so much better than dream sex." He licked his lips. "If you could go again I'd bury my head between your legs until I have to come up for air."

*There is no possible way for me to get redder. There just isn't.*"You—you never have to come up for air."

"That's the point." He wiggled his hips and smirked when she whimpered before slowly easing away and curling up beside her.

Bonnie yanked the sheets up to her chest and sighed contentedly. "Tonight was—I liked it. A lot."

"Good." He pushed strands of hair out of her eyes. "Figured I ought to give you a thrill for saving my life."

She punched his shoulder as he laughed. "Shut up! I love you, ya know…"

Damon arched a brow. "I *do* know. I also know that I love you too."

His words made warmth bloom in her heart. "Promise me something? Promise me that—that no matter what happens; we'll always choose each other. I mean I don't want you to let anyone die for me, but I want you on my side."

"I'm always on your side." Pause. "I can promise that if I can't promise anything else. You're safe with me, Bonnie. Always."

Smiling, she kissed his cheek and let him draw her into the circle of his arms. She stared at the ceiling and attempted to process everything that had just happened, but then decided there was no need. There was no reason to think or analyze. All she had to do was lay back and bliss, so that is exactly what she did.

~*~

Damon sipped his coffee down in the kitchen the next morning while leaning against the counter. His eyes were scanning the newspaper for anything of import but he wasn't exactly taking in the words. His mind was wandering and when something exceptionally interesting crossed it he smiled behind his cup. This is how Stefan found him when he entered the room; smiling and staring off into space.

"Damon. If I didn't know any better I'd say that you look happy."

Snorting, elder Salvatore rolled his icy blue eyes. "Good morning to you too, brother. I'm alive—sort of—isn't that reason enough to be in a good mood?"
Stefan nodded as he reached for the coffee pot. "Of course. But I doubt that is the only reason. Still I'm glad you're happy."

_"Ugh. Needless sap." Uh-huh. And how do you plan to spend your day?"

He shrugged. "With Elena. You?"

*_Probably with Bonnie.*" His face was carefully blank as his brother grinned knowingly. "Not that I want to rain on the parade but, where do you think our resident wolf/vampire disappeared to?"

"I don't know." Stefan frowned. "I hope he left Mystic Falls but I doubt it. I'm sure we'll be hearing from him soon enough. Too soon."

"Yeah." Tilting his head back, he cracked his neck. "Anyway…thanks for trying to save me."

"You're welcome."

Damon drained his beverage and sat his cup in the sink. "Elena still here?"

"Yes," Stefan said. "Alaric is staying with Jeremy so she decided to stay here for a while so that we could have some quality time together. Without all of the death and destruction."

"Good ole Alaric. Think he's gonna play surrogate daddy now?" The thought made Damon chuckle. "I suppose he could just until Elena is eighteen. You'd have to ask his permission to keep her out past curfew."

His brother huffed but it lacked any scorn. "Maybe I'll ask her and Jeremy to move in here."

*Over my dead body.*"Only if you want me to repeatedly kill Jeremy."

Stefan snickered. "I think we could all use a little less killing right now."

"I'll second that." Elena mused as she breezed into the room. "Good morning Damon."

"Good morning Elena." He replied. "Sleep well?"

She pulled the bread from the bread box and pulled off the twist tie. "Probably not as well as Bonnie did. But yeah."

*Heh…*"I'm sure I have no idea what you are talking about. Either way, I don't kiss and tell."

She giggled. "Okay. But when she wakes up tell her that I expect details."

"Pervert." Pretending to be outraged, he strolled out of the kitchen and made his way upstairs. So he'd had a good night. *A great night.* Wasn't that the point of sex anyway? For it to be good and make you wanna have little versions of yourself? *Damon jr, now there's a scary thought. There would have to be a Stefan jr around just to get on his nerves.*

When he'd thought about sex with Bonnie—and he had, at great length—he wasn't sure what he assumed it would be like. Totally fucken hot yes but the way she'd came apart under his hands was almost magical. He wasn't sure how it felt for her but through it all, their link had pulsed on his flesh like when you get shocked turning on a light switch with wet hands. Honestly he wished it could have lasted forever.

*Or a few days at least…*
Yeah he'd had sex with a lot of people but last night had been different. No compulsion, no fear and no one sided-ness. They'd both been all in and he could tell the difference between someone fucking him because he was sexy and because they wanted him. One night stands want you at the time but that's it. And yes maybe he was freaking out a little but nothing that would make him lose his shit.

He could remember thinking Katherine was one of the best he'd ever had. Well that wasn't the case anymore. Bonnie was still green but with practice he was sure they'd have a sex life so amazing it might knock a few stars out of the sky and cause them to fall. Practice makes perfect after all.

Bonnie was still curled up in his bed when he entered his room, her face pressed against his pillow. He hoped up beside her making the bed bounce and she grumbled, her brow narrowing.

"Rise and shine!" He exclaimed playfully. "Time for round two."

She yawned and blinked slowly. "I'm still recovering from round one."

"Mmhm well you know a little vampire blood will heal you right up." He wiggled his brows at her. "Drink enough and we can fuck like the energizer bunny."

She laughed, sitting up with the covers over her chest. "You're not gonna break me now that we've had sex."

"So what? You don't wanna do it again?" He inquired.

"Of course I do." Pause. "But that doesn't mean I'm now your little play toy."

Damon smirked and nuzzled her throat. "I'll be your toy then. You can tie me up and everything."

"I'm gonna hold you to that." She ran her fingers through her hair. "Last night was wonderful."

"It was." He agreed. "And you didn't set anything on fire."

She made a face, glancing to the floor. "Yeah but I melted all of the candles."

The handsome vampire shrugged. "Who cares? They were Stefan's anyway."

Bonnie laughed and slowly eased off the bed with the sheet wrapped around her. "I'll get him new ones."

Damon didn't care one way or another. "Sore?"

The witch blushed. "A little. I think I'm gonna get a quick shower."

"Sure. Oh Elena wants details." He slid his arms around her waist. "Tell her whatever you want as long as I come off sounding like a major stud."

"For her benefit or mine?" She poked him lightly in the chest.

"Neither. Mine." He scoffed. "My ego demands to be stroked whenever possible."

Shaking her head, she went to pull away but he jerked her back gently and kissed her. She melted against him with her hands on his bare waist, her thumbs rubbing tiny circles into his skin.

"Stop distracting me..." She whined pushing him away. "I have to shower."

He followed her into the bathroom. "Want some company? I could wash your back."
Nibbling on her bottom lip, she leaned down and turned on the water. "I'll tell you what. You make me something yummy for breakfast and there is a good chance you'll get lucky again."

"I like those odds." He kissed the bite mark on her neck. "One deluxe breakfast coming up."

~*~

So there was probably no point in taking a shower if you just planned to get…dirty again but Bonnie didn't mind so much. And it wasn't like she was filthy. At most she smelled like Damon and that was not a bad thing. Being with him again was not a bad thing. In fact it was a wonderful thing that was even better the second time around. Wrapped in his arms and pressed to the mattress with the soft sheet slipping lower and lower on his back each time he moved—it wasn't an image she would forget anytime soon.

Bruised things from his hip bones and a down low ache were totally worth it.

"Look at you sitting here smiling to yourself." Elena teased as she entered the living room. "Having good memories?"

"Maybe." Her friend replied. "But I can't talk about it."

"Yeah right!" The brunette sat down beside her. "I know you are just dying to tell me all about it. Not that we were listening or anything—in fact we left when we found out what was going on but—you sounded like you were having fun last night."

Oh god. "I—well—um—yeah. It—it was really great. Not what I expected but better."

Elena smiled. "Cool. Welcome to the oldest club in the world." She eyed the bite mark. "I hope you plan to either have that healed or hidden. I doubt your dad would be amused."

"Are you kidding me? He'd probably come over here with a shot gun or something." She laughed. "Thinking Damon is abusing me. I don't think he's back in town though. He said he would call when he is."

Elena nodded, her expression playfully mocking. "Okay. In the meantime you and I are gonna have a frank discussion about the birds and the bees, missy. I need to know you are being responsible now that you are sexually active."

Bonnie pinched her hard, laughing when she yelped. "Stop teasing me! You're supposed to be supportive and making sure I am okay emotionally."

The brunette sighed but it lacked heat. "I know you're fine because otherwise Damon would be on fire and you wouldn't look so happy. Besides you do realize Caroline is going to have a field day when she finds out."

That is so true. "She already offered me tips a long time ago." If she hooks up with Tyler she'll be able to answer the age old question of who is better, vampire or werewolf? "Maybe we should keep it between us then. The last thing I want is my father finding out and trying to give me the talk."

"I thought he already tried that when you were thirteen?"

"Yeah but it was less…wait until you're totally ready and old enough and more boys are evil and they'll leave you pregnant and alone, so it's best to just never have sex."

"Haha sounds like something a single dad would say. I bet your Grams would have been less harsh
about it."

"Possibly. Would she have been okay with me sleeping with Damon? I don't know. I do know that I'm happy and that I'm glad I waited. I think having sex with him any sooner and we wouldn't be here. It wouldn't have meant as much."

"I understand that. Do you feel any different?"

"Yes and no. I feel like me but—I don't know. There is another layer now."

"My little Bonnie is growing up!" Elena slipped her arm around her shoulders. "Least we don't need birth control."

The witch snorted. "Yeah, silver lining I guess. The thought of going to the doctor and having to get on the pill disturbs me."

For the rest of the afternoon Bonnie and Elena talked about their relationships and things that happened in the past, once too painful to recall. There was a sense of hope surrounding them and Bonnie prayed that it would last. She knew Klaus was still a threat and that Katherine was too much of a bitch to just give up, but she felt optimistic about life for whatever reason. The future was a mystery but the present was pretty good.

Being able to hang out with her friends and spend time with her boyfriend while everyone was okay—it was more than she could ask for considering the danger they'd once been in. She'd take this small moment and treasure it because there was no guarantee any of them would have more like it.

~Fin~
Trailing her slender fingers across Damon's collarbone while he slept, Bonnie drew invisible symbols into his pale skin with her nails. She admired how utterly magnificent he was, especially when he wasn't frowning or threatening anyone. His long dark lashes fanned his soft cheeks. His body was in total repose with the sheet slipping low and to the left leaving his right leg uncovered. And then of course there were his hip bones; the V that they came together to form almost looked painful. She'd never noticed that particular trait on guys before however now she found it to be very sexy.

But then Damon was sexy. Just smooth unmarred skin from his head to his toes. The way clothes hung on him should honestly be a crime.

It was still kinda surreal to be naked in his bed with him and to have memories of what they'd done the previous night. The touches—how he'd made her come undone in ways she never thought possible before. Not to mention the things he made her wanna do to him. She'd always found him hot and yes she'd day dreamed but it was different getting to be hands on. Getting to lick and scratch and watch how it affected him.

She knew that sex would change things and it had. If possible she loved him even more now.

Smiling, she shifted closer and began placing soft kisses along the column of his neck, sliding on top of him and flicking her tongue down to his nipples. She licked one and then the other, capturing the first between her teeth to hold it in place as she suckled and laved over it.

Damon twitched and slowly started to come around, stretching his arms high over his head. His sleepy eyes opened lazily and he grinned at her. "Mm hey. You should wake me up like this every morning."

She chuckled, resting her chin on his chest. "Maybe I will. At least until my dad comes back from his business trip."

He frowned, his arms wrapping around her shoulders to press her closer. "Boo. You should move in here. We could play house."

"Uh-huh." She smirked. Her cheek laid flat over his heart and she tapped her fingers in the rhythm it should have been beating. "You'd get tired of me eventually. Or actually I'd probably get tired of you first."

"Yeah I could see that happening." He mused. "I'm not everyone's cup of tea."

"I like you," she said with a smile. "But only cause you are so pretty."

His hand slapped her on the ass with a loud thwack and she yelped, squirming on his lap. He groaned softly and his hands caressed the small of her back. "Fancy another round?"
"Not right now," Bonnie replied eying him. "Besides we've already did it like four times."

He arched a brow and rolled, pinning her beneath him. "Yes and I hope to do it many more times. That's the whole point once you get started."

Biting on the inside of her cheek, she ran her fingers through his hair. "And we will but I—I'm…" Her cheeks flushed red and she sighed. "I just need a little time to recover."

He caught on pretty quick. "Ah. Fair enough I guess I have been a little eager with you, haven't I?"

_How am I still able to blush considering what we've done?_"It's okay. I've enjoyed every moment of it. But you know I'm not a machine that can just go for hours."

The vampire winked and held her face we he kissed her gently, slicking his tongue across her bottom lip. In truth if she wasn't in danger of possibly walking funny later, she would have submitted to him again in a heartbeat. She loved the closeness that she felt when they were making love. How his sole attention was on her and pleasing her, and it made her feel like the most important person in his world. _And maybe I am. Who knows? Either way it's a pretty thought._

Damon hummed against her mouth, dragging his fingertips from her chin to her shoulder to her breast. He brushed over a hickey he'd sucked into her delicate brown skin—right above the nipple—and then continued down to the finger marks on her hip. Her body was littered with different red and bluish bruises or bites but thankfully all of them could be hidden with clothes.

"God you drive me crazy." He nuzzled her throat. "I love this feeling."

"Did you used to love it with me too?"

Bonnie and Damon both jerked their heads to the side to see Katherine standing in the doorway, hands on her hips and a smirk on her face. For a split second one might have thought it was Elena but after a second look it was obvious that it wasn't. Elena was sweet and she would have _never_ invaded their privacy unless it was a life or death situation. _No this is the bitch through and through._ She strolled into the room and had the outright audacity to perch on the mattress and flick strands of hair from Bonnie's eyes.

Damon slapped her hand away none to gently. "What the fuck are you doing here?" He rolled to the side and got up, jumping into a pair of black jeans. "Shouldn't you be rotting away in Alaric's apartment?"

"Klaus let me go. Well he thinks I'm still under his compulsion otherwise I doubt he would have let me." Pause. "But I don't wanna talk about me. This is way more interesting. So, Bonnie, you finally gave it up huh? I have to say I'm surprised. I thought it would take the Jaws of Life to pry your legs open."

Tightening the sheet around her body, Bonnie inched to the very other side of the bed. "Yeah and I'm sure it would take industrial strength glue to keep yours closed."

Katherine giggled. "Mm you both smell like blood and sex. Makes me sorry that I missed the show."

"Leave." Damon pointed into the hallway. "We don't have time for your games and frankly the sight of you makes me sick."

She grabbed her chest. "Ouch I liked it better when followed me around like a lost puppy and begged me to fuck you or turn you. Rough Damon is sexy but only when he's rough for my benefit. And how do you know that I didn't come here to make amends?"
He snorted. "Bitches don't know how to make amends. As usual I suspect you're here to get on my nerves."

She grinned and picked at the bedspread. "Or I could be here to say good-bye. With Klaus sticking around I really don't wanna be anywhere near Mystic Falls. Especially now that he's missing a witch and probably in the market for a new one."

Bonnie swallowed loudly but kept her mouth shut. She honestly hadn't thought of that but now she had a feeling it would be lingering in the back of her mind for a while. Just great.

"Well Klaus can go fuck himself if he thinks he's getting his hands on Bonnie." Damon folded his arms over his bare chest. "He might be an Original but we aren't slackers when it comes to killing vampires."

"So valiant." She pretended to swoon. "Were you behaving like this when you were trying to get me out of the tomb? I bet it was sweet."

"And stupid." Plucking his button down gray shirt off the floor, he handed it to Bonnie. "Why are you really here Katherine?"

Fake pouting, she waved a hand. "I…just wanted to make sure that Stefan was okay. And you too of course. I heard about the werewolf bite. How are you still alive?"

Exhaling deeply, he glanced to the pretty witch slipping into his shirt under the sheets. "Bonnie saved me. It's our thing."

Katherine looked impressed. "I'm glad. Things wouldn't be the same without you." Standing, she migrated over to his vanity and dragged her nails along the top. "You know I was trapped in Alaric's poor excuse for an apartment for a long time thanks to Isobel double crossing me. Klaus tortured me and the only thing he had in his fridge was old people blood."

Damon watched her idly. "And I care about this why? You want blood you know where it is. Get it and get out."

The female vampire attempted a coy expression. "I don't want something in a bag. I wanna tap a fresh source. Her."

Bonnie blinked, her eyes stretching widely. "Excuse me? Why would I ever let you bite me?"

"Because I know how badly you want to get rid of me so that you can go back to playing house with Damon. And witch blood has a certain pep to it that I could use while skipping town."

"Find another witch."

"Can't. Damon killed them all."

His brows narrowed. "There is no way in hell you're biting her. I'll throw you outta here myself."

Annoyed, Katherine lunged at him and dropped him hard to the floor, her fingers wrapped tightly around his neck. She yanked a wooden brush off the dresser and brought it down fast, stabbing it into his shoulder causing him to cry out in pain. "Klaus might have tossed me around like a puppet but don't forget Damon, I'm stronger than you."

Bonnie jumped off the bed and flicked her hand at Katherine, sending her flying into the nearest wall with a loud crack. "Touch him again and I will kill you."
Katherine grunted as she pulled herself up. "Som—someone's got some more juice."

"You bet your ass I do. Pretty sure I can take you out now." She kneeled beside Damon and helped him sit up, wincing as he pulled out the brush.

"I'd get out of here if I were you." Damon smirked watching as the hole in his flesh mended itself. "While you still have two legs to do so."

"Fine. But this isn't over. As pussy whipped as you may be now Damon, the moment Klaus sets his sights on her you're going to track me down and beg me for help. You better hope I don't remember this." Blowing him a kiss, Katherine waltzed out of the room.

"God I hate her!" Bonnie exclaimed. "Seriously why can't she just get out of our lives for good? I should have just set her on fire."

Damon stood and stretched, dipping into the bathroom to wipe the blood off his skin. "Don't take it personal, baby. She's always been an irritating whore but she does have her uses."

The witch wasn't convinced. "Yeah to get on our nerves and keep us from being happy. And she is the last person I wanted to know about us having sex. I wouldn't be surprised if she took an ad in the paper and made me out to be a giant slut."

He shrugged. "At least she doesn't have pictures."

_Are we sure about that?_ Dragging both hands through her hair, she sat on the edge of the bed. "Do you think she was telling the truth about Klaus? That he'll come after me…"

Intense blue eyes stared at her. "I don't know. I was kinda hoping he'd just leave town now that he's all 'roided up. But whatever. If he tries anything we'll take care of him."

"I wish Elijah had just killed him when he had the chance. Why would he believe anything he says?"

"They're brothers. It's a familial flaw."

She gazed at him thoughtfully and wet her lips. "Not for every family." Pause. "I suppose we should try to make the best out of the rest of our day though. What do you wanna do?"

He tossed the towel onto the counter and flopped down beside her, kissing her shoulder. "How about a nap?"

She giggled. "Actually a nap sounds pretty good."

~*~

Damon wasn't the type of person to let people talk him into anything that he didn't want to do. However for some damn reason when it came to Bonnie he found that saying no to her on certain subjects was just impossible. Maybe it was because she was so cute or because he was now getting laid; he just felt more lax about giving in to her simple demands. Yes he wasn't _that_ fond of Caroline and he _hated_ Tyler but he tried to look on the bright side to letting Bonnie drag him to their lake side party in the woods.

That bright side being Bonnie in a bikini. Even with a sheer black covering she still looked amazingly sexy. It was hard keeping his hands off her.

Elena and Stefan were standing over by a roaring bonfire, fingers entwined and arms linked. They
were chatting with someone he didn't know but appeared to be quite calm. Stefan had a bottle of beer dangling from his free hand that he hadn't taken a sip from. *Appearances, appearances.*

Jeremy was here as well, sitting on a fallen log and fiddling with his ring while some pretty redhead flirted with him. He didn't seem to interested though and that made Damon smirk to himself. *Yeah pine away sparky but the witch is mine.*

"Look at you over here being all anti-social." Caroline mused as she walked up wearing a yellow tankini swimsuit. "You could try to have some fun."

He rolled his eyes. "Hanging out in the woods with a bunch of teenagers isn't exactly my idea of fun. I'm only here because Bonnie—for some reason—likes you people and wanted to come. And I knew I'd get to see her half naked."

She arched a brow at him. "I hope you're much nicer to her than you were to me," A beat. "Anyway though you'll be happy to know that Tyler plans to keep a low profile...like the rest of us. And my mom knows the truth but she—she's dealing. She won't be trying to stake you or your brother anytime soon."

*That's good to know.* "Good. I like Liz. It would be a shame if I had to kill her."

The blonde bristled. "No. She's not going to tell anyone. I think I'm making her understand that just because we're vampires doesn't mean we're horrible. Well it doesn't mean Stefan and I are horrible. I suggest you tread lightly."

He snorted. "Yeah, okay. How about you just keep your dog on a leash from now on? Getting bit wasn't fun."

"Sorry about that. You did save my life. His too."

"I didn't do it for you or him."

"I know but I'm thankful anyway. As much as it pains me, you're kinda an important part of our little group. And you did help me with my mom the first time she found out about me. If you weren't such a dick you'd be a pretty decent person."

"Yeah but if I don't do it then who will?"

Caroline smiled and shook her head. "Enjoy your night, Damon."

He watched her walk away and kicked off the tree, disappearing more into the thick brush. He could hear everything and see so clearly that it should be painful but it wasn't. His mind was a jumble of different things and although he wanted to relax like everyone else he couldn't stop thinking about what Katherine had said. Klaus liked witches because they were a convenient way for him to get what he wanted. Sure he could probably find one elsewhere but he seemed like the type who enjoyed poetic justice and kidnapping Bonnie would be right up his alley.

He wasn't sure they could defeat him now that he was an uber monster. *Stupid Elijah. Wonder where he is now? Serves him right if he got double crossed.*

Damon wasn't stupid. He realized the parallels between Klaus and Elijah and himself and Stefan. So many years of pain and heartache because of a girl and neither of them had been smart enough to walk away. Well in a way he was considering he couldn't stand Katherine now and was totally committed to Bonnie. Yet learning his old flame wasn't all she was cracked up to be wasn't a lesson that came easy. If it wasn't for Bonnie he wasn't sure he'd have even learned it by now.
Trekking over to a large boulder, he climbed onto it and made himself comfortable. The air was warm and the frogs were croaking, barely heard over the sounds of someone's car radio droning a song he didn't know. People were chattering and laughing—it was almost insane in its simplistic nature. The way they could turn a blind eye after danger or grief didn't make a lot of sense to him. Perhaps that is why when you became a vampire everything became heightened from all of the repressing.

"Damon."

Swirling his head, his brows drew together at the sight of a shirtless Tyler standing before him. "Yes?"

"I know what you did to my Uncle." Tyler folded his arms over his chest. "And I was totally ready to kill you because of it. I still kinda want to honestly. But you did save my life…"

"I saved you because I thought I was helping Bonnie and Elena," he said truthfully. "It wasn't out of the goodness of my heart."

"I know," Tyler replied. "But I'm alive because of you so…yeah. You know I'm not sure what Bonnie sees in you. From what I've heard you're not a very good guy. But I trust her judgment I guess and as long as you don't come after me, I won't come after you."

"Trust me I have bigger fish to worry about than you." Damon smirked. "Now run along. Oh and if you see Bonnie, tell her I said c'mere."

Tyler scoffed but walked away and moments later, Damon could smell Bonnie as she drew closer. He inhaled deeply and waited, skimming his consciousness along their bond to feel it simmer and warm his insides.

"You know," she began lightly when he was in view. "You can't just summon me like I'm some girl in your harem."

Wiggling his brows, he reached for her hand and pulled her closer. "You wouldn't just be some girl in my harem. You'd be wife number one."

She hit his arm. "Ha ha." She let him help her up onto the rock so that she could sit beside him. "You know there is another witch around that Klaus could go after. That girl who tried to kill you. If she thought he'd get rid of you in exchange for her loyalty, I bet she'd do it."

"Probably. But she hasn't been around in a while so let's hope it stays that way." Maybe I should just find her and kill her as a pre-emptive strike." Wanna go for a swim?"

She blinked at him, and then snickered. "We're not having sex anywhere near here. God I've unleashed a monster."

Damon chuckled lowly. "It's not my fault that you are so sexy that I wanna be inside you all the time."

Her cheeks tinged pink. "Such a romantic." Falling silent, she sighed and looked at him. "Can I ask you something that might piss you off?"

"Uh-oh.""I suppose."

"It's just…you've been around for a long time and you've had sex with a lot of people. I understand that and I'm not weird about it considering you were alive for years before I was even thinking about
being born. But I'm curious if sex with another vampire is better than with a human." She fiddled with the mesh of her cover up.

Her boyfriend cleared his throat, knowing full well that his answer could mean either kisses or pain. He didn't understand why chicks asked shit like this though. "Sex is sex unless you're having it with someone you care about. The more you love someone, the better it can be. So if you're asking if you measure up, believe me when I say you do."

Bonnie smiled and kissed him softly, smoothing the shine of lip gloss off his lips. "And I'll get even better with practice, right?"

He laughed. "Right. I'll teach you all of my tricks."

She bit her lip, amused. "Ooh sounds exciting." Falling silent, she held up her hand and wiggled her fingers when several lightning bugs became interested in them.

"You could probably learn to control animals if you wanted to." Damon suggested idly.

"Like you do with the crows?" She inquired and he nodded. "Hm that would be interesting I suppose. It's funny; when I first found out I was a witch I just wanted it to go away. But if it had I think we'd all be dead by now. I was so scared of the power but being able to harness that of my ancestors is such an incredible feeling. It makes me wonder if this is how Emily felt since she was apparently really powerful."

"Emily was rather low key with her witchy stuff. I don't know if that was because of Katherine or the founding families being scared of anything they didn't understand. She could have saved herself you know. But if she had I guess they would have turned on her children figuring them to be witches too." He frowned in memory. "Instead she died and I helped them stay under the radar."

She reached over and brushed strands of hair off his forehead. "You did a good thing even if it was for selfish reasons. I'm sorry she reneged on your deal."

Damon snorted; boy was that apology not needed. "Don't be. Yeah at the time I was pissed off but look how things turned out. Maybe she knew and that's why she did it."

Bonnie smiled and looked over when a giggling couple ran past, heading deeper into the forest. "Heh seriously? Haven't they seen horror movies?"

"When you're young and in love I doubt it crosses your mind. Humans have an uncanny ability to forget all of the supernaturally horrible shit that happens to them or around them. Or they rationalize it."

"I get that. Otherwise your brain could leak out of your ears."

"Perhaps. When I first found out vampires were real however I didn't run the other way."

"That's because you are special—and that may or may not be good."

"Special as I may be, I'm still perfect for you."

"If you had told me that when we first met, I probably would have laughed in your face but now I actually believe you. It's weird."

"Not really. Most people come around to my way of thinking."
"Hah yeah cause you compel them…"

He winked at her. "Well…there is that."

~*~

The grass was warm underneath her and Bonnie dug her toes into its softness, her eyes gazing up at a cloudless sunny sky. She could hear the birds chirping happily as butterflies fluttered from brightly colored flower to brightly colored flower. She knew that she was dreaming but she didn't care when everything was just so calm and vivid.

Sighing contentedly, she closed her eyes and smiled as a body dropped down beside her. "Is this your dream or mine?"

"I suppose that is the fun of it. Not knowing," A familiar voice replied and she jerked, rolling away as fast as she could.

She'd expected Damon but instead found Klaus stretched out beside her. "Wh—what are you doing here?"

He grinned at her. "I'm here to see you of course. How are you, Bonnie? Keeping safe I hope."

She swallowed deeply. "This isn't real. You can't be here; only Damon has access to my dreams."

Klaus simply watched her. "This could be a nightmare your mind conjured up, or it could be the power of an Original reaching out to you. I won't spoil the surprise."

Bonnie stood and took a few steps back. This had to be a dream. Vampires couldn't compel her which meant they couldn't mess with her head. "Yeah well either way, I'll never join you. I'll never work for you so you're wasting your time."

"I can be quite persuasive. I'd say ask Greta but your boyfriend killed her." He caressed a pink blooming flower. "And her father and brother. Damon is a sociopath—I fail to see how you two fit."

"That is none of your business." She snapped. "I almost killed you once and I'm sure I could finish the job if I had to."

Suddenly he was behind her, his lips at her ear. "I'd turn you before you got a chance."

Bonnie lurched away from him so violently that she nearly tripped on her own feet. "Stay away from me!"

He threw his head back and laughed. "I am going to see you again someday very soon and I think things will be different between us. You will either give me what I want, or I'll slaughter everyone you hold dear right in front of you. Starting with Damon."

"I'd kill myself before I let you hurt anyone I care about." She told him.

Klaus fixed her with a rather fond expression. "As if death could keep you safe from me."

Bonnie awoke to someone violently shaking her and she lashed out with her power as she bolted upright on the couch. She heard a loud crash and a grunt, and she cringed when several books toppled down onto Stefan from the bookcase she'd tossed him into.

"Stefan! Oh my God, are you okay?" She asked hurrying over to help him up. "I—I'm sorry, you startled me."
He chuckled and stood, dusting himself off. "I can see that. You were talking in your sleep. Nightmare?"

_I think there needs to be a new word for what I was experiencing._ "Yeah, you could say that. Still, sorry."

He nodded. "What were you dreaming about?"

Wetting her lips, she sighed. "Klaus." Pause. "Katherine was here the other day and she—she said some things and I think they got to me."

"Well she is good at that." He tilted his head to the side. "If you ever need to talk, I'm here for you."

She squeezed his wrist. "Thanks but I'm sure it was just a stupid dream…" Yeah, even as she said the words she didn't exactly believe them but they would have to do for now.

~Fin~
Attracting Chaos

Chapter Summary

Is it possible to attract chaos? Bonnie and Damon think so.

Attracting Chaos

Mystic Falls was a small town with rolling fields and an endless supply of looming trees that gave way to rivers and lakes. It was the type of place that you'd see on television and think about how nice it would be to live there because naturally nothing bad ever happened in a community so small. While you would be one hundred percent wrong on that point, it was still a relatively quiet area and especially beautiful in spring, fall and winter when the flowers bloomed or the leaves turned or the snow fell. The best thing however were the areas where you could disappear for a little while to reflect or whatever you were into.

Which is what brought Bonnie to being in the backseat of Damon's car on some dusty road people hardly ever traveled, naked and rolling her hips on his equally naked lap. It was a tight fit probably in more ways than one, but there was just something very erotic about the sight of Damon under her, his hands smoothing across her thighs and his head pressing back into the jacket he was using as a pillow. She loved the cramped feeling for some reason; the pull of her muscles that she would experience later when they were done a reminder of their time together.

Not to mention out here she could be as vocal as she wanted as long as her powers didn't explode his windshield.

Introducing sex to their relationship made her feel closer to him than ever before which was both wonderful and terrifying. Damon was still Damon and while she loved and trusted him, sometimes she felt as if she still didn't know him. He was so old and he knew how to twist himself into different creatures in a way. He had many different faces and while she could spot each one, she often wondered if there were more she hadn't seen yet. Though currently the visage she saw most was him trying to seduce her at every available turn.

Damon wasn't starved for affection but he seemed to never really get enough of her and that she loved. She enjoyed the fact that he wanted her all of the time; it made her feel extraordinary. Beautiful. Powerful. And she would be lying if she said the feeling wasn't mutual.

In the past when she'd thought about sex or witnessed a love scene on television she'd never really absorbed it if that made any sense. It was just an act that people did—most times in love—that looked very interesting in high definition. Like most teenagers her age she'd thought about it and fantasized about it, but decided early on she wanted to be with someone she cared about. She sort of had Elena to thank for that.

Elena only had sex with people she loved which meant she'd only slept with two people. Unlike Caroline who was a bit more...lax with her affections. Not that anything was wrong with that of course but Bonnie wasn't that type of girl. Emotions ruled her heart and she knew had she done anything before she was ready with someone she didn't honestly want to be with, it would have affected her in a negative way.
Never in a million years did she think she would be having sex with a vampire. Life was so weird.

Shifting slightly, she pressed her hands flat on Damon's chest and used the leverage to lift her hips up slowly, her hair falling like a dark curtain around her face. She was purposefully keeping her movements slow, squeezing out every ounce of pleasure that she could. She could feel Damon's thigh muscles flexing with the effort to let her do whatever she wanted. To not thrust up and take over. The thought that he was actually letting her go at her own pace made her smile, and she nuzzled at his chin with her lips.

Sitting upright, she arched her back and moaned as tingles raced up her spine. Damon grunted and brushed his thumbs across her nipples, cupping her breasts and squeezing, smiling when she sighed and pushed into his hands. He sat up and dragged his tongue over the soft skin of her neck before biting down hard enough to make her gasp and dig her nails into his sides.

"Damon." She whimpered grinding down onto him. "Th—that's cheating…"

He chuckled, one hand sliding down to grip her hip. "You love it." He lifted her easily like she weighed nothing and then let her drop as he thrust up, earning another yet louder moan.

"Fuck. " She shoved at his shoulders until he laid back. "Again. Pl—please."

"Whatever you want baby." He grinned and bucked up, started a rough slow rhythm that made her entire body vibrate and her breasts jiggle.

It felt like he was trying to crawl inside of her, erection first. It felt like it should be painful but it was anything but. There were stars exploding behind her eyes; she was burning from the inside out. She had to grip the passenger headrest to keep from crumbling sideways as he stroked over the nerves inside of her that sent bliss to all parts of her body. Seconds later she was pretty much babbling, awash on a sea of amazing sensations.

"Nng…fuck…" She cursed and the car rumbled on its wheels. "Damon…Damon…Damon…"

"You gonna come for me, baby?" He asked, dipping the tip of his thumb into her mouth. "Set the field on fire as you do? Fuck that'd be hot."

"I—"

Tap! Tap! Tap!

Bonnie jerked back to clarity like someone had slapped her across the face and looked out of the window to see a flashlight shining through the glass. She yelped and grabbed Damon's shirt off the floor, wrapping it around her chest. "Oh my God!"

Damon frowned. "Who is it!"

"The police," A new voice replied. "You're not allowed to do what you're doing here."

"Can you see in here?" Damon inquired with a raised brow. "Just how long have you been standing out there pervin' on my girlfriend while she rides me?"

The cop cleared his throat. "Sir, this is indecent exposure. I suggest you and your lady friend put your clothes back on and go elsewhere."

Snorting, Damon gently eased Bonnie off of him and reached around for the door handle, pushing the door open. He crawled out of the vehicle sweaty and completely naked, and grasped the cop
around the neck. "No one gets to see Bonnie naked but me. Well and maybe Caroline and Elena but that's a slumber party thing."

Bonnie groaned in embarrassment and leaned out so that she could see what was going on. "Damon, you can't kill him."

He pouted, tightened his hand and smirked as the officer sputtered and tried to pull away. "He was looking at you. He saw your parts and my parts while they were in your parts."

She rubbed her face. Geeze Louise, is this my life? "And that's gross but you still can't kill him."

Huffing, he clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "Fine." Catching the cop's eye, he drew in his consciousness and held it. "You didn't see anything. Nothing, not even a squirrel. I want you to go back to your car, drive to the nearest donut shop and enjoy yourself. Do you understand me?"

"Yes." He said blankly. "Donuts. I really need a donut."

Damon let him go and he stumbled back towards his squad car. Bonnie laughed softly and flopped back to the leather seat, shaking her head. "I can't believe that just happened."

Her boyfriend climbed back in beside her and shut the door. "I can't believe you wouldn't let me kill him."

She hit his thigh. "Why would I let you do that?"

"He was watching you. He probably had a massive boner."

"Ew! Still he didn't deserve to die for it."

"If I can't be possessive over you, what's the point?"

"You can be possessive but you can't snap necks for me."

"Oh you're not fun."

Bonnie tilted her head. "Oh so what we were doing five minutes ago wasn't fun?"

He grinned deviously. "Well when you put it like that..." Wiggling his brows, he lunged at her to finish what they'd started.

~*~

Caroline Forbes lounged on her bed with a Teddy Bear in her lap, watching one of her best friends go through her closet. "Why do you wanna borrow one of my dresses again?"

Bonnie continued to thumb through all of her pretty outfits. "Damon is taking me to some club in Richmond and I want to look nice. Sexy nice—and a lot of my dresses are every day nice or funeral nice."

The blonde giggled. "Well help yourself. So is this a normal club or some type of vampire thing?"

"Normal. At least I hope it's normal." She replied, holding a green dress up to herself before the mirror. "Considering the way he gets when other vampires show an interest in me, I doubt he'd take me to a place filled with them."

Caroline nodded. "Are you happy with him?"
The witch smiled. "Yeah, I am. Don't get me wrong sometimes I wanna punch him in the face but I'm happy."

"I'm glad. If I thought for a second he was mistreating you, I'd find a way to take him out." Her friend replied. "I'm sure Tyler would help me too."

"I know I've said it before but I'm sorry for the way he treated you. I don't want you to think I've just forgotten any of that or whatever."

"No I know you haven't. And I suppose in his defense he was a different person then."

"Yeah. But that's no excuse. He still knew right from wrong."

"Sometimes I honestly wonder if he did. Damon was fucked up back then, like really. And after meeting Katherine I can honestly say that I understand why now."

"Ugh that bitch. I hope she's gone for good but I'm not getting my hopes up. As long as she can do damage she'll stick around."

"Well better her than Klaus, right?"

Bonnie wet her lips slowly and sighed, returning the green dress to pull out a skinny strap red one. "True. Can I tell you something and not have it leave this room?"

Caroline sat up straighter. "Of course. What's up?"

Fiddling with the zipper in the back, she tossed it onto the bed and began to undress. "I'm not sure it was really him but, Klaus contacted me in a dream. He's in the market for a new witch to trail him around and apparently I fit the bill. I haven't told anyone because I don't want them to worry. It could just be my overactive imagination. Not to mention after everything we've been through, we all deserve some down time."

Tilting her head to the side, Caroline frowned. "But what if it is him, Bonnie? Damon and Stefan should know so that they can decide how to act. What if Klaus comes after you? He's all super powered now. Do you think you'd be able to take him?"

I've asked myself that several times and I honestly don't know the answer." Maybe. I don't know."

"You've got to get out of your martyr complex. Okay so you saved all of us. Why can't we return the favor?" She asked slowly. "Damon's gonna be mad if you don't tell him."

Bonnie snorted but it lacked any malice. She shimmed out of her clothes and pulled on the dress, letting Caroline zip her up as she surveyed herself in the mirror. Yes Damon would be angry if she attempted to take things on alone and she had no intention of doing so. But they'd just fought for their lives and survived; couldn't they relax for a few days? For a week? Couldn't she just go out with her boyfriend without the threat of danger looming over them?

"I'm going to tell him. I promise." She exhaled deeply, pushing up her cleavage. "But right now I want to look amazing and I want him to spend the night trying to talk me outta this dress."

Carolina laughed and patted her shoulder. "I think you could wear a bathrobe and he'd still be trying to talk you out of it. But this works too. You look gorgeous." Pause. "Aw my little Bonnie is all grown up and having sex! With an older guy! It's like you're really committed to following my example."
The other girl chuckled. "Oh shut up. You and Elena act like me having sex is some grand thing. Everyone does it."

She shrugged, moving over to her vanity to pick out jewelry. "True but it just seemed like we were all doing it and you weren't. You weren't even kissing guys. And now you're doing Damon. It's like you went from 0 to 80 in seconds."

Bonnie tossed a sock at her; did it really go like that? "Oh be quiet. Damon and I went through hell to get where we are now. Our whole thing was hating each other until—until we didn't anymore. I'd like to think that means something."

"I think it does. Tyler helped torture and almost kill me, and now we're like hanging out and stuff." Caroline mused. "Sometimes you identify with someone you never thought you would in a million years because you discover you're not that different after all."

*True. Though I'm sure our bond helped, and our mutual grief later on with Grams dying and Katherine not being in the tomb. I don't believe in fate but who knows? Maybe destiny or something is at work here. Things seem too insane sometimes for it not to be. The vampire who falls for the witch, whose best friend looks exactly like the vampire's dead girlfriend. What are those odds?*

"Speaking of Tyler…" She made kissing noises. "Are you two a couple or what?"

"We're…friends," Caroline replied with a grin. "We're trying to figure out this new element or our relationship. And what Matt is going to say or think. He pretty much told me he didn't want to be involved in anything supernatural but if I start dating Tyler I'd like to think he'd be pissed off anyway. I don't want to hurt him anymore than he's already been hurt."

"Matt is a strong guy. He'll be okay." *Hopefully."I think some time away from our craziness would do him some good. I'd hate to be human looking in on all that we have going on."

The blonde picked out a pretty pair of ruby earrings and handed them to her. "Yeah but I miss being human. All the stuff I thought I had time for—all the stuff I never really wanted—I miss it. Like I never wanted kids but now I'm kinda sad I'll never get to have them. It's stupid."

Bonnie shook her head. "I don't think it's stupid at all. If there is any way for my powers to help in that, when you're ready I'll try. What's the point of being a kick ass witch if I can't help my friends?"

Caroline hugged her tightly. "We're all lucky to have you, Bonnie Bennett. I'm glad it's something we realized before it was too late."

A pause. "I think my mom is coming around to the idea more and more though. She—well she understand that just because I'm a vampire doesn't mean I'm evil. I've been trying to explain all of it to her, ya know? I'm hoping that she at least comes to trust me."

"She's crazy if she doesn't." *In more ways than one. "It's hard when everything you believe is rocked to the core, but sometimes you have to stop hiding behind beliefs and think for yourself. Grams knew first hand that vampires can be horrible but she didn't tell me to stop seeing Damon. Whether she had faith that he'd mellow out or that I was a good judge of character, I don't know."

"Maybe she knew you'd be able to handle him." The blonde suggested idly. "It's not like he respects any of *us*. Everything he does for the rest of us is in direct relation to you…"
Heh. And Elena but not so much anymore. Thankfully. "Truthfully? I'm kinda glad Damon didn't just pull a one eighty and suddenly be this totally nice guy. His asshole-ness has kinda grown on me."

"Ha! That's how you know it's real love." Caroline said in a sing-song voice. "And hey with our nifty daylight rings you can have a day time wedding without anyone turning to ashes."

Bonnie eyed her and folded her arms over her chest. "I'm so having sex in this dress," she teased.

Caroline threw herself back onto her bed and got comfortable. "That's okay. I've had sex in it lots of times."

Her friend gasped. "Ew! And you let me put it on?"

The blonde waved a hand. "Oh whatever. It's been washed since then, duh."

~*~

While Damon knew that Bonnie didn't condone him compelling humans anytime he pleased, she didn't object to him compelling the bouncer at the door of the club into letting her in without seeing her id. He was surprised she didn't have a fake one but then again when one wanted to drink in Mystic Falls all they did was go to some wooded area and wait for a college dude. The city was different and the burly bald dude had express orders not to let anyone in under the drinking age.

That is until Damon reminded him that she'd already shown her id.

But on to more important things, like Bonnie's dress. She wasn't a woman yet so she wasn't as curvy as she probably could be, but she obviously knew how to enhance her assets. He was pretty sure her breasts were going to tumble out of her bra at any minute, and of course he'd be there to catch them like a good boyfriend. He could just barely smell a little of Caroline on the garment but it didn't matter. Bonnie was wearing it now and wearing it well.

From the moment she'd gotten in the car he'd wondered if he could talk her into bathroom sex. The fabric looked so freaken soft; all he wanted to do was rip it and tear it until he could get to the goodies underneath.

The club was loud as most clubs were, with flashing lights and grinding bodies on the dance floor. Heavy drum beats thumped from the large speakers and alcohol flowed freely from the bar. Everyone looked carefree and that was the plan, to go somewhere where they didn't have to think about Jenna's death or the fact that Klaus was still running around. The best part being no one knew them. They weren't Damon Salvatore and Bonnie Bennett; they were just a couple enjoying a night out.

In the past my idea of a night out was hunting a pretty little co-ed but this works too.

"Hey." He meandered out onto the floor and pulled Bonnie close to him, smoothing his hands down her sides. "Would you be up for more role-playing?"

She arched a brow at him. "Who would I have to be this time?"

He smirked. "The lost cheerleader. You can wear your uniform. I promise not to miss it up."

She laughed and wrapped her arms around his neck, grinding lightly to the beat against him. "I think I could be talked into it, maybe. Though I question my sanity whenever I indulge you and your violent fantasies."
The vampire snorted. "It's not violent. You never get hurt."

"Yeah. But if we weren't together and I was any other girl, it'd be a different story wouldn't it?" Her big green eyes watched him with a gentle expression. "And that—that's okay. I mean I get it."

"It's different now." And I'm not going crazy because of it. Man this chick has done a number on me."Long as you never get issues with me drinking human blood from a bag we'll be fine."

"I'm okay with that." She tugged at his hair. "You've been awesome about the no killing thing. So yeah, I'll be your lost cheerleader."

Damon smiled and kissed her. "You having fun so far?"

She glanced around and nodded. "Every girl in here is looking at us right now and wondering how I ended up with you. They're jealous and I'm kinda digging it. So yes I'm having a good time."

Laughing, he spared the crowd a glance. "You're the one who's burning bright, baby. Like a star. No one in here holds a candle to you."

Her cheeks flushed and she turned her back to him, rolling her hips to the beat of Jeremih’s Down On Me. Damon grunted and pressed his face into her neck, inhaling deeply. The urge to sink his teeth in bubbled up in his chest but he pushed it down—that was for later when they were alone. Instead he focused on just being in the moment and enjoying it for what it was. It had been a long time since he'd had this sort of night with someone. Dancing to be close and get aroused, not as a prequel to the rough feeding that would eventually happen.

He liked the way Bonnie moved. The way she felt almost fragile against him yet there was the unnatural hum of power that tickled the hairs on his arm, letting him know she could hold her on. She smelled delicious and seemed totally unconscious of just how gorgeous she truly was. Where Katherine's blatant sexuality had always got him going, Bonnie's understated sexiness was even better.

It's like she doesn't even know what she does to me. God, I could eat her up.

Nuzzling at the skin of her shoulder and causing one strap to slip down low, he licked over it slowly and smiled when she shivered. His fingers—too quick for human eyes to spy—dipped under her dress and brushed against the seat of her panties. "Lower the lights."

Bonnie grabbed his wrist, swallowing hard as she focused. Very slowly the lights dimmed but no one really seemed to notice for whatever reason. They were probably too caught up in their conversations or their drinking or their dancing.

Better for me.Smirking at his own thoughts, he pushed her undies to the side and rubbed a finger over her, delighting in the way she shuddered. Her eyes closed of their volition and she leaned back into him, keeping the beat as he applied more pressure to her clitoris. In minutes she was gasping lightly, and his fingertips were moving fluidly in a slick circle. His left arm was around her waist almost protectively, giving the impression that they were just off in their own little world, her body moving to the rhythm and nothing else.

And no one knew the truth which just made him love it even more.

When she came, she whimpered and dug her nails into his wrist. The entire club went dark though the music continued and a few people screamed at the sudden blackout. But it only lasted a minute at the most and everything was normal again.
"Shit…" She wet her lips and watched as he sucked his fingers into his mouth. "That was…dirty."

"But good." He grinned when she rolled her eyes but obviously agreed with him. "Wanna a drink?"

Running a hand through her black curls, she nodded. "Yeah I think I could do with one. Nothing too strong though."

Adjusting himself, he patted her on the butt and motioned to a table, then headed for the bar. He ordered two Ruin Me Russians. They had vodka in them but it wasn't like he could get drunk that quick anyway. And it didn't matter if she did because he was looking out for her. After they were mixed and he paid, he strolled back to their table, surprised to find some tall blonde guy occupying his seat.

Sitting the glasses down, he eyed the new arrival. "Can I help you?"

Blonde guy smiled. "I was just keeping this lovely young lady company. She said she had a boyfriend but I didn't see you so…"

"Well Sven I'm here now so you can leave." Damon slipped an arm around Bonnie's shoulder.

"You're a lucky man, she's breathtaking." His eyes were on Bonnie. "Kinda young to be in here though, wouldn't you say?"

"I'm twenty-one." Bonnie lied. "Not for nothing but you should seriously consider leaving. My boyfriend has a temper."

Blondie cut his eyes to Damon. "I'll bet he does. However if I had such a pretty witch like you on my arm, I'd probably be over protective as well."

Damon glared at him. "Who are you?"

The man grinned. "You can call me Klaus."

Jerking, Damon reached for his neck when Bonnie grabbed his wrist, pulling it away. "He's compelled. He has to be."

"I don't care. I'm killing him." The vampire growled.

Klaus continued to grin. "So impulsive. You realize I could have stolen Bonnie away while you were getting her drink. I could have taken her far, far away."

Climbing off her stool, Bonnie wrapped her arm around Damon's waist. "Let's go."

"You tell your boss to fuck off." Damon jabbed a finger into Klaus' chest. "Or things will start to get ugly."

"Whatever you say, Damon." Klaus winked. "I'm sure I'll see you around, Bonnie."

Resisting the urge to smash his face into the table, Damon pulled Bonnie towards the door as quickly as he could. He realized he was probably pulling too hard but he couldn't stop. He had to get her away from this asshole before said asshole got smart or before he killed him. In fact he was seriously considering coming back once he was alone and killing him anyway. Bonnie never had to know.

Once they were safely in his car and speeding down the highway, Damon huffed. "Sorry…if I hurt your arm."
There were small finger shaped bruises welling up, but she didn't seem to mind. "It's okay." Pause. "Damon, I dreamed about Klaus the other night. I—I thought it was just a dream but after tonight I don't know."

"Why didn't you tell me?" He snapped angrily.

Unbuckling her seat-belt, she slid across to him. "I didn't want to worry you. We've all been through so much and I just—I just wanted everything to be quiet."

Fuck..."Yeah okay but you know how secrets tend to come back and bite us in the ass. How did he even know where we were?"

She shrugged. "I don't know. I'll check for some spells to keep him out of my head just in case."

Damon gripped the steering wheel tightly. "We're going to have to kill him. You know that right? The longer he's alive the more bullshit he'll try to put us through. I mean he could just kidnap you. The rest of this is him being a dick."

Her voice was soft as she replied, "I know. But if he wants another fight we'll give him one. We haven't shrunk back from anything that's came our way so far and we won't now. We'll be okay."

Naturally Damon wasn't so sure. It'd taken an ancient to go up against an ancient and now Klaus was half wolf and they would be fucked if he decided to really flex his powers. All he could hope was that in reality Klaus had no interest in Bonnie. That he was just being an asshole because he could to sort of get back at them or whatever for trying to kill him.

Otherwise they were screwed. She couldn't take him on without possibly killing herself and he would not allow that at all. He'd grab her and run before that happened.

Actually that doesn't sound like such a bad idea...

"You okay?" She asked kissing his cheek.

"Yeah just...thinking." He said softly. "No worries, baby. I've always got a backup plan."

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

They say it's the thought that counts.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

This Place Is Death

Stefan Salvatore lounged on his sofa and watched as his big brother paced from one side of the room to the other. His expression was near murderous; his eyes hard and calculated with the thoughts running through his mind. He was close to the edge of losing control—Stefan could tell because he knew exactly where he was coming from. Whenever Elena was in danger or threatened he felt the same emotions course through him. And unlike himself, Damon had a history of acting without thinking about the consequences of his actions. It was a good and bad quality to possess.

Exhaling deeply, he clasped his hands in front of him. "So Klaus has been invading Bonnie's dreams? Are we sure it's him and not just a nightmare?"

Damon folded his arms over his chest. "He compelled some jerk in that club to screw with us so, yeah I wouldn't be surprised if he's figured out a way to get inside of her head. You know he could probably compel her to do anything and she'd have to do it."

Stefan nodded slowly. "We'll just make sure that doesn't happen. We'll be more vigilant and not let her go out alone without a chaperone. I'm sure Caroline and Tyler will help considering Klaus is a threat to them as well."

His brother frowned. "We need to figure out a way to kill the son of a bitch before he does anymore damage. He's planning something…I can feel it. That's the only reason he's lying low."

"How would we even begin to think about killing him, Damon?" Stefan inquired. "Bonnie was our best shot before with Elijah's help and now, well, it would take all of her energy to kill him. Which would kill her as well."

"That's not happening." Damon growled. "I don't know, okay? But we have to come up with something before he decides he's tired of these games and just comes for her."

The other vampire smoothed a hand over his face because he knew exactly how that felt. "Alright. I'll get Alaric to help me research; see what we can dig up. There has to be something out there that can help us."

Damon didn't want to spend time with musty old books but of course he didn't have any other choice. It was times like this that he hated not being older and stronger. He hated feeling so fucken useless. "This is all John's fault."

Stefan arched a brow. "How so?"

Because everything is John's fault? "Well it all started with him and that fucken device or whatever."
You know if we still had that thing we could probably use it against Klaus. It worked on the Mayor and what's his face so we know it would work on his wolf side. We could knock his ass out and then have Bonnie set him on fire." Pause. "I wonder where it got to?"

Stefan stood with a shrug. "Who knows? I think John was the last person to have it and he's dead now. We should find out if he has any holdings somewhere, like a safety deposit box or something. As a relative Elena would be able to get to them I think."

"Maybe I'll ask Liz what she knows." He grabbed his jacket and headed for the door.

"Damon!" Stefan called after him. "Be nice. Sheriff Forbes isn't our closest ally anymore if at all. Don't do anything that would make things harder for Caroline."

He grinned widely. "No problem, brother. I'll be on my best behavior." Winking, he exited the manor and headed for his car.

Stefan got on his nerves most days but it probably wasn't a secret that he did in fact care about his well-being. However one of his main problems with him is that he tried to care about everyone and everything. He wanted to save the world and be the hero, while Damon just wanted to protect what was his. He had no desire to change his stripes and be a decent member of society. He would sacrifice Caroline and the entire town of Mystic Falls in a heartbeat if it meant Bonnie was safe. And he wasn't going to feel bad because of it.

It was selfish and he realized this and frankly, he didn't give a shit. For almost one hundred and fifty years he coasted through the decades with only the thought of seeing Katherine again to keep him going. Well that and fucking up Stefan's life but that was beside the point. Anyway he didn't let anything stand in his way to reach her no matter how the situation finally acted out. In truth he'd been lonely while waiting for the comet. Meaningless flings with girls who may or may not have ended up his dinner passed the time but they didn't satisfy him. Back then only Katherine fit that bill.

Now things were different. He had someone and after all he'd been through with Bonnie and nearly losing her several times, he wasn't about to let some freak swoop in and take her away. He'd been saying it for months now but Bonnie was his and she always would be. No one and no thing had a claim to her, not even death. Especially not some asshole that would just use her for his own amusement.

Still he realized that love and emotions ultimately fucked you up in the end. Before Katherine he'd been human and regular. Perhaps searching for something more but his soul wasn't tainted with the blood of so many victims he'd lost count. Back then he had morals and chivalry. Back then he'd been more like Stefan than he ever wanted to let on now. Love—love—destroyed him and made him into a new animal, one that attacked and murdered without conscious.

Until Bonnie.

They'd come so far but obviously still had miles to go. Sometimes he didn't know what to make of her even now. She was like a hurricane; most times calm as a constant eye of the storm but look out if you go the outer rings. Yet he really liked that about her. He loved watching her unleash her fury onto the world. He loved watching her come apart under his hands until glass shattered and wooden beams creaked. One day they'd leave this stupid little town and live like royalty somewhere.

First though, Klaus.

Sliding behind the wheel of his vehicle, he glanced to his reflection in the rear-view mirror before starting up and pulling out of the driveway. He didn't have time to make nice with the scared
humans. Sure he wasn't a saint and yes he often killed without mercy, but it wasn't like Liz was innocent either. He was certain a few of the evil vampires she'd killed in the past were probably just trying to live their lives. Such a Lexi. Yeah he'd dealt the death blow but Liz would have herself if she could have.

Her prejudices weren't unfounded just out of control, like hating an entire group of people because of what one single person did.

Instead of driving to her home he went directly to the police station. He figured if she were there it would be easier for her to talk to him if she had back up. He'd pretend he couldn't kill everyone inside in five seconds if it made her feel better. After parking, he strolled inside and through the hallways, ignoring a few of the looks he got from people who knew the truth. Once at her office, he knocked and entered when she beckoned for him to do so.

Her expression was comical once he was inside. "You've got a lot of nerve coming here."

"Naturally." He said with a smile. "Look Liz, I know you're confused on how you're feeling about people like me and I'm not here to try to change your mind. Hate me all you want—I deserve it. But first I think you should know Caroline is still your daughter and she still loves you."

Liz frowned at him, her fingers moving restlessly on top of her desk. "Is that what you came here to tell me?"

"Nope." Popping the sound, he sunk down into a chair. "I realize you don't know the entire situation so I'm gonna fill you in on some of the finer details. When you tried to kill me I was infected and basically out of my mind. Things besides a few vampires draining people happen in this town, Liz. And I haven't fed on a human in ages. Well without consent I'll say."

"What sort of things?" She inquired curiously. "You mean this—this wolf stuff?"

"Somewhat." His brows drew together in a tight scowl. "All you need to know is that there is something out there ten times worse than I ever was. My brother and I want to kill it, a lot. But it's proving to be difficult."

She nodded, eying him warily. "And you need my help?"

He clasped his hands together in his lap. "I need to know where Jonathan Gilbert keeps his toys and important things. Things he wouldn't want anyone getting their hands on."

Liz snorted. "I'm sorry to disappoint you Damon, but John isn't exactly forthcoming with any of his secrets. Bastard hordes them like treasure."

Of course. Asshole.

"Does the Council know anything about how to kill an ancient vampire?"

She blinked in a sort of shocked stupor. "How ancient?"

He leaned back in his chair. "Very."

"I…" Shaking her head, she bit her bottom lip. "I don't know. I'd have to check the archives or something. I mean we know this town has a history of abnormal things but I don't know if anyone ever touched on an ancient vampire."

"If you could check that would be nice." He tilted his head to the side. "Every little bit helps."

"Right. You know I don't trust you at all Damon. You're a killer; I know all about some of the things
you've done."

"Then you should know what I'll do to protect those I care about."

"Bonnie Bennett, right?"

"I see Caroline has been running her mouth."

"She's being honest with me because I deserve it, and I want to understand what she is now. Bonnie is seventeen years old and you're...a hell of a lot older than that."

"Gonna lock me up for statutory rape?"

"I'd like to lock you up for a lot more than that. But no, I just think you should leave her alone. Caroline was fine before you and your brother came to town, and now she's a—a vampire. How many more people have to die?"

"As of right now, just one."

"I trusted you and you lied to me."

"Yet you're still alive. I could have killed you when you first discovered the truth, but I didn't. And it wasn't all because of Caroline either. It was because I considered you a friend. I'm not a saint but I'm not always the monster you think I am either. As for Bonnie, she's mine and I'm going to take care of her."

"What if you can't?"

"I don't take failure very well."

Liz exhaled deeply. "I'll talk to Carol Lockwood and see if she knows anything about your ancient vampires."

Damon nodded and stood. "Thank you." A beat. "For what it's worth, Liz, I'm sorry you found out about this the way you did."

"Me too." She said softly.

He gazed at her for a few moments before opening the door and walking out. A part of him couldn't help but think she'd stab him in the back the second he became too much to handle, and really she'd be totally justified to do so. But that didn't mean he was going to go down without a fight. He liked her—he did—but if her body added to pile helped him save Bonnie then he'd rip out her heart without a second thought.

So many violent thoughts today. Judgy wouldn't like it if she knew what I was thinking. She's like Stefan with the whole wanting to save everyone thing.

Damon couldn't help but wonder how Bonnie would see his reckless and intense loyalty. In the past she'd been upset because he hadn't seemed to care enough but now he figured she would see his single minded focus a bit un-nerving albeit telling of his true feelings for her. He couldn't help but hold on so tight because any other option sounded stupid. Vampires always went all out, that was just the way it was.

More pressing matters—he needed to find out more information on Klaus so that he could get rid of him. What they needed was another Original willing to sell the bastard out, but he didn't know where
they would find one or if there were any left. Nevertheless there had to be some way to get rid of him. After all vampires and wolves weren't exactly immortal just harder to kill than most. Sunlight and stakes might not work on him but something would. It was just a matter of finding that something.

Perhaps Alaric knew something. He had been Klaus' suit for a while. I shouldn't have killed his witches so quickly, but eh, what are you gonna do? Suddenly a light bulb clicked on in his head and he yanked out his phone, dialing Stefan.

"Hello?"

"Stefan. Remember that guy Rose took me to see? The one who was constantly in college?"

"Yeah." Stefan replied. "Why? Elijah killed him as far as we know."

"True but he had all this information on Originals and stuff." He explained as he strolled towards his car. "People like him always had backups or whatever. You should take Elena to his house and see if there is anything there. Steal his computers or something."

"It could be a long shot but okay." His brother agreed. "I'll call you if I find anything. And Damon? Be careful."

"Your concern is touching." He rolled his eyes. "Bye."

Pocketing his cell, he flopped behind the wheel and glanced around at the town. There is nothing good about this place, never has been. Why everyone is fighting so hard to protect it I have no idea. In a perfect world Stefan, Elena, Bonnie and I would hit the road and go somewhere so much better. And then Bonnie and I would ditch them for some much needed alone time.

_Honestly I don't think Mystic Falls is big enough for us and Klaus._

~*~

The rules of a vampire/wolf hybrid weren't clear to anyone but Bonnie assumed Klaus couldn't just waltz into her home without being invited. She didn't want to test her theory but she didn't have time to be always be afraid for the moment he might show up. She couldn't live her life like that—in fact she refused. There were things she wanted to do and needed to do, and going home to make sure her house was still standing was one of those things.

It was, thankfully.

Standing in her living room with the windows open to let in some fresh air, she picked up a yellow can of furniture polish and sprayed down the coffee table and bookshelf. She hadn't been home in a while so things were a little stuffy. Her father was still away on business though he did call her every few days to make sure things were okay. He'd also slip in a question or two about Damon but she always assured him she was behaving herself. Though she kinda suspected her father suspected that Damon had been over more times than he cared to really know about. At least too much has been going on for Tyler's mom to open her mouth.

After cleaning away some of the dust, she put a load of laundry in the wash and threw out expired food from the fridge. The sun was shining brightly outside and it made her feel better about being alone. Besides it wasn't like she could stay joined at the hip to Damon for the rest of her life. Well she could but she didn't want to. Still everyone kept telling her that it was okay to let him take care of her for a while. And God knows he appeared to really want to. In truth she did feel a lot better
going to bed at night with his arms wrapped around her.

Yawning and stretching her arms over her head, she hauled a bag of trash out to a can on the curb and rubbed her hands on her jeans when she was done. A white van with a bright pink logo on the side pulled up and a man in a brown uniform hopped out, coming around to where she stood.

"Are you Bonnie Bennett?" He inquired with a big smile.

"Uh, yeah." She scratched at her cheek.

"This is for you!" He handed her a long white box with a red ribbon tied around the center and had her sign his electronic clipboard. "You have a very nice day now!" And then he was hurrying back to his van and speeding off.

"O…kay…" Chuckling, she sat down on her porch steps and picked up the card attached to the bow. She'd never assumed Damon was the romantic type, well not the flowers type anyway. This was a pleasantly unexpected surprise.

*An showing of good will for a rose by another name who is just as sweet. —K*

Bonnie's heart went from steady to racing in a single second and she had to swallow down the sound that threatened to escape her throat. She balled the note up and looked to the box in her lap, steeling herself against nerves. *I can do this. He's just messing with me.* Wetting her lips, she pulled off the ribbon and lifted off the top to peer inside.

There nestled amongst a dozen long stemmed red roses was a bloody human heart.

She shoved the box away from her and stood, taking a few steps back. Immediately she wondered who was dead. Who had Klaus murdered to make a point to her? Elena? Jeremy? Her father? Tears filled her eyes and she opened her hand, gasping in air before noticing the words scrawled on the back of the card.

*You're the only pretty witch in town now.*

Realization dawned on her like a sunrise. "Clarissa."

A hand on her shoulder made her scream, and then the owner of the hand screamed and grabbed their head. "Bonnie! Bonnie it—it's me! Caroline! Ah! Please!"

"Oh, oh God Caroline I'm so sorry!" Bonnie instantly stopped bursting the blood vessels in her brain. "You—shit you just scared the hell out of me. What are you doing here?"

Pouting, the blonde rubbed her forehead. "Elena asked me to come and check on you while she and Stefan did something. What's wrong?"

She motioned to the box. "Klaus sent me a present or his idea of a present."

Looking into the gift, Caroline made a face. "Oh ew! Wha—whose heart is that?"

"There was this witch a while ago and she had a thing against Damon for killing a friend of hers. She came after both of us but Stefan destroyed her talisman and we hadn't heard from her since. I'm pretty sure that's hers in there." She said pointing. "Somehow Klaus found her and killed her. He made it sound like a fucken favor or whatever."

Caroline nudged the top back onto it with her foot. "I hope I never run into that guy."
"I hope if I run into him again I can kill him." Bonnie growled. "I'm tired of people coming here and thinking they can screw with us. We're powerful and they have no right."

"I'm with ya there." The blonde squeezed her shoulder. "Um, you should get rid of that though before someone sees it. Bury it in the backyard maybe? I'll do it if you want."

Bonnie turned and hugged her friend tightly. "Thanks. I have some clothes that need drying; do you wanna hang with me until they are ready?"

Caroline smiled. "Of course. We'll look out for each other."

~*~

It's dark by the time all of the clothes were dry and put away with the exception of the ones Bonnie planned to take back to Damon's. She and Caroline spent their time chatting after Clarissa's heart was buried under the bushes in the backyard. She knew that she has to tell Damon but she also knew he won't take it well. He didn't even want her out of his sight; she had to pull the *I'm a kick ass witch who can take care of herself* card.

Luckily she also had strong friends around to worry about her.

Humming, she brought her bag downstairs and sat it on the floor, checking to make sure she had everything she wanted to take with her. Not like she couldn't borrow something from Elena if she needed it.

Caroline was standing at the window while looking down at her phone, probably texting Tyler. Bonnie smirked as she remembered when she'd idly considered dating Tyler a while ago. She now thought he made a better fit with Caroline however. They're both so new to this world, both slightly scared and a bit jaded because of what's been done to them. They could become perfect for each other like she became with Damon.

*We will double date one night, I don't care what Damon says.*

Snickering, she ducked into the kitchen for a last minute check to make sure the stove was off when a loud crash sounded from the living room. She rushed back inside just in time to see Caroline be hurled into the wall with a loud *thud*. Her attacker turned slowly as if it pained him and the second Bonnie glimpsed his face she figured it probably did.

"Hello Bonnie. Long time no see."

"Luka…"

He was…disgusting for lack of a better word. Charred and dirty with clumps of rotten flesh peeling off his face and hands. His eyes were white, glazed and dead. His lips chapped to the point of breaking. He was decomposing right before her eyes, patches of his flesh moving on its own accord which could only mean insects were trapped and burrowing to the surface to get free. And the smell…it was enough to make her gag.

"I'd ask where my dad is but I already know." He glanced down at himself. "It's strange, being back in my body, if I can even call it that anymore. Everything itches."

She swallowed hard. "I—I don't know who did this to you but I can put you back to rest."

"Clarissa did it." He said. "But I don't feel her anymore. She brought me back for a reason though and I'm gonna take full advantage of it."
He lunged at her without warning and she screamed as they went down, hitting the carpet hard. She struggled and kicked out at him, trying to get him off of her but it wasn't easy. He was strong and heavy, his maggot eaten hands wrapping tightly around her throat and squeezing.

"I always wanted to kiss you, Bonnie." He grinned, his teeth black. "Consider it the last wish of a dead man."

His face came closer and she lashed out, sending him crashing onto the coffee table. She scrambled to her feet, nearly falling twice before she staggered into the kitchen with sore ribs. He was up quickly though and shoved her hard into the counter, knocking the air out of her lungs. He grabbed her from behind, his fingers tight in her hair as he started dragging her backwards. She slammed her head back violently into his face and he cried out, giving her just enough time to grab a glass of water sitting on the sink. She tossed it onto him and twitched. Without warning he erupted into a ball of flames, shrieking and flailing.

The kitchen door slammed back against the wall as it was forced open and she jerked her head to the side, her big green eyes meeting Damon's surprised blue ones. They both watched in silence as Luka fell burning to his knees and then onto his chest, his shrieks turning to whimpers and then nothing at all.

Damon was pulling her into his arms a second later, and she tried as hard as she could not to break down. "Are you okay? I felt your fear."

She nodded shakily. "I—a little. Thanks for coming to rescue me."

"Always." He winked, alert once again when a groan sounded from the living room.

"Caroline!" Bonnie stepped over Luka's carcass and hurried to check on her friend. "Are you okay?"

"Getting tired of being tossed into shit but otherwise, yeah." She grumbled. "What just happened?"

"Apparently Clarissa left me a parting gift. I wonder if that was before or after Klaus got his hands on her." Bonnie bit down hard on her lip. "I'm guessing after. God, it's like he's trying to court me or something."

"Fuck him." Damon snapped. He gently took Bonnie's upper arm and guided her outside. "Fuck this whole town."

She smoothed her hand on his cheek. "I'm okay. I told you I could take care of myself."

He nodded. "Yeah I know but that's not what I'm talking about. You do realize Klaus is just being a dick, right? He could come for you anytime he wanted just like he came for Elena. Well I'm sorry but I'll be damned if I just stand there like Stefan did while he takes you away. I'll burn this town to the ground before I let him have you."

Lifting onto her tippy toes, she wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him. Let him hold her a little too tightly. Let him turn the kiss from delicate to aggressive until she was gasping for air with kiss swollen lips and dilated pupils.

Damon tipped up her chin, his faded blue eyes searching her face before he spoke. "Would you leave with me?"

She frowned a little in confusion. "What do you mean?"

He exhaled, his expression guarded. "If shit got too insane and there was no way to fuck Klaus up,
would you leave with me? This town, this state, hell this fucken continent. Would you leave with me?"

She opened her mouth to respond with a hair trigger response but it died on her tongue. A burst of warmth flared to life in her chest and she shivered, slowly looking around the neighborhood she'd called home since before she could even talk. To the house she'd grew up in with a father who loved her and a Grams that drunk too much but was always there for her. To a few blocks over where her best friends lived and went to school.

And then she settled on the man in front of her and the answer was so clear. "Yes, Damon. I'd leave with you."

~Fin~

Chapter End Notes

The title of this installment is taken from a Deftones song; however I'm going to be a bit ambiguous on why I'm using it.
What's Next?

Chapter Summary

Everyone had a feeling something was coming, even if they tried to pretend otherwise.

What's Next?

Damon Salvatore was not Edward Cullen. He didn't sparkle in the sunlight and he thought the idea of going to high school over and over again as an inside joke was the dumbest damn thing he'd ever heard of. He only ate furry animals if there was nothing else around and he didn't spout poetry or whatever. No, he was certainly not Edward Cullen in any shape or form and not just because Edward was a figment of some housewife's imagination. He was real and raw and sometimes homicidal. However with all of that established he found that he did enjoy watching his girlfriend sleep.

Now it wasn't in a creepy, rape-y sort of way. Bonnie was totally aware that he was there and she didn't mind in the least. It should also be said that she definitely wasn't Bella Swan. Bella would never sleep naked with her vampire, her hands on his waist and her upper body pressed tight to his stomach. The sheet spread around her lower back and tangled up in her legs with her long hair fanning over her cheek. Not like Bonnie was currently doing and looking magnificent while doing it. All that smooth brown skin, still slightly damp from their previous love making and warm where it was blanketting his.

Anyway he liked watching her sleep and he wasn't sure why but he figured it had something to do with how beautiful she was. How when sleeping she reached a level of peace that was hard to get to otherwise.

He was propped up against the pillows, the fingers on his right hand carding through her silky hair idly. His mind was buzzing with different ideas but they all stemmed from the same source. She'd said that she would run away with him and meant it. When he thought back to their first interactions it almost made him laugh. He remembered the first time he saw her; he'd been trying to decide who to play with for the night and ended up picking Caroline. Good choice in hindsight because Bonnie would have accidentally killed him once she was scared enough.

But he remembered watching her and the blonde at their table at the Grille; Caroline whining and drunk while Bonnie attempted to take care of her. Eventually he would have gotten around to messing with her too if things hadn't went so drastically different. It was odd to consider being anywhere else though like still pining for Elena and having no concept of this feeling he was experiencing. He'd never admit it to anyone but he was better off with Bonnie. Elena was amazing in her own way but she didn't have half the fire Bonnie possessed.

Sometimes he wondered why it took him so long to realize that. He wasn't slow like Stefan.

Sighing, he rested his head back to the headboard and gazed out of the window. They could go to California or maybe London—he liked London. Totally reinvent themselves as anyone though she would probably want to finish school in some form. They could live in Paris in a lovely cottage with a small chateau. So many possibilities…
Yet he wondered if any choice would actually do any good. Klaus wasn't the type to give up because the object of his obsession moved away. There was a good chance he'd follow them no matter where they went, and always running wasn't the kinda life he wanted for Bonnie. Not that she could have much of a life with him in general.

_Fuck. That's depressing._

Bonnie shifted and made a cute little noise before nuzzling his chest and slowly opening her eyes. She smiled at him and stretched, raking her nails down his sides. "Morning."

"Good morning." He said mirroring her smile. "Sleep well?"

She nodded. "Yeah I did. No weird dreams or anything."

"That's always good to hear." He rubbed her back soothingly. "The only one who should be in your head is _me._"

She chuckled, lifting her head so that her chin rested on his chest. "You look like you have a lot on your mind. Wanna talk about?"

He made a face. "Not really."

Sighing, she kissed the spot above his nipple. "C'mon. It's not healthy to keep stuff inside. Besides I bet I could guess it in one."

_Yeah... _"Just thinking about where we could go if we had to leave. Any suggestions?"

Shrugging, she searched his face with her calm green eyes. "Not really. But I've always wanted to go to Spain—or travel in general ya know? I figured after college I'd do that for a while and then settle down somewhere." She smiled at the thought. "I suppose as long as we're together it doesn't matter where we go."

"Unless Klaus finds us and _shatters_ everything." He frowned deeply. "Maybe we could make some type of deal with him. There has to be something he wants more than you."

"Maybe, but I doubt he would hold up his end either way." Pause. "We're just gonna have to find a way to destroy him. Perhaps we should look more into his wolf side or whatever. Find out what the weaknesses are."

_That could work._ "Eh let's do that later." Wrapping his arms around her back, he kissed her forehead. "We should do nothing today but relax and try to put that bastard out of our minds."

Bonnie grinned. "I'd like that. Hopefully there won't be any more zombies. It sucks to think that Luka and the others can't be at peace because of what's his face."

Damon tilted his head to the side but didn't comment. He didn't exactly have any sympathy for the idiots that signed up to work with Klaus because they _had_ to know what they were getting into. Compelled was a different matter of course but he doubted they all were. Some had probably wanted whatever he promised them whether it be power or money. People were really fickle that way, willing to sell out their family and friends for cash. Not that he could talk, he'd sold Stefan out for much less back in the day.

"There might not be zombies, but I'm sure something else will come up." He shrugged. "Always seems to for whatever reason. It's like all this shit just followed Stefan and I back to town."
She patted his stomach. "Weird things happened before but no one really paid much attention. I know I didn't. Hell Grams claimed to be a witch every day and I just thought she was a kookie old lady who loved her gin. And she was but ya know…"

He smirked. "Right. Listen don't tell Elena or Stefan about…you know."

"Why not?"

"I just don't think it's wise. If the time comes we'll just go."

"Damon c'mon. You can't expect me to not say goodbye to the people I love. I'd at least have to leave them notes."

"Notes sound okay. I just don't want Klaus knowing anything of it. Secrets have a way of getting out when they're shared too freely."

"I won't even think about it then until it maybe has to happen."

Nodding, he smoothed a hand over his eyes and looked to the clock on the bedside table. "Hungry?"

She smiled softly. "Sure if you're cooking."

Forcing himself out from under her, he grabbed his jeans up from the floor and slipped them on. "I suppose I could whip up something. I want you however to continue to look beautiful while lounging. Think you can do that?"

The witch laughed while gathering the sheet up to cover her bare breasts. "Yeah I think I can manage that if you can manage eggs and pancakes…"

He stuck his tongue out at her and made his way out of the room, bounding down the stairs and into the kitchen. The manor was quiet so he assumed Stefan and Elena were out or at least held up in his room for a while. He wondered if the protection on the house still stood. Elena had died but her name was still on the deed so maybe things would be alright. He just didn't want any random vampire—perhaps working for Klaus—barging in to start trouble.

Though to be honest he did sort of miss killing them. It got his aggression out.

Taking a bright red bowl from the cabinet, he yanked out the pancake stuff but paused when voices from upstairs caught his ear. Apparently his brother and Elena were home after all…

The mattress creaked as Stefan stretched. "Wanna tell me what you're thinking about?"

Elena sighed probably with a smile. "Don't take this the wrong way but…Damon."

Stefan chuckled. "It's okay. What are you thinking about Damon?"

"Just…how is he with Bonnie. I remember how he acted when he first showed up and after I found out what you guys were, he was a terror. What he did to Caroline and tried to do to Bonnie…” She exhaled deeply. "And yet now he's like a different person. Well, no. That's not true. He still can't seem to stand anyone but Bonnie but it's a vast improvement."

Her boyfriend snorted. "Actually I think being with Bonnie has taught him a few social graces he was lacking. He'd never admit it but he likes Alaric. He'd still use him for his advantage but he likes him. And I think he likes Jeremy."

Damon rolled his eyes but continued listening.
Elena giggled softly. "I think he tolerates Jeremy for my sake. It's nice though that he has someone—someone who isn't Katherine."

Stefan agreed. "True. Though the last time I saw Damon happy was with Katherine. Bonnie is a vast improvement over her any day. She's like you. She's honest and sincere, and the only thing she wants from him is what you want from me."

"And what's that?"

"Undying affection?"

"Yes. And gifts. We both like gifts."

"Duly noted."

Elena laughed before falling a bit somber. "We have to make sure Klaus doesn't break them up, Stefan. We—Bonnie would have died to keep me safe and I—I have to help her protect herself and what she cares about."

"And we will." He said. "I promise. Damon is my brother and although we've had our ups and downs I'll do whatever I have to do to keep him safe."

Saint Stefan...always putting me to shame.

"I hope in a few years we'll be living a normal life." Elena replied absently. "Like after college—if I go or whatever—that we can just live somewhere and be together. Maybe get married; your side is going to be seriously lacking family though in the church."

He snickered. "True but as long as you're there I'll be fine."

Damon decided to stop listening at that point and continue cooking. He could still hear them but he stopped paying attention. That was the problem with human girls however. They wanted normal. They wanted a white picket fence and a dog and 2.5 children. When he was human he'd never thought much about that sort of thing. What with a war going on and his father being a controlling asshole... Back then it was expected though. A young man like him was expected to settle down and pop out kids.

After meeting Katherine he hadn't cared about anything other than being with her. After becoming a vampire kids got on his last nerve and he'd wanted to eat more than a few. Now? Well he wasn't stupid. He knew Bonnie would probably eventually want that slice of American life people said was so damn nice. He just didn't know if he could give that to her long term. Hell he didn't know if she'd want it from him long term. Conversations like that made his head hurt.

Answers to conversations like that often made everything hurt.

~*~

A day without drama to Bonnie Bennett was like a day with sunshine and she took full advantage of it. She shook off the stench of Luka's decaying flesh and the sight of Clarissa's heart in a box to just enjoy her life and those around her. She felt the Salvatore mansion would be perfect if it had a pool but alas it didn't. Maybe she could talk Damon into getting a Jacuzzi; that seemed right up his alley.

Browsing the many books in the library, she let her fingers trail over the old spines, smudging dust off of the titles. She glanced around at all of the elegant décor and wondered if she could see herself living here for the long haul. After she turned eighteen of course because her father would never go
for that. He'd rather she was at home alone than staying with her college age boyfriend in his fancy house with his three hundred thread count sheets.

But God those were awesome sheets.

Walking over to the couch, she flopped down just as the front door opened. Footsteps sounded and Jeremy Gilbert rounded the corner in black, brushing tendrils of hair off his forehead. He smiled at the sight at her and strolled over, sitting down a comfortable yet cozy distance away.

"Hey. I hope you don't mind that I came over but I wanted to talk to you."

She shrugged. "Nope I don't mind. What's up?"

He scratched at his wrist. "What do you know about ghosts?"

She arched a brow. "$\text{Ghosts?}$" He nodded and she thought for a moment. "$\text{Well not much really. I know Emily was a pain in the ass when I had to deal with her, but she had a message for me. Most of the times I've encountered a ghost they had something to tell me or warn me about.}"

He frowned a little. "$\text{So they usually come with a message or something?}"

"I suppose." She stared at him. "$\text{Why do you ask?}"

Jeremy pulled at his shirt collar. "$\text{No reason… Just curious. Ya know because of everything that has been going on… And with Jenna and John dying.}"

"$\text{I know I said it before but I'm so sorry for your loss.}$" She reached over and rubbed his arm. "$\text{If you ever need to talk I'm here.}"

He smiled. "$\text{Thanks. I'd take you up on that if just to make Damon insanely jealous.}"

She laughed. "$\text{You like doing that, huh?}"

"$\text{Of course.}$" He winked. "$\text{I think he deserves it for the times he was a total jerk to me. And it helps you guys ya know—keeps things interesting.}"

\textit{That is very true. Damon gets sexy and possessive when he thinks someone is trying to poach me.} "$\text{With Klaus still around things couldn't be more interesting if they tried.}"

Jeremy shook his head. "$\text{I'm so sick of that asshole. He killed Jenna and now he's just out there. There has to be a way to kill him. I'm totally down to help you find one.}"

"$\text{I'm sure Elena doesn't want you to be in any danger.}"

"$\text{Yeah well, Elena doesn't get a say on how I live my life. Besides why would I wanna sit back and let everyone else fight battles that I could be fighting in too? Everyone is doing their part. Hell even Tyler and Caroline aren't human anymore. No offense to Matt but I don't wanna be that guy. I don't wanna be sitting at home doing homework or going to school while my friends are being slaughtered.}"

Bonnie could see the logic in his argument from both points of view. Before vampires life was boring but it was safe. Now however it was exciting but there was no guarantee that she was going to make it to see another day. Though she had to admit that she rather be \textit{in} the loop than out of it. She'd rather be standing shoulder to shoulder with Elena against whatever darkness appeared than hearing about her best friend's death later on.
"With our group the way it is I think we'll be okay." She wasn't one hundred percent sure but it was better than being melancholy about it.

Jeremy hunched his shoulders. "Eh maybe if I learn a real skill. I was thinking about getting Alaric to teach me some moves or whatever. For my own protection of course."

She knew Alaric would see through that in a minute and so did Jeremy. "Uh huh. But if he agrees I say go for it. We should all be able to protect ourselves."

Jeremy groaned and let his head rest to the back of the sofa. "Easier said than done." Pause. "Anyway we should have a party or something. A little unwinding thing. I mean we have a while before the next useless festival comes up."

Giggling, she ran a hand through her hair. "I'm sure someone is putting something together in the woods as we speak. I'm having too much fun being lazy though."

He smirked at her. "I'll bet. Living in the lap of luxury with your rich boyfriend can do that to you. So I've heard of course."

"Your boyfriend not rich?" She teased and he hit her lightly for her trouble. "It's not just that although yeah, staying here does do to you. It's like living in a movie. But I like just lounging around reading or whatever. Besides my dad isn't home and it beats sitting in my room doing nothing."

He tilted his head to the side. "You could always hang out with me. I'm sure I could find something entertaining for us to do."

The witch sent him a look. "Was that not supposed to sound dirty? Because if not you failed miserably."

Jeremy tapped a finger on his thigh. "It was supposed to be a little dirty. Sometimes I can't help myself; you're just so beautiful."

She rolled her eyes playfully. "Whatever."

A comfortable silence fell between them and Bonnie bit her bottom lip. She knew that Jeremy liked her but she tried hard not to perpetuate his feelings so that he wouldn't get hurt. He was aware that he didn't have a chance with her, but she was aware that getting over a crush didn't just happen overnight. And perhaps if things were different—if this life was another life then she would have ended up with Jeremy instead of Damon. It sounded weird but the universe could be that way.

In that alternate reality Jeremy was most likely the gentleman that he was now and she was happy. But it was odd to think of herself happy with any other guy that wasn't Damon. Because Damon was Damon. He was brass and heat and intensity rolled into one—no one could compare with that.

And that was a frightening thought.

Then again so was not living to her full potential in life and love because it wasn't conventional.

"Did I kill the mood?" Jeremy's voice cut through her thoughts. "Sorry."

"No I—no I was kinda daydreaming." She slumped. "Lots of thoughts, I get lost sometimes."

He nodded with a strange expression on his face. "I know the feeling."

Bonnie considered asking him what was really wrong but decided against it. If he wanted her (or
anyone for that matter) to know he would tell them. And well she kinda had her own problems to deal with anyway.

~*~

Resting on a comfy blanket that was spread on the soft grass, Elena and Bonnie stared up at the cloudy blue sky. The Salvatore yard was large and highly manicured so it was easy to catch a few moments of peace while their boyfriends did whatever it was they were doing. Birds were singing softly and they could hear vehicles passing by the driveway on the road. It was just another lazy evening in Mystic Falls; in about an hour the street lights would flicker on.

"Have you given any actual thought to college?" Elena asked languidly. "When Jenna was—before Jenna—I had thought about going to New York or maybe somewhere closer like Christopher Newport University. Now I don't think I'll be leaving Mystic Falls for a while. I have to stay here for Jeremy."

Bonnie turned her head slowly to look at her best friend. College was the last thing on her mind these days. "Not really but I'm sure my dad will bring it up soon. I couldn't see myself leaving here anytime soon either though. Too much going on."

Elena sighed. "I wish every day could be like today. Stefan and I stayed in bed until noon and just cuddled. There was no urgency, ya know?"

She did—very well. "I do." Looking over to a large tree with sprawling branches, she concentrated and smiled as the leaves started to rain down around them, swirling as if they were dancing.

The brunette laughed and tried to catch a few between her fingers. "This is so cool."

Bonnie nodded. "It's been a long time since I used my powers because I just wanted to." She made the leaves curl into letters and shapes before creating a tiny little cyclone.

"I wish I could do magic." Her friend said. "Or something. Half of the time I feel kinda useless when danger happens."

"Hey you're got a good head on your shoulders. That totally counts for something."

"Yeah but I'm not super strong or super fast. And I can't control the weather…"

"But you know when to run and you've got a good heart. Powers are nothing without a good center."

"You guys are my good center. I'd be dead if it weren't for all of you helping me."

Bonnie poked her shoulder lightly. "How about we try to get through the next few weeks without anymore speeches on friendship and just go back to the way things were? School, cheer-leading for me and Caroline, and party committees. How does that sound?"

Elena grinned. "It sounds awesome."

Yeah it really does…

Unfortunately we both know that will probably never be the case again. Oh well we'll just take it one day at a time.

~Fin~
Shoving open the screen door, Bonnie Bennett stepped out onto the porch and exhaled deeply. She ran both hands through her shiny hair and pulled to the point of pain, willing the building energy in her veins to dissipate. The last thing she needed was to start a fire or mini wind cyclone and freak out her Aunt. But she was bored and horny and had the most annoying cousin on the face of the planet. And unfortunately she couldn't just disappear into the woods to float some leaves or make it rain because said cousin would just end up following her. So far the only thing she'd been able to do was break the toaster however it'd been worth it to hear her cousin squeal in shock.

She missed Damon. She missed Damon and it felt weird to be away from him. To not be able to go to his house or sit in the backseat of his car and watch the sunset or wrap herself so tightly around him that her limbs would turn numb. She missed kissing Damon and touching Damon and...Damon Damon Damon...it was almost pathetic how much she couldn't stop thinking about him. Helped with the boredom though.

Many interesting choices had led her to where she was and had been for the past two months; stuck at her Aunt Pamela's house where they talked about reality television and played Scrabble. Not that she had anything against either of those things but compared to Mystic Falls they were like watching paint dry.

Sighing deeply, she stalked down the steps and across the yard to a twisting tire swing. She climbed into it carefully and glanced around, making sure that no one was watching before conjuring up a nice breeze that would push her back and forth. She held onto the rope with her hands but leaned back as far as she could, a breath away from letting her long black hair drag the ground. The sun was drooping lower and the sky was cloudless but her mind was murky with different thoughts.

She couldn't get over her father's reaction to—well to her growing up. Okay it was probably more the situation than simply her being on the road to adulthood but ordering her from her friends and boyfriend just seemed wrong. Making her stay where she didn't want to be because he thought she needed "time to herself" was stupid and she'd only went along with it because he had looked so angry at the time.

There were many different types of girls in the world, all with different motivations and personalities. Some wanted fame and fortune while others wanted to know all of the mysteries that were floating around. Bonnie was neither and she'd never expected to be the type of daughter that a father would
have to worry about. She didn't break curfew and she'd never sneaked out of the house. Sure she had secrets but everyone did, and everything she kept from her father was to protect him.

But as fate would have it or perhaps just life screwing with her, she still managed to incur his wrath and in the most normal way possible. When she thought back on how it happened she could've slapped herself for being so stupid. For being so caught up but Damon had a tendency to black out her common sense receptors and replace them with his big blue eyes.

It had been his idea of course. Most of the bad ones were. How he had talked her into it she'll never recall but she assumed kisses to the spot behind her ear that made her shiver all over had something to do with it. Why else would she say it was okay for them to have sex in her bed?

Thankfully her father hadn't walked in on them mid coitus or he probably would have shipped her off to a convent for the rest of her life instead of to an Aunt's for the summer. She and Damon had been simply lounging naked on her bed and staring up at the ceiling, their heads touching as they talked about Klaus and his secretive master plan.

One minute things were fine and the next her father was walking in and Damon was jumping into his jeans and she was trying to force the floor to open up and suck her down. Not actively of course because it probably would have actually happened.

Now Charles Bennett didn't yell or chase Damon out with a shotgun, he simply asked him to leave and then they had a father/daughter talk. He felt that she was spending too much time with Damon and not enough time just being by herself. Which was stupid considering how alone I was before Damon when he used to go away on business trips. She'd argued the contrary but in the end he'd drove her to her Aunt's in the middle of the night and gave some bullshit excuse about her wanting to visit.

At first it wasn't that bad—Damon called and actually found the entire situation quite amusing. They video chatted and when she could get a free moment away—which were few and far between—he would drive up and they'd spend time together fogging up the windows of his vintage car.

Klaus was never far from their thoughts and Bonnie had been afraid he would try to kidnap her from her Aunt's but once again he managed to surprise everyone. His master plan was broken down into several different parts and she was just one of those parts. One piece of a massive puzzle he was concocting. Unfortunately Stefan turned out to be one piece as well.

About two and a half weeks into her stay Elena called her sobbing and with quick breaths explained the whole horrible story to her. How Klaus had threatened everyone but mostly her with a painful, torturous death if Stefan didn't leave town with him. To prove that he wasn't bluffing he had nearly broken Jeremy's arm and bashed Alaric over the head with a wine bottle. Sweet, kind hearted Stefan —never one for violence against those he loved gave himself over to Klaus.

Damon regrettably confirmed her story later that night.

Two months later and the facts of what Stefan and Klaus were doing had her on edge. Damon wasn't telling Elena anything and he'd sworn her to secrecy...and she hated it. She wanted to tell Elena about Stefan's feeding each time they talked but she didn't. It was terrible and she was being a bad friend but she would deal with that if it arose. The worst part for her was not being able to help. It was being stuck in some stupid town while Damon used Andy Starr for information and Elena sleepwalked through her life 'cause she was too worried about Stefan to do anything else.

At least Caroline appears to be having a better time. Someone ought to be.
What was also surprising? Damon admitting that he and Elena were closer because of their joint effort to find Stefan.

"It's not what you think," he'd said slowly on the phone that night. "Nothing romantic I promise."

She believed him.

The ringing of her iphone pulled her out of her thoughts and she dragged it out of her pocket. "Hello?"

"Bonnie, hey." It was Elena. "Sorry I missed your call earlier. Things are kinda insane and Caroline insists on throwing me a birthday party."

"Happy birthday! Ugh, I should be there." Bonnie rolled her pretty green eyes. "I got you a gift."

"You didn't have to," Elena said smiling. "Honestly I'm not really in the mood for celebrating. And can I just say how weird it is that Tyler knows all of our business now?"

The witch chuckled softly. "You know Caroline is horrible at keeping secrets."

The brunette snorted. "True. I suppose it's okay—Tyler has been really cool about everything. Whatever Caroline is doing for him it's working." Pause. "Damon's behaving himself."

Bonnie snickered. "You mean with Andy?"

"Yup!" Elena giggled. "Between me and you I think she's kinda smitten with him though."

Naturally seeing as how she is compelled."It's probably just the compulsion. How are you doing?"

"I—I'm here." She replied lowly. "I miss Stefan everyday and I wonder if he's alright or if—if he's in pain. But I'm not giving up on him. I just can't."

"Don't. I know it's hard but if in your gut you think Stefan's coming back you should just hold onto that." Bonnie whispered. "You should never give up on love lightly."

Elena sniffled. "Thanks." A beat. "God okay I should go and finish helping Caroline decorate. I'll call you later and tell you how out of control the party was."

Her friend laughed. "Okay. Bye."

They both hung up and Bonnie sighed, climbing out of the tire. She leaned against the large tree trunk and rubbed at the bark, wiggling her naked toes into the soft grass. Wetting her lips, she watched as several bright white lilies forced their way out of the ground to hug her ankles. The petals were delicate and silky and they tickled her skin but she enjoyed the feeling. She enjoyed the slight comfort they tried to give; to keep her from bursting into tears under the weight of everything going on. It just made sense to cry for Stefan—he would do the same for her if the circumstances were reversed.

*I'm no good to anyone all the way out here. Elena's barely hanging on and I know Damon is just as upset. He hides it well but I can see through him. He feels guilt over what Stefan was forced to do—over not being able to be his big brother and help him.*

Footsteps sounded and next a voice was saying, "Mom wants to know if you want any coconut cake."

Bonnie looked at her cousin Melanie and shook her head. "No thanks."
Melanie arched a brow. "What are you doing?"

The witch tried not to show her irritation. "Nothing. I was just wishing a friend happy birthday."

The other girl tilted her head to the side. "You know Uncle Charles said you wanted to come visit but I don't believe that. You've done nothing but mope or disappear or be on that phone since you got here. He made you come, didn't he?"

Bonnie licked her lips. "Yeah actually he did."

Melanie chuckled and folded her arms over her chest. "Why? So you wouldn't sit in the house all day by yourself?"

Bonnie stared at her, mind swimming with the knowledge that thanks to her ancestors' power she could probably blink her into another dimension if she wanted to. For some reason she'd just never got along with Melanie. Sure they loved each other but that was family and sometimes family had nothing to do with liking the other person.

Since they were little kids Melanie had always tried to one up her. Whether it be with grades or friends or boys—especially boys—her cousin just needed to be the center of attention. She would talk about her awesome this and her awesome that, and usually Bonnie was able to just let it roll off her shoulders. Even though it only got worse as they got older.

She could admit however that her cousin was pretty and popular and probably had a great life. But she also had something now and while she couldn't brag about her magic she had something else she could brag about.

"Actually…" She kicked off from the tree. "He thought I was spending too much time with my boyfriend."

Melanie sobered quickly. "Aw Bons you've got a boyfriend? Finally? That's so sweet." She waved a hand. "Though are you sure that's why Uncle Charles sent you here? I mean I doubt the kinda guy who would date you would be the type to ruffle his feathers. He's probably some nerdy type, right? Maybe even younger than you…"

Give me strength, lord. Fiddling with her phone, she brought up a picture she'd snapped of herself and Damon snuggled up on his couch and showed it to her. "His name is Damon."

Her cousin peered at the picture and it was almost comical how wide her eyes grew. "No. No way are you dating him. He looks—he's—how old is he?"

"He's in college. He's actually Elena's boyfriend's brother. That's how we met."

"He's in college. He's actually Elena's boyfriend's brother. That's how we met."

"Well he's okay I guess if you like that sort of thing."

Bonnie grinned. "I love this sort of thing; the picture doesn't really do him justice. He's got these intense blue eyes and a charming smile. He's smart and funny…" Okay so it's wrong to gloat but I finally have something Melanie obviously wants. Serves her right for being such a terror to me all these years. "Damon's amazing."

Melanie frowned. "Whatever you say. C'mon, there's cake." Turning on her heel, she headed back towards the house.

With a satisfied smirk, Bonnie followed her.
There were times when Damon thought back on his past and how fucked up he was, yet sometimes it seemed like it had happened to someone else. All of the killing and maiming and terrorizing for sport—sometimes he couldn't believe he'd been that way. And yet it wasn't like he was this born again whatever following the straight and narrow. He didn't kill anymore but he thought about it. He thought about drinking them dry and tossing them aside. Only reason he didn't was because he didn't want to lose Bonnie or upset her.

Heh. When had he gotten so damn whipped?

Moving on, things were fucked and that was putting it lightly. Klaus the dick bag had Stefan—yeah that was weird and was planning to do God knows what. Something devious though that would only end horribly for all parties not Klaus. So far the only thing that Damon could gather was that Klaus was making Stefan do all of the dirty work, if the bodies left behind were any indication.

Without Bonnie around to work the witchy mojo he was reduced to using Andy again, not that she minded thanks to his nifty compulsion. And so far she was working out well. She had connections because of her job. Liz was also being a big help though he couldn't help but wonder why. Maybe for Caroline's sake or maybe it was Elena's puppy dog eyes that did the trick. Either way he knew that his baby brother was cutting a bloody path through the Eastern seaboard. He just didn't know why.

Oh and he was lying to Elena. For her own good of course. He didn't think she could handle knowing what Stefan was up to just yet. Maybe after he found him and reversed whatever was going on in his head he would tell her. Maybe after he fixed him. It was nice to be able to work with her and feel nothing but friendship sort of feelings though. Nothing was complicated and his thoughts were pure. Or as pure as his thoughts could be.

When they weren't searching for Stefan they were talking about regular things. Or Caroline was flittering in and out of the area trying to be her usual optimistic self. He'd never admit it but he missed his brother. He missed annoying the crap out of him, and he couldn't help but feel guilty. After all Klaus had threatened him as well as Elena so Stefan left to save him as well.

Idiot.

Another odd development? He and Alaric were, well they were getting along really well. Hell they were friends and considering they'd both tried to kill each other in the past it was just strange. I tried to kill Bonnie and now she's my girlfriend. I tried to kill Alaric and now we're friends. Ironic…and kinda stupid.

My life used to be parties, girls, sex, murder and blood. Now it's girlfriends and former enemies turned buddies. Oh and homicidal brothers that ripped people apart.

Least it was still interesting.

Shaking his head, he frowned at all of the teenagers in his living room and vaguely wondered who was going to clean up the mess. Caroline his mind supplied. He took another swig from the bottle of expensive Scotch some random teenie had tried to make off with and grabbed up two glasses before strolling outside to where Alaric sat on the brick hedge looking like a homeless person trying to find the bus stop. He poured a healthy amount of liquid into each glass and handed one to his friend.

"Stop looking around like you're about to flash everyone and have some fun."
Alaric sighed deeply and shook his head but took the drink, playing with the rim. "I am every parents’ worst nightmare. I am the chaperone teacher from hell."

Damon was amused. "I love high school parties."

His friend snorted. "That explains why you're dating a high schooler."

The vampire shrugged. "What can I say? I like 'em bendy and nubile."

Alaric made a face. "Never say that to me again because I just pictured it and now I'm disturbed. Anyway isn't Andy supposed to be coming?"

Damon nodded as he sipped his beverage. "Ten o'clock broadcast, she should be here in a little bit."

"And Bonnie is okay with...whatever you're doing with her?" Asked the other man.

Damon licked his lips. "She knows it's strictly business. Andy has connections because of her job so ya know..."

Alaric rubbed the back of his neck and lifted his head as Elena appeared in the doorway. "Hello birthday girl."

Elena's expression betrayed the happy atmosphere to show just how frazzled she was. She requested the drink Damon was nursing. "Jeremy's smoking again."

Damon arched a brow. "Is his stash any good?"

Elena frowned at him. "You're an ass." Her big brown eyes cut to Alaric. "Talk to him, please? He looks up to you." Without waiting for an answer she headed back inside.

Damon chuckled softly at his friend's aw shit face. "You're screwed."

Alaric apparently agreed. "My life is a mess so let's talk about yours. I'm a little shocked you're actually coping with not being attached to Bonnie like a second skin. You were getting that weird sick cute couple thing—Jeremy and I were all prepared to start teasing when she left. Why did she leave again?"

"Because her dad is a dick. "Well good old Mr. Bennett is more or less convinced I'm going to probably end up knocking her up. He walked in on us in bed together."

That gets a genuine laugh...one that seemed like it was very much needed. "And you're still alive?"

"Heh we weren't fucking. We were just laying there naked and talking. I should have heard him coming but I was too preoccupied."

"So he shipped her off to a nunnery?"

"No her Aunt's house. She said he told her she needed some time to herself. I expected some kinda talk from him but nothing happened. I guess he figures I know the deal. I am in college after all."

"You're insane. You know if he sees you with Andy he's going to think you're cheating on Bonnie. I don't know about him but if some douche bag was cheating on my hypothetical daughter I would strangle him to death."

"That's why I make sure the Andy stuff happens here and nowhere else. At this point he'll be more likely to think I'm dating Caroline for as much as she is here stealing my blood and shit. I don't know
when I became someone people feel like they can *talk* to but I don't like it."

"Yes you do. Otherwise you'd revert back to 'old Damon'. And be alone…"

Damon rolled his eyes and took another drink. "I don't think that's really an option right now."

He didn't need to say it was because he was crazy about Bonnie and didn't want to lose her—Alaric knew that. Hell everyone knew that and found it either amusing or odd depending on who you were asking. It was both of course but it worked. He was fucked up so naturally his love life had to be fucked up as well, but in a fully functioning sort of way.

Sitting his glass down, he gazed at Alaric for a second and thought about all he had lost. Isobel and then Jenna—it was a miracle he was holding it together as well as he was. Having others around probably helped. It was weird being one of those *others* but it's not like he could pretend he wasn't included.

The only problem was that caring was a gateway drug to other emotions, all of which he felt over Stefan sacrificing himself for the people he cared about. He put on a good show of hiding everything from Elena and Alaric but in truth the guilt and sadness was steadily seeping into his pores. He wanted to find his brother and stop his Ripper ways and not just because it was the right thing to do. No he wanted it because as much grief as he gave Stefan about being a Saint, he realized it was just who he was. That brooding over all of his mistakes was so inherently *Stefan* and having to be Klaus' bitch boy was no doubt tearing a hole through him.

Even when he flipped his switch he still *felt* and that is always what made them so different.

But there was a chance Stefan could bounce back from the killings if he truly wanted to. He would be remorseful for *years*—something putting bodies back together wouldn't solve—but he could also heal under the right conditions. Elena being the main one of course. The problem might be the blood however. Two months in and *fuck* there was no doubt he was not only strong but most likely extremely addicted to the taste by now. He could never remember if there was even a possibility for Stefan to get *settled* like he was. Able to feed without freaking the fuck out.

*Yeah if those chicks in Tennessee are any indication I'd say that hasn't happened yet. Bringing him back to Mystic Falls will be like handling a bomb set to go off at any minute. So much worse than before when he went off the rails and nearly killed that girl.*

He'd do it however because—because Elena wanted it and because it was the right thing to do. Because Stefan would do it for him.

*We're all fucked.*

Frowning, he shook off his thoughts and grunted when his phone beeped. "Andy wants me to pick her up."

Alaric snorted in humor. "Your fake compelled girlfriend wants you to be a chivalrous boyfriend?"

Damon grinned and drained the rest of Scotch. "Well it's a complicated dynamic. Hold the fort down will ya?"

Alaric's voice was deadpan as he replied, "You mean the fort filled with my drunk history students?"

"Drink more, it'll feel less weird." Damon handed him the bottle of alcohol before walking away. "That's what helps me."
Sitting in her Aunt's living room with a basket of laundry at her feet, Bonnie quietly helped her fold up the clothes that were inside. The television was on but no one was paying attention to it; Bonnie's mind having wandered off somewhere between the first pair of socks and t-shirt that passed through her hands. She felt…odd. Anxious and slightly off though she had a feeling they weren't her actual emotions. Just like before she could detect when Damon was in certain moods and when he was in danger. And right now he was not a happy camper for whatever reason.

She wanted to call him but she also didn't wish to be rude to her Aunt. She'd promised to help out with some of the chores. Meanwhile Melanie was simply lying in the floor watching them.

"So Bonnie, Mel tells me you have a boyfriend." Her Aunt said slowly. "And that he's in college?"

Bonnie nodded. "Yeah."

Pamela smiled. "How long have you been together?"

"Um a few months." She focused on folding up a pair of jeans.

"Is it serious?"

"Yes."

"Well I hope he knows just how special you are. And that he's not trying to pressure you into anything."

"He does and he's not. He's a good guy."

Melanie lifted up onto her elbows. "Why would some guy in college want to date a high school girl? Can't he get a girl his own age?"

A small crystal figurine on the table jerked and Bonnie quickly pretended she'd hit it with her foot by accident. "Damon isn't with me because of my age. We actually have a lot in common and it's not like I'm fourteen. Pretty soon I'll be in college as well."

Pamela patted her thigh. "I'm sure he's a very nice young man." Pause. "I don't know whether it's because of tv or what but they tend to be faster."

Not another sex talk. "Not having that problem."

Melanie snickered lowly. "Are you sure he's not gay?"

Bonnie bit the inside of her cheek so hard that she almost drew blood. Usually she could just wave off whatever her cousin said but apparently that didn't apply when it came to Damon Salvatore. He wouldn't care one way or the other what was being said, but she felt compelled to defend his honor for whatever reason. "Very sure."

Melanie didn't seem to convinced but it didn't matter because someone was ringing the doorbell and she was bounding off the floor to go answer it. Bonnie huffed and returned the soft smile her Aunt was giving her, digging into the basket for something else to fold. Muted voices floated from the foyer and then Melanie returned with wide eyes and flushed cheeks, and behind her was Damon.

"Damon." Bonnie stood so fast she nearly knocked over a pile of clothes. "Wh—what are you doing
"I need to talk to you. It's important." He grabbed her upper arm before she could reply and dragged her outside onto the porch. "You have to come home."

She blinked up at him. "What's happened? Is it Elena? Is she okay?"

He wet his lips. "I saw Stefan earlier. He knows we've been looking for him and fuck…Klaus is pissed about it. Not that I give a shit what he thinks. Bonnie, he killed Andy."

Bonnie gasped, bringing a hand to her mouth. "What? No. No Stefan would never—"

"He flipped the switch." Damon interrupted. "I was there. I saw it. He slammed me against the wall so that I couldn't help her and told me to let him go. He was—he was like me. It was like looking into a mirror."

"I'm sorry." She whispered. She smoothed her fingers along his cheek. "Does Elena know?"

"She found my information so I had to tell her the victims were Stefan's and not Klaus'. This is a cluster-fuck!" He shouted angrily. "I don't—maybe we should just let him go. Fuck it all."

"No, Damon, we shouldn't. Stefan is just—he's just trying to keep us all safe. Klaus probably has him on a tight leash and it's been two months. He's done a lot of horrible things and he wanted to hit you where it hurt." She pulled on him until his forehead was touching hers. "He knew killing Andy would convince you that this isn't a joke. He's in deep and he has to act a certain way or Klaus will suspect."

"What if we keep looking and the next time it's you he's slaughtering?"

"I can take care of myself, you know that. I wouldn't want to but I could take Stefan down if I had to."

Damon growled and wrapped his arms around her, pulling her flush against him. "Come. Home. Otherwise I might do something stupid."

And here is the part where I do something really stupid."Okay. Let me um, get my stuff." Kissing him gently, she made her way back inside, not surprised to find her Aunt and cousin lingering in the foyer. "I have to go back to Mystic Falls."

Pamela arched a brow. "Excuse me? Your father said he was coming to pick you up when it was time for you to go home."

She nodded. "I know but Damon is—look there is a serious crisis going on right now and my friends need me." She hurried upstairs and started shoving her things into her bag.

Pamela was hot on her heels however. "You're not leaving this house, Bonnie. You're a minor and while you're here I am your guardian. Now if you want to call your father and ask permission that's fine. Otherwise you're staying."

Bonnie paused in packing to look at her. She loved her family and she would never do anything to hurt them but they didn't need her here. She was literally chewing up the furniture. Meanwhile Elena was in pain and Damon was putting on a brave face but ready to explode. Her people needed her. She had once said Elena was like a sister and that still rung true; her other family needed her and she was not going to let them down.
Stuffing her bags full of clothes and other little thing she'd brought, she zipped them up and slipped the duffel sash onto her shoulder. "I'm sorry Aunt Pamela but I have to go home. My family needs me." Grabbing up her suitcase, she swerved past the older woman and headed downstairs.

"Bonnie!" Pamela called as she followed her. "Bonnie Bennett don't you dare!" She jerked in front of her niece and blocked the door. "What on Earth has happened to you? Sassing your elders and running off with some man?"

"He's my boyfriend, Aunt Pamela." The witch stressed. "And it's not like we're eloping. He's just taking me home. My best friend just got some bad news and I wanna be there for her."

Pamela shook her head vehemently. "No. Now you march yourself right back up those stairs. I'm definitely telling your father about this later."

Fuck. Fine I'll ask forgiveness for this shit later."Damon?"

The man in question opened the screen door and entered. "Yeah?"

Biting her bottom lip, she tilted her head to the side. "Maybe you'll have better luck convincing my Aunt and cousin here that I need to leave."

Damon appeared moderately stunned by her request but naturally that didn't stop him from compelling her Aunt and cousin that her father had actually called and said it was okay for him to take her home. By the time he was done, she was leaving with them standing in the door waving, saying that she should visit again soon. She sat on the passenger side of his car and watched the scenery fly by, telling herself that she hadn't done the wrong thing. That it was better than letting her family think she'd suddenly went off the rails.

"Elena had me compel Jeremy after Vickie was killed…" Damon said in a matter of fact way. "You're not horrible for wanting it done."

I still feel horrible. "What about my father? He's going to flip his shit when he finds out."

Damon hmm'd. "I could compel him too…"

Dragging her slender fingers through her glossy black hair, she groaned. "Unfortunately you might just have to."

How the mighty have fallen.

~ * ~

By the time they reached Mystic Falls and the Salvatore manor the party was just starting to wind down. None of her friends were anywhere in sight and Damon didn't seem to give a damn either way about all of the teenagers in his house. He muttered something to Alaric about please getting them out and continued to pull Bonnie upstairs as if she were a rag doll. He released her once they reached the top and she put her things in his room then followed him to Stefan's.

His hair was longer in the back but it looked good and she enjoyed running her fingers through it. More important things at hand…

He was pacing like a caged animal out for blood and perhaps he was. He was guilty and hurting and trying to reconcile his feelings with the creature he'd been for so, so long. It wasn't easy and she didn't expect him to cry on her shoulder no matter how close they were now. Damon was still Damon and he would deal in his own way.
That way evidently being to destroy his brother's room. In a fit of rage he raked books off of a table before turning over another completely and kicking down a small shelf filled with odds and ends. He broke a chair into a lamp and sent candles flying to the floor before yanking up a guitar, preparing to smash it into a thousand pieces.

Bonnie watched silently as all of the steam drained from him and he tossed it away, nearly collapsing first into a white lamp shade and breathing hard with wild eyes.

"Damon." She said softly.

He blinked like he was just remembering he wasn't alone and gripped the edge of the table until the wood cracked under his strength. Next he was in front of her, shoving her back into the wall with a thud that rattled the antique paintings. The air let her lungs in a whoosh but she didn't have time to focus on that because Damon was unbuttoning her jeans and jerking them down her legs. When they wouldn't slide fast enough he ripped them apart at the seams. Her flimsy panties never stood a chance.

He opened his own pants and pushed them away just enough to free his erection. She didn't say anything when he lifted her, just wrapped her legs around his waist and buried her fingers in his hair, kissing him, sucking on his bottom lip, pulling him closer.

And then he was pushing inside of her, yanking her hips to him in a quick rhythm that left no pretense to what this was. It wasn't making love or anything sweet, it was fucking. It was nails scratching, teeth biting, wall slamming fucking and Bonnie was almost ashamed how much she found herself loving it. Her heels were hooked behind his back, resting on the swell of his ass as he thrust harder and faster, rattling the picture frames. If it weren't for the loud music downstairs everyone would hear the commotion and probably be alarmed, especially when the sounds she was trying so hard to hold in slipped out.

Damon shifted and drove upward so deeply that her back arched and the windows shattered inwardly. The door slammed shut of its own volition as Bonnie gasped, her breath coming in harsh pants against his ear. He was muttering nonsensical words into the skin of her neck with fingers holding her tightly and it was almost painful. All she could do was hold on as he pounded into her like a man starved for it, over and over, setting her raw nerves on fire.

It was wet and dirty; both of their flesh glistening with sweat, the clothes they hadn't had time to discard slightly moist. Damon's fingers kept slipping on her damp thighs but his motions didn't falter.

When Bonnie came the pleasure of it was overwhelming and she screamed his name as her muscles clenched tight, forcing a grunt from between his lips. He followed suit a moment later with a deep shudder, filling her up before becoming still, his chest heaving up and down.

Bonnie shivered and tightened her fingers in his dark hair even as her body started to go lax and her legs dangled at his sides. He made to pull away but she stopped him. "Not—not yet. Stay."

Damon exhaled shakily but nodded.

"We're going to get through this." She whispered breathlessly. "I promise."

She wasn't sure if he actually believed her but hearing the words had to help. Even if it was only a little bit.

~Fin~
Everyone is drowning in their own way, some are just sinking faster than others.

This one shot has bits of 3.02 (The Hybrid) and 3.03 (The End of The Affair) but it takes place during 3.04 (Disturbing Behavior) and 3.05 (The Reckoning).

Being with Damon meant compromising on many things but Bonnie never assumed she would have to go to such great lengths to keep her relationship with him. It was odd however because a father hating their daughter's boyfriend was possibly one of the most normal things in the world. In some cases the guy was perfectly fine and yet the dad didn't like him because he was a boy. In her situation it just felt like another large load onto the one she was already carrying on her tiny shoulders.

Evil vampire ex girlfriends? No problem.

Boyfriend has feelings for your best friend? Eh, who cares?

Boyfriend occasionally wants to kill people? Whose doesn't?

Dad doesn't like said boyfriend… It's the end of the world.

Ugh.

She'd really had no choice but to let Damon compel him. She wasn't proud about it but there was no other way—he wasn't going to let her continue to date him unless she modified certain thoughts. It wasn't an easy choice by any means and the guilt weighed heavily on her heart. Now that her Grams was gone her dad was all she had. Playing with his mind was horrible but just like she needed him, she also needed Damon. For one to exist with the other they had to get along. And until things calmed down where they could have more dinners and Damon could be charming, this would have to do.

The pain that bloomed behind her eyes was a headache she'd been getting off and on since leaving her Aunt's a few days ago. All anyone seemed to be focused on was getting Stefan back and she was exhausting herself looking for spells that would kill Klaus or send him to another dimension. But so far she couldn't seem to find anything. Time was of the essence however now that they knew Klaus wanted to make more of his kind.

That would be horrible on a global scale. Thank God they all burned out.

Sighing deeply, she pushed back the heavy curtains and gazed out of the window into the openess of the Salvatore front yard. At one point she'd been very righteous about vampires and their place in
the world—her world—to the point where Caroline's turning had made her slightly squeamish. Everything had been happily black and white. Now it was a muddy shade of gray and she was smack dab in the middle of serious drama.

Klaus was making Stefan kill for him because he was a coward or maybe just that much of a sadistic bastard, no one really knew for sure. But Andy was dead like so many others and at Stefan's hand. He was out of control and she was scared that one day she would have to stop him. Honestly she wasn't sure Damon would let her, and if he didn't what that would mean for them? She knew she couldn't kill Damon; that was out of the cards because of her love for him but she could incapacitate him if push came to shove.

Maybe for his own good. In any case she would destroy Stefan to save Damon if it came to that.

It sucked because she loved Elena like a sister but there was a bigger picture. Naturally she wouldn't just stake him—she would do whatever she had to do to save him but things weren't looking good.

Elena was doing stupid things, dangerous things in the name of love. Like trekking out into the woods to hunt down a bunch of werewolves in the hopes of finding her boyfriend or running off to Chicago on the off chance that she would be able to talk him into coming home. Neither of which had went well for any of the parties involved, herself included. It was probably sheer luck some rabid hybrid hadn't bit Damon or ripped all of them in half or that Klaus hadn't realized they were so near. Her shielding spell had covered that angle but it hadn't stopped her from getting a sprained ankle when they were attacked.

Pretty soon though their luck was going to run out and then where would they be?

But she understood where her friend was coming from. Sometimes the people you cared about needed saving and you couldn't just stop when things got too harsh or too complicated. You also had to read between the lines; naturally Stefan would say whatever he had to in regards to keeping Elena safe even if that meant breaking her heart.

_Better than her being dead. Though knowing Elena she won't take that lying down. Still I'm so happy Damon isn't into her anymore or I'd be accidentally causing tornadoes._

In other news Damon was on edge and she could feel his tension skirting the seams of their bond. He was confused and upset over his brother saving his life and yet refusing his help. For all of his bolstering he loved his little brother and wanted what was best for him. Which was all well and good but she knew how he could get when he was feeling helpless and out of control.

_The words angry and dangerous spring to mind._

Caroline's father being in town after torturing her wasn't helping matters either. He had a lot of demands and Damon wasn't in the mood to play nice. He wanted blood and violence, and unfortunately Damon usually got what he wanted.

Speaking of her father she couldn't believe what Caroline's dad had done to her. Locking her up and trying to recondition her to go against her true nature, it was so cruel. Yes Sheriff Forbes had been sad and said bad things but she hadn't inflicted pain on her only daughter. And now after getting all of the details she was dealing and making an effort to meet Caroline half way.

_Something tells me Bill won't be doing that any time soon though._

Wetting her lips, she glanced around the quiet room and tired to think of what her next move was going to be. So far Stefan claimed he didn't want to come home but obviously he wasn't happybeing
Klaus' best friend. It was obviously some type of ploy to keep those he cared about safe. Hurting them was just a part of the process and a lovely after effect to get his point across.

"Hiding out?"

Bonnie jerked her head up and looked to the doorway where Jeremy stood with a rather sheepish smile. "Not exactly. Damon is at a Council meeting so I'm waiting for him to get back."

Jeremy nodded and walked over to the couch, sitting down. "So um, I know you probably have a lot on your mind right now. I mean Elena has been keeping me in the loop about Stefan and Klaus so I know how that is going. But if you could spare a minute I kinda need to talk to someone and I don't wanna worry Elena."

*Maybe a distraction would do me good.* "Sure. What's up?"

Fiddling with the bracelet around his wrist he said, "Remember when I asked about ghosts? Well I've been seeing things. Ghosts I think."

She arched a brow. "The ghosts of who?"

He sighed. "Vicki and Anna. It—it's weird but I'll turn around and there one of them is. I can hear them and they can hear me." Pause. "What do you think it means?"

"Wow…” She breathed. "I don't know. How is it even possible? I mean you're not exactly supernatural."

"Yeah I thought about that but I think—I don't know. I've been *around* it a lot lately. And I've helped you with some stuff and I have this ring…” He shifted, bringing his leg up under him. "What if some of that magic is like affecting me and now I have this sort of sixth sense?"

"I guess it could happen. In fact considering what's happened to everyone who has interacted with Damon and Stefan it doesn't sound too farfetched. Caroline is a vampire, Tyler is a werewolf and my powers got stronger once Damon forced Emily out."

"See? It's weird though. Anna told me that I should be wary of Vicki…that I can't trust her."

"Jeremy you should be careful either way. You don't know what they want."

"No I know it's just nice to see Anna again, ya know? When we talk I don't feel any weird vibes."

"If you wanted I could probably make them go away."

"No. If she needs my help then I want to help her. I couldn't save her but I can help her be at peace or something."

"Okay but if things get weird I want you to come to me immediately."

He smiled and squeezed her thigh. "I will I promise." A beat. "So what's up on your end?"

Too much I'm afraid. "We're trying to save Stefan who says he doesn't want to be saved. It's taking its' toll though on Damon and Elena."

Jeremy drummed his fingers against the back of the sofa. "What about you? It can't be easy for you with them hanging out and stuff."

She shrugged. "In the past it wouldn't have been but I trust Damon. He's made it perfectly clear I'm
the only one he wants. And as for Elena well…Stefan is the love of her life. Besides she's not the kinda person that would date two brothers."

He seemed to agree with her. "That's true. Man, we've all got ourselves into some deep shit huh?"

Bonnie chuckled softly. "Something like that. But like you said…better on the inside than on the outside with no clue what's waiting for you in the dark."

"Yeah." Licking his bottom lip, he scratched at his hand. "Matt knows that I saw Vicki. Even with what Anna said—what if she just needs my help too? I don't get why she would be evil now when she wasn't in life."

"Maybe it was the nature of her death." She tilted her head to the side. "Not to mention she had issues when she was alive. Who knows what is going on now? Seriously though Jeremy if this ghost stuff gets too heavy I want you to tell me. I'll find a way to send them back where they belong. What good is having all of this power now if I can't help my friends?"

"I will." Standing, he exhaled and then kissed her cheek. "Take care."

She watched him leave. *Easier said than done.*

A few minutes passed and a knock sounded at the front door. Running both hands through her hair, Bonnie forced herself up to answer it. "Elena? I thought you were at the cookout. And why are you knocking? You usually just come in."

The brunette gazed at her. "I have to tell you something. You're my friend and I know you would want to hear this from someone who cares about you."

Bonnie frowned. "What's wrong?"

Biting her bottom lip, the other girl replied, "With Stefan being gone and Damon being so nice I've kinda developed feelings for him. I know it's horrible but I—I couldn't help myself. I mean he's so sexy and he's an amazing kisser. I decided I would tell you before I made my move."

A roaring filled Bonnie's ears and she took a step back. "Wh—what? You can't be serious."

Elena hunched her shoulders. "No worries. I don't want to date him; I just want to fuck him."

"You…" Narrowing her brows, she folded her arms over her chest. "You're not Elena."

*Elena* laughed and put her hands on her hips. "No but I had you going for a minute. Man, the look on your face—I should have taken a picture."

"What the hell do you want, Katherine?" The witch asked, feeling two seconds from setting her on fire.

Katherine smirked. "Is Damon here? I need to talk to him. It's important and it's about his dear little brother."

Bonnie shook her head. "He's not here. Come back never." She attempted to slam the door in her face but Katherine stopped her.

"You're cute when you're angry." She grinned and crowded the witch's space, flicking at her shirt near her jeans. "Is this your sex face?"

*You're ten times more powerful now. Explode her head! *Look if you have real information about
Stefan then I'm sure Damon wants to hear it. So why not just go somewhere until he comes home. If you stay here with me I will end up killing you."

Katherine fake sighed as if upset. "Fine I'll come back later. You know I like this stronger side of you. Maybe when I get back we can have a threesome." Laughing, she turned and strolled towards her flashy red car.

Bonnie growled as she drove away. "I'd kill myself before I let that happen." She slammed the door and smoothed her clothes down, patting at her pockets. That bitch stole Elena's necklace! Why the hell is she back? Oh of course because naturally Klaus' hybrid plans and off the rails Stefan isn't enough for us.

Maybe next as icing on the fucked up cake I'll lose my powers.

~*~

Damon thought that when he got over his fucked up feelings for Elena that life would be easier and smooth sailing. He wasn't a moron but perhaps just a tad more optimistic than usual and that was Bonnie's fault. She was all cute and shiny and seeing the best in him so eventually he started to see it as well. And so did everyone else. It's like they expected things of him more so than anyone else ever had. It was an honest surprise when he fell off the wagon as it were.

But how the hell was he supposed to act when some asshole kept goading him?

Bill Forbes deserved much more than what he got. Seriously, threatening to out him and making demands? Who the fuck did he think he was? No one told Damon Salvatore what to do—expect maybe his girlfriend. Anyway his point in trying to kill him was to spare Caroline anymore drama and to save himself from being annoyed. Perhaps it wasn't the best reaction but he was on edge.

His brother was killing for some douche bag master vampire and it was his fault. He should have been strong enough to protect Bonnie and kill Klaus so that he couldn't play with their lives like toys. Years and years of consuming human blood and terrorizing for sport and there was nothing he could do. Just stand by and watch as Klaus taunted Bonnie in her dreams before forcing Stefan to leave with him.

All those people Stefan had ripped to pieces, well, their blood was on his hands as much as his brother's. So yes he'd lashed out and bit Bill and attempted to choke Caroline. Never mind that he also risked his life in the woods hunting stupid ass werewolves with Elena, Alaric and Bonnie all on the off chance they'd find Stefan. Too bad he hadn't wanted to be found... Never mind he offered to be staked just so that Elena could have a moment to maybe bring her boyfriend home. And instead she ended up even more hurt.

But whatever. He couldn't drag Stefan home by his collar no more than he could cut Klaus' head off. He wasn't the type to give up but he was really at the end of his rope when it came to having faith. There came a time to just throw in the towel, get drunk and fuck like it was going out of style. He was pretty sure now was that time.

Stomping almost petulantly into the living room with Alaric over his shoulder—yeah he'd "killed" him, long story—he plopped him onto the couch and made a beeline towards fixing himself a drink. God I wish I could get fucken plastered without drinking an entire keg.

Soft footsteps sounded but he didn't look up. He didn't have to.
"Elena just texted me what happened." Bonnie placed a pillow behind Alaric's head. "Do you wanna talk about it?"

"No." His voice was gruff. "I don't wanna talk about how fucked up my life is. Since you know the deal I just wanna ask, who would really miss Caroline's dad anyway? He shackled her to a chair and bathed her in sunlight. I was doing the town a favor."

Inching closer she wrapped a hand around his wrist. "You need to calm down."

His face twitched. "Why? Why do I have to calm down, Bonnie? This is who I am. This is what I am. I'm sorry if people seemed to have forgotten that I'm a bastard but I am. Everyone needs to stop looking at me like I'm Stefan the sequel."

Clucking her tongue against the roof of her mouth, she grabbed his wrist again and yanked, pulling him as forcefully as she could upstairs to his room. He went because she was apparently the only person he couldn't resist. *I should try harder.*

She shoved him inside and closed the door, leaning against it. "First of it, calm down. I know you're not Stefan and I've known that for a long time. I don't want you to be Stefan. Just because people like it when you're not being a dick doesn't mean they're comparing you to your brother."

He scoffed. "Yeah right. I've been compared to my brother since I was human and I don't see it stopping any time soon. Even though he's out there killing people, some still want me to be like him. Brooding and guilty with the weight of the world on my shoulders." He stared at her. "And that's not me. I've done shitty things and I don't care about most of them. They aren't even a blip on my conscious."

Bonnie waved a hand. "Killing Caroline's father would have been going too far and you know it. Fighting her solves nothing."

"Made me feel better." He tore off his shirt and stalked into the bathroom, his jeans riding low as usual. "Besides as my girlfriend aren't you supposed to be on my side?"

"I'm always on your side." She whispered. "I don't want you to make an enemy of the Sheriff now that she's warmer to the idea of certain vampires—that would be bad for Caroline. You're pissed off and I get that, but lashing out at your friends won't help. What do you think Alaric is going to say when he wakes up?"

Damon shrugged; he won't be a happy camper that is for sure. "He'll be fine and maybe next time he won't get in my way." He sighed and gripped the counter. "Why are you here? Aren't you scared I'll go off the deep end and do something stupid?"

"No." She folded her arms over her chest. "You don't scare me Damon, and you haven't for a long time. I know it's your nature to push people away and you should know by now I'm not going anywhere."

He did know and sometimes it made him feel even more fucked up. He walked a fine line between self entitlement and feeling unworthy of the good things in his life. Or rather the good thing in his life. Bonnie. His ego insisted he should have pretty things because he paid his dues when he let Katherine snow him for so many years so he was owed. The other part kept whispering he would only end up breaking whatever toys he acquired so he shouldn't have anything at all.

One day he'd break Bonnie and he honestly had no idea if she'd let him put her back together.

Gazing at his reflection in the mirror, he grabbed a bar of soap and washed his hands knowing full
well he'd never really be clean. When they were dry and the towel was tossed onto the rim of the tub, he slipped his arms around Bonnie's thin waist and pressed his face into the hollow of her neck. No matter what happened she always smelled the sweetest right here. "Remember when we talked about running away together? Doesn't that sound awesome right about now? Just fuck all this bullshit and go to Hawaii or something…"

Smiling, she rubbed her hands soothingly between his shoulder blades. "It does but you'd just be pissy wondering what's going on here. How about I help you center your energies?" She moved away from him and climbed onto his bed, motioning him to do the same.

The vampire grinned and followed. "I love it when you help me center my energies." He turned her, pressing his chest against her back. "How about I center my energies from behind you this time?"

She hit him playfully on the thigh. "Oh shut up. I'm talking using our connection to give you a bit of peace."

He grumbled a non-committal sound as his lips placed delicate kisses up the side of her neck. "Being inside you gives me peace."

She shivered. "It also gives you orgasms."

Damon chuckled and pushed his left hand under her frilly white blouse, working his fingers between bra and flesh. "And what's more peaceful than a nice orgasm?" His right hand slipped low, dipping below the band of her jeans. "It leaves you light and blissful."

"But—but the problems are—are still there." She said, her voice going breathy. "When you're…done."

"That's when you have round two." He sucked at the bottom of her earlobe, smirking when she whimpered.

"Damon." She tangled her fingers in his hair and went slightly boneless. "Feel."

His pale fingertips skimmed her clitoris—he was feeling alright—when a burst of something rolled over him like water. It was warm and soft; like a perfect memory that you never wanted to let go of or that old shirt you kept around because of how it felt on your skin. It filled him up and whispered I love you…you bring me joy to the deep recess of his brain. To his pores and his skin and his limbs.

"What…" He had to clear his throat before continuing. "What is this?"

Bonnie smiled and kissed his chin. "Me. It's how you make me feel, Damon. What you bring out in me."

It was almost too much—the sentiment not the feeling. "I—"

Suddenly they were not alone. "Is this all you two do?"

Damon rolled his eyes so hard he was surprised they didn't pop out his head. "Katherine."

She giggled. "I mean not that I'm complaining. You do make a gorgeous couple. You should film it and put it on the internet."

Pulling his hands away from his girlfriend, he faced his ex. "What do you want?"

The brunette migrated to his dresser. "I came by earlier but you weren't here. I…need you to come
"with me."

"Why?"

"It's about Stefan."

"Isn't it always?"

"Touchy. Do you want to help him or not?"

"How would we help him?"

She held up Elena's necklace. "With this. I have a plan and I'm actually letting you in on it. But if you want to stay here and lick Bonnie all over, I can wait." She hopped onto his vanity. "Carry on."

Sighing deeply, he shook his head. "You okay with this?"

Bonnie looked anything but however she understood. "If it'll help Stefan… You think she's telling the truth?"

He snorted. "Don't know. I do know however Stefan is her favorite and she hates Klaus so…"

Crawling off the bed, he strolled to his closet for a shirt. "Are you gonna be okay here?"

"Yeah I don't see why not." She glanced at Katherine. "For the record, if you try anything with him? I will hunt you down and stake you myself."

The female vampire blew her a kiss. "No worries, Bonnie. You've got your Salvatore, I just wanna help mine. I promise not to keep Damon out after curfew."

Dressed, Damon latched onto her bicep and shoved her towards the doorway. "Go. I'll be out in a minute." When she was out of the room, he huffed. "This is probably a fucked up idea."

Bonnie walked on her knees over to him, putting her hands on his shoulders. "Definitely. But she does have a thing for Stefan and even though she's a horrible bitch, I think she cares about him in her own way. What he's going through…I think it's affecting her. Broody Stefan might not care about her but he's better than murderous Stefan. And we all hate Klaus and want him dead."

True. "Okay. I go with her and see what her master plan is and hopefully not die. What are you gonna do?"

She kissed his forehead. "Hold down the home fort." Pause. "Be careful Damon. I keep feeling like I should go with you."

"That would be nice but I doubt Katherine would spill her guts then." He explained, rubbing her sides. "I can handle her. Besides I'm full of your love or whatever. I'll be fine." Cupping her cheeks he kissed her lips softly. "Text me if you need me."

Patting her hip, he winked and left the room, heading downstairs and outside. This better be worth what I'm leaving behind tonight. It all better be worth it.

~*~

How do I let Caroline talk me into this stuff? How do any of us let Caroline talk us into this type of stuff?

Caroline Forbes was a kick ass vampire who at any moment could run faster than the average human
and who could lift ten times her weight but at the heart of her she was still a teenager, and she still yearned for teenage things. Bonnie figured pulling a prank on the teachers was just her way of remembering what it was like to have normal human problems. When she'd called and said everyone was at the high school to cause mischief Bonnie knew she couldn't turn her friend down after everything she'd been through. She wasn't surprised to see that neither could Elena and Tyler.

The whole senior class had turned out actually to toilet paper the pool and slick up doorknobs with honey. For most it was funny but for them it was a distraction from issues. Being a vampire, being a werewolf, worrying about boyfriends…yeah their issues were a plenty.

Damon was off with Katherine and she wasn't jealous; I kinda should be but I'm not. She was more worried for his welfare but she had a feeling Katherine wasn't going to hurt him. Whatever she had up her sleeve was for Stefan so Bonnie felt that she could take a step back this time. Stefan gave himself over to Klaus to save her as well as everyone else and she wanted to help him too.

I still hate Katherine though.

Her fingers were sore from setting up at least fifty mouse traps in one classroom so she jumped at the chance to throw harmless rolls of toilet paper over the pool with Matt. Plus they hadn't really spent any time together in a while because of how crazy everything was.

Letting a roll sail to the other side, she grinned. "This is fun, right?"

"You sound like Caroline." He said.

"I'm embracing her philosophy." A pause. "You should be more into this."

He huffed. "Yeah. Where's Jeremy tonight?"

Good question. Defacing public property seems like his thing. "I don't know. I haven't seen him. He uh—he told me about seeing Vicki."

"Ah I'm glad you know."

"I'm sorry. Is it weird to hear about your sister like this?"

"No I mean I—I kinda wanna see her myself. I mean I never got to say goodbye to her. Do you realize that just last summer you and I were lifeguards at the pool? And the only two problems I had in my life were that Elena was breaking up with me and I sucked at CPR."

"Everything was so different."

"Yeah. Now Elena's dating a vampire, you're a witch and my sister is a ghost and…I'm…I'm just the guy who's wondering how life got so screwed up."

"It's crazy. I—I can't imagine what it must be like for you."

"It's just uh, it kinda explains why I'm not that into senior prank night." Sighing, he picked up a cardboard box. "I'll go grab a couple of more rolls and we'll hit the gym."

Bonnie sent him a soft smile. "Okay. Poor Matt. We're always saying how tough it must be for him—playing the straight man. Guess we were right.

Idly she walked out into the hallway, tugging at the lace strap of her pretty tank top. She could hear
the chatter of other students and she smirked, there was going to be such a mess when the teachers arrived. How all of them weren't getting suspended she had no idea.

Matt popped out of the boy's bathroom a second later and she fell in step with him. *Maybe I should hang out with him more. Make an effort or something. It has to be hard for him being on his own with all of his friends as supernatural creatures. "How's your job working out?"

He made a face. "It's a living. Probably gonna have to cut back my hours once school starts."

She nodded and made her way into the gym. "Yeah that makes sense but I'm sure your boss will understand. You've gotta have time for—"

"Bonnie get out of here!"

Before Bonnie could take in the scene or inquire as to what was going on, a breeze *whooshed* past her shoulder. "Hello Bonnie. I was hoping you'd be here."

She jerked around quickly, nearly losing her footing. "Klaus."

He grinned. "Now we can get started. Dana? Why don't you and Chad relax and sit tight?" He set his attention back to her and not the boy and girl he'd been torturing. "You are even more beautiful than I remember. And quite crafty I hear. I assume you're the reason Elena's still walking around alive…"

She swallowed hard, wondering if she could weaken him long enough for everyone to run. "That's right. You wanna blame someone, blame me."

He chuckled. "Ah there's no need for blame, love. I'm intrigued that you were able to hide it from me for so long. And that you could bring her back but it means you have extraordinary power."

Reaching out, he caressed her cheek. "I like power. However your witchy interference seems to have caused some undesirable side effects and since you caused the problem, I'm gonna have you find the fix."

"And if I don't?"

"Hm. I kill all your friends." Klaus smirked and gestured to a blonde who entered the room dragging Tyler with her. "I'd like you all to meet my sister, Rebecca. Word of warning she can be quite mean."

"Don't be an ass." The blonde said, British accent and all.

Klaus arched a brow, his hand latching around Tyler's neck. "I'm going to make this very simple. Every time I attempt to turn a werewolf into a vampire hybrid they die during the transition. It's quite horrible actually." Biting into his wrist, he forced it to Tyler's mouth. "I need you to find a way to save my hybrids, Bonnie. And for Tyler's sake…you better hurry." Next he snapped his neck like it was nothing and then laughed at their outraged faces.

Bonnie could feel the power building up inside of her, whispering for her to go after him like she did the night Elena *died*. Sure it would kill her but at least she would take him out with her. His sister however was a problem. With her dead no one would be around to kill this Rebecca. Damon and Caroline weren't strong enough because they weren't as old. *Fuck! What am I going to do!*

Stepping over Tyler's still form, Klaus sauntered up to her. "I know you can do it. You're magnificent. And after Tyler is okay, you'll help me make more hybrids." He traced his fingers down her neck. "We'll be unstoppable."
"Leave her alone." Elena said valiantly.

"Why? I like her." He smiled, walking behind her, sliding his nose along the same path his fingers had taken. "She smells sweet."

*I'm gonna be sick. "I'm not here for your amusement. You want me to help you, right?"

He nodded. "I do. But I haven't seen you in so long...without your watch dog in tow. Where is your dark knight by the way? I thought he would be here by now with his empty threats?" Pause. "He's going to miss the party. When Tyler is better we're leaving."

She looked him dead in the eyes. "I'm not going anywhere with you."

The vampire snickered and tipped up her chin. "You won't have a choice my love. You'll come with me because if you don't, my sister will take great pleasure in destroying all of those you care about. Starting with the doppelganger. You can't take us both on." Tapping her nose, he stepped away to take Elena's bicep. "So I'll hold onto Elena for safe keeping while you go and fetch your grimoires and enchantments and what not."

Bonnie met the brunette's gaze and she simply nodded, silently letting her know that it was okay. With teary eyes, she grabbed Matt's hand and hurried out of the gym. *Think think think! What am I going to do? How am I going to save everyone? How am I going to save myself?*

"What are you going to do?" Matt asked, his nerves frayed.

"I—I don't know. My grimoires don't go back far enough to be of any help." She hurried down the hallway. "And my ancestors won't help—they hate vampires they wouldn't want him to make hybrids. They'd sacrifice everyone. They won't help me contact the witch who made the curse."

Matt frowned. "What about Jeremy? He can talk to the dead, so he says. He said he saw Vicki, remember?"

"Jeremy!" She exclaimed.

Her friend was already texting him. "He's not replying."

*Great time to go off the grid, Jer.* Taking out her own phone, she rattled off a quick text to Damon. "I'll text Damon. I don't want him in the middle of this but I don't have any other ideas. Maybe he can find Jeremy for us."

"Shit I forgot my keys. Go ahead I'll meet you by my truck."

"Okay."

*Oh god, what's next?*

~*~

*Klaus is HERE!*

Three simple words that had made Damon's dead heart lurched into his throat. He hadn't thought twice about leaving Katherine to her mission with Jeremy, knowing he would be fine. Besides he'd figured he had enough to do a little damage to Klaus or at least get him wigged so he could perhaps stake him. Or kick him...something. *Anything* to get the bastard away from the woman he loved.

Thankfully one simple *name* had done the trick.
That dude must be scary as hell to ruffle Klaus' feathers. Oh well, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Least everyone is safe…mostly.

Exhaling slowly, he looked up as Bonnie descended the stairs. "Elena okay?"

Bonnie shook her head slowly before falling into his arms, burrowing against him as deeply as she could. "She's upset and confused and hurt. What Klaus did to Stefan—what he made him do to her…" She released a low sob. "She uh, she's just trying to make sense of it all."

He kissed her temple and held her close. "Are you okay?"

She snorted. "No. Matt drowned himself to see Vicki and I—I almost wasn't able to bring him back. Tyler nearly died and Klaus really skeeved me out. He looks at me like I could be a possession. Or… something else."

"Never happen. Klaus will never use you. Or have you." Damon replied vehemently. "I shouldn't have went with Katherine."

"But you learned some valuable info." She shrugged. "It was worth it I think."

He wasn't so sure. "Maybe but you were here and you were scared. I should have been here for you because you're always there for me." He ran his fingers through her hair. "I promise you. I will never leave you again."

"Well isn't this cozy?" Stefan teased and waltzed over to the alcohol.

Damon schooled his features but stood just in case he tried anything. For all that he'd been through with Stefan, he hated the thought of him being forced to turn off his emotions. It was almost like a form of non consent. "What are you doing here brother?"

Stefan poured himself a drink. "Last I checked, I live here. Klaus is gone but he's asked me to keep watch over Elena until he returns. From now on, she is under my protection." He offered cheers before leaving. "Mm by all means carry on."

Yeah this is gonna work out perfectly. "Sure you wanna keep staying here? I kinda don't even wanna stay here."

Bonnie wet her lips. "I'm good. Stefan doesn't scare me, not even this version of him. I'm not leaving you either."

Nodding, he settled down beside her again and slipped his arm around her shoulders. "Looks like we're in this together…for better or worse."

~Fin~
This installment tags episodes 3.06 (Smells Like Teen Spirit) and 3.07 (Ghost World).

Ripper Stefan didn't scare Bonnie. While it was entirely possible that he would rip her throat out without so much as a second glance, she felt secure in the knowledge that she could take care of herself. That she could blow his brains to pieces over and over again until he was unconscious on the floor. So when he had returned to the manor with promises of watching out for Elena, she hadn't really batted an eyelash. It wasn't until Rebecca showed up the next day—complete with luggage—that Damon suggested she stay at home while they got things sorted out.

Apparently after hearing that Mikael might come into play, Klaus skipped town and left her behind. She had thought nothing scared the annoying Originals but something did and Mikael was it.

She liked the thought of Klaus being afraid. Of him getting a taste of his own medicine as it was—he deserved it more than anyone else. He had destroyed so much; their happiness being number one on the list. She knew it was most likely seriously hurting Elena, having Stefan so close and yet not really knowing him at all. Seeing him do horrible things to people and yet not being able to stop him or trust him or have a conversation with him where he didn't act like a complete asshole.

Damon of course was hiding his feelings but she could tell he was hurting as well. Anger was probably winning for him though. He didn't like the helplessness of sadness so he always chose to focus on his rage. Currently his rage was directed at coming up with a plan to kill Klaus, something that she whole-heartedly supported.

On top of all of the supernatural crap that she had to deal with, school had also started up again. So now she had to pay attention and get good grades while trying to stay alive and keep the people she loved alive. She had no idea how she was going to juggle it all. Not to mention she couldn't get over the feelings of guilt at having her family compelled. But it was for the best really. At least they were safe this way. Right?

Charles Bennett was out of town—what else is new—so she was left to her own devices. He'd left however with a bright smile telling her to be safe and to stay with Damon if she started feeling weird with being alone. Naturally he wouldn't have said such if Damon hadn't convinced him that their relationship was as chaste as a virgin in a chastity belt. With those happy thoughts implanted in his head he'd skipped out of Mystic Falls leaving her to feel like a horrible daughter.

But what else was I supposed to do? Even if I weren't sleeping with Damon being around him is crucial right now. I have to keep him grounded or he might slaughter an innocent person. And then I would have to slaughter him…

Sighing deeply, she stared at the ceiling of her bedroom as soft music played in the background. She could hear the shower when it shut off and minutes later, a barely towed Damon strolled through the open doorway. He hadn't bothered to dry off at all so his skin was still wet with tiny drops of liquid rolling over his chest and back. Falling from his inky strands of hair down the sides of his face
and onto his shoulders. She would always freely admit that he was gorgeous…even when she was
pissed at him. She decided she had a right to be this time considering the content. Considering
someone could have been gravely injured.

"Are you going to give me the silent treatment all night?" He inquired with his hands on his hips. "I
was stabbed earlier you know by Barbie Klaus. I thought you would be all for kissing my booboos."

Sitting up, she frowned at him. "You lied to me."

He lifted a finger. "I didn't lie. I just didn't tell you what I was doing. There is a difference."

Bonnie scoffed. "I'm sorry but do you think you're talking to Elena right now? Do you honestly
think that bullshit doing this for your own good speech is going to work on me? I'm not some damsel
in distress."

Damon's jaw twitched. "It was Elena that didn't want you involved in our little plan, okay? I was all
for getting you to use your magic on Stefan but she said no. She figured he might hurt you though I
doubted it. Still, she had a good point. At this point he would probably kill me if it benefited Klaus."

She shook her head. "I can handle Stefan—you know I can."

He nodded. "And Rebecca? She's like a little Klaus in heels but bitchier if it's possible. She wouldn't
hesitate to hurt you."

A shrug. "Klaus seems to be interested in me for some reason so I don't think she would kill me. I
could probably knock her out before she got a chance anyway." Pause. "My safety isn't the point
here."

Frowning, he stalked closer until he was standing at the foot of the bed. "Your safety is always the
point with me. We just wanted to get Stefan locked up so that we could get him under control. We
didn't think it was going to be a total cluster fuck but either way; neither Elena nor I wanted to risk
your safety. You're like a sister to her and you know how much you mean to me."

Bonnie wet her lips slowly. "I know but you should have told me what was going on. Do you have
any idea how it felt when you waltzed in here from the bonfire with blood on your shirt? I—I
thought you had been seriously hurt. You could have been killed and—and I wouldn't have known
until I felt it. Or I would have gotten there too late to do anything."

His expression softened and he sat down beside her, taking her hand. "What we're doing is
dangerous. Rebecca and her crazy ass family aren't playing a game so there is a chance I'll end up
with a lot more blood on my shirt before all of this bullshit is settled. Between Tyler turning into
Klaus' bitch and Stefan eating his way through every co-ed in the town, I don't know what is going
to happen."

"Which is why we need to stick together and share information. Remember? We're supposed to be in
this together."

"We are but that doesn't mean I won't protect you by any means necessary."

"I don't like it when you lie to me. Besides, I think Elena needed more protection tonight. She almost
got burned alive."

"Yeah that was weird. Alaric said it was a freak fire or something."

"It was Vicki."
"Vicki? She's dead."

"While you and Elena were carrying out your master plan, I was cleaning up Matt's mess. Vicki tricked him into doing some kinda spell so that she could interact on our plane. The witch who did the hybrid spell sent her here to kill Elena so that Klaus couldn't make anymore. I had to send her back."

"Sounds like you had a busy night too…"

She rubbed the back of her neck. "I guess. The hard part came after when I had to comfort Matt. He has no one and then he had to send his sister away—it was like he lost her all over again."

Her boyfriend cringed. "Maybe I should send him a fruit basket to say I'm sorry for pumping her full of vampire blood and then snapping her neck."

She made a face. "That's not funny. When I think about the shit you have done in the past it upsets me so I try not to think about it."

Damon studied her for a moment before reaching up and pulling the rubber band off her hair. "Noted. We'll pretend it never happened." Flexing his fingers, he dragged them through her silky black locks. I'm sorry we didn't tell you about the whole trap Stefan thing. Next time you'll totally be in the loop."

"Thank you." Her voice was soft. "I know you were looking out for me and I get it. It's just—you know I love Elena and I would do anything to keep her safe but it's odd when you two hang out so much considering…stuff."

He tilted his head to the side. "Bonnie you know I don't have feelings for her anymore and I haven't for a long time. We're friends; that's it. What I'm doing is just as much for Stefan as it is her."

I do know that but..."She's depending on you more, and I want it to be okay but it's kinda not. I understand she's hurt and angry but she shouldn't be able to run to you because you're here. She should be coming to me or Caroline." She bit the inside of her cheek. "To be honest I'm not sure how she sees your relationship anymore. I don't think she would like make a move on you or anything but it's getting sort of emotional. I'm a little worried she might start projecting or something because you're being so great with her."

He chuckled softly and kissed her cheek. "Well I am super handsome but you've got nothing to worry about. I only wanna keep her safe. If I feel she's getting too close I'll pull back or if push comes to shove, we'll have a talk."

I can't decide if I'm comforted or not. I guess time will tell. "Okay."

Smiling, he smoothed his thumb across her bottom lip and leaned in, kissing her gently. He tasted faintly of marshmallows and chocolate, and she wrapped her arms around his neck and pulled him closer. As usual he went without much prompting, shifting until they were both stretched out on her bed. She raked her nails down his bare back to the towel slung low on his hips, giving it a little tug.

He grinned against her lips. "Is this makeup sex or sorry you were stabbed sex?"

She snickered and wiggled out of her camisole. "How about I'm glad I have you sex?"

"Hm that works for me." Wiggling his brows, he kissed her chin and then continued down, dragging his tongue over her breasts and across her bellybutton.
Bonnie's lashes fluttered closed and she arched her hips so that he could slide her panties off. He tossed them behind him and coaxed her legs over his shoulders. As his lips tickled her inner thighs, she exhaled and let herself seep into the pleasure that she would soon have. There would be plenty of time to worry about their troubles tomorrow.

~*~

"I don't like it when you're grumpy. Things explode when you're grumpy."

Bonnie smiled and reached out as far as she could on the sturdy silver ladder, knowing that if she lost her footing Caroline would catch her even if it turned a few heads. "What makes you think I am grumpy?" She twisted the small wire onto a low tree branch until it supported the bright white lantern.

Caroline gazed up at her. "C'mon we've been friends for like, ever. I know when something is bothering you. So out with it. Is Damon being a jerk again?"

Sighing, the witch slowly climbed down until she was on the ground. "No. Look if I tell you, you can't tell anyone."

The blonde smirked. "You mean I can't tell Elena. Fine. Spill."

Glancing around, she huffed. "I guess I'm just starting to get a little wigged out by how much time she's spending with Damon. I know it's all to help Stefan get his humanity back but I can't help but remember the huge boner he used to have."

Her friend nodded slowly. "And you think it could come back?"

Bonnie shrugged at her dark gray sweater. "Not really. Not on his part anyway. I just think Elena is in a vulnerable place right now and the closest link she has to Stefan is Damon. I don't know." She frowned deeply. "I guess I'm just freaking out over nothing. Elena would never make a move on Damon."

"True." Caroline said. "She's not Katherine. But I totally understand where you are coming from. When—when Matt and I first started going out I had that same sort of wrong feeling because of all the history they had. It took me a while to get over it."

"I feel horrible though 'cause I don't really want her hanging around him but I can't tell her that. She'll think I'm accusing her of something." Yanking on her silver necklace, she bit her bottom lip. "So I guess I have to take one for the team until Stefan is normal again."

"Least you know Damon would never cheat on you. Well not now." Caroline grinned. "Not after you guys have gotten solid and made with the love."

Bonnie's cheeks flushed; it just couldn't be helped anymore. "I don't know what I would do if he did, especially with her. Just thinking about it causes a bad reaction."

Caroline rubbed her shoulder gently. "Well don't think about it…or you might set the lanterns on fire and I'm not explaining that to Tyler's mom. She already doesn't like or trust me."

That must be rough. "Because of the whole vampire thing?"

The blonde made a face. "Mmhm. I seriously think she thinks I'm going to eat him one day. She doesn't know he's a hybrid yet and I'm not sure he's going to tell her. Meanwhile Klaus' stupid sister is trying to take over my life and I just…ugh! If you do decide to start blowing shit up please let me
know. I want to get in on that action."

Bonnie laughed. "Sure thing." She plucked up another lantern and ascended the ladder, going a bit higher this time to rope it around a swinging branch. A light breeze swept strands of her black hair off her neck and she shivered; *is it just me or do we have a lot of festivals and stuff?* "Ya know when Damon and I were first doing whatever it is we were doing, I had this really intense dream about him."

Caroline arched a brow, her nails tapping on a metal rung. "Oh I'll bet you did. Were there two of him?"

Snorting with laughter, she resisted the urge to kick out at her friend. "No! Geeze. He—he kinda got me to go bad I suppose you could say. We just wrecked stuff and set stuff on fire. It was so violent but I liked it. Not that I want to go around destroying things of course but it was like, that was the moment I knew had I been born a different person, Damon and I could be really dangerous together."

"Hm." The other girl murmured. "That would be kinda scary. I know I'm a vampire and there are bad things in this town but a bad Bonnie would have us all beat. So I think it's best you just stay your sweet self."

*Let's hope I can manage that.* "I will certainly try."

Easing back down to the ground, she watched as Caroline unfolded more colorful lamps to be strung up for the *Night of Illumination* thing they were having once it got dark. People were chattering all around the area and working on signs and food stands; they were never short on volunteers. Idly she wondered if Carol Lockwood forced people into helping out or if they just really got into the town's history that much. Across from where she and the blonde were working stood Matt at his pickup truck, digging around in the back for tools. She felt like she should go ask him how he was doing but she didn't want to bother him. Obviously losing his sister for a second time had been rough, and she wouldn't be surprised if he didn't want anything to do with any of them for a long time.

*God our lives are so fucked up! And none of us knew they would turn out this way. I wonder if we had known would we have made different choices?*

Right now however she couldn't focus on what might have been, she had to pay attention to what was actually happening. Klaus was still very much a threat and until he could be normal again, Stefan was too in a way. And Tyler who currently thought Klaus could do no wrong. Sometimes it really seemed like the moment they were happy something came along to fuck it up.

Maybe they were all just cursed or something.

Her emotions over Elena and Damon were familiar in a strange way that took her back to months before when the tomb vampires were lurking about and everyone knew Damon had the hots for Elena except her. The pain was all too real and too searing in her gut to forget but she'd managed to move past it without being damaged in the process. That was partly because Elena didn't return his feelings at all. Now she couldn't push away the tiny voice in the back of her mind asking what would happen if she suddenly wanted him? If she suddenly saw him in a different light and tried to get him to remember when he saw her the same way…

"Ow!" Caroline jerked away from the ladder, sucking her finger into her mouth. "Metal is hot as fire. Jesus that hurt."

*Huh…* "Too much sunlight shining on it probably."
The blonde scowled and turned towards the road when the sounds of an angry engine grew closer. They both watched as Damon's gorgeous vintage ride with the top down broke over the hill, tires squealing as he stopped beside where they were working. "Greetings Blondie. Witchy."

"Hey." Bonnie migrated over. "What's up?"

"I think you got your voodoo wires all crossed when you got rid of Vicki Donovan." He explained. She frowned. "What do you mean? Why?"

He looked up at her. "Because I'm pretty sure I just got spit roasted by Mason Lockwood's ghost."

What? "What?"

Caroline snorted. "Why would you think that?"

He sighed, slightly annoyed. "Maybe because he chained me to a chair and shoved a hot poker in my chest. Let's just say I'm having déjà vu."

Bonnie blinked and was immediately concerned, sliding her hand down the v of his black shirt, her fingers roaming over smooth cool flesh. "Are you okay?"

Her boyfriend shrugged. "I healed but let's just say it wasn't fun. At first I thought it was Stefan being a dick but then I remembered our last chat with Mason. I think he's still pissed."

"I don't blame him." Caroline replied all matter of fact. "But I thought you said ghosts couldn't physically interact with people."

"They can't." At least they aren't supposed to be able to. Ugh, what now? Damon shifted in his seat. "Yeah well I don't have time for a vengeful Lockwood. When I kill someone they're supposed to stay dead. I have too much on my mind right now to be worried about fucken ghosts."

Pulling her hand back at his tone, Bonnie hugged her waist. "Sorry I apparently screwed up when I sent Vicki away."

"I didn't say that."

"You didn't have to."

Exhaling, he grabbed her hand and kissed her palm. "C'mon judgy don't get all weird on me. I'm just asking you to check things out, that's all. And not only for my benefit. I'm sure you don't wanna be seeing Clarissa or Luka again anytime soon either."

 Fuck I had forgotten about them. "I'll look into it."

He grinned. "That's my girl. I'll see you later." Next he was driving off.

"Fuck." She said rubbing her forehead. "Now what?"

Caroline chewed on the inside of her cheek. "I really hate to suggest this but..." She motioned to Matt, who had heard the entire exchange. "We should probably talk to him...see if he's seen Vicki
again since you sent her away."

*I would rather be swallowed by a sink hole but unfortunately she is right. "Yeah. Let's go."

~*~

Damon wasn't fond of dead people; ghost or vampire. Of course he also wasn't too fond of living people either so it was safe to say he was a bit anti social. However as far as people were concerned at least those with a pulse weren't exactly a threat. Werewolves maybe but there weren't any in town so he wasn't including them on the list. Ghosts though—ghosts were a plenty.

And he hated them.

They weren't bound by the natural laws and really, how the *fuck* were you supposed to kill something already dead? Maybe when they couldn't slap him around he was more tolerant but now? No way. Now they could chain him up and beat the hell of out him and that just didn't work for him. So the sooner all of the floaty assholes went back to wherever they came from the better off everyone would be.

Especially him since he'd killed quite a few people who probably wanted revenge. Damn that would be a very long list if they all lived in Mystic Falls. Thank God for small favors I suppose.

Anyway at the moment he had to concentrate on the Mason bullshit—I should probably warn Alaric. Right okay there was also the elephant in the room in the form of the time he'd been spending with Elena because of the whole Stefan deal. In the past nothing would have made him happier but now it was just a means to an end. A way to keep her safe until Stefan pulled his head from out of his ass. He wasn't in love with her at all. She was a friend—sometimes annoying—but just a friend.

And he couldn't be held responsible for her emotions. *Whatever those might be. I think Bonnie is overreacting though. No way Elena would suddenly become into me because Stefan is off his rocker. That doesn't even make sense.*

He wouldn't say this to Bonnie because he valued his brain cells. In any case he was going to have to spend more time with her after things cooled down. Let Stefan at least protect Elena while he focused on defeating Klaus and making sure Bonnie knew just how much she meant to him.

Shaking his head, he yanked open the door of the Grille and strolled inside looking for Alaric. It was time to break the Mason news to him. He had a feeling he wasn't going to take it well.

~*~

There were certain times when Bonnie felt that being a witch was probably the most horrible thing that had ever happened to her. Worse than her father working all of the time or her mother abandoning her. No matter how much power she had she also had *so many* questions that she was quite sure would never be answered. And it made her wonder about her fate; if she would live to see twenty-one or grow old and end up like her grandmother.

There was an unpleasant numbness in her joints—a chill that didn't seem to want to leave no matter how many blankets she wrapped herself in. When she had performed the Manifestation spell she'd had no idea it would make her Grams appear to her like she was still alive. Like for once everything was right in the world. Instead she'd learned that by sending Vicki Donovan back to the other side she'd opened some kinda doorway that any ghost could stroll right on through if they wanted to do so. Thankfully it was not all her fault; some dead witch was using magic beyond the grave to interfere.
Yet Bonnie couldn't get over seeing her Grams again and getting to talk to her and actually touch her. She thought she would be revealing things about her relationship with Damon but Shelia had known it all.

"Just because I'm dead doesn't mean I'm not watching out for you." She had said with a smile. "I'm glad you're happy, baby."

Her blessing wasn't so much as needed as greatly appreciated. She didn't bring up the compelling or Bonnie's thoughts about losing control but Bonnie figured she knew. Maybe in the grand scheme of things though they were small potatoes. She had however told her to stay out of Original vampire business.

"How can I do that Grams when Klaus is gunning for me?" She'd replied slowly. "And all of those that I care about. I can't just sit by and do nothing."

"You have to be careful and learn when to pick your battles." Shelia whispered. "I'm sure you will know what to do when the time comes."

Bonnie on the other hand wasn't sure at all.

Anyway closing the 'door' and sending all of the ghosts back to wherever they came from all hinged on Elena's necklace which apparently Damon had stashed somewhere. She and Caroline had searched his room but found nothing, only learning that Lexi was back to help Stefan dry out and Anna was hanging around Jeremy. They could have taken their time and actually let Lexi finish what she had started with Stefan if the tomb vampires had not returned as well. They killed Tobias Fell—strung him up a tree—and planned to continue their massacre of the founding families.

Absently Bonnie wondered how much pain had it caused Jeremy to get the necklace from Anna—which she had stolen—so that it could be destroyed, knowing it might send her away so that he could never see her again. Or how sad Elena became when she realized Lexi hadn't succeeded in her plan to de-Ripper Stefan. Probably just as bad as she had felt when her Grams disappeared, but not being leaving a few choice parting words…

You are stronger than all of this. I'm so proud of you.

If only she could be proud of herself.

The lights flickered on and she frowned, glancing to the doorway. "Hey."

Damon motioned to the room with his hand. "Any particular reason you're sitting in the dark by yourself?"

She sighed deeply. "I don't know. I just—I feel kinda down I guess. Today was a very draining day."

He nodded and climbed up on the bed beside her. "I'll second that. I got stabbed, again. This time by vervain soaked spikes that shot out of a wall. Mason of all people saved me but we did make progress on a way to maybe kill Klaus."

She scratched at her cheek. "I saw my Grams."

He blinked, his blue eyes widening. "Really? That must have been a mind fuck."

Bonnie nodded slowly. "It was but it was also nice to be able to talk to her again. I miss her so much."
"I know you do." He slipped his arm around her shoulders. "She have anything to say about our torrid love affair?"

The witch chuckled softly. "Not really. She knows everything but as long as I'm happy she's okay. And you make me happy, Damon. No one saw it coming but it's the truth."

Damon grinned. "I'm sure someone saw it coming. Emily perhaps." Pause. "Is that why you're all broody…or is there something else?"

*Isn't there always something else?* "The necklace wouldn't stay destroyed. It exploded and then mended itself somehow. I don't know what that means for anymore ghosts or whatever. Hopefully it was ruined enough to shut the door."

Crawling behind her, he pushed the blankets off her shoulders and began to massage her neck. "We'll keep it on ice then; this time I'll try to hide it where even a ghost can't get to it. So Alaric is kinda my friend again."

"You kissed and made up, huh?"

"Ha. I did apologize about breaking his neck."

"I'm sure he was touched."

"Oh yeah. He wanted to hug but I'm not into that. Unless it's you."

"I'm the exception?"

"Always."

As his fingers smoothed away the tension in her muscles, Bonnie slouched and closed her eyes. All of her hard days should end like this. "Remember when we talked about running away?"

"Of course." The vampire said, dragging his knuckles down her spine. "It was my amazing idea. I always remember my amazing ideas."

She snorted playfully. "We should do it after graduation. Or at least go on a long road trip faraway from here."

Damon peeped at the side of her face. "We could do that…if Stefan is normal and Klaus is rotting somewhere. Ya know Mason led me to this cave with some weird script on the wall. We don't know what it means but we're pretty sure it relates to the Originals. I'm going to tell Elena about it tomorrow."

*Naturally.* "Uh-huh."

Wetting his lips, he flopped back to the headboard with a leg on either side of her, pulling her easily back against him. "What's on your mind, jugdy?"

Bonnie opened her mouth to reply but at the last minute she didn't. Instead she rested to his chest, turning so that she could press her face into the hollow of his throat. "Can't we just talk about something else for a change? No Elena or Klaus—just us."

"Bonnie, if you don't want to be a part of this all you have to do is say so." He played with her fingers. "Might be better anyways, keeping you far away from Klaus."

"It's not that I don't want to help because I do." A beat. "I'll go down fighting just like everyone else,
but sometimes I get tired. I'm a witch not superwoman, and even if I were I think I'd still have emotions and shit."

Damon looked down at her, studying her expression. "This is my fault." Before she could interrupt, he continued. "I was a dick in the past and I strung you along while I had feelings for Elena, and now you're paranoid. But you don't need to be. The list of people I let into my life—that I trust—isn't a very long one. And besides you there is only Stefan, Alaric and Elena. But it still doesn't compare to my trust for you." He shrugged. "Besides my little brother you're the only one who knows the real me. You're the only one I would trust to handle me if I got out of control."

His words brought a smile to her pretty face, and she inched up just enough to kiss the side of his jaw. They had come so far from where they started out with all of the drama and danger and slight cheating. Even so she believed him because surprisingly this time he wasn't the issue.

"I told you it's not you." Groaning, she started unbuttoning his shirt. "I love Elena and I know her but I also see how difficult everything is for her right now, and you're kinda one of the only things making it better. I'm sorry that it kinda irks me."

"You are so cute when you're jealous." He tilted up her chin. "But I get it. When you were talking to Jeremy about our issues I was pissed off. The difference however is that Jeremy wanted in your pants; Elena doesn't want in mine."

"Yet. Ugh I'm such a bad friend for thinking that but I can't help myself. Getting a handle on my emotions isn't easy with everything that is swirling around. I'd stop trying but I might end up causing a flash flood or something."

Tucking her hair behind her ear, she sat up. "You're right, I should chill. Stay focused on the task at hand." Slithering into his lap, she finished with the unbuttoning and pushed his shirt down his arms. "You were stabbed and I should make sure everything is okay."

Damon smirked in his trademark way. "Can I call you Nurse Bonnie?"

She laughed. "If you want." Her fingertips slid along his flawless pale skin, dipping down to brush along his happy trail; on anyone else this would be too pale but with him it's just totally sexy. How does that work? "Did I tell you that my cousin thought you were way too hot for me?"

He arched a brow and busied himself with the ties on the front of her flimsy tank top. "She did? Well obviously she was just jealous of you and probably wanted me all for herself. Not that I blaming her because I am very attractive."

Bonnie poked him in the chest. "And so damn conceited..." Cutting her eyes to her stereo over in the corner, she blinked and it clicked on, the sounds of Helicopter Girl's Satan's Seventh Bride flowing into the otherwise quiet room.

Unsurprisingly he didn't deny her words. "Yeah but that's sexy. You love it when I'm cocky."

"Heh..." She rolled her eyes and unbuckled his belt, yanking it from the loops. "Keep talking like that and I will be forced to tie you up."

"Promise?" Lifting her up without any trouble, he coaxed her out of her pajama shorts and discarded his jeans without missing a beat. As usual he wasn't wearing any underwear.

His fingers dipped into her panties and she shuddered when they pushed inside of her, starting a slow, fluid in and out rhythm. "Do—don't rip them—this time..."
Her boyfriend snickered and nuzzled her shoulder, pulling her tank down with his free hand until it was bunched up at her stomach. "Okay. We should just get them off then."

Nodding shakily, she backed away to take them off and then slumped against his chest as his fingers slid back into place, causing her hips to jerk. His lips were nipping along her throat, sucking at her brown skin hard enough to leave bright red marks; the ones from the previous night hadn't even faded away yet. A part of her felt like she should hate them but she honestly couldn't bring herself to. In some odd way she liked that he enjoyed leaving his mark.

Swallowing thickly, she reached between them and slicked her thumb over the head of his cock, delighting when he hissed in pleasure. She wrapped her hand around him and gave him a few rough jerks, up and down, then licked her damp fingers as he watched with rapt attention.

"Oh you are such a little tease." Damon growled. He bit her pulse point and slowly guided her down onto him until he was buried deep. "A hot, tight little tease."

Bonnie whimpered and rolled her hips; the fact that she knew how still a little shocking. She gripped the hair at the nape of his neck and kissed him, panted against his lips as he thrust up over and over. His hands held her close and he chuckled at the yelp she let out when he smacked her on the ass.

"C'mon judgy." He teased, his voice raspy and low. "Ride me harder. You—you know you can."

"Keep talking." She gasped, spreading her thighs wider. "God I love it when—when you talk."

"Tell me you love me."

"I love you."

"Tell me you love what I do to you. How I…take you."

"I—I love it when you fuck me, Damon. I'll always lo—love it."

Damon tangled his fingers in her hair and suddenly she was on her back on the bed, legs squeezing his slim waist, heels hooking behind his back as he pinned her to the mattress and drove into her until the frame rattled loudly against the wall. Vaguely she managed to wonder if the neighbors would complain but she couldn't really find it in herself to care. She often lost sight of everything but Damon when he was inside of her.

His moans were ringing in her ears before his mouth trekked lower and his fangs sunk into her throat. She made a sound like she was dying and arched into him, digging her nails in his biceps. He shifted and rolled his hips, pressed down and grinded, making her thighs tremble and his shoulders tense as he drank from her.

By the time that all too intense pleasure uncoiled in her stomach and erupted throughout her body, she was all but drowning in his love and warmth. She clung to him like he would disappear if she didn't; chest heaving as his thrusts turned erratic and he came with choked off groan.

Bonnie could hear her heart thudding loudly in her ears and she let herself sink into the mattress with his weight, her legs flopping open. She stared at the ceiling and smiled a little; their bond was all but pulsing with soothing sensations to calm whatever left over nerves she had. Sure it wouldn't last but sometimes just living in the moment made all the difference.

Flicking strands of damp black hair off Damon's forehead when he looked up, she grinned. "Spend the night?"
He kissed her chin. "You never have to ask."

~Fin~
Liar Liar

Chapter Summary

Sometimes telling the truth really isn't an option.

Chapter Notes

This tags episodes 3.08 (Ordinary People) and 3.09 (Homecoming).

Liar Liar

Over the years Damon Salvatore had worn many faces depending on who he was interacting with. He could be the helpless human, the ferocious vampire or the total flirt…and those were just three of the masks in his bag. After a while though he honestly came to forget who he really was but when you could turn off everything that mattered, it wasn't a big deal. And he would love to credit Bonnie with making him want to find himself again but that actually went to Elena. After all he'd been somewhat obsessed with her when he first returned to Mystic Falls.

Everything else though was because of Bonnie. In becoming someone she could be with, he slowly remembered what it was like to be that human man with father issues and the world before him. He still didn't exactly understand it all however. His relationship with Bonnie wasn't something that made sense but it worked and he liked it. He liked that she was his—that she'd wanted him from the start unlike a certain vampire whore he wouldn't mention. He didn't want to get all sappy and say that Bonnie was healing him in some way but she was. If it wasn't for her love and stuff he was pretty sure he wouldn't be able to function around Katherine, let alone be civil enough with her to have dastardly plans.

Still it was amusing to him how he could love Bonnie and hate so much else. How he could want her safe and yet be willing to let everything else burn. Well except Stefan but he hoped he was never in that situation where it was either or. Shouldn't I be different now? Shouldn't I be all hearts and rainbows because the power of love has touched me?

Apparently not.

Whatever.

His moments of retrospect were drifting in more and more because of their current circumstances. He was spending time with Elena, helping her train and save Stefan, and he couldn't help but think back to earlier times when he would have given his right testicle to be this guy. The one she counted on and turned to when times got fucked up. Now—while he didn't mind helping her out—he also felt nothing when she was in his arms or looking up at him with those big puppy dog brown eyes. Friendship sure but nothing else. No fluttery emotions where he wanted her to forget his brother so they could drown in each other.

A part of him felt like it should be weird but it wasn't. Truth of the matter was Bonnie satisfied him in
every way that he needed. Sexually—fuck yeah—emotionally and one of the best parts was that she
didn't let him get away with shit. It was a bit annoying but he liked that she wasn't scared to stand up
to him. That she had no problems calling him out or putting him down when he got to up his own
ass. He'd never tell her but she was a bit like Katherine sometimes; powerful, beautiful and cunning.
The big difference is that she was also sincere and empathic to the feelings of others. Especially his.

*God I'm such a fucken girl.*

Anyway so yeah he didn't have feelings for Elena anymore. He wasn't sure how she felt
about him and naturally he wasn't about to ask, but he hoped their quiet moments were just normal.
That she wasn't coming to depend on him more now that Stefan was acting like a coke fiend. He
didn't want to have some kinda talk with her. As far as he was concerned everything was as it should
be.

Now if only he could get Bonnie to see things the same way.

*Maybe she needs some kinda grand gesture. Jewelry. Expensive jewelry might do the trick. Or
something old and heartfelt.*

*But back to the matter at hand. Stefan.*

Elena didn't think he knew how to handle his little brother but he did, so letting him out of his cell
wasn't a bad thing. Not like he was really getting better in there anyway. No matter how much of the
bloodlust he lost he would still be compelled to not feel anything. *They* needed to see how far that
went through.

Sitting in the loud country western bar at a sticky table with a pretty waitress named *Callie* on his
lap; *Bonnie finds out about this and she might smoke my ass,* Damon watched as Stefan flipped a
coin into a glass and commanded that he drink. They'd already been through one bottle of whiskey—
well he had—Stefan was too busy sipping from poor Callie's veins. She was a small price to pay
however for some brotherly bonding.

Patting her on the thigh, he sent her off for more booze while Stefan questioned his motives once
again. Apparently no humanity also meant he didn't trust anyone or anything. Fair enough.

"Damon, you are worse than Elena." He mused. "Getting me drunk, brotherly bonding. What do
you think I'll break down and you can pull me back from the edge?"

Damon snorted. "I happen to like the edge, Stefan. Your problem is your inability to resist falling
over it. You're all or nothing man. You can't just..." He shifted as Callie slid back onto his lap. "Be.
Although who am I to judge?" He offered the pretty blonde's arm. "Drink up brother."

Stefan smirked and did as requested, ripping another hole in Callie's already ruined wrist. "You're
lying to yourself if you think you've been anywhere near the edge lately. I might not have my
humanity but my memory is just fine. Bonnie's got you on a short leash."

"Because I'm not out killing people?" Damon inquired.

His brother shrugged. "You're miles away from the man you used to be. I can't decide if it's a good
or bad thing though. The old Damon would be tearing up the town with me, not playing house with
some teenage girl. Not that I don't see the appeal..." He leaned back in his chair, wiping red from his
lips. "There is just something about teenage girls, huh? Maybe it's their utter naiveté at thinking
they're special and not a dime a dozen."

"Bonnie is descended from a line of the most powerful witches around and Elena is or was a
doppelganger...I don't think chicks like those come around every day." Damon tilted his head to the side.

Stefan watched him with a knowing grin. "Remember when you tried to kill Bonnie? If I hadn't saved her she would be dead right now. Do you ever...think about that night? How you ripped into her throat? The little scream she was barely able to get out. How she fell to the ground bleeding?"

Pause. "I could hear her heart beating slower and slower. A few seconds too late and she would have died."

Low blow, brother. "Your point?"

The other vampire tapped his fingers on the table. "No point. I just think a vampire can't really change. I spent years hating my existence and for what? It was all bullshit. Now here you are spending your time trying to pretend you really give a damn about Bonnie when we both know you don't."

Damon knew this game because he had played it hundreds of times before, and most of the time with Stefan. It was like they had switched places except his brother didn't look as good being a bastard as he did. "Enough about chicks and relationships. This place is dead." Easing Callie off him, he stood and took off his jacket. "You've been in jail for a while. We should party."

He wasn't against using his powers for evil though he wasn't so sure compelling most of the patrons in the bar to "act normal" and have a good time was exactly evil. And anyway it was probably more for their own good.

Five minutes later and the place was much livelier with the drinks flowing and people laughing happily. Even though he was there for Stefan he couldn't resist having a good time; he had to sell it after all. He had a feeling he was playing the part of a man breaking away from his ball and chain that was in desperate need of a night out. So he jumped onto the bar and pulled two flannel wearing hotties up with him, and proceeded to dance. He almost felt like he'd went back in time to the years he was pining for Katherine and just trying to hold out onto the comet was in play.

While they hadn't been bad years by any means, compared to what he had now they were a bit lonely in hindsight. Compelling someone to care about you wasn't the same as just having it.

He had left Stefan chatting up Callie, mixing her blood with another bottle of warm whiskey. His baby bro hadn't been interested in dancing or anything of the like, and judging from where he was gnawing on her neck like an over excited puppy he still wasn't. Sighing, he hopped off the bar and stopped a concerned looking customer from blowing the whistle, telling her to just move on.

Stefan could eat his way through this whole town. I love blood as much as the next guy but damn."

"Hey hey hey, ease up..." He pulled Stefan away, frowning at the gaping bite marks on Callie's neck. He tied a red scarf around them. "She's giving us her employee discount. Now, just run along." Shaking his head as she walked away, he signaled the bartender for more alcohol. "Two more."

Stefan grinned, animated by all the blood in his system. "Alright time to fess up. What's the point of the jail break, hm?"

"I thought you could use a hug, Stefan."

"C'mon Damon. You know Elena is gonna hate you for letting me out. And we both know that you care about what she thinks."

"Not as much as you probably think."
"Right. Cause you're over her now. Who are you trying to fool? Me or yourself?"

"This again? Really?"

"Hey I just think it's kinda sad especially for Bonnie. She hated how into Elena you used to be. Bet she's just loving all of the time you're spending together lately. Maybe I should console her while you're busy with her best friend."

"I think you'd be better off leaving Bonnie alone for your own health unless you want your brain to explode."

"Do witches taste different?"

"Yeah. Sweeter. And maybe all of this has nothing to do with Bonnie or Elena. Maybe I wanted to remind you what freedom was like before Klaus took it from you."

Stefan rolled his eyes as if that meant nothing. "As long as Klaus is alive I do what he says."

"That's my point Stefan, you've given up." Damon angrily downed his drink. "Now you can sit around and be his little bitch or you can get mad and do something about it."

The other vampire was exasperated. "Damon, he can't be killed."

Before Damon could say anything about it one way or the other, a rather dashing blonde gentleman walked up and voiced his opinion on the matter. "The Salvatore boys, I presume?"

Stefan straightened his back. "Mikael."

Well things just got interesting! Katherine did her part...for once. "The vampire who hunts other vampires. Are you here to help us?"

"I'm here to kill Klaus. Tell me where he is and he will no longer be a problem for you." Mikael replied easily.

Damon leaned back against the bar. "That might be hard considering we don't know where he is and Stefan is compelled to be his good little soldier."

Mikael smiled smugly. "I can be very persuasive when I wish to be. So Stefan, let's see if we can't get some information out of you."

~*~

Getting pretty fucken tired of being stabbed in the chest and punched in the chest and generally having someone else get my blood on my clothes.

Of course by the time Damon got to Bonnie's house he was nice and clean; no evidence that Mikael had threatened his life on him at all. And at least something good had come out of it. They were going to get Klaus back into town so that they could kill him, and he had confirmation that Stefan still cared about him. It was hidden as deep as possible but it existed and that was all he cared about. Now his insane quest to redeem his brother wasn't so crazy after all. He was going to repay his debt whether Stefan wanted him to or not.

And he didn't know why he had beat his brother up when Stefan mentioned his humanity but... yeah...it had been an odd night.
Stretching out on Bonnie's bed, he folded his arms behind his head and glanced to the door when she walked in. "Hey judgy."

She smiled at the sight of him. "Hey. I didn't know you were coming by."

He shrugged. "Thought I would check on you. How did things go with the cave scratching?"

She sighed and turned out the light, crawling up beside him. "Okay I guess. We found out that Mikael didn't kill the Original witch, Klaus did. He's been lying all this time. Elena said she was going to tell Rebecca and see if it changes anything. I think it will." Shifting under the covers, she looked at him. "How was your outing with Stefan?"

"Eventful. Mikael showed up so I guess Katherine kept up her end of the deal." He explained slowly. "He's going to help us kill Klaus."

"You make it sound so easy." She bit her bottom lip. "And it's really not. I'm not even going to let myself hope that it works so that if it doesn't I won't be disappointed."

"Don't be such a buzz kill." He poked her shoulder. "Mikael is a dick but he has been hunting vampires for a long ass time. If anyone can take out Klaus it will be him. We just have to play our parts and hope Stefan is free enough to play his. He's the loose cannon."

Bonnie hummed in response and rested her head to his chest. "Well whatever I can do to help just let me know. I know how badly you want Stefan to be himself again."

Damon nodded absently. "Yeah. Except letting Stefan out didn't change anything so I'm sure Elena will have something to say about that. He's an even bigger dick than before but I think he's tired of being Klaus' errand boy."

"I'm sure she'll get over it." Bonnie said. "What we're doing—what we are all trying to do—sometimes you have to go in a direction you never expected." She yawned. "Besides it's you and we both know she's willing to make allowances for you these days."

Heh. "Whatever you say, sweetheart. Right now we should just focus on staying alive." A beat. "Especially you."

"I'll do my best." He could hear the smile in her voice. "Goodnight Damon."

Looking down at her, he whispered, "Goodnight Bonnie."

Damon wasn't stupid; he knew Bonnie could take care of herself. She was strong and had kick ass powers and was not against using them when the situation arose. But Klaus had some type of weird fixation with her and every time she was close to him she was in danger of being kidnapped or who knows what else. Klaus was a tricky fucker like that. She should set this one out for her own good. I gotta have all of my bases covered and I can't watch my back, Stefan's back and hers at the same time.

She's going to be pissed.

*I'll deal with it. *

~ *~

It was funny but Caroline managed to make every dance they had sound like the most important one of their entire lives. In all honestly Bonnie couldn't wait to see how she reacted when it was time for
prom and yet she was also terrified. She wouldn't be surprised if her friend literally exploded with excitement and anxiety when the time came.

Well if any of them were alive to see prom but she was trying to be optimistic.

But Homecoming was the current noise and Bonnie was being a good friend by attending the party at Tyler's home since the gym was now a flooded mess. A small fact that naturally nearly made Caroline have a stroke though the situation in progress right now didn't have her fairing much better. She'd been planning something glitter filled and shiny at the school but somehow Tyler had managed to pull off something more akin to a seasonal bash.

There were strobe lights and expensive decorations with flowing alcohol and loud music. Even with his money and connections it was strange he was able to tack something this massive together in time.

Wearing a lovely silk plum colored dress; the vampire in question frowned at the state of her boyfriend's home. "How did he plan a better party than me so fast? Wait—is that a band outside?"

Bonnie arched a brow and glanced around at the large chattering crowd. "Who are all of these people?"

"This is weird. Where is Tyler?" Caroline huffed and stalked off. "I wanna know what in the hell is going on."

*I second that.*

Shrugging out of her small black coat, she slung it over a chair and meandered into the room, trying to find someone that she recognized. While she noticed students from her school and classes sprinkled throughout the group, there were many more faces that were totally alien to her. It didn't make any sense—why would Tyler invite people they didn't know?

Perhaps he just wants to have some type of legendary party. *Old Tyler would have loved that.*

Smoothing down her tight gold dress, she strolled to the open glass doors and stared out at the band on the lawn and at the dancing bodies swaying together. An elaborate fountain sat off to the side, spewing red punch so she grabbed a glass and took a small sip just in case it was spiked. The last thing she needed was to be out of her mind tonight. She had a feeling something was going to happen but she didn't know what. She'd had every intention of asking Damon but sleep claimed her the previous night before she could and she hadn't seen him all day.

Which is odd but whatever. *An earlier conversation with Elena provided no information either except that she still wanted Stefan back and she couldn’t be wait to be rid of Klaus. A sentiment echoed by probably the whole town, even those who had no idea who Klaus was. He was a menace; never thought there would be someone worse than with him gone and Stefan back, Elena would be spending all of her time making sure that he stayed in the shallow end of the blood drinking pool.*

Away from Damon.

*And I won't have to lie to her anymore when she asks if anything is wrong.* Normally Bonnie would feel horrible about it but it was actually better this time to lie than be honest. She wasn't in the mood for any type of argument and she didn't fancy herself the stay away from my boyfriend type either. It just seemed easier to blame her distant nature on the problems at hand instead of creating new ones.

Sipping her beverage, she drifted off to the left and ditched the now empty plastic cup into a waiting
trash can. A hand appeared at her neck and slid down to her lower back, the fingers tip toeing across the material of her outfit in a not unpleasant way. At least not until she realized who it was of course.

"Don't touch me." She said jerking away. What is he doing here anyway!

Klaus grinned at her. "Even when you're not happy to see me you manage to look extremely lovely. How is that Bonnie?"

She took a step back. "What are you doing here?"

He gestured to the party. "Celebrating the demise of a persistent thorn in my side. My father."

Mikael is dead? But I thought he was on board to help kill Klaus. And who killed him? What is going on? "Well congratulations."

She turned to leave but he grabbed her wrist, effectively keeping her in place. "Now now, play nice or I might end up adding more names to the deceased list, starting with your friends." Smirking, he pulled her closer and began to rock from side to side to the song playing. "Surely dancing with me won't kill you."

Swallowing down her disgust, she put her hands on his shoulders. "It might."

He chuckled lowly. "Do you know why I like you? It's possible it's because you despise me so much. Or because once upon a time you had the balls to try and kill me. While I should be ripping your heart out for that little indiscretion I can't help but think it's commendable. That such a woman should be standing at my side, not crushed under my foot."

Bonnie rolled her pretty green eyes. "Save your words for someone who cares. The only reason I haven't set your brain on fire is because there are too many people around."

He didn't seem to care one way or another. "Fair enough." Pause. "You and your buddies wouldn't happen to be planning something tonight, would you? I notice they are all here."

"This is supposed to be our Homecoming. Of course we'd all be here." She snapped angrily. "You're the one who doesn't belong."

Klaus tilted his head to the side. "I find it interesting I was able to compel Greta and yet my compulsion doesn't work on you. Does that mean you are stronger than her?" He peered deeply into her eyes. "Or is it because of Damon… Your loyalty to him is…intriguing."

She wet her lips slowly. "It's not just loyalty it's love. But I don't expect someone like you to understand that."

His hands tightened almost painfully on her waist. "I know love my dear. It's more than just a pretty word to make butterflies erupt in someone's stomach. You think you and Damon are in love but you're not. I'm sure he's just using you. One of these days he is going to hurt you quite badly either by leaving or choosing someone else. And when he does I shall be here to help you."

Wrenching away from him, Bonnie clenched her hands into small fists to avoid striking out. The last thing they needed was some sort of incident. "He hasn't forced me to do something I don't want to do, so he's still miles ahead of you. He could leave tomorrow and I'd still hate you. Stay away from me." Without waiting for him to reply, she hurried off in search of Caroline.

Together they were going to find out what in the fuck was happening.
Surprisingly Caroline was not the one she eventually found after wandering around the Lockwood mansion for about thirty minutes. Instead she caught a glimpse of a black leather jacket shoving Tyler into his father's study and the tiny hairs on her arm began to tingle. She followed and entered the room just in time to see Damon and Tyler locked in a fight with her vampire boyfriend tossing the hybrid into the wall as hard as he could. There was a loud thump and then Damon was yanking a stake from his inside pocket, preparing to drive it into Tyler's chest.

Frowning deeply, she extended both hands and concentrated, feeling the power leap from her fingertips and into their heads. They cried out in unison and sunk to the floor, Tyler losing consciousness rather quickly. Once she was sure he was out, she dropped her hands.

"What the hell is wrong with you?" Damon asked as he stood on shaky legs. "You weren't supposed to witchy migraine me."

"You weren't supposed to kill Tyler!" She exclaimed. "I obviously had to act quick and it was the easiest way to get your attention."

He shrugged. "He tried to bite me. And normally I would take offense to that but I don't have time right now."

"I know it's not that cut and dry." She watched as he plucked up the stake and tucked it away. "What is that?"

"Nothing."

"Oh my God, is that the—"

"Shh! They're everywhere!"

"Why do you have it?"

"Because I'm the only one who can get inside the house."

Exhaling, Bonnie grabbed the collar of his coat and shook him the best she could. "What is going on?" Her voice was low, barely a whisper. "Klaus is here and he says Mikael is dead."

Damon gently pushed her to the side. "I don't have time to explain."

"Make time." She demanded. "Whatever is—I should know what you're doing. I can help you."

"You wanna help me? Stay out of sight." He kissed her hard on the mouth and was gone.

Well this isn't over. Not by a long shot.

~*~

"We'll survive this. We always survive. Trust me."

"We're never getting Stefan back. You know that, don't you?"

"Then we'll let him go. Okay? We'll have to let him go."

Bonnie stood at the threshold of the Salvatore living room, arms limp at her sides as she carefully took in the scene before her. It was slightly innocent in all honesty but like the fire raging in its'
heated hearth, so was the one burning inside her chest. There was just something about the way Elena's hands were on the sides of Damon's face. Meant to be comforting in his time of need but out of place; uninvited even though it was obvious he was very disturbed. Yet she had no real right to his wellbeing, friendly or otherwise.

The crystal glasses on the wine table jingled as they shook violently. Elena noticed her first and she licked her lips, smoothing down her long sleeved shirt. "Bonnie. What are you doing here?"

Ten…nine…eight…"I suppose I could ask you the same thing but it's pretty par for the course isn't it? I thought I would stop by and get some fucken answers for a change."

The brunette sighed. "I don't know if now is the time… Things—things didn't really go the way we were hoping."

Seven…six… "Oh? And what things were those? I only ask because no one saw fit to tell me anything of substance."

Elena waved a hand. "Bonnie we were just trying to protect you."

Five. "I don't need protecting. What I need is to know what my boyfriend is up to, especially when it's a life or death situation." A beat. "You know I've let a lot slide lately but someone could have been seriously hurt tonight. And frankly I'm sick of all the secrets."

Damon dropped his glass to the floor and crossed to her. "Stefan stopped me from killing Klaus. He got his freedom and then he bailed. It was all for nothing. Mikael is dead and with him went our best shot at getting rid of Klaus."

Her anger dissipated a bit and she hugged him, rubbing his back soothingly. "I'm so sorry Damon."

"Listen I know you're mad Bonnie but, I wasn't even at the Lockwoods. That was Katherine." Elena replied once Damon was out of the room. "We thought it would be safer if only a few people knew about the plan."

Running a hand through her long black hair, Bonnie huffed. "Elena, I'm trying really hard here not to lose my temper and accidentally bring the roof down on us but you're not making it easy."

The brunette arched a brow. "What are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about your relationship with Damon." She folded her arms over her chest. "I know you miss Stefan and that he's been helping you, but frankly I think you're getting a little too attached."

"What?" The other girl's brows narrowed. "Are you serious?"

This is why I didn't want to have this conversation. "Very. You're depending on Damon more and I wish it didn't bother me, but it does."

Elena moved over to the couch and sat down. "Damon and I are just friends. That's all we've ever been, even when he thought he wanted me. You have nothing to worry about."

Not on his end, no. "I hope not. Otherwise things are going to get very complicated."

"Do you really think I would do that to you?" Her best friend inquired. "That I would go after someone you love?"
Do I? I remember when I could have stated with crystal clarity that I totally didn't think that. "Not on purpose, no. But you can't pretend you haven't been using him to fill the Stefan shaped hole around here lately. Damon's not the guy he used to be—he's not slaughtering innocent people or pushing his emotions away. I know he's been sort of taking care of you. I know how that feels."

Elena shook her head vehemently. "He's been a great friend but that's it. I don't have any feelings for him."

Okay that's a lie but we'll let it slide for now. "Alright." Shuffling her feet, she headed for the stairs.

"Bonnie?" The brunette called out. "Are we okay?"

Bonnie nodded slowly. "Yeah we're okay."

But that was another lie. A smaller one but one just the same and only time would tell if it would come back to bite them both in the ass.

~Fin~
Better Than This

Chapter Summary

Be thankful for what you have.

Better Than This

It was kind of like being under water, everything was hazy and muffled even though the bright morning sun was shining through the wide upstairs window. Bonnie could hear the shower running and if she pushed herself forward from the middle of the bed, she knew she would see Damon under its’ clear spray probably staring off into space, water cascading down his pale body like warm rain on glass. But her head was too clogged to send the necessary electricity to the parts of her body that needed it to get her into motion.

Her skin felt like it was tingling all over; like when your foot falls asleep and the tiny needle sensations almost feel like magic swimming in your veins. The kicker of course was that she did have magic swimming in her veins but times like this it didn't really matter. Times like this it most likely exacerbated the situation.

The sheet was clutched to her chest. Her long black hair was covering half of her face and the breaths she released sent strands puffing into the air, tickling her shoulders and her cheeks. She swallowed hard and blinked, willing the bright neon swirls to stop dancing in front of her eyes. Bonnie had never done drugs before in her entire life—unless alcohol counted and she did not think it did—but damn if too much of Damon's blood didn't affect her like some type of acid trip.

All she could do was sit quietly and wait until it passed, try to think about normal things instead of how easier her life would be if she could wrap herself up in Damon and never come up for air. He had so many faults and when he was upset he could close off, but she couldn't stay away from him. She liked to pretend that he wasn't dangerous but she knew better. Damon Salvatore was a killer and yet she loved him anyway.

Loved him, burned for him, offered herself and her blood to him as if they were nothing because she knew—she hoped—to him they were everything. He could be rough and bruising and wicked but he never crossed any lines and stopped when she told him to.

However it was kind of strange to go from innocent good girl to willing vampire girlfriend. While she had been interested in sex like any other person, she had never craved it. Not even when she was frustrated and horny. Damon brought out a side of her she was sort of ashamed of but couldn't let go of. When she thought back to how she had reacted; how she'd begged for him and dug her nails into his skin to make marks just to see them heal, it was like she'd been possessed.

Their bond had flared bright—she'd almost seen it behind the ice blue of his eyes. She could feel it on her flesh as sure as she could still feel his fingertips dragging over her collarbone to her pulse point.

Sighing deeply, she looked up as he padded into view with a white towel slung low on his narrow hips, hair wet and slicked away from his face. "You okay?"
She nodded slowly. "Getting there. You?"

He shrugged and sat on the edge of the bed. "I'm rethinking my game plan but so far I'm not sure what I should do. Maybe Elena was right...maybe we should let Stefan go."

Bonnie crawled over to him, draping her arms around his neck. "No. He would never give up on you so I don't think you should give up on him. Klaus might not be dead but Stefan is free. There is a chance he would be willing to help you kill him now."

Damon snorted. "We don't even know where he is."

He nuzzled his cheek; he smelled like fresh soap, the wetness of his skin seeping into her own. "I could find him for you. Simple locator spell would work especially since his personal possessions are all over the place."

He exhaled but didn't seem too adverse to the idea. "We'll give it a few days and see what happens."

Kissing her wrist, he studied what he could see of her. "Sorry about the party bullshit. I should have told you what we were doing."

"Yes you should have, but it's over now." She traced her thumb on his cheekbone. "In the future though please don't do that. I know you want me safe but that street goes both ways." She caressed his face. "I don't think I would be okay if I lost you, Damon."

His expression was blank but he closed the small amount of distance between them and kissed her, flicking his tongue against her lips until she parted them. He always knew just how much to nibble and suck, leaving her mouth kiss swollen and humming. Bonnie loved kissing Damon; he was so passionate and she liked how he poured the things he wasn't comfortable saying into the kiss.

Pulling back with a little mmm, he kissed the tip of her nose and moved over to his dresser for clothes. She slouched and stretched out on his grand bed, her head lolling off to the side as her eyelids grew heavier and heavier. Before she realized it she was sleeping softly.

Elena smoothed her hands up to Damon's neck, her thumbs rubbing soothing circles along his jaw. "We'll survive this. We always survive. Trust me."

Damon stared at her with such anguish in his eyes. "We're never getting Stefan back. You know that, don't you?"

She tilted up his chin. "Then we'll let him go. Okay? We'll have to let him go."

Lifting onto her tippy toes, she pulled him closer and sealed her mouth to his. The glass in his hand clattered to the floor as he wrapped his arms around her small waist. Elena moaned and let him push her against the wall, let him rip her shirt over her head and toss it to the floor.

"More." She pleaded. "Please Damon, more."

Suddenly the yellow flames in the fireplace slithered out onto the carpet like tentacles, reaching with inhuman arms to enfold the couch legs and climb up the walls. They wrapped around Damon and Elena's legs and they screamed, tried to pat them away but it was futile. The dancing blaze dragged them withering and shrieking down like vines until they were completely enveloped and the entire living room was on fire.

Bonnie stood at the threshold watching impassively but for the tiny smirk on her lovely face.

"Impressive." A voice whispered in her ear. "Is this how you treat everyone who betrays you?"
She smiled. "No. Some I really hurt."

The figure stepped from behind her to reveal Klaus. He grinned and rested his chin to her shoulder. "You are exquisite."

"You're not angry with me? Without Elena you can't make anymore hybrids." She pointed out idly.

"True, but I don't need them now that I have you." He brushed her hair to the side and kissed a spot below her ear. "And I do have you, don't I Bonnie?"

"Yes." Her lashes fluttered. "I'm yours."

Klaus smiled. "Good." And then he sunk his fangs into the tender flesh of her throat.

Bonnie woke up so violently that she tumbled out of bed and put a deep crack down the center of the mirror in Damon's bathroom. Seven years bad luck. She raked a hand across her face and grasped her neck, exhaling when she felt nothing but silky skin. What the fuck was that?

Getting up, she dressed quickly and hurried downstairs to find Damon on the sofa, nursing a glass of Scotch and reading. "Did I hear something explode?"

She cleared her throat. "Sorry about that. Bad dream."

He hunched his shoulders. "Nothing money won't fix. What were you dreaming about?"

Better not tell him right now, he has enough on his plate. Just the usual sort of crap you know? Nothing to worry about." Easing down beside him, she pulled a pillow into her lap.

Because of dream walking with Damon in the past and always being in control in some form or another, she figured that was just a regular dream. Perhaps brought on by the stress of the night before. Klaus wasn't powerful enough to get into her mind without her being aware, and if nightmares about him were all she had to deal with then she would be okay.

What if they come true? What if one day you end up burning the world down with Klaus?

No. Never happen. I'll destroy myself first. Damon would never let me fall so low.

"So, I heard you and Elena talking last night." He snapped his book closed with an audible pop.

She cut her gaze to him. "Yeah? I figured you would what with the vampire super hearing."

Damon drained the rest of his beverage and got up to get another. "Mmhm. I'm glad things didn't get out of hand."

A brow went up. "Out of hand? You know I would never hurt Elena…" Contrary to what my dreams might say." I just—we needed to clear the air. Or maybe I needed to finally get things out in the open. I wasn't trying to start anything but she needed to hear how I felt about your relationship."

He nodded. "You trust me, don't you?"

"I do." She said quietly. "I'm not worried about your feelings for her, not anymore. This is about how she is seeing you."

"She won't cross any lines, Bonnie. Besides she can say what she wants but I know she hasn't given up on Stefan. She's just confused and shit. We all are."
"I understand that completely."

Grunting, he downed another drink, hissing as it went down. "I'll watch her. Make sure she doesn't get the hots for me."

His girlfriend snickered lightly. "How considerate of you." Pause. "I hope now that she's been made aware she'll be more conscious of what is going on. I just don't want anything coming between our friendship."

"Nothing did when I was into her." He points out. "But I guess it's different if it's suddenly her chasing me down."

_That it would be. I suppose it shouldn't be but considering my history with Elena..._

She wanted to be optimistic and think that things would be fine now. That Elena would pull back but for some reason she couldn't bring herself to believe that. Perhaps it was because she had eyes and she'd seen the looks her best friend would give her boyfriend—just as early as last night. Big brown eyes had searched Damon's face for understanding, for sympathy and for camaraderie. In that moment she had needed those three things and felt he was the best person to give them to her.

Bonnie knew sometimes you fell for someone unexpected; that was basically her entire relationship with Damon. If Emily hadn't interfered she would probably hate him or at least only able to be civil with him for everyone else's benefit. Everything would be different but she doubted it would be better.

Shifting the pillow in her lap to the side, she put her feet onto the floor. She couldn't help but remember her dream and the flames; the way they had burned through everything. Of course she would never, ever hurt Damon or Elena but in that second she'd felt vindicated. Even more disturbing though is the fact that she'd _wanted_ Klaus. Thinking about it now made her skin crawl!

And it wasn't because he wasn't handsome or whatever, but cause he was completely evil. He hid behind his daddy issues so that he could do terrible things and so that he could control people. Even if she didn't have Damon she could never see herself with someone like that. Damon was a lot of things but totally void of emotion he was _not._

Next she was frowning. "What are you going to do with Rebecca?"

"Well we're _not_ taking the dagger out for one." Damon replied, brows narrowing. "We'll probably just leave her down there unless she's needed for leverage or something."

"Yeah." Yawning, she stood and stretched her arms high over her head. "I'm gonna run home and get some clothes. Unless you'd rather I didn't stay here."

He snorted. "You can stay here whenever you want."

She knew that but it was still nice to hear. "Okay." She walked up to him and pulled him into a hug, rubbing her cheek against the fabric of his shirt. "I'll be back as soon as I can."

~*~

After packing an overnight bag and checking her voice mail for messages, Bonnie had every intention of heading back to the Salvatore mansion to lavish affection on Damon and make him feel better. However a phone call from an upset Caroline derailed her plans and she found herself at the blonde's house listening to her latest problems. Naturally they revolved around Tyler.
"I'm trying to be supportive, I really am but…" Caroline exhaled deeply. "He—he's basically a pod person now. Yes he vervained me to make sure I was safe but, what's next? He'll do whatever Klaus says and that scares me."

"I think you're right to be scared." Bonnie replied softly. "But Tyler cares about you and we have to hope that's stronger than whatever loyalty he feels for Klaus."

The blonde shook her head. "What if it's not? What if—we have to kill Tyler?"

"I wasn't going to think about that but…" It might not come to that. If Klaus decides to come after us he'll probably do it himself or—or use his other hybrids."

Her friend shrugged. "But Tyler knows almost everything about us. He would be perfect. Besides you didn't hear him, Bonnie. Talking about Klaus like he's some sort of savior or something. All he cares about now is blood." Pause. "I'm happy he doesn't have to go through the pain of turning if he doesn't want to, but God, I don't trust him."

Bonnie's brows narrowed and she found herself wondering if Tyler would honestly hurt any of them. Perhaps if Klaus expressly asked for it but he still had his own mind and could make his own decisions. Right? "I'm sorry, Caroline. I know this is hard on you but don't give up on him just yet. Whatever loyalties he feels for Klaus could wear off as time goes on."

"Yeah." A beat. "I don't know if I have it in me to wait around however."

"Naturally. "Well you have to do what you think is right."

The blonde sniffed. "Why can't I have a successful relationship? First Matt and now Tyler? I couldn't keep a human boyfriend and now apparently I can't keep a hybrid either. What else is out there?"

"Knowing this town? A whole lot."

"Hah, true."

"Are you sure you and Tyler are over?"

"It's not looking very good to be honest but we'll see. I think we need to have a long talk."

"Yeah. You never know what might happen."

"Unfortunately that's the problem."

~*~

Damon wasn't the type to lounge around the house brooding but he figured it was better than his usual alternative which was killing some innocent person. In truth he was more confused and angry than sad. He thought he knew Stefan. He thought he knew every move he would make, especially when it came to his freedom. Not to mention he knew Stefan hated Klaus just as much as he did, so naturally he would do whatever it took to kill him. Stefan despised Klaus…so why didn't he let him drive a stake through the hybrid's heart?

It just didn't make any goddamn sense and although he tried not to dwell on it he couldn't help himself. Sure his brother was free of compulsion—which had been the point—but Klaus was still out there causing shit. Or he would be because that is just how he operated. And when the time came again he and Bonnie would be forced to protect everyone else because they were the strongest. And where the fuck will Stefan be? Sunning down in Cabo?
But whatever. If Stefan wanted to be a dick then he could be a dick. Perhaps he was due after spending so many years with a stick jammed firmly up his backside. The only problem was that this time there was no Lexi to talk him down from his Ripper ways.

*Never thought I would be sorry I killed her.*

Shaking his head, he wedged his book back onto the bookcase and walked over to the thick curtains, pushing them back to look outside. The sky stretched on in hues of orange and yellow from the setting sun, and he checked his watch. Bonnie had been gone for a while but he wasn't worried. The low simmer that signaled their connection was sincere and calm so wherever she was, she wasn't in any danger.

He would never admit it to anyone but it was nice and comforting to have around right now.

Sighing, he closed the drapes and wondered if he should try to cook—if making Bonnie dinner would take his mind off of all the bullshit he was feeling. He was just about to stroll into the kitchen when the sound of the front door opening caught his ear, followed by soft footfalls.

Elena entered the wide living room and glanced around, her big brown eyes settling on him seconds later. "Hey."

"Hey." He continued into the kitchen knowing she would follow. "What brings you by?"

She rubbed her upper arms. "Just checking up on you. How are you doing?"

He rolled up his sleeves and took two bowls down from the cabinet. "You mean since my brother stopped me from killing the asshole that's been tormenting us? *Juuuust* peachy."

She sighed gently. "I'm sorry, Damon. I—I don't know why Stefan did what he did. Maybe he has a good explanation or maybe he just—maybe he thought we wouldn't succeed. Maybe he thought saving Klaus was the only way to get his freedom."

Damon huffed. "Yeah except I *had* him. One more hit and he would have burst into flames like Mikael. If that stupid son of a bitch hadn't—" He slammed his fist down so hard the countertop cracked. Fuck!"

Elena rushed over and cradled his hand, checking it for damage. "Damon, you have to calm down. Whatever happens we'll get through it. Together."

Studying her, he eased away over to the fridge. "I overheard your talk with Bonnie last night."

The brunette leaned against the table. "Not surprising since you have super hearing. I'm not sure where she got any of *that* from but I'm kinda glad she brought it up. At least it's out in the open and now we can move on."

Pulling out fresh vegetables, Damon grabbed a knife from a drawer and tossed a long dish towel over his shoulder. "You really have *no idea* why she would think we're becoming closer? It's not exactly a secret. We *did* look for Stefan together the entire summer. I think we'd both be lying if we said our relationship hasn't…developed."

"True but she made it sound like we're falling in love with each other and that's not what is happening. We're just…friends." Pause. "Considering the fact at one time I didn't trust you at all, I think it's an improvement."

He nodded. "What she's feeling—it's probably residual stuff from when I had feelings for you."
She smiled a little. "But you don't anymore and I'm sure she knows it. Look I won't lie and say you haven't been wonderful these past few months because you have been. I don't know what I would have done without you."

Another nod. "Well...we were both trying to save my little brother. I figured a joint effort would cover faster ground."

"And you knew if I helped I wouldn't be just sitting at home thinking about the what ifs."

"That to."

"You're a good man, Damon."

"I don't know about all of that. Finding Stefan was for my benefit as well."

"Yes but it wasn't something you had to do. You were doing it because you care about him. And you let me help because you care about me."

Damon had his back to her; he didn't disagree with her however. "I do care about you, Elena. I always have." He chopped up a cucumber slowly. "But I'd stop seeing you in a second if it really started to hurt Bonnie."

Her small inhale wasn't loud by any means but he still heard it—super hearing and all. "I..." Wetting her lips, she soldiered on. "I understand. I hope she's okay though. I mean I hope she realizes we're just friends and I—I would never do anything to mess up our friendship. She's like family to me."

"Good. Good." He replied absently.

Elena stared at him. "You really love her, don't you?"

"You sound surprised." He smirked at her. "What do you think I've been doing?"

She shrugged and moved over to the sink to wash the other vegetables for him. "No it's not that. You're just not usually this open, not even with me. Alaric says you've mentioned your feelings but nothing concrete and always in a jokey way."

"I'm not the sharing type. You know that." He dumped the cucumber slices into a bowl and started tearing up damp lettuce. "Besides it would damage my street cred if everyone knew."

Laughing, she bumped his shoulder. "It's funny how things work out I guess. Before Stefan came into my life I was wondering if I would ever be happy again and if I would find someone as sweet as Matt. The bad stuff has been shitty but I wouldn't change any of it if it meant I'd get Stefan all over again."

*I know the feeling.* "Yeah. It does seem trivial in comparison to the good stuff. Though I kinda miss the way I used to annoy Bonnie by popping up and molesting her. She expects it now."

Elena chuckled. "You could always go back to doing it. I'm sure eventually it would start to annoy her again."

*That's true and it would amuse me. I do so love being amused.* "We'll see. Wouldn't want her to set me on fire."

"She would never do that. I've never seen Bonnie into someone as much as she is into you." She said. "Not that she's ever had a serious boyfriend before either. It's this new side to her."
"That's why I don't want to see her hurt. If I fuck this up she might never wanna date again." He shook his head. "Not that I plan on going anywhere so she could."

Elena gazed at him as if she were seeing something she had never encountered before. "She's really lucky to have you."

He shrugged. "I'm lucky to have her to."

~*~

"You're mighty quiet."

Bonnie blinked slowly and looked away from the flames in the fireplace, instead focusing on Damon's chin. They were curled up on the couch together, shoeless and relaxed, her back against his chest where he was propped against the arm. His fingers were dragging idly through her hair while hers drew designs on the peek-a-boo flesh revealed by his crooked shirt.

After a nice dinner in which she'd teasingly told him she was happy he still enjoyed food because it made him a better cook, they'd done the dishes together and then retired to the living room for some peace and quiet.

"Sorry. Just thinking." She replied lowly. "Caroline and Tyler might be breaking up and she's upset, of course. Just got me to thinking about us."

Damon arched a brow. "You thinking about breaking up with me?"

She smiled. "No. I'm thinking about the night we first met and all of the nights after. You know if one thing had gone differently we wouldn't be here. I'm not sure where I would be or who I would be with."

He shrugged. "I think you're exactly where you're meant to be." He kissed the top of her head. "How we got together doesn't matter so much as why we're staying together. And you're with me because I'm incredibly sexy and incredibly smart."

Bonnie laughed and snuggled closer. "Oh so very true." A beat. "Still, you have to wonder why so much seems to be against us. Is that our punishment or something? Why can't we just be happy? Why can't Mystic Falls just be happy?"

"I don't know. The town itself is fucked up but, ya know, I'm happy. I might not be satisfied because shit is trying to kill us but I'm happy..." He trailed off slowly. "Considering what we're dealing with, I don't know if it could be any better than this."

"One day it will." She wiggled her toes. "One day Klaus will be dead and we won't have any worries."

"What are you worried about? Elena?"

"A little but mostly—I don't know—I just feel like something is coming."

Damon frowned and put his lips at her ear. "Then let it. We can't stop it so let it. Won't change us."

I'm scared it will though.

I'm scared we'll both be twisted into something neither of us recognize anymore.

She wanted to tell him about her Klaus dream but she didn't because she was scared of its
implications. Naturally it could mean nothing at all—just her stressed mind trying to cope—but the fact that it could mean something left her terrified. She had never thought herself the type to go dark side but then she’d never thought herself the type to date a vampire either. To fall in love with one and give herself to one as completely as she’d given herself to Damon. Klaus was very powerful and he could compel witches. What if he one day he did manage to compel her?

The thought made her shudder and Damon's arms tightened as if he assumed she was cold. "I love you."

"I love you too." He said easily.

Four simple words that never failed to bring a smile to her face. It was silly to think but she knew as long as she had Damon and the will power to fight, everything would be okay. It might not be easy or safe but it would be okay.

Right now that was really all she could ask for.

~Fin~
Possessions

Chapter Summary

Everyone wants what they can't have.

Chapter Notes

This installment tags episode 3.10 (The New Deal) and as usual I have changed things and added things.

Possessions

It was a bit unusual for all of them to be at the Grille at the same time for no apparent reason other than getting blitzed or simply checking in. And by them Bonnie meant Elena, Damon, Alaric and herself. But then again there weren't many places to go in Mystic Falls and they each had their own reasons for showing up. Damon just wanted to drink away his grief over Stefan and Alaric was looking for Jeremy—getting bothered by Damon was his added bonus. She and Elena on the other hand were just talking and catching up about everything going on. Well maybe not everything. They were both being very careful not to mention Damon.

Yet there was an underlying tension between them however they were both experts at ignoring it. Case in point, while her pretty petite friend was in the restroom Bonnie chose to focus on her own thoughts which revolved around Klaus. She was getting so sick and tired of dreaming about Klaus. While they weren't like before with him biting her they were still annoying. Waking up each morning with a racing heart and glancing around the room anxiously would eventually start to wear on her. And once Damon noticed he'd want answers and the last thing she wanted was to give him more to worry about.

Sighing deeply, she sipped from her white cup of tea and tracked Elena as she exited the bathroom and returned to her seat. "You okay?"

The brunette nodded slowly. "As far as I can be I guess. What about you?"

Bonnie waved a hand. "About the same. It's funny, I was pretty sure Katherine was the worst we would ever see. Now I know she was tame in comparison."

Elena picked up a sugar packet and added it to her coffee. "I know right? I almost miss her. At least she didn't send people after me."

"True. "At least that guy wasn't shady and just honestly out for a jog. Though when did you start running anyway?"

Her friend sighed. "It helps me clear my head and not think about all that is going on. I know it's dangerous to be alone like that but, well I can't always have someone watching me. No one should have to anyway."
"We don't mind. You do stuff like that for the ones you care about." Bonnie related with a small smile. "You would do the same for any of us."

Elena exhaled but it was obvious she should. "That guy was just minding his own business and I almost hit him with a tree branch. I feel like I'm going crazy." She scratched at her cheek idly. "I'm totally paranoid all the time."

Bonnie smiled softly. "You have a right to be. Klaus is still out there; he knows you tried to kill him."

The brunette shook her head from side to side. "Why isn't he making a move? There's been no sign of him. Nothing." Growling, she pushed her hair out of her face. "Just my slow spiral into insanity."

The other girl chuckled. "Join the club. Every time I close my eyes, I have that nightmare. On repeat."

Elena frowned in concerned. "Same dream?"

*Unfortunately.* "Yeah. Four coffins, Klaus is in one of them. It's weird."

Glancing around, she leaned closer. "What if it's not just some dream? What if it's like, ya know, a witch dream?"

Naturally Bonnie had considered that and came to the conclusion that it probably was. However she wasn't in the mood to face up to it or really give it a lot of thought. Dreaming about Klaus was one thing but having honest to God prophetic dreams about him that could come true? Well that just terrified her to the core. What if the next one didn't involve coffins but her submitting to him? "It—it's just stress. I'll figure it out." Pause. "What about Stefan? Has there been any sign of him?"

"He betrayed us Bonnie." Elena sounded so broken. "The Stefan I know is gone."

The witch reached over and rubbed her wrist. "I don't think you should give up on him. I know he's—whatever right now but Stefan has always been a good person. I'm sure what Klaus put him through wasn't easy to deal with and now he's trying to get focused."

A shrug. "I wish I could believe that. I wish I could believe that the goodness I once saw in him is still there but after what he did at Homecoming I honestly don't know anymore. Damon would have killed Klaus if it weren't for him."

*That he would have...* "Still Stefan isn't exactly the type to not have a good reason for the shit he does."

Tilting her head to the side, Elena sat back in her chair. "Why are you championing Stefan all of a sudden?"

Bonnie arched a brow. "What are you talking about?"

"You're just—you're being so optimistic about everything when I've basically let him go." She said very matter of fact. "You guys weren't really *that* close so I'm just curious why you're standing up for him."

"Maybe because there could be more to the story that we realize.* Seriously?* "And the last thing I'm gonna say to Damon is sure give up on your brother after he saved your life. Why would I say that to you when he saved yours too?"
Elena's expression gentled. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't be getting snappy at you. I'm just freaking out. We all played a part in trying to kill Klaus so we're all in danger." She wet her lips with the tip of her tongue. "And I don't have a handsome vampire watching out for me this time."

Bonnie nearly said something quite rude but she swallowed the words down. It was hard but she needed to remember that her friend was going through a traumatic experience right now and not thinking clearly. Though we're all going through something horrific I suppose for her it's worse because she doesn't know where Stefan stands. "Nothing bad is going to happen to you. Damon and I will make sure of it."

Whether Elena noticed anything in her tone or not, she didn't react. "I'm really lucky to have a friend as awesome as you." A beat. "I'm gonna pay for our drinks."

Bonnie nodded and watched as she made her way up to the bar. Rolling her pretty green eyes to herself, she got up and strolled over to where Damon was playing darts by himself. For someone drinking to numb his internal pain he looked gorgeous as always in his sleek leather jacket and tight jeans. I should wear the jacket he let me have more often. As a bad ass witch I should look the part.

"You checking me out?"

Snapping back to attention, she grinned and folded her arms over her chest. "Just your ass."

He snickered and turned back to the board. "So what were you and Elena talking about?"

"The usual." She said. "She wonders why Klaus isn't making a move."

"Heh she should be happy he's not. He squinted, letting the dart fly. "I for one am ecstatic I don't have to worry about whether I'll die tonight or not. Besides…" He motioned to where she was chatting with Alaric. "She's about to have another issue."

"What's that?" Bonnie inquired.

"Jeremy got fired and he's failing history…or whatever the hell Alaric teaches." He shrugged as if it didn't matter one way or another. "He should just get drunk like the rest of us."

Sweetie you're the only one getting drunk. "If alcohol actually hurt you I would be very concerned."

Damon snorted. "Yeah well my liver is already shot so nothing to worry about there." He winked and kissed her on the cheek. "At least I'm not killing people."

Bonnie grabbed the sides of his coat when he tried to turn away. "Hey. If you need to talk you know I'm here."

He clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "I know."

Searching his face and detecting no deceit, she lifted onto her tippy toes and pressed her lips to his. "Okay. Just wanted to make sure."

Damon smirked, his hand settling at her waist, giving her a squeeze. "I love how you take care of me. Makes me feel all tingly in my happy places. You should stay over tonight." His icy blue eyes drifted behind her before she could reply. "Hello Elena. Get everything taken care of with Jeremy?"

The brunette huffed. "No I got his voice mail but tonight we are having a serious talk. I can't help but feel like I've been neglecting him lately. He's been through so much and he needs my support."
"I'm sure he knows you're there for him." He murmured. "Alaric too."

"Yeah." She bit the inside of her cheek. "Between seeing ghosts and dealing with Klaus I guess he's just burnt out. We all need a vacation."

"May I suggest Florida? I hear it's beautiful this time of year." Came an English accented voice behind her.

Elena jerked and whipped around to find Klaus leaning against a table looking like the cat that got the canary. "Klaus."

Bonnie's first reaction was to bolt but she figured he would just give chase, so she swallowed hard and tried to keep herself in check. The last thing they needed was a spontaneous fire or gust of wind alarming the oblivious patrons. _He might start something if he feels threatened and a lot of people may get hurt._ She grabbed Elena's wrist and pulled her closer; said nothing when Damon stepped protectively in front of both of them.

"You're going to do this in the Grille in front of everyone? That's a little beneath you, don't you think?" Damon snapped.

Klaus feigned ignorance. "I don't know what you are talking about. I just came down to my local pub to grab a drink with a mate." He motioned to the man behind him. "Get a round then would you Tony?"

Tony smirked and left to do just that. From Elena's expression it didn't take a genius to know he was the man that had been chasing her earlier in the morning. _Guess she's not going crazy after all._

Damon wasn't impressed. "Surprised you stuck around town long enough for happy hour…"

The hybrid sighed. "My sister seems to be missing. Need to sort that out."

"Cute, blonde bombshell? Psycho? Shouldn't be hard to find." Damon teased spitefully.

Klaus grinned and stalked closer, yanking the darts out of Damon's hand. "Truth is I've grown to like your little town. Thinking I might fancy a home here. Now I imagine you're wondering how does this affect you and the answer is not in the slightest. As long as I get what I want and everyone behaves themselves, you can go on living your little lives however you chose. You have my word."

Elena gulped. "What more could you possibly want?"

Turning away from the dart board, he invaded her personal space. "Well for starters you can tell me where I might find Stefan." Next his eyes landed on Bonnie and he flashed a smile, making her flinch. "I'll keep my other desires to myself for the moment."

Damon's jaw clenched tight and slipped his hand onto her shoulder. "Stefan skipped town the second he saved your ass."

"Well you see that is a shame." He threw a dart so hard that it pierced the wall. "Your brother stole from me. I need him found so that I can take back what's mine."

"That sounds like a Klaus and Stefan problem." Elena related with a tiny bit of venom.

Klaus didn't seem to care one way or the other. "Well this is me broadening the scope, sweetheart." Pause. "And if you don't want something tragic to befall someone you care about, you'll find a way to get in contact with him. You do have a lovely witch at your disposal."
"God, why are his lips so red? Did he eat someone before coming here? "What makes you think I can find him?"

"Because you're powerful." He said simply. "It's just one of the many things I admire about you, Bonnie. The others being your bravery, your intellect and your beautiful eyes."

She balled her hands into tiny fists. "You do know if you try to hurt anyone, I'll stop you."

He sucked his bottom lip into his mouth. "You'll try. And I'm sure I will enjoy every moment of it."
Without warning he stabbed Damon in the hand with the sharp point of a dart and grabbed her upper arm, shoving her back into the wall.

Damon made to retaliate but she shook her head; she could see the anger written all over his handsome features at being denied. Heard the gasp her best friend made. "I might not be strong enough to kill you without dying but I could certainly hurt you."

Klaus edged to the side so that he could look between her and the others though he kept his left hand pressed against her throat, his thumb stroking her pulse point. She shivered and his expression broke with delight but he didn't comment on it. "From the second we met I knew you were special. I've known quite a few witches in my day—Greta and her family being just the tip of the iceberg—and you managed to surpass them. To surprise me. Yet you let yourself be hindered by him."

"Fuck you." Damon growled. He looked like he was ready to burst out of his skin and attack.

"Looks aside, he's impulsive and crass." Klaus responded, ignoring Damon entirely. "What has he ever really done for you? I took care of Clarissa for you—a crazy witch that would have no doubt eventually tried to kill you again."

_I would have taken my chances._ "You killed an innocent girl."

"She was far from innocent my dear." He smirked. "Bonnie you should be worshiped like the goddess you are. Think of all that we could accomplish together."

She bristled. "I'd rather be alone."

Klaus tsked her playfully. "Be careful what you wish for; love, because it might just come true. You do realize that Damon and I are not so different. From what I know about him, we're both temperamental murderers with a thing for powerful women. If it's the physical aspects of the relationship you are worried about, you needn't be." He dipped his head to whisper into her ear. "I am beyond confident that I could satisfy your needs."

Damon reached for him but Elena gripped his elbow and pulled him back a little. "Damon…don't forget about Tony."

"Tony is going to behave himself." The hybrid mused. "Look at them love. You _do_ know it's only a matter of time with those two, don't you? They _will_ betray you and when they do, you'll come to me." He smiled and caressed Bonnie's cheek. "And I will help you raze this town to the ground. In the meantime, find Stefan."

Kissing her knuckles, he brushed past Damon with a hard knock to his shoulder and continued to where Tony sat with a large pitcher of beer.

Bonnie closed her eyes and let her body slump. She raked her nails down the side of her neck and left bright red marks but the pain helped settle her. Helped her get the image of him biting her out of her head. _Well he really knows how to go for the kill doesn't he? But I suppose it doesn't take much..._
to see what bothers me the most when it comes to Damon and Elena. He probably knows everything considering he knew Katherine before the Salvatores did.

If he ever got me he'd have me forever.

Cool hands on her face made her lashes flutter open. "I'm okay."

Damon was not convinced, and he pulled her in for a comforting hug. "I will kill that fucker if it's the last thing I do. You have my word."

She managed a tiny smile, resting her cheek to his chest. Elena was watching them with an expression of mixed emotion but nothing that Bonnie wanted to focus on. If she let herself think even for a second that her best friend had feelings for her boyfriend she was opening herself up for trouble and paranoia, neither of which she could afford right now. Klaus was clearly going to start shit if he didn't get what he was owed and as usual she was on the first line of defense.

I should check out the old mansion and see if my weird ass dream holds any water. "We should get out of here before he tries to start something else."

"I agree." Elena replied, her brows narrowed. "I should get home and see if Jeremy is there."

"You coming with me back to the manor?" Her boyfriend asked. Clearly he wanted her to.

"I'll swing by later. And don't worry I'll be careful." She smiled, hoping it would quell some of his rage. "There is just something I have to do first."

~*~

The trek to the decaying old mansion was one that Bonnie could probably do in her sleep and had if her dreams meant anything. It never changed or fell into more disrepair and she found herself wondering if it had anything to do with the ghosts of a hundred dead witches residing in the walls. Either way she watched where she stepped as she moved inside; the smell of warm dust and onion grass wafting up her nose. She steeled herself for their whispering voices and followed the path she'd taken in her sleep, moving down into the basement as peaks of sunlight shined through broken boards.

Everything appeared quiet but she knew how deceiving the still air could be. However when she reached the openness of the room and saw nothing, she couldn't help but be a bit relieved. No coffins. Fanning a thick cobweb out of the way, she stepped into a beam of white through a broken window. Even though nothing looked out of place, there was something niggling at the back of her mind. A tiny prick of wrong floating in the air that she couldn't put her finger on.

What am I missing?

Floorboards creaked behind her and she turned as a voice said, "Hello Bonnie."

He materialized out of the dark and she blinked. "Stefan." What? Did he know I would be here? Did —did he want me here? "You lured me here?"

"Yeah. It wasn't too hard." He shoved his hands into his pocket. "You should probably be more careful."

And here I thought Klaus was all I had to worry about today. Well at least I can kick Stefan's ass if he tries anything. "What do you want with me?"
He grinned. "Oh relax. I just need your help."

She balked. "Why would I help you? Elena said you saved Klaus' life. And basically screwed up everyone else's."

Stefan shrugged. "Let me fill you in on a little secret about Klaus. He kept his family with him at all times. Daggered, stored in coffins and now I have them. And I need you to help keep them hidden."

*Looks like my dream wasn't just a dream after all. Christ. You're out of your mind. You're just going to make him angrier.*

The vampire smirked deviously. "His family is his one weakness. As long as I have that I can ruin him."

"I—my powers aren't always steady. I don't know if I can hide four Originals and continue to do so for as long as you might need." She gestured to the room at large. "Not to mention I don't like this plan at all. Klaus is unstable and he's liable to do anything. Someone could get hurt."

"I think it's time he's the one who gets hurt. Aren't you tired of him messing with you?"

"Of course. We all are."

"You know I was with him for months tracking werewolves and I saw how disposable people are to him. I'm sure he's tried to charm you but he's a very good liar, and the second you became too much trouble or you refused to do what he said, he would discard you without a second thought. The only thing he cares about is his family."

"Stefan, what am I supposed to do here?"

"You're a witch, you hate Klaus. I know you can figure something out."

"What about Damon?"

"What about Damon?"

"You know I can't keep this from him." Pause. "I have to tell him what's going on."

Stefan snorted loudly. "Actually you don't have to tell him anything. You two aren't joined at the hip just because you're fucking."

*I liked boring, brooding Stefan better. We're more than that to each other and you know it. I'll help you because—I don't know—you're standing in here and the witches are letting you so I guess they want to help too. But you should talk to your brother and to Elena because they're both hurting.*

"Hurting together I'll bet." He sniffed and walked over to a chair, sitting down. "Sure that annoys the hell outta you—they growing closer."

She folded her arms over her chest. "Are you trying to piss me off?"

He tilted his head to the side. "Just making conversation. You know Damon isn't the one woman type or at least he wasn't. And then you came along and I started seeing a different side to my brother. But when he first showed up he was a major dick." He snickered. "Maybe I should flirt with you; give him a taste of his own medicine."

Bonnie rolled her eyes. "Instead of making things worse maybe you should focus on getting everyone together again. Klaus is powerful and he has friends."
"And I have something better than that." He crossed his legs at the ankles. "You can't tell me you don't want your own sort of revenge on Klaus. That you don't want to get some hits in. He isadamant about getting you on his team...for starters."

His words made her heart constrict tight in a phantom fist. "He'll get what's coming to him but we have to be smart about this."

"You be smart and I'll do all the hard work." He replied. "How is that?"

Something tells me I am going all the hard work. "How is that?"

~*~

It was no secret that Damon hated Klaus probably more than he'd ever hated anyone and well, Damon Salvatore had hated a lot of people. Sometimes for good reasons and sometimes just because they looked at him funny. But with Klaus it was different—it was because he was a giant asshole who flaunted his power over other people. Damon had never had an arch enemy before but he was pretty sure Klaus was it.

However Damon was also a tactical sort of person when he needed to be. Obviously he wasn't strong enough to just rip Klaus' heart out so he realized that he had to take a different direction with him. He wasn't against using him for information in the hopes that he would let something important slip concerning his own demise. That is why he offered him a drink when he suddenly appeared in his living room. Acted civil and joked about younger siblings while Klaus explained that Stefan had stolen his family in their coffins and naturally he would do anything to get them back.

It wasn't Stefan's usual m.o. but Damon could get behind it because of its poetry.

"It sucks that Stefan has apparently stabbed you in the back. Actually it doesn't but you can see why I would say that." He took another sip of his bourbon. "I'd love to find him but the trouble is, I sure as hell don't work for you."

Klaus smiled as if he held all the cards. "Always so quick to resist in the beginning, aren't you Damon? So eager to prove how strong you are. Is that what Bonnie likes about you? Your strength?"

Of course he would go there. "Bonnie's not a part of this."

The hybrid hissed lightly. "Oh I beg to differ. I must say she looked ravishing earlier, and I find the way she stands up to me to be so intriguing. I can't remember the last time someone looked me in the eye in spite of their fear."

Would punching you in the eye with a broken bottle count? "I'm sorry to break it to you but Bonnie can't stand you."

He glanced to the liquid in his glass, swirling it around. "Perhaps...but that doesn't stop her from being attracted to me."

Damon nearly laughed at that because that was the stupidest thing he had ever heard. "I think you've had a little too much to drink."

Klaus hummed in response. "It is not so far-fetched to assume she has a type and that I am it. After all we do share similar qualities Damon. And I want her without the effects of magic interfering."
"You also killed her best friend's Aunt and attempted to kill her when you were in Alaric's body. Might put a damper on the romance."

"I'll make up for it with my loyalty and...other sizable attributes."

Gripping his glass so hard that it cracked a little, Damon's nostrils flared and walked closer to the man tormenting him. Wonder where he hid the dagger? If I could find that I could take another shot at killing him. "You touch her and I'll find a way to kill you." Pause. "I hope Stefan takes your family and burns them all at the stake."

The playful expression on Klaus' face disappeared. "You know your drink stinks of vervain, so I can't compel you. There'd be no point in killing you because you're actually the one with the most hope of getting me what I need. And yet it would seem a demonstration is in order." He took out his phone. "There are many ways that I can fuck up your life, Damon. Ways that are more fun than simply getting my hybrids to tear you a part. I noticed something earlier today in the Grille; Elena looks at you differently. It's clear you care about her in some capacity—old emotions stirring up maybe."

Damon chose to remain silent instead just glaring, his thoughts running rampant in his brain. Was he going to try to use Elena in some form now? Threaten her life to get him to do what he wants? He seemed pretty sure that he would keep her safe no matter their relationship status.

"You care about Elena but I know Bonnie is your heart just like my family is mine. So if you don't help me find your brother, I'll rip your heart out. I will carve it out and squeeze until it is unrecognizable. And it seems you people respond best to displays of violence so why don't you take this as an example of my reach..." He pressed several numbers on his phone and waited while it rung. "There he is. So that thing I told you to do? Why don't you go ahead and get on with it."

Ah fuck, what now? "Bonnie can take down your hybrids so you probably just got one of them killed."

Sitting his untouched drink on the table, Klaus chuckled. "Not everything is about her. However something did occur to me. Every time I go after Elena or her family and you're there for her, it pushes you and Bonnie further apart. Let's see how hard I have to push before she leaves you altogether." Winking, he turned and strolled towards the front door.

Damon cursed and hurled his glass into the wall, watching as it shattered into a thousand pieces. The last thing he wanted to do was give that asshole more fire power but he felt responsible for Elena, especially since Stefan sacrificed himself for his safety as well as hers. One day Stefan's brains wouldn't be scrambled and fuck he owed him.

Growling, he jerked into his jacket and grabbed up his car keys. He had to pay the Gilberts a visit.

~*~

Sometimes I wonder am I truly a different sort of person or is it all a mask I wear for those around me. The urges I felt before to maim and hunt are still there bubbling below the surface and it takes motivation to hold them down. To not let them out on some unsuspecting hiker out for a midnight stroll. And I don't do it because I want to appear like my brother or because I'm scared of the clean up afterwards. I do it because I don't want Bonnie to lose faith in me. Once upon a time she was the only one who had it and call me a greedy son of a bitch but I want it to stay that way.

I figure I owe her that much considering what I have put her through. Considering how I tried to have it all and hurt her in the process.
Yet there is a part of me that enjoys the fact that I'm still that monster deep down inside. Maybe it's the vampire in me; it's in his nature to destroy and find joy in that destruction. It sucks that sometimes I look at Klaus and see myself.

Damon fully believed that sometimes a lie was better than the truth. Hell most times. Which is why he was totally on board with compelling Jeremy and sending him away for his own safety. Sure the kid might be pissed off later on but it was better than being dead. He'd get over it and this way he wouldn't have to worry about seeing ghosts or fighting off hybrids or feeling guilty for nearly getting Alaric killed.

For just a little while he would be free.

Standing in the dark of the woods with his hands in his pockets, he stared at the darkness of the abandoned manor. The spirits of the witches were helping his brother hide the coffins. Bonnie was helping his brother hide the coffins and of course he didn't like her being directly involve but she was needed. And even though Stefan claimed he didn't give a shit he was still being a saint in his own way; saving his ass on the night of Homecoming and wanting to keep Elena out of their new dastardly plan to fuck Klaus up.

In retrospect he realized he should have known it was more cut and dry than Stefan just not wanting Klaus dead. That he would never betray them, not really.

Though now Klaus has Rebecca and that is just one more asshole to add to his high tally of them. Stupid Elena.

Frowning, he watched as Bonnie stepped out of the old house and rubbed her upper arms. She looked up to the moonless night sky and sighed.

Damon thought about turning around and leaving but he didn't. He walked the short distance to the porch and sat down, smiling when she joined him. "Everything okay in there?"

She nodded. "Yeah. Stefan and I couldn't get in this particular coffin but we think it has something to do with defeating Klaus. Or at least making him suffer."

"Good."

"Are you okay?" She reached up and massaged the back of his neck. "What's wrong?"

"I noticed something earlier today in the Grille; Elena looks at you differently." "I always thought I couldn't feel guilt, or maybe I didn't want to feel it is more like it. Life is just so much easier when you turn it all off. No guilt, no pain—you're just numb to everything around you. I think that night in the woods after I bit you for the first time I felt…anything besides being hollow."

Silence.

"I'm not a good person but you're with me anyway. Makes me want to hold on as tight as I can." His frown deepened. "Not sure I have a right to with how I was in the past with Katherine and Elena."

"I don't dwell on the past." She said softly. "You weren't an angel and I understand that. But the man you are now is pretty cool. The man you are now is the one I love and trust."

Smoothing a hand across his face, he faced her but his mind was drifting back to earlier at the Gilberts after he compelled Jeremy to go to Denver to stay with a few family friends:

Elena was upset but she knew it was the best course of action. She just wasn't sure how Jeremy
would react when he eventually found out the truth. "I just can't stop thinking about what happened the last time I asked you to compel him."

Damon shrugged. "He found out and then he got over it. Again, not dead Elena. Jeremy is so lucky to have you for a sister."

Elena smiled a little. "Thank you."

Another shrug. "No problem."

She shook her head gazing at him with her big brown eyes. "Not just for this Damon for everything. I don't know what I would do if you weren't here."

And then she'd...

"Damon?"

Bonnie's voice broke through his thoughts and he exhaled. "Elena kissed me."

"What?"

"She was just—I'd just compelled Jeremy to leave town for a while and she was emotional."

"She—she kissed you?"

"I think she just slipped or something from all the shit that happened today. It was just for a second and she felt horrible afterwards—"

The ground quaked beneath their feet and what little dusty glass was in the windows exploded, raining down onto the ramshackle porch like tiny lightning bugs. "I—I have to go."

Damon latched onto her wrist before she could move. "Bonnie. It didn't mean anything."

She looked at him. "Maybe not to you."

"Are you pissed at me?" He inquired. "I didn't kiss her back. And really it was so brief."

Dejected, she fell against his side. "I'm not mad at you. I'm disappointed in her. I can't believe she would do this to me." A beat. "We're definitely talking about this later. I know she's upset over Stefan but I'm not letting her trade in one brother for the other."

He nodded slowly, deciding they would get into it later. "But we're okay?"

"Yeah. We're okay." She kissed his cheek.

It was a nice feeling being able to believe her but Damon wasn't stupid by any means. Obviously problems for their little band of rag tag Klaus haters were just beginning.

~Fin~
Bonnie thinks it's time for a talk.

Okay guys I'll be totally honest about this update; I hate it. It's the shortest one to date and it's the bare minimum of what I actually wanted. I rewrote it three times but I just couldn't get into the flow, and I couldn't fit it where I wanted it in either episode so it's sort of AU. This installment sort of tags epsiodes 3.11 (Our Town) and 3.12 (The Ties That Bind).

Hello Jealously

Bonnie stood in the doorway watching as Jeremy Gilbert waved and climbed into Alaric's SUV so that he could be driven to the airport to start his new life in Denver. It was just a shame he'd been compelled to want it—to leave his family and friends behind so that he would be safe. She didn't believe for a second that it was the right thing to do even though she understood Elena's motives. Still he deserved to be able to make his own decisions whether they were good or bad. Taking that choice away from him would only turn horrible in the end. It usually did.

She had never seen her friend this self absorbed before. When her parents died she appeared to go out of her way to be okay to spare everyone else her grief although no one begrudged her not being the life of the party back then. Yet now she was making rash decisions without thinking about the consequences of her actions. Maybe it was fear or maybe she was just honestly losing her mind. Only time would tell.

Sighing deeply, she waited until the vehicle was pulling out of the driveway before closing the door. Elena had already migrated into the living room and to the couch. She was cradling a pillow in her lap and picking at the fuzzy edges, oddly quiet. After Caroline's birthday party/funeral—in which Bonnie had spent the entire night pretending everything was fine so hard she'd nearly blew out her own brains—Stefan had scared Elena to death by threatening to drive them off the bridge her parents had went off to force Klaus' hand. She understood that her friend was probably still shaken but she had a few things she needed to get off of her chest.

She was trying very hard to not be the jealous girlfriend but it wasn't working. Yes Elena was her best friend and basically like a sister to her; didn't mean she didn't want to punch her in the face for kissing her boyfriend. In fact it hurt more because of their history together and made her want to strike out even harder. If it was anyone but Elena she probably would be taking off her earrings and cracking her knuckles for the upcoming brawl.

But I can't just jump into the situation like she is some random girl being stupid. I don't owe her anything however I'll be civil and at least let her plead her case. If I don't like what she has to say
"then maybe I'll slap her."

"Jeremy is going to be fine, you know…” Elena said slowly. "At least this way he's safe and I can focus on getting rid of Klaus without worrying about him."

"Yeah." Bonnie nodded and sat down across from her. "Maybe sending him away will turn out to be a good thing. Guess we'll find out eventually."

"Are you mad because I asked Damon to compel him?" The brunette inquired, looking contrite. "I should have talked to you about it but he—he was around and I didn't know who else I could trust to do it."

Wetting her lips, Bonnie shook her head. "No that—well it bothers me a little but not as much as you kissing him does."

Her friend's eyes stretched wide. "He—he told you about that?"

The witch resisted the urge to snort. "Of course he did. Damon and I have reached a point in our relationship where we don't keep secrets from each other. Especially not big ones like this."

Elena tucked her hair behind her ear. "Bonnie I—I'm so sorry! I don't know what happened. I was upset over Stefan and Jeremy, and Damon was being so sweet. I don't know what I was thinking."

That makes two of us. "Look with everything going on with Klaus and Stefan I get that Damon is sort of looking out for you. Really it makes me love him more seeing how sweet he can be with someone else considering I'm usually the only one he takes care of. But I think you're seeing more to it than there actually is."

The brunette shook her head. "No, no that's not it at all. I know how much you love Damon and I know that he cares about you as well. Like I said what happened was just a stupid mistake."

"He doesn't just care about me. He loves me. I know it's weird sometimes because of how he was in the past, but I believe it. Yeah we had a rough patch and he had feelings for you but he doesn't anymore."

"And he said that?"

"Yes. Quite a few times. So I guess the question is now, do you have feelings for him?"

"Of course not."

Bonnie tilted her head to the side. "Are you sure? Because honestly I think you are lying to yourself. I think Stefan has you all confused and Klaus has you all afraid, and Damon is this solid presence in your life." Pause. "And he's handsome and he has the ability to make you feel like nothing else matters. I think he'd risk his life for you…but it doesn't mean he wants you."

Her friend bit the inside of her cheek. "I…" Trailing off, she cleared her throat. "Okay. Maybe I do have some kind of mixed up feelings for Damon. I didn't plan on them and I certainly didn't plan to act on them. You're my best friend Bonnie and I would never, ever do anything to hurt you."

I wish I could believe that. "That's the only reason I'm not yelling at you right now. We've been through a lot and we need to stick together right now more than ever. But Elena, I can't be that girl anymore. The one who just smiled while you and Caroline talked about your love lives. The one who wondered why no guys seemed to be interested in her. The one stands idly by while someone else tries to steal her boyfriend."
"I'm not trying to steal him." Elena frowned deeply. "I can't believe you think I would do that, especially to you of all people."

"Well you did kiss him." Bonnie pointed out, not maliciously.

The other girl pushed the pillow in her lap to the side. "And I'm sorry. What more do you want from me?"

That's easy. "I wanna know that you're not going to do something trifling and try to kiss him again. Or more. I want you to realize that just because you are hurting doesn't mean you can start making eyes at Damon or that you can use him as a replacement while Stefan is off the rails. It's not fair to Damon and it's totally not fair to me." A beat. "You're like a sister to me and I love you but you can't trade one Salvatore for the other. Damon—no matter how he might have felt about you in the past—is mine now. He loves me and I love him. We're in love; as much as we can be with him being a vampire and me being a witch. I wanna stand by you Elena because Klaus is dangerous and we're all in peril…don't gimme another reason not to."

The brunette appeared shocked by her speech but she didn't refute anything she had to say. Instead she lowered her gaze and put her hands in her lap. "It won't happen again. I promise."

Bonnie honestly wasn't sure that she believed her but she wanted to. She wanted them to be a united front because there was too much at stake to be otherwise. However she wasn't stupid, she could tell Elena was clinging to Damon because he was strong and he cared about her. Because he would keep her safe from Klaus. A part of her wanted to tell him to mind his own business but Bonnie knew she would never forgive herself if something happened to her best friend while she was too busy being mad to help or let Damon help.

Yet being the bigger person didn't do much to quell her fears. What if Damon decided he still wanted Elena? What if his feelings for her came back in some way? She didn't know how she would react if any of that happened. Badly, very very badly. Sometimes she felt like she was walking such a thin line as it was between having so much power and a little British voice in her ear whispering about joining him. Bringing all of her fears to the surface so that he could goad her into doing something stupid.

If Klaus finds out about their kiss he'll badger me with it until it drives me crazy. It's bad enough I'm dreaming about him biting me and locking me in one of his coffins.

The truly terrifying parts however were the other dreams where she gladly killed who he asked her to killed and looked upon him as if he'd hung the moon. Like Greta had yet with more conviction. In her head submitting to him often made sense though she had no real idea why. If she had to guess she supposed it was the power. He was an Original vampire—now hybrid—and apparently unable to be killed. While her magic came from the earth and nature, it was also passed down from witch to witch and she wasn't silly enough to think they had all been good. Absolute power corrupted absolutely and she could see one of them being lured to the dark side.

It was more fun over there after all because there were no rules.

Damon and Elena getting together would gut her and she would fill herself with their pain in order to function.

I could be pretty fucken scary if I wanted to be. I hope for all of our sakes it never comes to that.

~ *~
"So my day was bullshit. How was yours honey?"

Bonnie rolled her eyes and turned off the light in her bathroom before trudging over to the bed and sitting down. In truth her day had been very disappointing. In the off times she'd imagined meeting her mother, she'd never considered it would be so blah. That she would discover her mother left for a sort of valiant reason but decided to never return because of a truly selfish one. That she simply made herself another little family and never looked back. That his Jamie got the mother she should have had all these years.

She looked to Damon stretched out across the mattress and sighed. "It sucked. We found my mom as you know and she basically tried to trade me to a hybrid to save some random boy she took in years ago. She also had all of these excuses as to why she left. A part of me wishes I'd never had to find her."

He nodded. "Well after we get that coffin open she can ride back into the sunset."

"I doubt it'll be that easy." She said slowly. "I—God this is going to sound horrible but I hope she doesn't want a relationship with me. I suppose I should forgive and forget but she left me and then raised some other guy. I don't care about her reasons. I don't trust her."

"I wouldn't either." He reached over and rubbed her thigh. "Does she know about us?"

Bonnie shook her head. "We didn't have any heart to heart moments though she might want to later. I'll gladly tell her I'm dating a vampire just to see the look on her face."

Damon smirked. "Sassy. I like it." Pause. "So I take it you and Elena are okay now?"

Define okay. "We talked but I think we're still on a sort of probation sort of friendship. But she knows exactly how I feel concerning the kiss and her relationship with you. She knows I'm not gonna just stand idly by while she kisses you or leans too heavily on you."

He watched her carefully. "Would you rather I stayed away from her?"

Of course. In a perfect world that is exactly how I would have things go down. "Yes, but I can't ask you to do that because if something happens to her I'll feel guilty. But you don't have to be so accommodating. It's not your job to make her feel better."

"Well with Elijah awake and hopefully on our side, all of this shit will be over soon. And maybe Stefan will go back to normal and whatever she thinks she feels for me will disappear."

"And if it doesn't?"

"You and I will move to Spain or something. Either way you don't have to worry…"

"I know. I'm not worried so much as trying to not be pissed off. There is too much life or death stuff going on—I don't have time to be the jealous girlfriend right now."

"I think you're cute when you're jealous. And sometimes that helps a relationship."

"Oh so when Klaus hits on me, that's helping our relationship?"

Damon frowned deeply. "Fuck no. But that's because he's a sadistic bastard who wants to use you as his play thing. Though it does remind me how lucky I am to have you when he's going on and on about stealing you away."
She wasn't worried about being stolen away though. She was more concerned about leaving through her own free will. However that would be a form of giving up and she refused to do that. She refused to let Klaus get into her head and she refused to let Elena take away something she loved.

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

Maybe one night of shining stars isn't too much to ask for. Then again, maybe it is where Mystic Falls is concerned.

Chapter Notes

This installment tags episodes 3.13 (Bringing Out The Dead) and 3.14 (Dangerous Liaisons). The dress that Bonnie wears in this chapter is an actual gown and if you would like to see what it looks like, just go to any image search engine and type in Miley Cyrus 82nd Annual Academy Awards. I figured it would look amazing on Bonnie with her skin tone.

Under Twinkling Lights

Elena Gilbert did not consider herself a bad person. If anything she often thought that she cared too much and that it got her into trouble. Still she couldn't seem to kick the habit and really she wouldn't even if she could. She liked having a big heart. She liked being able to be there for the people she cared about, which now included Alaric of course. She liked that he was slowly morphing into another part of her family. It was nice having him around now that Jeremy was gone. She didn't care that he brought home pretty doctors and drunk dialed them at two am as long as he was happy.

However if this new Meredith Fell was stabbing people with stakes he probably wouldn't be for long. But she just didn't think Dr. Fell was capable of something like that. She liked to save people, not kill them. Damon wasn't as convinced though—he figured since the dead person was once the doctor's ex that naturally she was the main suspect. It made sense but she didn't want to go there.

She had enough on her plate right now.

Pulling a chair out from underneath the dining room table, she sat down and watched Alaric look at all of his weapons. "Um, can I get your advice on something?"

He nodded. "Sure. What's up?"

She sighed. "I did something really bad and—and now I don't know how to fix it."

He arched a brow. "What did you do?"

"I kissed Damon." She said in one short breath. "And I know it was possibly the stupidest thing I could ever do, but I did it. I feel horrible."

Alaric turned his full attention to her. "Does Bonnie know?" She nodded slowly and he continued. "Well that's uh—that's got to be putting a strain on your friendship."

"Yeah. I know she's upset with me and that she's playing it all low key because of everything that is
going on." She bit her lower lip hard. "She's a much better person than I am."

He smiled a little. "Why in the world would you kiss Damon?"

Elena frowned. "I don't know! It—he's been really cool lately as you know. Looking out for me and everything. After Jeremy left I was feeling like shit and there he was again, offering support. To be honest he sort of reminded me of Stefan. Things just kinda happened. One minute I was telling him how great he was and the next my lips were on his." Pause. "The second horrible part of this is that it wasn't terrible. I didn't...hate it."

His eyes stretched wider. "Elena... I know I haven't known you very long but you don't seem like the type to go after your friend's boyfriend."

She shook her head quickly. "I'm not! I swear I am totally not that girl. But I would be lying if I said my feelings for him were strictly friendly now. At the very least I think I have a small crush and believe me when I say I don't want it. You know I saw how upset Bonnie was when Damon thought he was into me. I don't want her feeling like that."

Leaning back in his chair, Alaric rubbed at his chin. "What about Stefan? Where does he fit into all of this?"

She glanced down at the table. "I thought I knew him so well but now he's like a stranger to me. Still I—I'm not a vampire so I can't just turn off what I feel. Besides everything that has happened to him is partly my fault. He left with Klaus to protect me and Damon. I know he's trying to get revenge for everything that Klaus has taken from him." Her voice grew softer. "But honestly I—I—I know we're not done with each other. I'm just having a hard time reconciling the man he is now with the Stefan I fell in love with."

Her friend appeared to understand. "Well I think the first thing you need to do is make sure what happened with Damon never happens again, and not just for Bonnie's sake. Believe me when I say love triangles do not work out."

"I know. Ugh..." Running both hands through her hair, she pouted. "How can I make this up to Bonnie? I kissed the first guy she has ever been in love with! I think deep down I thought it wasn't as serious as it really is. I'm such a bitch. She has done nothing but be there for me and keep me alive, and this is how I repay her."

Alaric patted her hand. "You made a mistake. They suck but sometimes they happen. If I can forgive Damon for turning my wife into a vampire, I'm sure Bonnie can forgive you for kissing him. You just have to prove to her that it'll never happen again and that you're truly sorry."

"How do I do that?" She inquired sincerely.

"You're her best friend. You'll think of something." He replied easily.

~*~

"So dig deep, Abby Bennett. Scrape out whatever magic you have left." Stefan favored both Bennett women with a hard glare before turning and stalking out of the cave.

Bonnie rolled her pretty green eyes and opened her duffle bag, taking out candles and putting them on various flat rocks and stones. They would need all of the light that they could get to see what they were doing and possibly open the shiny brown coffin sitting at the front of the dark cavern.

Unfortunately Damon had not had time to get all of the coffins from the old house before Klaus
showed up, but he managed to have the most important one moved. Of course he wouldn't have had to move any of them if her mother hadn't forced their hand. So far she was quite underwhelming and honestly, Bonnie couldn't wait until they could go back to pretending like the other didn't exist. She was sure Abby was in a hurry anyway to get back to Jamie.

As she set out more and more candles, she could hear her mother moving around in the background, probably looking at all of the drawings on the wall. It was surreal seeing her again—or at all since she hardly had any memories of her and her father was content to lock away most of the pictures as well. She had always thought however that her mother must have had a good reason for never coming back. That maybe it was too dangerous or she'd been captured. To find out she was simply playing house with someone else seriously hurt feelings she'd long since buried.

Why wasn't I good enough to come back for?

Shaking her head, she glanced around and then waved a hand, watching as the small little wicks flared to life with bright yellow flames. Next she was pulling out some spell book Abby had brought and laying it on top of the coffin.

"Stefan is a bossy one, isn't he?" Abby related in an effort to make small talk. "Not as bad as Mikael but still…"

Bonnie arched a brow and continued flipping pages. "He's been through a lot lately."

Her mother ventured closer. "And the tall one you were talking to earlier is Damon, right?" Her daughter gave a curt nod. "Are you two close?"

Bonnie blinked. "Why would you ask that?"

Abby shrugged. "Just...the way he was looking at you."

Thinking back to earlier when Damon explained the plan he hoped to cook up with the newly undaggered Elijah; she tried to picture how he might have looked at her. The image made her smirk. "Damon is my boyfriend."

Her mother—naturally—was shocked. "You're dating a vampire? Did your Grams know about this?"

"Yes. She did. In fact Damon was pretty perfect to me after her death." She said proudly. "And he's met daddy too."

"I—I wasn't trying to be mean or whatever. It's just witches don't usually have a good track record when it comes to vampires. We're usually just pawns to them." Abby responded softly. "But if he treats you well then I suppose everything is okay."

"Damon has a lot of faults but we love each other." She folded her arms over her chest. "He's been there for me when no one else was."

Abby smoothed her hands across the coffin. "I know it's not my place and that I really have no right, but you have to know you can't really have any sort of life with Damon. He is a vampire."

Bonnie bristled. "You're right. It's not your place. I don't believe this. You can't give me any type of advice—you don't have the right. Damon may not be perfect but he's never abandoned me. And he's never tried to trade me to a hybrid to save some other dude's life."

Her mother lowered her head, thoroughly chastised and Bonnie pretended to be very interested in the
grimoire in front of her. A conversation about her relationship with Damon wasn't something she wanted to get into with basically a stranger. Especially when said stranger didn't know any of the details besides him being a vampire. It made her angry because when she'd needed her mother for advice the woman wasn't anywhere to be found. Yet she could have really used her when the bond was first formed and when Katherine showed up to cause trouble. Instead she handled it all on her own…and with grace if she could pat herself on the back.

Not to mention there is just no way I'm bringing up what Elena did. We should just keep our relationship semi professional so that we can open this coffin and she can leave town.

After all it was too late to get back all of those lost moments. Grams hadn't exactly approved of Damon but obviously she'd foreseen how he would end up caring for her, otherwise she would have done something horrible to him.

Exhaling deeply, she pushed all of that out of her mind to concentrate on the matter at hand. "Let's see if we can't get this thing open."

~*~

So naturally Damon did not trust Elijah. Honestly he wasn't sure if he even liked Elijah but he was certain that he didn't trust him from his front door to his driveway, however desperate times called for desperate measures. It was either make a deal with the devil you know or continue to deal with the devil that probably had wet dreams about your girlfriend. Considering that every time he saw Klaus' face he wanted to punch it in, he felt it was better to conspire with his brother and hope things didn't go like they did last time. Then again Elijah was most likely in a revenge filled state of mind; he heard being daggered and locked in a coffin for several months could do that to you.

Funny enough the hard part had been getting Stefan to agree to dinner with Klaus not that he was surprised of course. Stefan had lost more than any of them to the asshole so it made sense that he did not want to sit down and break bread with him. Ripper Stefan was all about violence but that wasn't working against the hybrid so they had to use other means to get him to leave town or get the drop on him.

Still making nice just seemed wrong. And it was fucken hard.

Sitting at the same table with Klaus and Elijah was like some sort of surreal experience. In fact he fully expected to wake up any moment from a bad drug trip or something. But no, this was really happening. He was really pretending to want some type of truce with the asshole that had ruined his brother's life and was trying to ruin his as well. In reality of course he was just waiting for the right time when he and Elijah could get to the crux of their plan.

Both of them knew that Klaus was too powerful for either of them to kill but that didn't mean he had to continue to have such an easy life. If things worked out in their favor, he would be getting what he deserved very soon.

Stefan on the other hand was being very rude—not that Damon blamed him—however he felt the need to play peacemaker. And it's killing me to do so. I mean look at that smug son of a bitch sitting there sipping his wine like he owns the world. I just wanna stab him in the eye with a fork. Might not kill him but it'll hurt like hell.

Bonnie can't get that damn coffin open soon enough.

"So…" Elijah began harmlessly. "Stefan, where is the lovely Elena tonight?"
Stefan arched a brow. "I don't know. Why don't you ask Damon?"

Klaus snorted with laughter while his brother looked quite confused about the entire conversation. "I'm sorry you missed so much. Uh trouble in paradise."

Stefan glared at him. "One more word about Elena and…this dinner is over."

_Fuck._ "You know what? Probably best to keep Elena in the _do not discuss pile._"

Klaus nodded slowly. "Alright. Let's talk about Bonnie then."

_Twitch._ "I think she should also be added to that pile."

The hybrid shrugged innocently. "Well we have to have a topic of conversation however. And…this is a civil evening. I think we should be able to address the state of those in our lives." Pause. "How is she?"

_It's okay. Play along. Remember the plan._ "She's fine. Perfectly fine."

Klaus smirked at him. "Mm. You know she's young but she already has such amazing powers. When she's old she'll probably be almost unstoppable. I can see why you'd want to get in on the ground floor. Not to mention she's fairly gorgeous."

"Yeah well, our relationship is about more than that." Damon took a big sip of his wine. "We compliment each other."

"I'm sure you do. Elijah, you remember Miss. Bennett don't you?" A beat. "You _conspired_ with her against me months ago. Tell me, what do you think about her?"

Elijah clasped his hands together. "I think she's a very capable young witch."

Klaus grinned. "She is—that she is." He picked up his utensils. "I like Bonnie very much. She has a certain allure that I haven't encountered in many years. Different than say the allure of the doppelganger. Bonnie is more than beauty; she has fire inside of her. Just imagine how different all our lives would be if _she_ were the doppelganger."

Stefan snorted. "If she was you'd be trying to drain her dry to make your hybrids instead of writing sonnets to her."

Klaus' eyes rolled his eyes. "Perhaps. However I'm thankful that she isn't actively involved in this. I wouldn't want her to get hurt. I care a great deal for Bonnie."

"Sure you do."

"Think what you will, Stefan, but I _do_ worry about her safety. And her emotional state."

"Her _emotional state?"

"Yes. Damon knows what I am referring too."

_Count to ten…"Bonnie knows that no matter what happens, I love her."

"I wonder if our kind are really capable of love." Klaus mused lightly. "After so many years and so many faces, how do we know it's true and not just an impulse to stave off the loneliness? Humans need much coddling to be happy; they're like fragile little birds in a way." He gazed pointedly at Damon. "Break their wing once and when they can fly again, they go far far away to find something
Damon managed a small smile to mask his true feelings or the fact that he wanted to shove the hybrid into the burning fireplace. "I guess I just have a lucky bird feeder then."

Klaus chuckled. "You do know she is attracted to me. She'd never admit it but she is."

"Twitch. That's natural. I find other women attractive. For instance your waitresses are all very lovely." He gestured to the pretty girls in gold and black. "That doesn't mean I plan to take any of them home though."

"Fair enough." Klaus conceded. "Just…ask her if she's had any interesting dreams lately."

Before Damon could reply, his brother huffed and folded his arms over his chest. "This is pointless. I'm sure my brother is used to you trying to rile him up by now. We all know if you could, you'd have compelled Bonnie to want you by now but since you haven't you obviously can't. Which is good because it would be a shame for someone like her to get messed up with someone like you. I speak from experience of course."

The hybrid tilted his head to the side. "I can assure you my dealings with her would be vastly different from ours."

Stefan picked up his knife and tapped it against his plate. "You show love as violence and hurt those who defy you. I doubt you'd suddenly change for a girl."

Clearing his throat, Elijah sighed and lifted a hand. "It is true that Niklaus has a temper but even he has loved. We all have. There was a time when my brother and I shared affections for the originator of the Petrova line; a young woman named Tatia. She refused to choose between us and it led to a very strained relationship for a while. In order to restore the balance, our mother dispatched her and used her blood in the ritual to turn us into vampires." He pursed his lips together. "Eventually Niklaus and I realized that nothing is more important than family."

Yeah nothing says I love you like stabbing someone in the chest with a dagger and keeping them in a coffin for a decade.

Klaus wiped his mouth with a napkin. "Mmhm. Elijah, you were the one who suggested we all come together. I think it's time to get this show on the road."

"I agree." Stefan said flatly. "The sooner I can leave the better."

Showtime.

~*~

"Are you sure you're okay?"

Bonnie groaned and held the ice pack to her head. The room was no longer spinning so that was a good sign. Hopefully she didn't have a concussion or any brain damage. Technically whatever had came out of that coffin hadn't hurt her. She'd hit her head when she was rendered unconscious by some weird wind that smelled like wood chips and spring rain. Woke up to Damon and Stefan looming over her asking if she was alright. All things considered she could be worse.

"Just a little foggy." She admitted. "Whatever it was, it didn't want to hurt us. It could have done that."
Damon was still frowning. "It knocked you out." He brought his fingers up and traced her hairline. "As far as I am concerned that's strike one."

She chuckled softly. "Yeah but we got it open. Hopefully whatever came out is on our side."

He clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "We'll see." Pause. "So your buddy says hello and he misses stalking you."

She rolled her eyes. "I'm sure he does. Sure he'll get right on that as soon as he can."

"Nah I doubt it. His family was pissed about being daggered and stuff. I wouldn't be surprised if they are ripping him a part right now." He grinned as he said it. "I figure even if they stick around they won't be as horrible as he is. Maybe once he's dead Stefan will ram that stick back up his ass and act normal."

Bonnie took the ice pack away and pushed hair out of her eyes. "I don't think he'll ever be how he was—too much has happened. I guess the best we can hope for is silence."

Her boyfriend got up and paced in front of his bed. "Yeah doubt we'll get that any time soon. Someone is popping council members now. Mystic Falls has herself a good old fashioned murderer for once. Liz and the others have been so deep in supernatural shit they don't know how to react."

"That means you have to be extra careful." She pointed out. "You are a council member and only a select few know you're a vampire. You could be on the list."

He shrugged. "Least then I would probably find out who's the killer. Anyway you should be careful too. Being my girlfriend and all."

_Naturally._ "I can take care of myself, Damon."

Smirking, he sat at the foot of the bed and rubbed her thigh. "I know. It's sexy." A beat. "How did things go with mommy dearest?"

She lowered her big green eyes. "As expected. I just—I don't know. Whenever I look at her I get so angry and don't want anything to do with her. She was asking about you and our relationship, and I felt like she had no right whatsoever. When I needed her she wasn't here so why should we even pretend?"

He squeezed her knee. "Sorry it's not working out for you."

_That makes two of us._ "It's okay. I knew it wasn't going to be some amazing reunion. I'll admit I thought it would go better than it has but, whatever. She can go back to Jamie and I can focus on everything happening here."

Damon stared at her, his piercing blue eyes taking in her expression and body language. "You turned out great without her, you know that right? There is nothing about you I'd change or make better. You're perfect."

Blushing a little, she couldn't stop her lips from curling up at the sides. "You're sweet." Wetting her lips, she slouched back to the headboard. "I'm glad Klaus didn't hurt you guys."

"Well he tried to burn Stefan alive but he got better." Rubbing the back of his neck, he kicked off his boots and joined her. "He talked about you…and Elena a little."

Bonnie shook her head. "Right now I don't give a shit. My head aches and I spent the better part of
the night with the woman who ran out on me. Any drama Klaus is trying to stir up will have to wait until I feel better."

Damon pouted and slipped his arm around her shoulders. "No drama; he was just being a dick. Though he did say I should ask you if you've had any interesting dreams…"

Biting her bottom lip, she swallowed thickly and debated fairly quickly the meaning of his little dig. And it was a dig. "I dreamed he bit me. There was nothing sexy about it if you're wondering."

He made a face. "Good to know. Are you…okay? We haven't really talked about…that thing we're not talking about."

"I'm tired of talking about it or in this case, not talking about it. I've told Elena how I feel about everything so she knows. Whatever happens next will pretty much define the rest of our friendship or end it." She explained. "I'm tired of being taken advantage of because I care. If she makes another move on you, we're done. She knows that so…whatever. Besides we have bigger issues in the form of Klaus, and I have my long lost mother to deal with." She caressed his face. "You love me, right?"

"Yes. Of course."

"Good. Keep doing that and we'll be okay."

"That goes both ways you know."

"I love you. You want me to be honest? Okay. Sometimes the shit Klaus says gets to me because he knows exactly where to hit but that doesn't mean I'm gonna fall into his arms. He scares me and I'm glad. Keeps me on my toes around him."

"What if he didn't scare you?"

"Then I could kill him without worrying about what he'll do to those I love if he lives."

"Are you attracted to him?"

"No. He reminds me of you a little bit so there may be a little transference, but I'm not interested in him at all."

Damon kissed her cheek. "Hungry?"

She nodded. "A little."

He crawled off the bed and headed towards the door. "I'll whip you up something. Don't fall asleep."

Snorting she waved him off and poked lightly at her temples, wincing at the sore spot. She stared at the ceiling for a few and contemplated her next move with her mother but kept coming up with blanks. She really expected her to leave town as soon as she could now that their job was basically done. She had no way of knowing how to help her get her powers back, and honestly she didn't really want to anyway. It should continue to be her punishment for running out on her family.

*I doubt it'll be that simple though. I don't see her running off into the sunset; at least not right now anyway.*

Fuck. I feel kinda bad wishing my mom would leave when some people would give anything to have their parents back in their lives. This is just all screwed up!

Like she had told Damon she wasn't wasting any more time on feeling crappy about what Elena had
done. She had no reason to feel bad so she just wasn't going to anymore. If Elena cared anything about her she would be on her best behavior and remember everything they'd been through. If not well…perhaps it was time to find a new best friend.

~*~

A few nights later Bonnie found herself draped in a sparkling white strapless gown with a silk bodice and a layer of tiny diamonds over the lace skirts. Her long black was hair pinned off her neck with soft tendrils framing her pretty face. She stood beside her car staring at her reflection in the glass window, making sure that her soft pink lipstick hadn't smudged and that the glittery eye shadow she wore wasn't creeping up into her eyebrows. She wanted to look her best tonight even though she was slightly nervous about the proceedings. Her idea of fun was not going to a party thrown by a bunch of ancient vampires but Damon convinced her he needed her to watch his back. It was also implied that Caroline and everyone else needed her as well.

She hadn't spoken to Elena since their chat but she knew she was going. Caroline had no issues about spilling the beans; Elena planned to talk to Esther and she didn't want the Salvatores to know because they thought it was a bad idea. Usually Bonnie would agree but knowing now that Esther was in the fourth coffin and that she hadn't tried to kill her or her mother when she busted out, she didn't see any harm in them having a conversation. She also didn't think she would attempt murder in a room full of people.

Not to mention she's a witch, not a vampire like her children. Perhaps that makes her a bit more stable.

Exhaling deeply a few times to calm herself, she cleared her throat and made her way across the concrete driveway to the large manor Klaus had rebuilt from the inside out. It wasn't as nice as the Salvatore home but it was pretty with thick green vines climbing the outside walls, as well as new windows, doors and tiles.

She could already hear the crowd of people inside and the gentle classical music from a live orchestra. Here goes…

She made her way up onto the porch and watched as the double glass doors opened, careful not to trip on her dress as she slowly walked inside. She had to hand it to the Originals; they sure knew how to throw one hell of a ball. Everyone looked fabulous in their outfits though upon first glance she didn't really see anyone she usually talked to. However it appeared as if everyone had been invited, not just the founding families.

A young girl stepped up to her when she was inside, and she handed over her silver purse because there wasn't anything she needed to have on her all night. The girl disappeared into a room—probably where the coats and shawls were kept—and she clasped her hands in front of her idly.

"I was hoping that you could make it."

Glancing to her left, she met Klaus' flirting eyes. "Oh? I thought Caroline was now your new obsession."

He smirked. "I can have more than one obsession. Caroline and I are kindred spirits. You and I are so much more than that." He drifted over to her right. "You look absolutely ravishing by the way. Like an angel."

"I don't know what you're trying to accomplish with Caroline, but you better not hurt her." She warned. "I'm serious."
"I can tell." He mused. "Why would I want to hurt her? After all I did save her life after Tyler got carried away. If it were not for my blood she would be dead by now. Though perhaps you would have saved her like you did Damon. Still, you're not jealous are you?"

Bonnie frowned at him and he continued. "Either way I promise to be on my best behavior tonight. I owe you thanks for...freeing my mother. She has forgiven me and our family is once again whole."

He took her hand in his and pressed a kiss to her knuckles. "Save me a dance will you?" Flashing a wide grin, he winked and then migrated down into the throng of the crowd.

Still an insufferable ass I see. Poor Caroline, though I can't say I won't enjoy not having to look over my shoulder all night for him lurking behind me. And she is a vampire...she can handle herself.

A hand touching her elbow snapped her out of her thoughts and she smiled at the sight of Damon beside her, looking beyond gorgeous in his tux. Say what you wanted about him and Stefan but they both cleaned up very well. "Hey you. You look great."

"Me? You're the bell of the ball." He whispered in her ear, his lips brushing the soft shell and making her shiver. "You're the prettiest girl here."

He offered his arm and she took it, letting him lead her more into the room. "Anyone else here we know?"

He nodded. "Elena and Stefan are around here somewhere, as well as the Mayor and good old Matt." Lowering his voice, he snorted. "I met Kol Mikaelson earlier and between me and you, he looked familiar but I can't place his face. He's douche so we know he's definitely related to Klaus."

Bonnie giggled softly. "It really amuses me the way you talk about other vampires now. Not long ago I thought you were a douche too."

Damon rolled his eyes. "Oh I still am. I just try to wear kid gloves where you are concerned. I heard it's not right to be a complete dick to ones girlfriend."

She hit his arm lightly. "You're so horrible sometimes. I don't know why I put up with you."

"That's easy." He shrugged and kissed her neck. "I'm pretty."

Laughing, she watched as he swiped two glasses of sparkling champagne from a passing waiter's tray and handed one to her. They clinked them together with a little ping and sipped quietly just gazing at one another. A hum simmered low under her skin and in the pit of her stomach, and from the flare of Damon's eyebrows she could tell that he felt the same thing. Her flesh flushed red and he smirked, draining his drink quickly. She could only imagine what dirty things he was probably imagining right now.

"Wanna dance?" She inquired.

"Sure." Sitting their glasses on a nearby table, he took her hand and they found a space on the marble floor between other couples.

There was still something captivating about being in Damon's arms. About having him stare down at her like she was the only person in the world he could ever see himself being with. She used to wonder if he'd looked at Katherine the same way, but now she didn't care. Katherine was out of his mind for good and wasn't a threat any longer. As far as she was concerned neither was Elena. Life was too short to spend it stressed out; their lives shorter than most when vampires and werewolves and hybrids were concerned.
All she wanted to do was dance with her boyfriend for one night under twinkling lights to classical music.

So for the next few moments that is exactly what she did. She pressed her cheek to Damon's chest and melted against him, her palms flat on his back as he swayed her from side to side. It took her back to when things were simpler. When Stefan was normal and she'd walk into the Salvatore kitchen to find him and Elena making breakfast for everyone, laughing and sneaking looks at each other. She wanted that back. Or at least some semblance of it. Yet she was a realist and she knew no matter what happened—even if Stefan and Elena found their way back to each other—things would never be as they were.

She could only hope they would actually be better.

Suddenly the music died down and Elijah's smooth voice was filling the room. "Uh if everyone could gather please?"

The crowd turned to face one of the winding staircases. Damon noticed Stefan and he patted her waist before moving over to stand beside him. She adjusted her white gloves, blinking slowly when Elena sidled up beside her. They didn't say anything but the brunette offered up a timid smile, one which Bonnie returned.

"Welcome. Thank you for joining us." Elijah said. "You know whenever my mother brings our family together like this it's…tradition for us to commence the evening with a dance. Tonight's pick is a centuries old waltz, so if all of you could please find yourselves a partner, please join us in the ballroom."

Chattering happily, people started that way. It was of course Stefan and Damon who blocked their path. "For the record I don't think this is a good idea."

"Waltzing?" Bonnie asked.

Damon shook his head. "No. Elena spending time alone with mommy dearest."

Elena rolled her brown eyes. "She wants to see me alone, Damon. She's not gonna do anything with all of these people here."

Stefan itched at his cheek. "True but you should have someone watching your back. Just in case."

Nibbling on her bottom lip, Bonnie blinked as a plan popped into her head. "Why don't I cause a distraction so that the other Originals are too busy to interfere? That way Elena can see Esther and you'll know at least one of them isn't hiding behind a door to kill her."

"That puts you on their radar so, no." Damon popped his lips. "We should all just leave."

"I can't until I have some answers." Elena sighed. "C'mon. What if she's on our side? Rebecca and Klaus are still problems we need to deal with. I'll be fine—I don't think Esther wants to hurt me or Bonnie."

"We should go before they get suspicious." Without waiting for confirmation, Stefan took Elena's arm and moved into the ballroom.

Cursing silently under his breath, Damon took Bonnie's and did the same thing.

Living in Mystic Falls meant knowing every little bit about the history that one could or should. When they were little girls, Bonnie, Elena and Caroline would go with their parents to this meeting
or that meeting and learn how to dance or set the perfect place setting for your dinner party. It was mostly a waste of time until festival season rolled around. Teenagers weren't interested in waltzes but seeing everyone moving as one did make everything feel more glamorous.

Out on the floor, moving in the slow steps of the dance, she locked eyes with Caroline—who looked amazing in soft velvet blue and who was dancing with Klaus—and the blonde made a little annoyed face but honestly she didn't seem to be in distress. I'm not sure if I'm appalled or... Klaus sent Bonnie another wink and she scowled. Note to self, ask Caroline what is up with her and Klaus.

Swirling around the floor in time with Damon she caught sight of Matt and Rebecca. What is happening here? I can't believe Matt would agree to come. He's always saying how much he enjoys not being caught up in our vampire drama.

Pushing those thoughts out of her mind so that she could pay attention to her feet, she expected to be twirled out of Damon's arms and into Stefan's since he was the closest. She was quite shocked however when Stefan side-stepped her to grab Elena and one of the Originals she hadn't met took his place.

He didn't look anything like Klaus but he was handsome; she wouldn't lie. He had rather sharp features, high cheekbones and a Romanesque nose with dark brown hair and tanned skin. "I don't believe we have met. I am Finn Mikaelson. And you... are the witch that released my mother."

"Yes." Bonnie replied as he whirled with her in a small circle around the room.

Finn smiled. "Klaus said you were beautiful and I can see now that he wasn't exaggerating. I apologize on his behalf if he has been less than a gentleman with you. He's always been... impulsive."

She resisted the urge to snicker. "That's one word for it."

He chuckled. "I would like for you to know that I respect your kind. Witches. A balance in nature must be upheld and I'd imagine it's hard being the person to do that."

"Yes." She looked to where Damon was dancing with Rebecca now. "But I have faith in my powers."

"Hm." He murmured. "That is a good thing. You should consider meeting my mother. I think you two have quite a lot in common."

"Can I ask a favor of you?"

A brow arched. "Okay."

"My mother wishes to speak with Elena alone. Is she open to the idea?"

"She is."

"Good. I can assure you that your friend will not be harmed. I give my word."

"Then... you should catch her while she's dancing with Stefan. In his state of mind I think he's more open to stuff."

Finn grinned and actually bowed before hurrying over to where Elena and Stefan stood locked in conversation.

Oy. Could this night get any stranger?
Twenty minutes later after Elena and Esther emerged from their secret conversation, Esther made a toast and everyone then just sort of wandered around. Bonnie found herself on the second level admiring some of the art when she noticed Matt and Klaus' brother Kol talking. As they shook hands, Matt cried out and dropped to his knees. Bonnie gasped and hurried over, concentrating on Kol's brain, imagining she could see his vessels exploding like too hot chili.

He released Matt with a shout and grabbed his head, falling back against the railing of the balcony. She grabbed her friend under his arms and tried to pull him to safety but found herself pinned to the nearest wall with a hand squeezing tightly around her throat.

"Stupid little witch. Your powers aren't strong enough to really hurt me." Kol bragged as spots danced in front of her eyes.

"Obviously you've caught her on an off day." Damon taunted, appearing out of nowhere.

He growled and in the blink of an eye, Kol was being shoved over the balcony's iron railing, Bonnie was crashing to her knees sucking air into her lungs and Damon was leaping to the ground to deliver more blows to Kol.

She heard his neck crack loudly before several people ran out to see what the noise was. Coughing, she helped Matt to his feet and downstairs; her neck red and sore. Thankfully those near were vampires and Elena so it was easy to explain what honestly happened. Esther vowed that her children would be taken care of in the harshest way possible. She apologized for them, her eyes lingering on Bonnie before she ushered her family back inside with Elijah and Finn dragging and unconscious Kol.

"Oh Matt." Elena rubbed his shoulders. "Come on. Stefan and I will take you to the hospital. Bonnie, are you okay?"

The witch nodded, swallowing thickly. "I'm good. Go ahead."

"Apparently it's not a party unless there is violence." Damon yanked his bow tie off and removed his jacket, draping it over her shoulders. "I knew he was an asshole. Lucky you were near or Matt could be in serious pain right now. Well, more than he is." He smiled and wrapped his arms around her small waist. "You were pretty bad ass taking on someone that old.

She laughed a little then groaned. "Told you I could handle myself. I stopped mojo-ing him to help Matt and he got the drop on me. Won't happen again."

"Let's go home and take a bath." Damon entwined his fingers with hers. "I've had my fill of Originals for one night."

"That makes two of us." She murmured. "I drove so I'll follow you." Glancing back to the Mikaelson mansion, she sighed and felt a cold shiver well up in her bones.

He either noticed it or felt it as well because he dipped forward and kissed the top of her head. "C'mon. I'll help warm you up."

Bonnie smiled at him. "I'm sure you will. You always do."

~Fin~
Burn It To The Ground

Chapter Summary

There was really only one thing holding Bonnie back, but Damon has the cure for it.

Chapter Notes

This installment tags episodes 3.15 (All My Children) and I went totally AU for it. Technically it takes place after the episode but it's something I had in mind since it aired.

Burn It To The Ground

"But somehow she's always the one who gets hurt."

"Just tell her that I love her, okay?"

Most people didn't know what a truly broken heart felt like but Bonnie Bennett did. She'd experienced it when her Grams had died helping her save the Salvatores from a life of desiccation and torment. When she had helped her save the man that Elena loved because she loved Elena. At the time Stefan had bore the brunt of her emotional distress since she half blamed him and half blamed Katherine for fucking up her normal life. But as time went on the pain lessened—with Damon's help—and she was able to grieve and move on. At least she still had her father after all.

Pain was a part of life, anyone would tell you that. If you lived long enough something tragic was bound to happen to you whether it was a relationship gone sour or the death of a loved one. It was supposed to build character and strengthen who you were. Bonnie however thought that was a load of fucken bullshit. Sure she'd tried to the best of her ability to be glass half full or the perky, sassy one everyone expected her to be but that wasn't who she was anymore. Not after all of the sorrow she'd been put through. Not after losing her mother twice because of her best friend.

True that Abby now being a vampire wasn't the end of the world but it might as well be. There was a good chance she would decide not to feed and just die like Caroline's father had. Being immortal wasn't for everyone.

Her emotions were a raging storm inside of her and it took all of her will power not to crumble Caroline's house to the ground with them. The blonde was being so totally sweet and understanding, offering to help Abby if she decided to be a vampire or to hold her hand if she decided to pass on. Bonnie was so thankful for her that she didn't know what to do. All she wanted to do was cry or find a way to fix everything that had gotten so fucked up. Go back to a point in time when she could right every single wrong that had been dealt to her. Perhaps even starting with the reason her mother had left Mystic Falls in the first place.

And if that meant Elena was never born so there was no doppelganger for people to fawn over then so be it. She loved the brunette but she was just sick and fucken tired of always being the one hurt. Of always being the one forced to lose someone she cared about or playing second fiddle.
The Originals treated her family like they were nothing, just pawns to the perfect Gilbert family. Elijah hadn't hesitated setting up the terms that for Elena to live, she or her mother had to die. Hell he probably would have preferred it if both of them had died. And naturally Stefan would have done whatever it took to keep Elena safe contrary to all of the bullshit that he spewed about being over her. It didn't matter that once upon a time Bonnie had been his friend and had saved his life; nothing seemed to matter to anyone in their town except Elena.

And she was sick and tired of it.

She didn't want to play the who has lost more game but she couldn't help herself. She totally remembered that Jenna and John were dead but they'd basically willingly sacrifice themselves to save someone they loved—to save their family member. Bonnie thought she was done sending the people she loved to the slaughter when her Grams had died but apparently that was not the case. Would her father be next? Would they not be satisfied until she had no one?

In any case Abby was in transition because Kol had managed to get the jump on them. After the Originals learned of Esther's plan to kill them all while drawing energy from the Bennett line, Elijah had kidnapped Elena and set Rebecca loose on her, threatening to let his sister kill her if Damon and Stefan didn't figure out a way to stop his mother. They couldn't go after Esther and naturally there was no way that Damon was letting anything happen to her, so they'd devised a plan to dagger Kol—who they assumed was the weakest link—there by knocking out all of the Originals since they were linked.

However Klaus had not been affected and had saved his brother, only to set him loose on the witches after learning what their mother's true motives were. The kicker of course is that it was supposed to be her. She was supposed to be laying in Caroline's bed right now going through the change. Kol had wanted her as some sort of sick revenge on Damon but at the last minute in the confusion of everything going on, he'd pounced on Abby instead, fed her his blood and broken her neck. Laughed afterwards like it was the funniest thing in the world. Bonnie would have set him on fire if Damon hadn't been there to hold her back.

"She's going to be out for a while...if you wanted to get some sleep." Caroline's voice broke through her morbid thoughts. "Or a shower or something."

Bonnie wiped at her wet cheeks. "I'm okay."

Caroline offered up a small smile. "Yeah we both know that's not true. I—I know it's not what you wanted but Abby can live a functioning life as a vampire if she wants to. I do it."

The witch nodded. "I know and you have no idea how thankful I am that you are here right now. I'd probably be even more of a mess if you weren't. I just—God Caroline I was so horrible to her and now look what has happened."

The blonde touched her shoulder. "This isn't your fault though. It's Klaus' and his stupid family."

True. "Thank you by the way for trying to distract him so the guys could dagger Kol."

She shrugged. "I'm just sorry it didn't work."

Me too. "You know when I was growing up I was always jealous of you and Elena because you had moms. I mean I love my dad and Grams but it wasn't the same. And I just—I always figured she left because she couldn't cut it as a mom or wanted to be free. Finding out she abandoned me for save Elena just..." She swallowed hard. "But I figured that was in the past so whatever. And no one forced her to go. Seeing her again though; I didn't really want anything to do with her especially after
learning about Jamie. I spent most of our time together wishing she would go away. And—and—and now she might and I—I—I feel so guilty for wasting our ti—time together."

Caroline slipped closer and drew her friend into a comforting hug. "Bonnie your mom knows that you love her. I think she totally understands your reaction to everything that has happened, and she doesn't blame you for being upset. When my dad left us for his boyfriend I was upset, and I was terrible to him for a long time because I was hurt but I never stopped loving him. Not even when he rejected me for being a vampire."

"I know but it doesn't help my guilt." She whispered. "I'm the one who dragged her back into all of this anyway. And why? Because I thought she could help us find a weapon great enough to kill Klaus. If I hadn't gone to her she would still be alive and living with Jamie. I'm gonna have to tell him what's happened."

"Just worry about yourself right now." Her friend suggested. "And Klaus has screwed up all of our lives. We all want him dead or gone. Besides I don't think Abby came back just to kill him. I think she came back to get to know you and help you."

"Yeah and it's gotten her killed." Bonnie sniffled softly. "I wouldn't blame her if she hates me when she wakes up."

"But she won't." Caroline seemed so sure. "Trust me." Wetting her lips, she decided to change the subject a little. "You can stay here though for as long as you need to, I don't think my mom will mind. I'll explain to her what's happened."

"Thank you." The other girl replied. "I'd go stay with Damon but Elena might be lurking around the mansion and I can't see her right now. I can't be around her right now. I don't trust myself…"

"You wouldn't hurt Elena." Caroline said slowly. "Right? I mean she does feel awful about everything that has happened."

Bonnie sighed deeply. "I know but it doesn't change the fact that everything that has happened is because of her. It's best if I keep my distance for a while, otherwise I—I might accidentally kill her."

Caroline's big eyes stretched wide. "Bonnie…"

Shaking her head, she stood and moved over to the cluttered vanity. "Cause my powers are off the charts unstable right now. You don't how much hard it is to not to tornado your house just to fuck something up."

Pressing her lips together, Caroline took out her cell phone. "I'm calling your boyfriend. If anyone can make you feel better it's him. I don't know why he isn't here anyway."

"I think he's giving me space or whatever with my mom. He might feel a little guilty that he couldn't save her." Which he shouldn't because it's not his job to protect everyone. He did what he could and I am thankful for that."

As Caroline dialed, Bonnie drifted out of the room and into the hallway where she slid down the wall to the floor. She gripped her knees tightly and exhaled, feeling the ground underneath her feet vibrate with the tension she was carrying. She wanted to blow something up or set something on fire but felt it wouldn't be right for whatever reason. Though she doubted anyone would really blame her if she burnt down the Grille again or something, not like they had to know it was her anyway.

What am I going to do? How am I going to be able to rationalize any of this when the time comes? How am I going to be able to do anything if I am needed? How am I going to be able to save Elena
if she needs me when right now all I want is for her to burn?

Bonnie did not think she would be able to bury her feelings anymore. She had done it when Damon was in love with her friend and every time since when Elena made a stupid fucken decision that caused someone their life. She'd thought that by not making waves it would be better for others…but it was never better for her. She was sick and tired of it, and if Caroline hadn't sent Elena away she probably would have seriously hurt her albeit by accident.

If Kol had turned me into a vampire tonight I know my first stop would have been to gut my best friend. I feel like I should be ashamed for even thinking it but I can't bring myself to be. After all that has occurred who would really say I'm at any fault here? All of the things I've lost or given up have been because of her. This entire war that I'm fighting is because of her. Even if I wanted out I can't leave it; there is too much at stake.

A knock sounded on the front door and Bonnie quickly dried her oncoming tears, expecting to see Damon looking through the glass of the other side. She was shocked and quickly angered however to see Klaus instead. Standing quickly, she stalked to the door and threw it open. "What the fuck are you doing here?"

Klaus managed to look contrite. "You have every right to be angry at me, Bonnie but I am here to offer my condolences all the same. I had no idea what Elijah intended to do until it was already done."

She rolled her eyes. "Fuck you. All of this is your fault because you brought them into our town. No one matters but you and your family, you've made that abundantly clear since day one. Your apology means nothing to me."

"Naturally." He said. "But in the case of either you or your mother, I would hope Kol chooses her every time. Contrary to what you may think of me, I do understand a bit of what you are going through. You blame yourself for your mother's current situation just as I blamed myself for my younger brother's death."

"If you think we're going to bond over tragedies you're insane." She stared at him head on. "My mother is in transition because no one cared enough about her to just leave or whatever. When her life and my life were weighed against Elena's, people decided Elena's life was more important. And you can stand there with sad eyes all you want but I know you would have killed me in a second because without her you can't make more hybrids. The lesson here is what it has always been and that is only Elena matters."

He frowned a little. "That is not true. Putting Elena in danger was Elijah's plan not mine. I had no idea what was going on until Alaric daggered Kol. The fault here lies with my mother. If she had not tried to kill all of us none of this would have happened."

Bonnie ran a hand through her hair. "But it did happen. And you're still the last person I want to see. So unless you want to end up on fire, if I were you I'd leave."

Klaus nodded slowly. "Fair enough. I am sorry, Bonnie. I wish that things could have turned out differently."

Her brows narrowed as she watched him leave, and the wind chimes near the door shook violently by an unseen wind. She didn't need or want his false apologies, and him having the gall to even try to explain anything just made stuff worse. Besides what did he hope to accomplish with them anyway? She would never be on his side and she would never fall for him. She really hoped the same could be said about Caroline if he decided to continue his chase of her.
Though she would be lying if she said there wasn’t a role Klaus could play at the moment where she was concerned. All of his many repulsive faults aside, there was one she wished she could harness for her own selfish needs. She wished she could just destroy something without feeling that remorse later like he appeared to be able to do. She knew it wouldn’t solve all of her problems but she just needed it desperately right now. Otherwise she might explode in all honesty and take Caroline’s home with her.

Walking out onto the porch and into the fresh night air, she balled her hands into fists. "Grams, I could really use your help. Please…"

She jumped when arms circled her waist from behind. How had she not heard or felt Damon come up? "I'm here."

"You're gonna make me cry again." She leaned back into him. "Klaus was just here."

He snorted. "Thought I smelled something foul. What the fuck did he want?"

"To offer his condolences." Pause. "He was just being a dick as usual."

"Hm." Damon kissed her temple. "How are you holding up?"

"Just barely." Was her reply. "My mom might become a vampire or she might die, and I haven't been the nicest person to her since she got back into town. Not to mention my dad has no idea what is going on because he's off on business. I feel like I've lost control of my life and it makes me want to rage."

The vampire turned her to face him, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. "What happened tonight was fucked up, but I think your mom will understand. I think if it was between you and her, she'd rather it was her. But if it makes you feel any better I plan to rip Kol's head off the first chance I get."

She smiled but it didn't reach her eyes. "If I thought it could be done it would make me feel better. But he's older and therefore stronger. I don't know what we're going to do."

"We'll be okay. Somehow we always are."

"Yeah. It's the people we're close to that we have to worry about."

Damon hmm'd in response. "I wish there was something I could do for you, baby. I hate seeing you like this." His expression shifted subtly which could only mean he'd had an idea.

She arched a brow. "What?"

Cutting his eyes into the house, he took her hand and pulled her out into the yard. "You can feel me sometimes through our connection, right? Like when I'm in trouble or whatever?"

Bonnie gazed at him. "Yes. Why?"

He grinned a little. "What if I could help you work out some of that anger and pain?"

Oh, Damon. "I love you but I'm not in the mood to have sex right now."

His face went blank and he tipped up her chin. "No. Though that would make you feel better. " A beat. "But if you can feel my emotions and shit, who's to say I can't affect yours?"

Her interest was pique. "What do you mean?"
"I can turn mine off whenever I want. I haven't in a long time because of you, of course, but I can." He explained lightly. "Shouldn't there be a way for me to reach down inside of you and do the same? Just for tonight or whatever so you won't feel so fucked up. We could drive somewhere, start a few bar fights."

His words rang in her ears and she swallowed thickly at the thought. "It sounds kinda dangerous. What if you can't turn them back on? And would you give a shit about me with no emotions?"

"I did in the past. I mean I was in denial but I still saved your ass when you needed me." He shoved his hands into his pockets. "Honestly I think we both need a night where we can fuck shit up and not give a damn. You're hurting and that makes me feel useless, and I hate feeling useless. Stefan and I tried to take out Kol so that no one had to die but we failed…and your mom paid the price. When I think about that it could have been you; fuck yeah that makes me not wanna feel. I was a bastard once, Bonnie. I love you but sometimes I miss it."

She scoffed but it lacked any heat. Kicking at the gravel of Caroline's driveway, she weighed the pros and cons of what her boyfriend was suggesting. She did feel crushed under the weight of her guilt and her inner turmoil of how her mother would react when she finally woke up. And she did want revenge or compensation for all of the wrongs that had been done to her but that would mean taking her pound of flesh from Elena. While justified she was trying hard not to go that route. It would make her no better than the assholes that kept fucking with her life.

One night of debauchery however did sound enticing. Actually it sounded downright perfect. Damon would keep her grounded; that she was certain of.

"There is something I want to do." She admitted. "But you probably won't like it."

He tilted his head to the side. "Lay it on me."

"I want to go somewhere where we're not known and where we'll never be found out, and I wanna kill some vampires." She bit the inside of her cheek. "I want to burn them until there is nothing left."

Damon clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth and folded his arms over his chest. "Let's do it."

She blinked. "Just like that?"

"Just like that. You need it and I'll provide it." He popped the collar of his leather jacket. "When I was fucked up you were there for me, once when you were pissed off. You really think I wouldn't be up for paying that back? You wanna be bad then let's be bad. I think I'm better being the bad guy anyway."

Bonnie's big green eyes flooded with tears and she threw her arms around his neck, hugging him tight. She wasn't sure what she would do without him. If everything they'd went through still led to moments like this, then she would take them all. They sucked but trials did make them stronger. We could take over the world if we wanted. Sometimes I want…

With excitement and nerves churning in her stomach, she thumbed to the house. "I'm gonna go tell Caroline we're…going for a bit. I hope my mom doesn't wake up while we're gone."

"Doubtful." He replied. "Transition takes a while."

Nodding, she hurried back into the house. "Caroline! Damon's here."

"I know. I heard," The blonde murmured. "For the record I think what you're going to do is hella
dangerous. But I also know you're in good hands with Damon—all things considered—still *be careful*. I don't want you coming back as a major bitch."

Bonnie chuckled. "I won't I promise." She hugged her. "Thank you. You're one of the best friends I've ever had."

"I know." Caroline chirped. "Go on. We'll be fine here."

Kissing her cheek, Bonnie squeezed her wrists and strolled back out to where Damon waited. They climbed into his car and she slouched, watching the scenery fly by as he maneuvered the vehicle out of town and onto the highway.

"Where are we going?"

"Well believe it or not but there is a vampire hangout down in Raleigh. I hit it a few times before coming to Mystic Falls."

*Interesting and odd but so is the rest of the world.* "And they won't immediately murder me the moment we walk in because I'm human?"

He snickered. "No. One I will be protecting you and two sometimes they have humans in…as snacks. So that should tell you the kinda people they are."

*Oh it does.* "So you're going to just take me in and watch me set them on fire?"

Damon glanced at her, the lights from the other cars reflecting in his eyes, making them shine. "No. We're going to turn off your pesky emotions and then we are going to have some fun. Trust me."

She patted his thigh. "I already do."

~*~

It was a dive bar like so many other places that promised beer and loud music. Maybe food if you were lucky. It looked like the type of place that didn't card for drinks and that had a juke box over in the corner somewhere. So unlike the Grille with its clean tables and friendly staff—you'd probably be lucky to get a clean anything inside of this place. Not that Bonnie cared.

Sitting out in Damon's car, she watched as people—that she assumed were vampires—nearly skipped inside with happy grins. She could only imagine what was going on in there. "I don't want to hurt anyone not a vampire. Can you make sure they get out?"

"I think that can be arranged." He turned to face her as much as the seat would allow. "You ready to do this?"

*No. Yes. I don't know.* "Honestly? I don't know but don't let that stop you. Let's try it."

Damon was pleased. "Okay. Don't know how our thing works or much about witchy juju but here goes." He grasped her hands. "Feel free to help."

*Help or do all of the work?* Smiling at her own thoughts, she closed her eyes and tried to focus on that warm undercurrent of energy that flowed between them. That let her know when he was in trouble and vice versa. Sometimes it would flare bright while others it simmered, like it was doing now. She pictured it in her mind like a chain with golden links binding them together, wrapping around both of their souls and refusing to let go no matter what. Depending on what was going on it could either be dormant or spike out like spider webs to the brain and heart.
"Okay." Her voice was low. "Do it."

She really had no clue what flicking the switch entailed, she just knew it could be done. First images of course conjured up an actual switch being pushed from one position to the other. From on to off. However the second Damon flipped his, she felt a flood of chemicals assault her from all angles, almost like she'd just injected drugs into her veins. They dulled her nerves and took away that parts that put the entire world on her shoulders. The parts that forced her to care about everything, and put her own emotions aside for the greater good.

It All. Just. Stopped.

No more pain.
No more guilt.
Just…urges.

The urge to fuck shit up. The urge to dance and sing and drink because she could. The urge to crawl into the backseat right now and fuck Damon until the sun came up. The urge to let her powers loose and see what they could really do.

She looked at Damon and they shared a smile. Giggling, she threw open the car door and climbed out, inhaling the fresh night air. Things appeared so differently when you weren't bogged down by useless shit. When you didn't give a damn who lived or died as long as you got what you wanted.

"Is it always like this?" She asked with a hum. "I haven't felt like this since before you and Stefan came to town."

Damon took her hand, entwining their fingers together. "It can be. Don't know what it feels like for a human though. C'mon." He gave her a yank and pulled her towards the bar. "Let's get you nice and drunk."

She laughed but followed him. "God! It's so freeing! I—I don't care about anything. Well I care about you which is weird but everything else is just background noise. My mom is turning into a freaken vampire and it kinda amuses me. Mother Nature being a bitch and all. Really it's probably what she deserved for ditching me when I was a little girl." Pause. "Elena could be in danger right now and I wouldn't give a shit. She's so whiny anyway. Waa Stefan! Waa Damon! Waa my life is so hard! Whatever. Sometimes I wanna slap her across the face."

Damon smirked. "Chick fight…sounds sexy."

She shoved him a little. "Sure, if you think me choking her to death is sexy. I tell you Caroline is so much cooler than her now. Maybe if Elena died I'd be able to tolerate her more."

Her boyfriend snickered and guided her up to the bar. "Tequila shots for me and my lady."

As the guy poured, Bonnie hopped up onto a stool. She swirled around to face the people inside before getting an intriguing idea. Nibbling on her thumbnail, she bit down hard and sent out a wave of energy into the room specifically for vampire brains only. She'd never tried it before but figured why not? What was the worst it could do to a person? Stroke 'em out? Sometimes you had to break a few eggs to make an omelet. She wasn't surprised though when most of the people inside grabbed their heads in pain, Damon included.

That made her laugh. "Sorry. I was testing a theory."
He shucked off his jacket. "Try not to test it on me next time." He picked up one of the tiny shot glasses and handed it to her. "To us."

*I can toast to that.* Taking it, she wet her lips and drank it down. "Woo! Another!"

Damon grinned at the bartender. "You heard her." He slipped onto a stool, frowning at the humans set up to become dinner. "You know back in my day it was less group shit. You find someone, you lured them away and you killed them. Kids today, it's all about being flashy."

Bonnie pouted at him. "Poor Damon. Oh how you've suffered." She took her second shot. "Why aren't you killing people now?"

"I have the foresight to know you'll be pissed if I do when you're... back to your old self." He shrugged. "Besides tonight is about you baby."

She liked the sound of that. "Every night should be about me." Standing, she slipped her hand into his pocket with a flirty smile.

"I don't know what you are looking for, but if you shift to the left you'll have found it." He winked.

"I'll find that later." She leaned forward and kissed him softly on the lips while pulling spare change out of his pocket. "Right now I want music."

Sashaying across the room to where the old juke box sat, she surveyed the songs with a bit of disinterest before sticking in the coins and picking the one she could actually listen to. Jimi Hendrix's *Red House* started its soulful croon with an electric guitar and she flipped the hair out of her face. The sound moved through her from her head to her toes, and she pushed past a few people to get back to Damon. They weren't pleased but who gave a shit? She wanted them to try something.

Skipping back to her very gorgeous—fuck super gorgeous—boyfriend, she pressed herself against his front. "Dance with me."

"You know," He began, standing to do as she requested. "I saw Hendrix in concert once. Blew my mind."

"Did you get lucky that night?"

"I get lucky every night."

"You're so damn cocky."

"You *like* that I'm cocky."

"Ugh I do. I'm sick."

"You're perfect."

"That too."

He laughed, his attention suddenly behind her. "Can I help you?"

Bonnie turned in his arms, frowning at the tall redhead with legs up to *there* that was currently giving her man come fuck me eyes.

"Just wondered if you wanted to dance?" Red inquired. "My friend wants to dance with your friend."
"Girlfriend." Bonnie corrected. "And no, he doesn't."

Red smiled at her like she was a cute little fuzzy animal, taking great care to meet her gaze. "You should go dance with my friend."

_Oh how cute! She's trying to compel me! _"You should back the fuck off before I put you through a pool table."

Naturally Red was shocked. "Wh—what? I…"

Damon bent down to rest his chin on his girlfriend's shoulder. "Aren't they cute when they are confused?"

Bonnie made a face. "They're cuter when they have stakes sticking out of their chests."

Red frowned. "Is this some sort of play with my food sort of thing I don't get? Or some _Twilight _scheme where you're Edward, she's Bella and you're gonna whisk her outta here in your Volvo when stuff gets too intense?"

Bonnie giggled. "Seriously? I bet you became a vampire just hoping you'd sparkle." She rolled her eyes. "Baby I'm bored. Can I play now?"

"Of course." He nipped at her earlobe. "Show me what you got."

Pecking his chin she concentrated on Red like she always did but with more passion, channeling her desire to destroy at Red's brain, forcing the power out of her like clay dough through a dispenser. She imagined her brain turned to chunky soup and the vampire screamed, stumbling back into a table as she clawed at her temples. She went down hard, sprawling out unconscious in a matter of seconds.

That got everyone's attention.

_Look at their faces. So puzzled. I hope they melt like wax._ "Oops."

"What did you do to Courtney?" Someone yelled—most likely her friend.

"What? I think it's a vast improvement." Bonnie replied as innocently as she could. "You can't tell me she was some sort of genius or whatever."

The friend—a hipster type wearing skinny jeans—was obviously the act first and worry about the rest later type of guy. He checked on Red and then lunged at Bonnie with his super speed, prepared to do some damage. But since he wasn't as old or as fast as Damon he never got to touch her. Instead he ended up with a fist through his chest and fingers wrapped around his heart.

Damon yanked his hand back, heart intact and hipster gurgled before falling down dead. "Make a wish."

"I wish that any human that doesn't want to die would get the fuck out of this bar." She gave a pointed look. "Now."

A few people started inching towards the door as if in slow motion before suddenly they were all out running. The vampires weren't smart enough to be scared so they didn't move; instead opting to box Bonnie and Damon in near the bar.

When it was just her and them, she elbowed Damon in the ribs. "Duck."
He didn't need to be told twice, dropping to his knees as if his life depended on it. Looking behind the bar at all of the different bottles of alcohol, Bonnie waved a hand and they leapt off their perches, slamming into the black eyed vampires with enough force to shatter on their legs and at their feet. She smirked, snapped her fingers and the flames appeared out of thin air with a loud whoosh. She watched with a near gleeful expression as the vampires were engulfed in red and yellow, flailing their arms and bumping into each other as they sought to be put out.

"Hotter." She demanded and the screams grew with the force of the fire. She could feel the heat making small drops of sweat break out along her hair line; the smoke burning her nose and thickening as chairs and tables caught as well.

*Destruction is beautiful.* She stared at their thrashing bodies as if mesmerized.

"Time to go." Damon scooped her up into his arms. "*You* are a goddess."

They were outside in seconds flat and she was pulling him into a possessive kiss, holding tight to his jacket like she thought he would disappear at any moment. She spared a thought for the immortals that might try to escape and shook the ground with her powers, making the roof tumble in and trap any unfortunate souls not yet dead.

She sighed against Damon's lips. "We should have brought marshmallows."

He laughed. "We should go before the cops show up. I don't know about you but I'm *too pretty* to go to jail."

~*~

"Do I even wanna know what you guys did?"

Damon smirked as he carried a sleeping Bonnie into Caroline's home. "Depends on how kinky you are." He put her down gently onto the couch and smoothed the hair off her cheek. "How is her mom?"

"Still out." Caroline replied softly. "Is Bonnie gonna be okay?"

He nodded. "She should be. She was overwhelmed when I turned our emotions back on. Exhausted so I decided to bring her back here. Nothing like having a girl pass out after crazy sex to think you broke her."

The blonde made a face. "Ew."

He chuckled. "Yeah yeah. Anyway call me if she needs me." Pause. "Hopefully though tonight helped her and she won't be so wound up."

Caroline had to agree with that. "I think as long as she has you to lean on, she'll make it through."

He took the blanket from the back of the sofa and spread it out over her. "We'll see."

Damon headed to the door without another word, trusting Caroline to take care of Bonnie. He wanted to stay with her but figured Liz wouldn't go for that. Not to mention Abby might freak out more whenever she woke up. He would have gladly took Bonnie back to his home but he knew full well why she wasn't there and he didn't blame her. Sure he hadn't wanted Elena to die but *this* was worse in a way. Bonnie had already been through so much and now she was forced to go through even more. It wasn't fair.
Out of everyone she deserved all of the heartache that had came her way the least. He wasn't stupid; he recognized that all of her problems were because he and Stefan had come back to Mystic Falls. *Well maybe not all of them but a good deal. The tomb shit and her grandmother dying...* He couldn't help but wonder if they'd both stayed away would things be different? Would Klaus have ever came to Mystic Falls in the first place?

*Probably. Guy's a dick.*

Tonight however had proved something to him that he'd wondered yet sort of known all along. There was a darkness in Bonnie that while frightening was also intoxicating. Watching her kill those vampires with a little smile on her perfect lips made his black heart soar. Even after he'd turned their emotions back on he'd been proud of her.

In the past he'd underestimated Bonnie sometimes. Thinking she wasn't as strong as she claimed to be but he wouldn't do that again. Bonnie was a warrior; she was beautiful and fierce and amazing. And he was going to fight by her side until the end.

~Fin~
Asphyxia

Chapter Summary

When it rains it pours, and Bonnie is scared she'll soon be drowning.

Chapter Notes

This update is a mash up of episodes 3.16 (1912), 3.17 (Break On Through) and 3.18 (The Murder of One).

Asphyxia

There never seemed to be a lack of deathly mystery and intrigue when it came to Mystic Falls. Usually it was of the supernatural variety but unlike some, Damon could appreciate a good old fashioned murder spree by a salt of the Earth human. However as luck would have it, that human was apparently Alaric. Naturally there were signs if you counted his cache of weapons and his general willingness to put himself into danger killing vampires, but he just had never came off as the type of guy to go people hunting. After all he wasn't a vampire or a werewolf.

Of course that didn't really matter considering all the other normal non-supernaturals who butchered innocent people for the fun of it. But Alaric was different. He wasn't evil or fucked up in the head… or at least he hadn't been, not at first. The Gilbert ring he wore; not only did it keep him alive but it also shattered his mind or something. Gave him a split personality like it did one of the original wearers years and years ago—caused him to start killing members of the Council. He'd even stabbed himself so that he wouldn't be implicated in the other murders.

Alaric would have been a lot of fun back in the day in my BB period. Before Bonnie.

Anyway long story short, Meredith Fell—cutie vampire blood stealing doctor extraordinaire had framed him and cleared him all in the same breath with the Sheriff. She was kinda insane that way though anyone who looked out for Alaric couldn't be thathorrible.

Damon did not have friends because he was basically hard to get along with and dangerous. Yet somehow he and Alaric had formed a shaky friendship from the ashes of their mutual hatred. For all of his posturing, when Damon brought someone into his inner circle he went to bat for them if they got into trouble. He had been totally willing to help prove Alaric's innocence by any means necessary. Now they just had to make sure he didn't stab anyone to death.

Oddly enough though all the talk about who was killing Council members made Damon and Stefan think back years before when it had happened. Damon remembered himself as calm and controlled, and wanting to stay as far away from his brother as he could. Not because he didn’t trust him but because he still blamed him for Katherine's incarceration and for getting him to transition into a vampire. A far cry from the creature he eventually turned out to be.

Sage helped with that though. For a strong vampire chick she sure had a lot of weird thoughts when
it came to women. Bet had she been involved she'd have set the feminist movement back several years.

'Women are not just for food. They're for pleasure.' But when you were a vampire that was true of everyone and he had never passed over food or the chance to fuck with someone just because they had a dick. People came in so many interesting shapes, sizes, colors and genders; it would be stupid to deny himself any of that.

Now though he mostly only sipped from blood bags or Bonnie. Sometimes he missed being able to prowl and destroy as he pleased, but he figured what he'd gained was so much better than anything he'd given up. Seriously he was with a hot as hell witch who could move the earth with a single thought, who looked at him like he was the most important man in the world and who was not scared to risk her life to save him. Murder just didn't compare.

Moving on to other thoughts, Bonnie's mother planned to become a vampire which sort of blew Damon's mind. He was just happy that he had nothing to do with it…unlike that unfortunate mess with Isobel. He'd offered to help but Bonnie felt Caroline would be an easier fit in the grand scheme of things. Yes he had more experience but Abby also wasn't that fond of him. In trying to be a normal mother she'd decided looking out for her daughter's love life was the way to go.

Whatever. As long as she learned to control herself. However it seemed a pity that she wasn't going to have her kill everything in my path phase. Those were awesome.

Right now however he was focusing on helping Stefan learn moderation. His dear little brother had a repeating tendency of going onto the rails just to fall off of them in a spectacular fashion. He believed in all or nothing, and clearly that wasn't working for him. So Damon was going to be a good big brother for once and instead of leaving him to his own devices, he was going to try to teach Stefan to control his Ripper urges. It wouldn't be easy but nothing worth it ever was.

~*~

Bonnie could hear her mother inside of the house, moving around listlessly like a zombie instead of a newly turned vampire. She was sulking but it was understandable; her entire life was basically over if you wanted to get technical about it. She was dead and she would need blood to survive. Though that didn't seem to bother her to much to be honest. She appeared more concerned that she would never be able to do magic again. That nature was no longer a part of who she was. It was a major loss for a witch…being unable to feel the elements nipping at your fingertips.

Caroline didn't get it but she was being an absolute sweetheart trying to help, bringing blood packets and coaching Abby on control. It was weird to think of the blonde as this secure, mature person but she was. Even though she hadn't long lost her father she was willing to push aside her grief to help in any way that she could. Bonnie appreciated it more than she could ever describe.

Elena wanted to help too of course but honestly Bonnie just did not want to be bothered with her yet. On some level she totally realized that it wasn't the brunette's fault, but on another selfish level she didn't give a fuck. The people in her life—the people she cared about tended to die where Elena was concerned. First her Grams, then Caroline and now her mother; if things kept going the way they were Damon would be next. Bonnie wasn't sure what she would do if anything happened to him.

In truth she sort of envied him a little especially now that she knew the exquisite release of being able to lock down your emotions whenever you wanted to. That night still stood out fondly in her mind of not feeling anything. It was something she wished she could do every time she needed a break. Damon didn't think that was wise and he was probably right. It didn't take a genius to realize she could easily become addicted to escaping her problems through flipping the switch. But she bet if she
asked him—begged him—that he would do it for her because he loved her.

And that's why she loved him.

Sighing deeply, she smoothed dark strands of hair out of her face and shifted on the cement bench. There was a slight chill to the air and all of the flowers in the garden were dead. Caroline was inside trying to get Abby to eat something but naturally she didn't want to. Bonnie couldn't help but think about herself and what she'd do if she were in that situation. Without her magic and liable to go off at any second because her emotions were all out of whack.

_Craving blood._

A twig snapping drew her attention from the ground, and she looked up to find Jamie hovering a few feet away. She put on a pleasant smile that didn't reach her eyes. "Hey." She wasn't too fond of him but she was going to try to be civil at least. It wasn't his fault her mother had decided to raise him like a son instead of returning to her own daughter.

He smiled. "Hey. I um, I thought you'd be inside with your mom."

She shrugged. "Caroline is helping her. There isn't much I can do really. I made her a daylight ring but I'm not a vampire so I don't _really_ know what she is going through."

He nodded and drifted closer. "I know I should go talk to her but I don't know what to say. I don't want to upset her and I'm…"

"Scared?" She inquired and he nodded again. "I don't think you have to be. She would never hurt you." _On purpose._

Jamie shoved his hands into his pockets. "You've been around a lot of vampires, right? I mean you know a few."

"I guess so." She said slowly. "I've met several over the past few months but I only _know_ a small group. Why?"

Biting his bottom lip, he sat down beside her. "I'd never encountered a vampire before that dude showed up looking for Abby. Not even sure I believed they were real and now _boom_. It's like they are everywhere. Lurking and wanting to help. I just don't know how you stand it."

She tilted her head to the side. "It's not hard once you get used to it. Besides the vampires in my life—with the exception of the screwed up Originals—aren't horrible at all. Caroline is one of the best people I know and Damon is…Damon's wonderful."

He arched a brow. "That's Stefan's brother, right?" Pause. "Aren't you scared that one day he might turn on you? They're dangerous."

"I can take care of myself." She replied. "And things with Damon were rocky at one point but now I trust him with my life. I think it's easy to think of them as monsters because some _are_. They've forgotten their humanity or they never had it in the first place. But some are just running from the pain and when you figure out which are, there is a chance you can get through to them."

He was skeptical. "But if you pick the wrong one you could end up in serious trouble."

_True._ _Ben McKittrick was a prime example of that._ "The only one you'll probably have to deal with is Abby though. So you're fine."
"I hope so." He slid a hand over his close cut black hair. "No offense or anything."

Why would I be offended? I'm not a vampire. "None taken. They aren't for everyone. Most people should be quite scared of the supernatural. They can be vicious and cruel. They'll hurt you for the fun of it and destroy everything you love because they can. But not all of them are like that." She rubbed her forehead. "Look Jamie, obviously you're freaked out and I don't blame you. But my mom is still the person who took you in and raised you. She's just dead now."

Jamie swallowed hard. "Good cause I wanna be there for her like she was there for me."

Bonnie felt a surge of jealousy but pushed it down. In truth Abby was lucky to have someone like him in her life. "She's lucky to have you." Before he could reply, her cell phone chimed. She whipped it out and scanned the caller id. "Hello?"

"How would you feel about me seducing Rebecca for the greater good?"

She snorted. "Damon."

"Wait wait, just hear me out." He cleared his throat. "An old friend of mine has shown up and she has the means to get the information I need. Mainly why Barbie vamp is so interested in my family's old lumber business. But to get the info Rebecca has to be nice and loose."

Good lord. "Are you asking for permission to cheat on me? Damon I've had a very stressful few days and I swear to God if your penis goes anywhere near her, I'll burn it off. I will throw water on your pants and I will burn it down to a nub."

"Whoa whoa whoa judgy, calm down. I'm not that stupid. I don't wanna fuck her, I just wanna make her think I want that." He responded, probably grinning. "Which means I might have to turn on the Salvatore charm. But rest assured my heart and penis belongs to you."

She laughed before she could stop herself. "You're such an asshole." A beat. "Do whatever you want that doesn't involve falling into bed with her. And no kissing."

"Damn, that doesn't leave a lot of options. What am I supposed to do? Hold her hand?"

"You're smart and conniving, I'm sure you'll think of something. Get her drunk."

"Alcohol does liven things up. Okay I'll keep you posted. How are you by the way?"

"Tired. Abby—mom—she's not adjusting very well but we're hopeful."

"Let me know if you want me to come by and tell her about the fun parts."

"I'll do that."

"Love you."

"Love you too."

Hanging up, she shook her head fondly. "Sorry about that."

"It's okay." Jamie murmured. "I should go chop some more firewood. We're low."

She didn't say anything as he got up and trudged towards the barn. She figured there wasn't anything she could say that would put his mind at ease. He would just have to judge the situation for himself and make up his own mind. Hopefully though he chooses to stick by my mom. I know she would be
devastated if he skipped out on her.

Exhaling, she stood and brushed off the back of her jeans. *I wonder what the hell Damon is about to do now? His plans have a way of blowing up majorly in his face. As long as he doesn't end up needing my help—not sure I could get back to him in time. I wonder should I be more concerned about how Rebecca factors in?*

Frowning she headed back up to the house and inside, closing the screen door with a soft click. She wandered into the living room to find her mother and Caroline sitting on the couch, sucking idly at blood packets. Abby quickly hid hers when she walked in but she just waved a hand. Not like she hadn't seen and experienced worse.

"How are you doing?"

Abby wet her lips. "Honestly I'm not sure. This is a lot harder than I thought but Caroline has been wonderful help."

Bonnie smiled. "Yeah she's cool like that."

Caroline beamed. "What did Damon want?"

*Vampire hearing.* "You know Damon, he has some master plan in the works. Something about Rebecca and lumber—I don't know. But if he knows what is good for him he'll behave."

The blonde smirked happily. "I love it when you crack that whip on him." She grabbed up the other blood packets. "I'm gonna put these in the fridge for later."

"Do you really feel like Damon listens to you?" Abby inquired somberly.

"Yes." The pretty witch took a seat beside the other woman. "Why do you ask?"

She rubbed her face. "Becoming a vampire has opened my eyes to things. Half of the time I can't feel anything. It's like I'm blank on the inside but under that is anger, and the urge to lash out without consequence. I can't help but wonder if that's how it is for him too. And if so maybe he's not the best person for you to be around."

When the agitated sigh built in her chest Bonnie didn't attempt to stop it from escaping. She put her hands in her lap, entwining her fingers together so that she could rub her knuckles. Most of the people in her life—at one point or another—had felt the need to *warn* her about Damon. To gently guide her away from him for her own good. She understood that they were just trying to look out for her, but that didn't mean it wasn't annoying. Hearing it over and over again, from people who were no better sometimes made her want to scream.

"Damon has been a vampire for a long time." She crossed her legs at the ankles. "He has more self control than many of the people I know. I won't lie to you and say he's always been what he is now. There was a time when he terrified me; when I feared for my life every moment that I saw him. But I don't anymore and I haven't for such a long time."

Abby stared at her. "You said Emily linked you two together so that he wouldn't harm you. I just—I don't understand her reasoning."

"I didn't either." Her daughter whispered. "I hated it and *he* hated it but in the end it was the best thing to ever happen to us. You know I had to watch Caroline and Elena with their families and I tried not to be jealous but it was hard. Fruitless. And then Elena's parents died and I felt guilty for ever being jealous of her and her mom. Her parents died, she broke up with Matt and then there was
Stefan." She nibbled on the inside of her cheek. "The way he would look at her…like nothing else mattered. No one had ever looked at me like that. I was usually on the sidelines watching guys look at Caroline and Elena…even Vicki Donovan like that."

Silence.

"Then suddenly I'm connected to the man who tried to rip my throat out. We started sharing emotions and vivid dreams. He saved my life several times and I saved his too. Then Grams died and it was like my soul went with her. If it weren't for Damon I'm not sure I would have survived." She explained lowly. "Yes he's been a dick. Things have not been all sunshine and roses where we are concerned. At one point I severed our bond completely because he'd hurt me. But when he looks at me, it's like nothing else matters."

"But he's a vampire." Abby was up and pacing next. "Yeah he's older but he still craves blood just like I do. I mean I'm standing here and all I can think about is the way your heart is beating. Or Jamie's out in the yard. It's just blood blood blood on a constant loop inside my head. I'm scared of what I am capable of now."

Bonnie felt her heart break a little. "You're a newly made vampire; of course all you can think about is blood. It was the same for Caroline too but it does get better. You learn to control your urges." *I think I'll skip telling her about the mistakes she might make. It'll just bum her out.* "I get that you're trying to protect me but you don't have to worry about Damon. I'm safer with him than I am anywhere else in the world."

A flare of heat erupted in her chest and she shuddered, wrapping her fingers around the collar of her red blouse. It was like Damon knew she was talking about him and he was quite pleased. She was so used to their link that it was almost a part of her now and not something she dwelled on, so when it lit up behind her eyes to make itself known, it was like seeing a shooting star. The tinges warmed her bones and reminded her that no matter what, someone had her back.

Suddenly all she wanted to do was wrap her arms around Damon and buried her face into the hollow of his neck.

"Um, I hate to interrupt but…" Caroline meandered into the doorway. "I sort of need a favor."

Bonnie's mother nodded. "It's okay."

"What's up?" Bonnie rubbed at her tired green eyes.

The blonde looked beyond contrite. "Alaric. The ring that Alaric has been wearing that brings him back to life has apparently been making him crazy too. Elena didn't exactly give details but it's pretty bad. He's gotten dangerous."

"Of course he has because no one is just normal anymore. "So? I mean…I don't get it."

Caroline shrugged. "I guess she is hoping there is something we can do to stomp out this new dark Alaric. A spell or something."

Abby ran her fingers through her soft hair. "Actually it's not uncommon for this rift to happen, at least where magic is concerned I guess. There have been a few witches who have lost control when they turned to the darker arts. They became obsessed with their powers and started acting on their darkest impulses." For a second she stared off into space before shaking herself. "Anyway there's a spell that should restrain that part of your friend. I can tell you how to do it."

*I can't just have an entire day to myself anymore. If it's not Elena and her issues, it's those around*
her. Why do I always have to fix the mess? Why do they always assume I'll be willing? I wonder what they would do if I said no. If I just didn't give a fuck like that night at the bar. Man it is so tempting to do that right now. But Alaric has never done anything to me. I have no grudge against him. If anything he's just mixed up in this chaos just like I am.

Dragging her palms flat on her jean clad legs, Bonnie managed a little smile. "I guess we should get started then, huh?"

~*~

It was just a game, and with all games there had to be a winner and a loser. And Damon hated to lose.

True he'd had a small handicap what with not being able to seduce Rebecca into his bed for maximum effect, but in a way that just made things more interesting. Sage had not understood his loyalty to the girl I can smell all over you even though all she'd yammered on about was Finn this and Finn that. Whatever. Getting Rebecca nice and soft and doe eyed using just his clothed charm was one of his greatest accomplishments. Booze, blood and sexy music while making her feel wanted and appreciated and accepted had worked surprisingly well.

"We're all vampires here." He had whispered in her ear. "We understand each other in a way no one else can. I mean I love Bonnie but she doesn't really get it. She never will. But you do, don't you? You're one of the very first. You're magnificent in a way few can understand."

Pretty words and she had buckled, drunk until passing out seemed like the right course of action. Then Sage worked her mind mojo and boom, Rebecca's white oak tree hunt was out in the open. The only wood that could kill an Original and his family once owned it.

Long story short Sage was a two faced bitch for betraying him and ratting him out to Rebecca, not that he'd expected any less however. He needed his plan to be "revealed" so that they wouldn't suspect a thing when he and Stefan truly made a move against them.

Alaric is crazy but God bless him for making that Wickery Bridge sign out of the same white oak.

Now all they needed to do was turn the sign into something pointy and pick a target. Personally he wanted it to be Finn for the symmetry of the act but in truth he'd settle for any of the Originals.

"So you really think this could work?" Stefan asked, tapping his ringed finger against a soft couch cushion. "That this will finally let us kills Klaus?"

"I don't see why not." His brother replied as he poured himself a glass of whiskey. "We have the element of surprise. Rebecca thinks she burned all of the oak when she torched the bridge. All we have to do is come up with a suitable plan, get the Scoobie gang involved and pick a victim."

Stefan cracked his knuckles. "We have to be air tight with this. One mistake—one mistake—and it's all over."

Damon tilted his head to the side. "I understand that, brother. Which is why we are going to ask Alaric for help on the weapons front. Until we have them, mum's the word to all the little worker bees."

"Even Bonnie?"

"Especially Bonnie. I trust her but she's a bit...distracted at the moment. Mommy issues. After we have very sharp stakes we'll meet everyone somewhere out of the way and tell them the good news."
"Okay. " Stefan got up with a devious grin. "Let's get started."

~*~

The back of Bonnie's head was throbbing, sending small tendrils of pain around to her temples. Surprisingly however she didn't have it in her to be scared or angry that Klaus had kidnapped her. Sneaked up behind her, knocked her out and brought her back to Mystic Falls under the cover of darkness. In truth she was numb from the top of her head to the soles of her feet. It was hard to concentrate on her current situation when her mother had walked out on her. Again.

Except this time she'd left a letter trying to explain herself.

Bonnie had set it on fire and would have taken the kitchen with it had Jamie not been inside. She didn't understand why so much anguish was finding its way to her doorstep. Was she being punished for something she'd done in a past life? Was it simply bad luck? Was it supposed to be some grand lesson where in the end everything would be made clear? She doubted it. The truth of the matter was for some unexplained reason the only person that honestly loved her was the man who'd once tried to kill her.

Well my father loves me but he's almost never around. How lonely I would be without Damon?

"I've learned that parents often end up disappointing their children one way or another." Said a melodious British voice behind her. "You should not think of it as a slight against yourself. You're amazing."

"I hate you." She replied softly. "I once thought I would never hate anyone as much as I hated Katherine, but you've managed to surpass the disgust I carry for her."

Klaus put his hands on the back of the chair and leaned closer, his lips at her ear. "And yet you haven't killed me. I know you have the power." He stared at the side of her face. "Of course it would kill you as well, however once you were perfectly fine with sacrificing yourself for your friends. I wonder what has changed…"

She remained quiet so he continued, "Perhaps you just wish to stay alive so that you can stare into Damon's pretty baby blues. Or maybe your loyalties have shifted because of what happened to your mother. I wouldn't blame you. Your friends often do take you for granted."

Exhaling, she pushed off the sofa and moved over to a table. "At least I have friends."

He clasped his hands in front of him. "Bonnie, why do you insist on living this way? You're young and beautiful—you could own the world. For as lovely as I'm sure Damon is in the right light, he's not very powerful or big picture. I believe he was much more fun before he lost his edge. In any case you should be with someone who is not afraid to go after what they desire."

"Damon has no problems doing that." Dragging her fingers through her curly hair, she faced the Original. "Why don't you just go find another witch? There have to be more out there."

He nodded. "But none like you." Wetting his lips, he came closer. "Your mother is a fool for leaving you. For not taking the time to learn about the goddess you've become. My father didn't care much for me either. I tried to please him in every way I could think of and yet, nothing worked. The rift between us became so large that only his death would finally give me peace. You'd be surprised how liberating revenge can be."

Wrapping her arms around herself for some semblance of heat, she struggled to not let his words get to her. Why wasn't I enough to make Abby stay? I bet she would have stayed for Jamie. Why didn't
she love me? "What do you want from me? Why am I here?"

Klaus sighed. "I was hoping to change your mind about joining me, for starters. I also need your magnificent powers to unbind my family and I. This pesky business that my mother got us into is most inconvenient."

She frowned. "I—I don't know if I could even do that. Your mother is a very powerful witch."

"Yes." He admitted. "But she used your energy. I have complete faith in you of course."

Asshole. "And if I refuse?"

He caressed her cheek. "I'll be forced to kill someone you care about." When she doesn't say anything, he smiles. "You doubt me? Come I have something to show you." He wiggled his finger and waltzed out of the room.

Balling her hands into fists so tight that her nails cut into her palms, she slowly followed him out of the grand study. Their trip was short; he led her passed the ornate double staircase and out into the openness of a side room where a small fire burned in a beautiful fireplace. What she saw stopped her heart cold in her chest to the point where she was sure she was about to have a heart attack.

Strung up with rusty chains and bear traps was Damon, shirt open and leaking dark red blood all over the marble blood. His body was sagging; his wrists shredded by the traps' claws, his chest a patchwork of deep cuts and slashes.

"Oh my God." She nearly fell getting over to him. "Damon? Oh God, Damon!" There is so much blood!

He was obviously weak but he smiled anyway. "Knew you'd show up…to save me."

She cradled his face in her hands. "Ho—what are you doing here? How come I—I didn't know?"

"Shielding." He groaned. "Didn't want you involved."

Tears pooled in her eyes and raced down her cheeks. "I'm gonna get you out of here. I promise."

"You shouldn't make promises you can't keep." Rebecca mused. Her boot heels click-clacked as she sashayed into view. "Damon's been a bad boy and he must be punished."

Bonnie glared at her. "You did this to him? I should end you."

The blonde laughed. "Ooh I'm so scared."

It happened before she could reign herself in; the blast of power that hit Rebecca like a wrecking ball and sent her flying into the nearest wall with a loud thud. The plaster tumbled to the floor and the Original growled, pulling herself up on shaky legs.

"You stupid little bitch!" She screamed.

"Fuck you!" Bonnie yelled.

"I am going to rip your throat out!" Rebecca made a move for her but Klaus was suddenly in the way.

He tsked his sister. "There will be none of that. Bonnie has a spell to do after all."
Damon coughed. "What spell? Wh—whatever he wants, don't. Don't do it."

Rebecca picked a knife up off a side table. "If she doesn't I am going to carve your tongue out of your mouth." Using her super speed, she shoved Bonnie back into Klaus' arms and plunged the knife into Damon's stomach, twisting it harshly, making him cry out in pain.

"No!" Bonnie shrieked; Klaus' grip on her upper arms was so tight she was sure she would be bruised later.

Klaus hummed. "I would get to work, love. Rebecca can be quite creative when her feelings are hurt."

Fifteen minutes later—from amidst Damon's guttural screams—and the spell was done. The Originals were no longer linked together. For a brief minute Bonnie felt horrible for what she had done, but it passed quickly at the thought of Damon dying had she refused. She was exhausted to the point of sickness. **What I wouldn't give to be able to turn it all off right now.**

*Keep it together. Keep it together. Keep it together!* 

By the time she was done, Stefan had arrived and she was just too **tired** to wonder how he even knew what was going on. She half listened as he and Klaus ranted at each other about white oak stakes and Finn being dead. Klaus' opinion of himself was staggering. Naturally he thought that he was simply giving Stefan someone to hate. Someone to go after so that he wouldn't be at odds with his own brother. Each word out of his mouth made her want to put a hole through his head, not that it would go any good. No matter what they did they just couldn't seem to **beat** him.

She literally phased out the rest of their stupid conversation, only snapping back to attention when Rebecca released Damon, making him crash to the floor. Paying the pool of blood no mind, she knelt beside him to help keep him steady.

"What are you doing?" Klaus questioned.

His sister waved a hand. "This is ridiculous. I brought him here so I get to release him. My rules now." She looked to Stefan. "Bring us the remaining stakes and you both live. Take your brother as a sign of good faith and go."

~*~

Stretched out on his large king sized bed, Damon smoothed his hand up and down Bonnie's bare back repeatedly, listening to the sound of her soft breathing. After getting home, cleaning up and sucking down several blood bags, he'd made love to her though honestly he wasn't certain if it was for her benefit of his own. He had just **needed** to be as close to her as possible, and he got the distinct impression that she needed the same thing. She was hanging on by a loose thread so whatever he could do to help her, he'd do it.

Including **hunting down her fuck wit mother and ripping her heart out if it's what she wanted. Granted I haven't been the best brother to Stefan but seriously, ditching her daughter for a second time? Did she just not give a fuck how that would hurt her? Had she already flipped the switch or was she just being selfish?**

**Probably a bit of both.** "Do you wish you'd never met me?"

Bonnie opened her eyes slowly. "What? No. Why would you ask me that?"

He shrugged and slipped his free hand behind his head against the pillow. "Well shit started to go
south around the time Stefan and I returned to Mystic Falls. It really hasn't stopped sliding since we showed up."

She dug her nails into his naked chest lightly, pressing her cheek firmly down above his heart. "I don't think any of that matters anymore. Everything that has occurred was most likely put into motion the moment Elena was born. Not saying it's her fault since she has no control over that but...you know." She kissed his nipple. "I'm way past wishing we'd never met. If it weren't for you I'd have no one."

He almost winced because that was fucked up. *Damon Salvatore, dependable. It's like we're in an alternate universe.* "Yeah well, you'll always have me." *If no one accidentally kills the Original my bloodline is made from.* "When this bullshit is taken care of we'll go somewhere. Blow off some steam."

Idly her fingers traced invisible designs into his skin. "Like we did at the bar?"

"If that's what you want." *Might be good to go a little crazy for a while.*

She nodded slowly. "It is. I want to not have to worry about anything or anyone except you." Pause. "I feel like I'm coiled so tightly that I could snap at any second. Nothing makes sense anymore. My mom ditched me without even attempting to let me help her. It makes me wish she had just let herself die. She sacrificed everything to lead Mikael away from Elena when we were younger but couldn't be bothered to stick around for her own kid. What is it about me that isn't good enough?"

His icy blue eyes flashed with ager. "Are you kidding me? You're more than enough—she's just a stupid idiot. Her issues are hers alone. She's a coward baby, plain and simple."

"I wasn't enough for you in the beginning. You wanted Elena and Katherine." She reminded him, her voice oddly void of emotion. *Not my finest hour.* "I was an idiot then too. The Katherine shit was like ingrained into my brain since the moment I met her, and the Elena stuff was just some weird kinda transference. Thankfully I came to my senses." He kissed the top of her head. "I have more with you than I ever had with Katherine...than I've ever had with anyone. I couldn't have this with anyone else. You are just for me."

"I like the sound of that." She snuggled closer. "Us against the world."

"Let's take care of Klaus and his fucked up kin first." He smirked a little. "Then we'll start on the rest of the world."

~Fin~
The In-Between

Chapter Summary

No matter what happens, they both know it's love.

Chapter Notes

This update is a mash up of episodes 3.19 (Heart of Darkness), 3.20 (Do Not Go Gentle) and 3.21 (Before Sunset).

The In-Between

"You didn't have to come you know. This was a pretty standard sort of mission."

Bonnie pushed her black hair out of her face and glanced to her boyfriend. She knew he meant well and that as always he was trying to look out for her, but sometimes he could be selectively obtuse with certain situations. Damon wasn't stupid by any means; he was just being blank to test the waters and see if there were any rough waves on the horizon.

"Right. I should have just chilled at home watching bad tv while my boyfriend and my best friend jetted off to parts unknown." She rolled her eyes playfully. "With ample time to stare longing at each other."

He snorted. "Denver is hardly parts unknown. And the only person I stare longingly at is you…but not lately cause you put out now."

She hit his shoulder with her tiny fist. "Ha ha. Don't forget who saved your ass from Kol earlier."

He slung his arm around her shoulders and kissed her noisily on the cheek. "I don't. I'm just saying if you were worried about Elena and I falling into each others' arms, you're kinda stupid. I only fall into your arms."

Bonnie smiled; she couldn't help herself. "It better stay that way."

In truth Bonnie understood that she had nothing to worry about on Damon's end. He was hers and he wasn't going anywhere. Well he wasn't going to leave her for her friend—he could still die if Klaus had his way but she didn't wanna think about that. Yet when she'd found out about the trip to Denver to get Jeremy to talk to the recently deceased vampire Rose, she had not seen a reason to stay behind in Mystic Falls and do nothing. It wasn't like she could help Stefan get the location of the final white oak stake out of Alaric, and she honestly wasn't in the mood to decorate for another silly dance with Caroline and Matt. So tagging along just made sense—besides what if they needed her to kick some Original ass?

Naturally Elena welcomed her with open arms…not that she had much of a choice. They were in a weird place and in all truthfulness she hated it. Elena Gilbert used to be the one person she could
always confide in about anything. She was the first friend she had ever made. They had a bond and it really sucked that she was not sure if it still existed. Not talking about the elephant in the room was stupid but safer. Whenever she considered airing all of her pent up emotions it just seemed easier to fake it. The scary thing was that since turning her emotions off once, it was frighteningly easy now not to give a shit.

Elena did talk to her however, mostly about Stefan and her unresolved feelings for him. After all they had been through she was in love with him even now, and Bonnie was sure he felt the same way. But there was all this other shit in the way. Klaus, the fear that all vampires would be wiped out if all of the Originals died, whatever she had locked up inside where Damon was concerned—Stefan felt they shouldn't think too deeply about their feelings until all of their issues were fixed. He was a smart guy, that one.

_I can help him with the Original stuff but only Elena can make herself not feel anything for Damon. Maybe she already has. What's the point in lusting after someone forever if you know you'll never have them? This isn't some fun crush on a celebrity type deal, it's real life. If she is still into him she can't feel too good seeing us together._

_That should make me upset—realizing that she could be hurting but I swear I don't have it in me to care right now._

_I think I'm broken._

The cool night air stirred again and she shivered, pulling her gray sweater tighter around her small frame. Damon closed the space between them and wrapped his arms around her waist, resting his cheek to the side of her head. His black shirt was unbuttoned, the two sides open but he didn't seem to feel the cold at all. He was warm against her, his thumbs rubbing soothing circles on the back of her hands. He didn't say anything but she knew he was thinking, wondering if things would ever be normal again. She didn't think they would be.

A part of her hated that she loved Damon so much. That he fit this slot in her life—the slot she'd always imagined would remain empty until she went to college or whatever. He was rude, cocky, and belligerent at the best of times, downright psycho at others but she loved him anyway. She accepted his faults because he did the same with hers. She wasn't a saint by any means but he never made fun of her or asked her to change, except to be more carefree and that wasn't a bad thing. Everyone should learn to kick back and have fun.

It just sucked that meeting him and being with him had also brought some of the most painful moments into her life as well. However she could push them aside because he took care of her and let her see the side of him that he hid from the rest of the world. And he was pretty awesome, though she wouldn't tell him that. His ego _did not_ need to get any bigger.

With all the Katherine/Elena shit aside, their relationship was pretty damn wonderful. Under other circumstances they'd probably be some type of power couple. Yes she had suffered because of him but all of those experiences just made what they had more magnificent. And she knew that he wanted her not because she was a sexy vampire or because she had the face of a long lost love, but because she was simply herself. Bonnie Bennett the teenage witch.

Anyway they were staying in some flea infested motel for the night because things hadn't gone according to plan. What was supposed to be a simple trip to talk to Jeremy had turned into stabbing Kol and then melting Kol's brain when he had attempted to beat Damon down in the house of the vampire who made Rose. Kol had killed her and was now pretty sure they could never find out which line the Salvatores came from. _And that's just bullshit. Man the Originals can be dumb sometimes. It's like Elijah is the only smart one._
Obviously they just had to attack things from a different angle. Moving on though, after getting themselves together and listening to Kol snark his way out, they'd returned to their motel to wait for their flight out in the morning. Jeremy was currently sharing a room with Elena; everyone felt it would be safer for him to return to Mystic Falls.

*He should have just stayed there in the first place. Compelling him to leave did nothing to keep him safe. If I pointed that out though I'd be a bitch.*

Rolling her eyes, she looked off into the distance as a dog barked and cars continued on the highway. She fiddled with the necklace around her neck and exhaled, rubbing the end of her nose against Damon's chin. "Aren't you cold?"

"Not really." He said idly. "Kinda feeling the need for a serious shower though. This place needs to be blacklighted."

She made a face. "Well I was a little sleepy but that's totally over. I'd rather sleep in the car now."

He chuckled. "Hey I'm sure the sheets and shit are clean. We could sue if we get syphilis or something."

His words didn't inspire any confidence in her. "Maybe I'll just sleep on top of you. You're a vampire; diseases don't translate where you are concerned."

He nipped at her earlobe. "Using me as a shield…that's how I know it's love."

She giggled and turned in his arms, leaning back against the railing. "Is that the only way you know it's love?"

Damon smirked—his favorite facial expression—and smoothed his hands down to her hips and then around to her ass. He squeezed and lifted her easily, balancing her precariously on the inch wide railing, letting her heels dig into the back of her thighs. "Not the only way but it's up there. Definitely top three. Number two would be the way you react when I do this…" He dipped down and sucked at the spot underneath her ear, grinning when she shivered and made a light squeaky noise.

"What's number one?" She gazed up at him with hooded eyes, the usually bright green swallowed up dark pupil.

"We'd have to be alone for me to demonstrate that." His voice slid low and velvety soft. "I'll give you a preview though."

And then he was kissing her like he wanted to burn her up with one hand steadying her waist and the other slipping under her shirt. His fingertips were freezing when they pushed up her bra and tweaked a nipple, making her moan and press forward, trying to get closer. Her thighs gripped his waist tight; knowing that he wouldn't let her fall she thrust her hands into his hair and just held on. There was something so intensely sexy about Damon just completely overwhelming her in a matter of minutes. Of him just kissing her until she was gasping but unwilling to pull away for air.

His tongue was caressing and rubbing slowly in a way that made her toes curl in her sneakers when someone cleared their throat behind them. Damon pulled back a little with flushed cheeks, turning to see Elena leaning out of the doorway of her room, clutching the sides of her long sleeved shirt together. Her eyes were three sizes too big yet it appeared as if she were trying to look anywhere but at them.

*Maybe that's because his hand is still fondling your boob. Licking her lips, Bonnie gently removed his hand and righted her clothes. "Yeah?"*
Elena blushed. "Rose is back again. She—she's asking for you Damon."

Arching a brow, he shrugged. "Wonder if she wants to tell me how gorgeous I am again?" Pecking Bonnie's cheek he went about buttoning his shirt as he strolled towards the room.

Elena favored him with a small smile and drifted out of the way, crossing to stand beside Bonnie. She was quiet for a second before breaking into a wide grin. "Right out here in the open huh?"

Bonnie chewed on her bottom lip as she blushed. "It started as an innocent conversation."

"I'm sure it did." A laugh. "Just like the time we caught Caroline and that one guy in the AV closet."

"Hey at least I still had my pants on!"

"For now. So interesting trip, huh?"

The witch nodded. "Yeah. I think it beats that year we went camping with your folks and a stray dog stole your dad's lunch."

The brunette laughed softly. "That was so funny though. I thought I would die laughing when he was chasing it around trying to get the bag out of its mouth." She shook her head. "Like, just let the dog go. Who'd want anything that had been in its mouth?"

True. "I'm sure it was the principle of the thing. I'm just glad it wasn't a bear."

"Me too." Elena murmured. "We probably would have gotten eaten, especially since you hadn't discovered your awesome powers yet."

Her friend smiled, brushing a hand across her cheek. "Maybe they would have kicked in because of the adrenaline."

"Yeah I could see that happening." Wetting her lips, she leaned against the small white railing. "You know I really miss you."

I guess it is about time we did this. Completely. "I know. But with everything going on I haven't had time for anything."

"Except Damon." Elena remarkeed though not maliciously. "I know you're still mad at me for kissing him and I don't blame you. I still feel horrible about it and—and I'm glad because it was a horrible thing to do to my best friend. I just—at the time I wasn't thinking straight." Swallowing thickly, she continued. "And then your mom died and everything just got so messed up."

"Yeah." Bonnie whispered. "You know it hasn't been easy, feeling like I couldn't talk to you. I'm so used to telling you everything or having your support. But as much as I wanted to cry on your shoulder...I also wanted to hit you. Try as I might I can't help but blame you a little for what Kol did to Abby."

Sniffing, Elena wiped at her big brown eyes. "I totally get that. It's my fault she's dead. People keep telling me that it's not true but it is. Rebecca was going to kill me unless you or your mother died." She reached out and grabbed Bonnie's hands. "But you have to know I would have gladly died if it meant sparing you this pain you've been in. I owe you so, so much. God, I love you so much Bonnie. I have a shitty way of showing it lately but I do."

"I know you do." Bonnie squeezed her fingers. "Deep down I think I even understood that you weren't trying to steal Damon away." Deep, deep down. "That you wanted to feel safe and he did
that for you. But on the surface it was a total violation of trust."

The brunette bit the inside of her cheek. "You can be mad at me for as long as you want. I deserve it. I want you to know however that no matter what happens, I'm here for you. If you wanna yell at me or slap me you can. I'll take my licks as long as we're still friends in the morning." Pause. "Without you all of us would be dead by now. Stefan and Damon are strong, and I talk a good game, but you're the one with the real power. We all get that."

Funny enough I've never felt like you did. Not in the way it's supposed to mean anyway. It's good to hear that others realize how much I am the glue that holds everything together. "Thank you. It means a lot to me to hear you say that."

Seemingly unable to control herself, Elena lunged at her and pulled her into a tight hug. Bonnie allowed it.

Their problems were far from over, it would take time to mend their fractured relationship and for Bonnie to be one hundred percent convinced that Elena did not want Damon. Perhaps this was a good way to start however. It wasn't like they could remain in some sort of limbo forever. Maybe when all was said and done they'd be back on the same carefree level of friends again. And if not well, there would be an important decision for her to make. Which did she need more in her life; her best friend or the man she loved?

~*~

Damon really didn't understand the point of high school dances. He understood parties and raves and the fancy stuff, but school dances where you paid for tickets and shit sort of went right over his head. But that was probably because he was from another time when that kinda thing didn't exist. Still he realized that he was dating a high school girl and that he would have to take her, unless she didn't want to go. Honestly Bonnie didn't seem too enthused but Caroline wasn't taking no for an answer. So yeah, he was worried about his little witch and it had nothing to do with Elena or Klaus. Well mostly nothing to do with Klaus. While the stupid Original still liked to bother her and flirt with her, he'd been rather low key lately. Probably all that business with the white oak stakes and his budding whatever for Caroline. I understand that even less than I do high school dances. Anyway though Bonnie wasn't her usual perky self. If she wasn't sulking about her mother leaving, she was staring off into space with seriously deep thoughts. He had a feeling she was standing on the edge of a knife trying to decide if she wanted to jump or not.

Naturally if she did he would be right behind her. Sometimes a person didn't need you to save them, they needed you to fall with them, and he could do that for her.

He knew that she wanted to shut off again. Of course whenever she asked he would help—he wasn't sure why she was holding out. Maybe it scared her, and that he did get. Humans basically were their emotions. The only people who felt nothing were sociopaths.

She wasn't exactly confiding in him, not that he needed her to when he already knew the deal. He just liked it. I'm such a chick. Abby skipping out again had crushed a part of her that she probably hadn't even realized existed. He could relate because even though his father was an asshole most of the time, he was still his father and his death hit him hard in the chest. No doubt Abby leaving for a second time fucked with her head in ways she hadn't even imagined.

It was enough to make him wanna track the bitch down and drag her back to town. Not to mention that her father was none the wiser to the situation, and out of town. Again. With the way things were going, Damon fully understood that he was all Bonnie had. Yes she had Caroline and Elena, but
they each had their own issues as well. And there was that thing with Elena that was even now on some sort of shaky ground. Besides he liked being there for her.

The gym was beautifully decorated for the era and although he wasn't personally dressed like someone out of an Alec Baldwin movie, he was impressed with those that were. But where in the hell did people find flapper dressers from? Seriously no matter the occasion, the teenagers of Mystic Falls always dressed accordingly. Yeah he had a lot of old shit in their attic just like Stefan but he was also a vampire who'd lived through all those decades. What were the humans' excuses?

*I'll bet the costume shop in this town is making thousands.*

Stefan and Elena were at the dance, and he was happy for them. Well he wouldn't say he was happy but he was glad that his brother wasn't drowning in his plot for revenge anymore. Did he buy his sudden change of heart? Eh a little bit. He could get saying *fuck it* if nothing you did ever worked out. However he didn't trust himself completely to be with Elena again for whatever reason. The whole blood deal—he wasn't exactly a pillar of self control in that respect yet. There was a good chance he would never be which sucked because rabbit blood just didn't make you strong like they needed to be.

He would find his own path though. Stefan always did.

Right now they were focusing on finding out who sired their line. With their luck it would be Klaus. Or Rebecca. Honestly he didn't know which he hated worse. Probably Klaus; sure Barbie vamp had tortured him but Klaus was so much worse. Klaus wanted Bonnie and world domination, two things that were rightfully *his*. So they had to find another lead. Scary Mary was dead but there was nothing stopping Jeremy from possibly contacting her. If all he needed was a connection, well, Damon knew how she liked having her hair pulled during sex. Nothing said *I once knew her* better than I've seen her naked.

He was kinda slutty in the past so sue him. There was nothing else to do before the invention of the television.

Shaking his head, he blinked slowly and folded his arms over his black shirt. Bonnie looked gorgeous in her 1920s outfit; it kinda made him wanna role play and see her in nothing but that feathered boa. She and Caroline—who actually looked pretty hot in red—were over by the refreshment table talking about something. Maybe she was filling her in on their trip to Denver. His brother and Elena were out on the dance floor, swaying to the sounds of soft jazz.

"Hey. You're Damon, right?"

Arching a brow, he glanced to his right. "Yeah. And you're the kid Abby adopted instead of coming back to take care of her daughter. Johnny?"

Jamie managed a smile. "Jamie." Pause. "I uh, just wanted to say hey."

"Why?" Damon tilted his head to the side. "I was told you weren't too keen on vampires."

The other guy nodded. "I'm not. I mean I was going to be there for Abby but…whatever. I just—with Abby gone Bonnie is kinda my only link to her. So I wanna hang out and stuff if that is okay with her."

*Heh.* "I'm sure it will be. Bonnie's sweet like that."

Jamie adjusted his hat. "Yeah she's a cool girl. For what it's worth I think what Abby did was horrible."
That's one word for it. "We all react differently to the change. I'm guessing she didn't trust herself around people anymore. She might come back when she's learned some self control."

"That would be nice." He sighed deeply. "Anyway I just thought I would say hello so that if you saw me talking to Bonnie you wouldn't rip my throat out."

Damon flashed a toothy grin. "My self esteem is not so low that I'd kill someone just for talking to my girl. I have killed for less but Bon-Bon tends to frown on that kinda thing."

Jamie snickered. "So it would be okay if I asked her to dance?"

The vampire considered his request. "Why not? Just keep your hands where I can see them."

"Yes sir." Saluting him, he moved through the crowd towards Bonnie and Caroline.

Snorting, Damon cracked his knuckles and headed out of the gym with his hands shoved into his pockets. He wasn't going to lie and pretend watching them wasn't going to make him jealous, even when he knew it was utterly harmless. So he was going to just step outside for a few to keep himself from massacring anyone.

Look how proactive I'm being.

~ ~

Slouched in the front seat of Damon's car the next morning with blood crusted onto the side of her neck, Bonnie rubbed her aching head. She couldn't remember anything from the previous night beyond Esther trapping all non humans inside the school so that they would be sitting ducks when dark Alaric showed up to kill them. She remembered doing a spell to break the salt line so that Damon and Stefan could help Elena—she'd went with Esther to keep everyone safe and ended up helping the older witch turn Alaric into a super vampire. He'd regained some part of himself however at the last minute and killed Esther, then decided not to complete his transition.

After seeing him one last time, she'd—she'd let Jamie drive her home so that she could change and wait for Damon to come fill her in. The next thing she knew she was waking up in a dirty crypt with Damon forcing his blood into her to heal her apparent self inflicted injuries. Not to mention the gaping hole in her neck.

What the fuck happened to me last night? I didn't even change clothes.

"I'm sorry if I hurt you." She said softly. "I don't—I don't remember any of it."

"I'm fine." He said curtly, pulling up before Elena's home. "C'mon, we have to tell the others what's going on."

"Are you mad at me?" She asked as he got out and came around to her side.

Damon's jaw clenched and he pulled her out of the vehicle, holding her against him when she swayed. "I'm not mad I'm just…waking up to find you half dead is not the way I thought I was going to start my morning. I don't care if you did your mind thing on me—I'm fine. You're not."

Bonnie let him lead her to the front door. "I'm okay, just a little weak and dizzy."

He frowned at her. "Do you know how close you came to not being okay? Jesus, Bonnie. Alaric almost killed you! If I hadn't come to when I did, you would have bled out." Exhaling deeply, he rang the doorbell. "From now on I want you to keep some of my blood in your system at all times."
She opened her mouth to argue that point when the door opened and a surprised looking Stefan gaped at them.

Damon pursed his lips. "We have a problem."

Stefan blinked. "What happened?"

Easing Bonnie into the kitchen and into a chair, Damon looked at his brother. "Alaric is now a vampire. He turned."

"What do you mean he turned?" Stefan inquired. He filled a dishcloth with ice and then handed it to Bonnie. "I thought you were standing guard."

"Don't blame me. Blame Bonnie the blood bank. She fed him." Damon drifted over to the island with a scowl.

And he says he isn't mad. "I had no idea what was happening, okay? The witches led me there. They wanted him to feed so that he could turn."

Nodding slowly, Stefan put his hands on his hips. "So where's the stake now?"

"Oh you mean the white oak one? The one that can kill an Original and wipe out an entire line of vampires?" He leaned over the back of a chair into his girlfriend's space. "We don't know."

Growling, Bonnie met his stare defiantly. "If you are so upset with me why did you feed me your blood to save my life?"

His brows drew together tightly. "Like you even have to ask that question. Don't be stupid—you know why I saved you. Why I'll always save you." He dragged a hand through his hair. "I'm the one who does stupid things like letting my friend die with dignity instead of just killing him."

Stefan smoothed his fingers over his face, perturbed. "Alright so how do we kill him now?"

God, my head... "I've been trying to figure that out. A witch can't truly make an immortal creature, there is always a way to undo a spell."

Her boyfriend snorted. "So what's the witchy work around?"

Good question. "That's the problem, I don't know."

Clearly that was not the answer either Salvatore was looking for. Bonnie groaned and stood, making her way into the downstairs bathroom so that she could finish cleaning her neck. She glared at the holes and rummaged in the medicine cabinet, taking down a bottle of peroxide and cotton balls. As she was dabbing at them until they nothing more than pin pricks, she heard the doorbell chime. She wasn't really in the mood for anymore drama. Hell Elena didn't even know what was going on yet. She should really go upstairs and fill her in. Though she had a feeling he was hiding behind that so that he wouldn't have to deal with the fact that she could have...died. It's not something I want to think about either.

I'm gonna have to do something really special for him to take his mind off everything.

Walking back towards the kitchen and dining room, she quickly cottoned on that something was wrong. Both Salvatores had major frowny face going on. "What's going on?"
Damon looked out the window. "Klaus wants in. We have to keep him out." He smiled at her a little, then jerked and hit the deck. "Ah, duck!"

Before she could grasp what was going on, Stefan grabbed her and they both crashed to the floor together as *something* flew through the window violently, shattering the glass and blinds into jagged pieces.

"I think you're probably going to want to let me in!" Klaus yelled.

"What the hell is going on?" Jeremy shouted as he ran downstairs.

"Into the kitchen. C'mon." Stefan hauled Bonnie up. "Elena's car is gone."

*Great. That's all we need.* "Why wouldn't she tell anyone where she was going?"

Nobody got a chance to answer because seconds later a blue and white ball burst through the closed wooden door, nearly putting someone's eye out. It hit the counter with a loud thud, sending the bowl of fruit tumbling to the floor. Klaus stalked onto the porch with pieces of a white fence in his hands, which he then began to hurl inside like javelins. He used so much force that they embedded in the walls. Naturally Damon had to antagonize him as well, ripping out the stakes and launching them back with just as much speed.

"Damon be careful!" Bonnie shrieked, hiding behind the counter with Jeremy.

In the end it was Stefan's phone ringing that stopped everything.

*Alaric has Elena and Caroline, and he wants Klaus or they both die. It's gonna be one of those days apparently.*

Leaving the vampires to work out some type of plan, she hurried upstairs to borrow some of her friend's clothes. As she was pulling on a red tank top an idea hit her like a ton of bricks. Mikael. He had been chained away for years by her mother. Maybe she could get the spell and do the same to Alaric. Hell it was worth a shot. Not like they had many other options.

~*~

No one could say that Damon didn't have a damn good poker face. Lounging on one of his comfortable sofas in his expansive living room, he watched Bonnie pace from one side of the floor to the other as if he didn't have a care in the world. As if he wasn't fucken raging inside over the memory of her lying cold and pale on the blood stained ground in a puddle of bright red. He'd almost thought it was too late at first; that was how *still* she had been. But thankfully her heart was strong. Even weakly beating it refused to just give up.

*It's a good thing the Alaric I knew is gone. Now I don't have to feel guilt over wanting to rip his goddamn head off. And what the fuck is up with those witches? They're supposed to be protecting their descendents, not driving her into situations where she could lose her life. Would they really sacrifice her just to rid the world of all vampires? Or was it just Esther pulling the strings?*

And now. And *now* they had to team up with stupid ass Klaus because they needed whatever strength they could get. *I should be the Original. I should be the strongest.*

The tiny clock on the mantle dinged and Damon sighed. Noon already. They had until sundown to put their master plan into action. "Well this is promising."

Bonnie rolled her eyes. "Relax. Abby will be here."
He shook his head. "I'm sorry. I forgot about her stellar track record in the dependability department."

The witch continued to pace. "Jamie said she was coming, okay? Just…give her time."

"We don't have time, cupcake." He tapped his fingers against his denim clad legs. "C'mere."

She looked at him. "Why? So you can emote angrily at me some more?" Laying her cell on the coffee table, she sat down beside him.

Smirking, he combed his fingers through her hair. "You want me to apologize for caring about you? Yeah not gonna happen."

"Damon, you know that is not what this is about. I love that you care about me. But really, it's not like I had any control over what happened last night. I didn't intentionally put myself into that kind of danger."

"I know. But as the dysfunctional one here I'm allowed to be pissed off. You know how it feels to come close to losing someone you love. I've almost died…"

"It scares the hell outta you."

"Right."

Shifting, she cuddled up to him, rubbing his chest. "I'm right here, Damon. I'm not going anywhere."

He kissed the top of her head. "Can you promise me that?"

Bonnie was quiet for a long set of minutes before speaking, "Yes. I can."

He honestly did not know what to make of that, but he had no problems taking it at face value. "I believe you."

"Do you really want me to always have your blood in my system?" She inquired lowly. "If I die, I'd come back but I wouldn't be a witch anymore. And let's face it, our little rag tag crew needs a witch."

"We need you more. I need you more." He said easily. "I'd take you as a vampire over dead any day. I know you don't want to be one but, tough. You can basically never die."

Several moments passed of them just sitting on the couch tangled together before the bell dinged to alert that their visitor had finally arrived. Bonnie reluctantly got up and opened the door, letting her mother inside after a few brisk words.

Damon fixed himself a glass of blood. "Let's get this show on the road, shall we? Alaric isn't going to desiccate himself."

~*~

I have the power to stop a heart from beating. A human heart. I literally held the power of life and death today. And God did it feel extraordinary! The power rushing through my veins; feeling Klaus as he slowly shriveled up like a drying husk.

Abby was wrong—as usual. I think I handled it just fine. Jeremy is still alive and we are now living in a Klaus free world! I don't feel too tempted. I mean sure I could always use more power. It helps me to keep the people I love safe. And besides I'm going to need to take out Alaric soon. I wonder if I get enough power could I do it without stopping a human heart…
Snapping back to attention and to the chatter in Elena's kitchen, Bonnie watched as her friend moved inside slowly. While Caroline explained that their gathering was a victory party now for being free of Klaus, she hurried to the front door.

"Hey!" She called out. "Not even gonna say good-bye?"

Damon grinned and thumbed to the SUV. "Not like I'm leaving for good. We're just gonna dump Klaus into the Atlantic Ocean and hope he stays there forever."

She nodded and jogged up to him. "Be careful, yeah? And come by my place when you get back. I'm still majorly wired and I wanna work off some of my energy. Naked."

He cupped her face with his hands and kissed her. "Sounds good to me. Stay inside. We don't need Alaric trying to use you as bait or whatever." And then he was whispering into her ear, "I'm gonna ruin you later."

She giggled. "I'm holding you to that." Squeezing his waist, she waved as he crossed to the passenger side of the SUV and climbed in.

Exhaling deeply, she smiled and turned to slowly go back inside. For the first time in a long time—even with crazy vampire killer Alaric on the loose—she felt like things were looking up. Klaus was gone and all of her friends fine.

Perhaps things were finally settling down. Only tomorrow would truly tell.

~Fin~
Bonnie couldn't tell him why she wanted to go, just that she wanted to. And Damon wouldn't tell her no.

This bit is AU from 3.22 (The Departed) because, well, things happened in the episode that I didn't want to tackle/deal with until October when the show returns haha.

Leaving, Now

Bonnie had never been anywhere that she would call amazing. She had never been out of the country before but it was on her list of things to do before she died. However with the emergence of vampires and the idea that you could live forever, she didn't exactly stress dying as much as she had in the past. She didn't want to die or become a vampire because she liked being a witch, but in the grand scheme of things it was the better option than being in the ground forever. If she had to she would cope with it.

Life was about change after all and she'd been through a few since finding out she was a witch. From victim to most powerful; she had run the gambit and came out on the other side better for it. She could do things that no one else could do. She could hold life in the palm of her hand and shift the destiny of those she loved. And it wasn't hard to make those sorts of decisions anymore. She didn't have to agonize over what to do when the alternative was death. She would choose life every single time.

That is why when she had looked into Klaus' dead, desiccated eyes she'd realized no matter how much she hated him and wanted him dead, she couldn't take that chance. She couldn't let Alaric kill him because there was a tiny chance people she loved would die as well. She cared nothing about Katherine or any of the other vampires she'd turned, but the Salvatores and Caroline were her family. Maybe even Tyler to a lesser extent. In any case it was a 50/50 draw and she did not like those odds.

Besides if everyone around her could do things for someone else's own good without telling them then why couldn't she? They were safe for now so what did it matter?

Is Tyler safe? And what would Caroline say if she knew the truth?

Groaning, she ran both hands through her hair and glanced out of the SUV window. In order to "save" Klaus she had put his essence or whatever into Tyler—his soul—if vampires in fact had one. Tyler was fine just not in control anymore. Kinda like how Alaric had been once upon a time. It was a temporary fix until they found Klaus another body to inhabit but it also kept the vampires of his bloodline alive. Sure it wasn't optimal but it wasn't like she'd had a lot of time or resources at her disposal. Alaric was on the loose ready to kill any Original he came across and no one had any idea what to do that didn't involve killing Elena to stop him. Getting close to him so that she could stop
his heart was out of the question.

He needed to get rid of Klaus to have some sort of victory. Now Klaus was dead and he was off hunting Rebecca and Elijah for the time being. Eventually the truth would come out but hopefully by then someone would have a master plan. Until then those she loved were safe and she could focus on staying calm and thinking about something other than power.

Or only about power.

Wetting her lips, she got out of the truck and leaned against it, watching as the counter on the gas tank ticked higher and higher. Damon was inside the convenience store grabbing bags of junk food for their trip. Neither of them had a set destination in mind, they both just wanted to get out of Mystic Falls for a while. When she'd suggested it she was sure he'd say no but he'd surprised her. He often did that.

So here they were, leaving behind Elena and Stefan and everyone else they knew for adventure and some much needed alone time.

*Let's see how long we can go without something fucked up happening to us.*

Yes. Yes there was a little voice inside her head telling her to spill everything to Damon because he would understand. He wouldn't like it by any means but he would get it because he was the type to put it all on the line or do something underhanded when it came to protecting those he cared about. He would see the need to keep Klaus alive even though he was a murdering asshole who sometimes wanted to get into her pants. Dick or not he was apparently the originator of the Salvatore line.

*Why couldn't it have been Elijah? As far as insane vampires go he has always been the most humble besides Finn. Why couldn't our luck be that good just once?*

Shoving her hand into the pocket of her jeans, she yawned and rubbed her eyes with the heel of her other hand. The night air was chilly but comfortable and she was mellowed out. It was hard not to think about stuff but she knew Klaus-Tyler would lay low until they figured out the next step in the plan. Everyone thought Tyler was dead anyway, and unless Klaus showed himself they would continue to believe that. Not that she gave a shit. She wouldn't even be around if he did.

*I'm going to start looking out for myself for a little while. I've played their games and conformed to their rules so now I am going to make my own. If they can't survive a few weeks or whatever without their trusty witch around then that is their fault. I never said I wanted to save the world.*

Klaus had reminded her that the spirits would be angry but she didn't care. They had brought nothing but pain and destruction into her life aside from her bond with Damon. They used her whenever they saw fit like she was a pawn in their supernatural chess game. They possessed her, let her be fed on and violated against her will and then left her for dead. If it hadn't been for Damon she most likely would have bleed to death on the cold ground of a crypt. So why should she give a fuck about them when she was nothing more to them a vessel they could manipulate? Besides they were dead and she wasn't. There wasn't anything they could really do to her from the other side.

In spite of everything she had done for her friends she'd been quite honest with Klaus in their short meeting. She was tired of everyone pushing her around or making demands on her without asking how she felt about them. They just expected it and while she was happy to help, she didn't appreciate being taken for granted either. She'd let it go on for far too long earlier with Damon and only when he realized she was serious about leaving his ass had he changed his tune.

Of course Bonnie realized they didn't mean any real harm. When a thousand year old vampire was
threatening to rip your throat out you did not think straight and you turned to whatever source that would help. Still there came a time when even the most placid person would get fed up.

And her time was now.

The bell over the door dinged as Damon strolled out carrying a white plastic bag. He was all swagger and indifference, jiggling his keys in his hand as he made his way over to her. He opened the passenger side door and tossed the bag into the backseat, then looked slowly around the area.

"What did you buy?" Bonnie asked.

He grinned. "The usual; sodas, chips, condoms."

She giggled a little. "One of which we don't need. I'd rather have lemonade."

He tutted and pressed her back up against his truck. "You're funny. The clerk told me there is a nice cozy Bed and Breakfast a few miles down the road. They are usually booked up but I'm sure I can convince them to give us a room." He wrapped his arms around her waist. "However we should probably not mention that you're a minor. Unless you wanna pretend I'm your English teacher or something to really screw with their heads."

She laughed lightly. "No! We'd probably end up on the news or something and that isn't something either of us need. Not to mention my dad would see it and blow a freaken gasket. I had to spin a decent web to get him to let me go with you in the first place. Not that I should even need to considering how he's still away on business. I honestly don't think he gives a shit one way or another." Pause. "We could tell them we're married…"

Damon made a face. "I can afford a vehicle like this but I didn't get you a giant ring? That would make me look like an ass."

"I doubt that is something they'll be looking for." She shrugged her small shoulders. "We'll probably get more flack for being interracial if there is flack at all."

"Ah right. I often forget about that because of the whole interspecies thing." He rubbed her arms soothingly. "Wouldn't that be something? Good old fashioned normal bigotry instead of what we've been dealing with."

Bonnie smiled softly and rested her forehead to his chest. "Let's pretend to be married. I just wanna have some fun while we're away. I wanna forget all the bullshit we've been through."

His expression softened and he kissed the top of her head. "And we will. We'll see stupid tourist stuff and party all night long with people we don't know who think we're their best friends. We can even steal shit if you want."

Bonnie chuckled. "Um we'll see. For now I would just like to not be in a life or death situation for a bit."

It was almost funny how that was easier said than done nowadays. However if anyone was up to the challenge it was Damon. He loved to be contrary.

"We'll see." He teased and returned the gas nozzle to its' perch once the tank was full. "At the very least I think we should find some asshole vampires to set on fire again. That was amazing."

She bit her bottom lip; it had been amazing. And keeping shit pent up inside never helped anyone. It would make sense to release some steam in the form of raining ashes down onto the world. "Maybe
after we're rested…"

Her boyfriend hmm'd in response and she climbed back into the SUV, securing her seatbelt across her lap. Damon hopped in and they were off, heading down the darkened road with the radio playing softly in the background. Her mind was drifting peacefully towards thoughts of perhaps going to Virginia Beach or taking an exit in the other direction and heading instead towards Williamsburg for some shopping when her cell phone chimed loudly from her purse.

She fished it out slowly, staring at the caller id before finally deciding to answer it. "Hello?"

"Hey. Bonnie, where are you?" It was Elena. "I went by your house but no one is home and now I'm at Stefan's but you're not here either."

Bonnie cut her eyes to Damon. "I'm with Damon. We—we're taking some time away from Mystic Falls for a while."

"What?" Her friend sounded confused. "Are you sure this is the right time to be leaving?"

*There is never a right time with our lives. Even so we don't need your permission. "Why not? Alaric is hunting Rebecca and Elijah—he doesn't seem to give a crap about the Salvatores. There is a good chance things will be normal for a while."*

Elena sighed. "I guess but why didn't you tell me you were leaving?"

Because you would try to talk me out of it. "It happened kinda fast. After the guys were forced to hide Klaus instead of dumping him in the ocean…*Like they had planned until you went about making deals with Originals...*"And I did the spell to cloak his body, I brought the subject up with Damon and he agreed we should take off. So after the shit with Alaric killing Klaus and stuff we just packed a bag and took off. I was going to call you."

"Oh." She cleared her throat. "Where are you going?"

Bonnie slouched. "We don't know. Right now we just want to spend some time together away from all the drama."

"Mm. Okay well keep in touch and I'll see you when you get back."

"Okay. Take care."

Elena echoed the same and then she was gone. Bonnie clicked her phone off and stuck it back into her purse, noticing that Damon was surprisingly quiet about the whole thing. "You know Elena and I made up some. We're not where we were but I think we'll get back there. She's still crushing a little but Stefan is the guy she wants."

He tapped his fingers on the steering wheel. "Did she say that?"

Bonnie tilted her head to the side. "When we talked in Denver, yes. I don't see what would change that much from then until now. It's always been Stefan for her. She met him first and he was there for her when she was going through one of the toughest times of her life. I can relate. It's like how you were there for me when Grams died."

Damon scowled. "Yeah except I sort of had a hand in that." A beat. "So are you saying he's the one because she met him first?"

*What a weird question… "No. I don't know her thought process I just know Stefan is the man she..."*
loves. Does it matter that she met him first? You’re not into her anymore."

"No. I’m not and it doesn’t." He grabbed her hand and kissed the back of it.

~*~

Every person on the planet either had a secret or eventually came to have one. Children hid the things they broke from their parents and adults did horrible shit for any number of reasons. Some secrets were good though—that really must be said. Surprise parties and babies and all that other stuff that was so sweet it caused your teeth to rotten. Now a vampire amassed so many damn secrets that they would forget a few here and there. And it must be said that before Damon calmed the fuck down and realized Katherine didn’t give a fuck about him, he cut a path of destruction miles wide. Some of it he didn’t even remember.

One of his favorite things to do was stretch out in the middle of the road and wait for some idiot to stop to help him so that he could eat them. He did this countless of times, and honestly by the time he met Elena—who he assumed was Katherine at first—he had it down to an art form. Back then he was so screwed up and then there was this chick that had the face of the woman he loved and, yeah nothing made a lot of sense back then. And before he could eat her a car pulled up so he told her some bullshit and compelled her to forget they ever met.

Then promptly forgot himself until Alaric literally beat it out of him before running off to follow Rebecca.

Back then it would have meant something but now it was just another foolish mistake to add to his growing list. Thankfully though Elena would never know so it wasn’t something he needed to dwell on. It wasn’t something that would fuck up what he had with Bonnie. Not to mention it was before they hooked up so…yeah. But then he’d started to remember other stuff, more stuff, and one particular moment (not the Elena thing) stood out amongst the others.

\[
\text{Damon could hear the sounds of teenagers partying from a mile away even though he was closer than that. He could smell smoke and beer, and the sounds of laughing and music were chasing away the quiet from the dark woods. They were celebrating something so not much had changed in Mystic Falls since he'd been gone. They still had too many damn parties.}
\]

\[
\text{He was leaning against a tall tree, shrouded mostly in darkness and hidden from the roaring yellow flames of the fire. Jocks in footballs jerseys were clinking beer bottles and laughing. Loners were a few paces away sucking on joints and chasing the smoke into the air. And then there were the girls. Pretty young girls of every size in tight jeans or t-shirts, but he couldn't stop staring at the ones in blood red cheerleading uniforms. One thing he could appreciate in this new age was the clothing and the women's movement which made it okay—nay empowering—to show so much skin.}
\]

\[
\text{Made getting to flesh a lot easier.}
\]

\[
\text{There was a perky blonde with pompoms bouncing around to music. Across from her was a brunette with long hair and a low cut shirt trying to get more beer out of the large silver keg. She's already tipsy and the blonde looked at her with a mask of disgust, rolling her eyes when she spilled most of what was in her red cup onto the ground. Idly he thought about luring the brunette into the woods and draining her for an easy meal. He doesn't know that much later he will at a party similar to this one. Much later he'll turn her for sport and bury her in a shallow grave as a quick fix when she inevitably goes bad.}
\]

\[
\text{But he quickly lost interest in her drunk antics when a new face joined the blonde. Another cheerleader in apple peel red with long black hair and smooth brown skin; she had a bright smile}
\]
and big innocent eyes. She reminded him of someone from many, many years ago but he couldn't
decide why. Later he would bite into her and taste their history while changing his future. But at that
moment he just watched her giggle and dance and mess around with her friends.

About thirty minutes later she was alone, standing outside of a rest stop bathroom while the blonde
stumbled inside to do whatever it was she had to do. Making sure to be just a blur in the background
of most people's minds—not that any of these drunk kids would remember him anyway—Damon
came around behind the small building and stepped up beside her.

She visibly jerked, bringing a hand up to her chest. "God! You nearly gave me a heart attack!"

He grinned. "Sorry about that."

She scoffed lightly, her hair shining under the bright street lamp. "Did you... want something?"

He looked her over slowly. "I really think I do."

The young girl laughed. "Yeah well no offence but that's not gonna happen. I don't make a habit out
of hooking up with creepy dudes in rest areas."

Damon smirked and stepped closer to her. "You'd enjoy it. Trust me."

Arching a brow, she folded her arms over her chest. "Maybe, maybe not. Too bad we'll never know
if you're as good as you obviously think you are."

"Why? You got a boyfriend?"

"No. And I'm not looking."

"Are you sure?" He met her eyes. "Because I think I'm exactly what you are looking for."

She glared at him for a moment, and then shook her head. "And that's where you're wrong. But it's
okay. You're probably wrong a lot."

Damon blinked at her before chuckling softly. He leaned down into her space. "You're gonna be a
fun one, aren't you? Someone to help me pass the time with at least."

"What are you—"

Cutting her off, he latched onto her gaze and tried to push his thoughts into her mind. "You never
saw me though. I was never here."

"You—you were—never here..." She frowned but slowly repeated what he said.

Damon made a noise low in his throat. He could feel something inside of her fighting his compulsion
but whatever it was, it wasn't strong enough just yet. Which was lucky for the both of them because
otherwise he'd have to snap her neck.

"Ugh... my head. " The blonde trudged out of the bathroom. "Bonnie, where is Matt? He always has
aspirin or something in his truck. Bonnie?"

Bonnie smoothed a hand over her face. "Hm? Sorry I must have spaced out. C'mon let's go get you
some coffee."

From the shadows Damon watched the two girls head back towards the party. Later he would
decide that it was safer to play with the blonde. Bonnie and her weird whatever would just be too
"Damon?"

Snapping back to attention, he put their bags on the floor. "Yeah babe?"

Bonnie poked his shoulder. "Mrs. Hill asked if you liked the room."

"I love it." He flashed the elderly B&B owner a bright smile. "It's exactly what my wife and I were looking for. Thank you so much."

Mrs. Hill beamed. "Oh you're welcome, sweetheart. Just ring if you need anything!" And then she was gone.

Bonnie flopped onto the bed and kicked off her shoes. "I know I should feel terrible about you compelling her but we're paying so..." She stretched her arms high over her head. "What were you thinking about earlier?"

Closing the door, he shrugged out of his jacket. "Nothing. Hey do you remember when we first met?"

She nodded. "Yeah. You were making eyes at Caroline in the Grille and I wasn't even a blip on your radar screen."

He snickered, sitting down beside her. "Nah I just—I figured Caroline would be easier to control. You never do what I say."

Bonnie laughed. "Hey I do when it counts!" She inched closer, putting her chin on his shoulder. "I'm glad you didn't go after me back then though. We wouldn't be here if you had."

"True."

Smiling, she kissed him softly and pulled herself up. "I'm gonna get a quick shower and then we can figure out our dinner situation, Mr. Salvatore."

_Chicks._ "Okay Mrs. Salvatore."

"Try saying that like you're not constipated and I might come to believe you like it." She teased as she headed into the bathroom.

"I like it just fine!" He called out. "I'm old fashioned remember."

The sound of the water drowned out her laughter and he exhaled, unbuttoning his shirt and stripping it off. This whole leaving Mystic Falls for some alone time deal made sense to him, though he hoped he wasn't leaving Stefan in a lurch. They didn't plan to be gone long and as long as Alaric wasn't in town things should be fine. They'd have to deal with him sooner or later though which was an odd thought. Once upon a time he'd wanted Alaric dead but things had changed. Ric had become a good friend.

Unfortunately.

Another clue that caring paved the way to heartbreak.

But he wasn't going to think about that because he owed Bonnie a fun time with no Debbie Downer shit and he was going to try his best to deliver. She deserved it.
And the shit is going to hit the fan eventually. Whether it's Alaric coming back to kill all of us or the Council trying to finish the job for him, it's going to happen.

"Damon! Can you come and wash my back for me?" Bonnie inquired, rather sweetly.

He smirked and stood, pushing down his pants before strolling into the bathroom.

The good part though? It hadn't happened yet.

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

The future isn't written in stone but sometimes seeing what it could be changes what it will be.

What Could Be

To be completely honest Bonnie couldn't remember the last time she'd went on an actual vacation. Surely it was before she was seventeen because after that her father started working out of town too much for them to go anywhere fun. And her Grams was too busy working and drinking to take her anywhere. Whenever the Gilberts would make plans to go they would invite her and sometimes she would go, but it wasn't the same as being with her own family. While her and Elena had fun and Elena's mom never made her feel anything less than Elena's actual sister, she knew she wasn't and it wasn't a feeling she could shake. At the beginning of senior year she'd made a personal pledge to herself to do more fun things and to spend more time with her friends.

Yeah that hadn't exactly worked out at all. So far the only promise she'd kept to herself was getting a hot boyfriend.

But whatever there was no point to wishing for things that couldn't be helped or changed. Besides her new outlook on life was to grab it by the balls and show it who was in charge. So far saving Klaus was step one and running off with Damon was step two; she had no clue what step three would be. Probably saving her friends once again whenever they returned to Mystic Falls hence why she was in no hurry for that. So far she knew they were okay—if sad in Caroline's case—and Stefan wasn't ripping people up so she was counting it as a win. Alaric was still off stalking Originals as well. He probably figured he had all the time in the world to kill the Salvtores if he couldn't find Elijah or Rebecca.

As horrible as it sounded it was true.

Anyway she was trying to enjoy herself before the shit hit the fan. It was surprising how being alone with Damon was enjoyable. Whenever it was just the two of them having dinner or talking about all of the things he'd seen in his long life, she'd stare at him and wonder how they came to be what they were. Clarissa and to an extent Lucy made it sound like vampires and witches couldn't really co-exist because they were such polarizing creatures. Vampires went against nature and witches were supposed to uphold the balance.

*Which is bullshit because they will do things ten times more terrible than a vampire to get what they want. Including sacrificing one of their own.*

Bonnie didn't know where her loyalties lie except that she knew she would protect Damon at all costs. He was annoying and crass but he was also the one stable thing in her life. She knew that she could count on him, more than her mother and more than Elena. So she would fight for him because he would definitely fight for her. All things considered though she was having a great time; it made her wonder if this is how it would always be if it were just the two of them.

Stretched out under a large white umbrella by a large private pool, Bonnie pushed her sunglasses up
onto her nose and sighed deeply. She tapped her foot to the music playing over the speakers—Usher—and continued to mellow out. Dressed in a slinky red bikini outlined in gold she couldn't seem to feel bad about how much Damon was compelling people to get them into swanky places. After coupling it up at the bed and breakfast as man and wife, they'd moved on where they were now, a sort of resort kinda place for the rich and stuck up. It was kinda amusing to watch the older people wonder how they could afford such a place, especially since she did look younger than Damon. He'd just throw out something about a trust fund and it was all open arms, mostly. Still it was a nice change to be snubbed because they didn't look the part instead of for anything supernatural.

Picking up her glass of ice cold water she took a few sips and placed it back on the table. A smartly dressed waiter strolled over and handed her a crisp white towel and a bottle of sunscreen. "Mrs. Salvatore, your husband requested that I give this to you. He said this is much better than the kind you brought."

She smirked and took it from him. "Thank you. By the way, where is Mr. Salvatore?"

The waiter motioned inside. "Talking to the manager about switching you to a room with a hot tub. He said to tell you that he shall not be long."

"Thank you." She smiled at him and watched as he walked off to help someone else. "Oh Damon."

Apparently pretending to be wealthy suited him just as much as being wealthy. Also he would deny it forever but she got the feeling he liked pretending to be married to her. If only because he got off on showing her off.

Chuckling, she squirted a dollop of smooth lotion into her palm and proceeded to rub it into her arms and legs. She was humming to herself and not really paying much attention when an older woman plopped down beside her, sitting her bag on the ground with a little huff. She was probably in her early forties but very stylish with honey blonde hair and big hazel eyes, sort of a better looking Jennifer Aniston in a way.

"Was anyone sitting here?" She asked after the fact.

Bonnie shook her head. "No you're good. Not many people out today anyway."

"Good!" She grinned. "I hate when the pool area is crowded. Makes reading a real drag." Pause. "I'm Spencer…unless you wanna be left alone then I'm nobody."

"No it's cool. I'm Bonnie." As they shook hands, a tingle ran up Bonnie's arm and she jerked, recognizing that type of energy. It wasn't familial but it wasn't hostile either. Still she couldn't help but feel a bit apprehensive about what this could mean for Damon. Witches tended to hate vampires on principle and if one struck out at him he would want to retaliate. She wasn't sure she was stronger but she would test the theory if it came to it.

Spencer felt it as well because she smiled softly. "A fellow witch, nice. I haven't met one that wasn't actually a part of my family in a long time. Have you been practicing long?"

Bonnie tucked her hair back. "Um, not really but I'm pretty good at it I guess."

Spencer nodded. "Where are you from?"

"Mystic Falls." That should explain everything. I wonder if it will?"

"Ooh lot of history from that area I hear." The other woman replied. "I keep meaning to visit for some culture but my boyfriend doesn't wanna go. He says it's too dangerous."
Tilting her head to the side, Bonnie tried to figure out if she was being honest of fishing for details to start trouble. "Dangerous?"

Spencer smiled again. "Yeah. Um I don't mean to be too forward or weird, but you wouldn't happen to be here with the tall guy with the blue eyes, would you? I saw him talking to the manager. Well I saw him compelling the manager."

Oh boy. Guess we're checking out sooner than expected. "Yes. He—he's my husband."

Spencer giggled. "Ah I know that con; it was one of my favorite's back in the day."

"What?"

"My boyfriend is a vampire too."

"I—what?"

"Hah! I know it's not something you hear every day but he is. We've been together since I was twenty-five."

Bonnie blinked slowly and shifted in her chair so that she could face Spencer. The people of Mystic Falls aside she'd never encountered anyone else that didn't see vampires as a scourge upon the Earth—those that knew about them anyway. "You—you're with a vampire?"

Spencer shrugged. "Yup. His name is Andrew and here is around here somewhere. She laughed at Bonnie's shocked expression. "Oh c'mon. You didn't think you were the only witch to date a vampire, didja?"

Uh, yeah. "Kinda. I've been taught and told that witches and vampires don't mix because we're so different."

The other witch hummed in response. "I see what you're getting at. Well to be honest that is true but sometimes something different happens and a few of us learn that not all vampires are bad. Some do just wanna eat and kill whatever they come across, but others are gentle. They didn't have a choice in becoming what they are so they try hard to not be evil. Or to throw their switch." A beat. "Andrew was turned by a very bad man and he's spent a very long time trying to make up for what that man made him do."

Unlike Damon who spent a very long time being as evil as he could. "And you guys have been together for a long time?"

"Yeah. He was already two hundred by the time we met. I was freaked out at first but after a while I realized that he wasn't a bad person. He was actually very charming." She bit her bottom lip. "And he made me feel special. It wasn't always easy—my family hates him—but I know that he loves me. That he would do anything for me Doesn't make family holidays any easier but it gives me piece of mind afterwards."

Bonnie fingered the necklace around her neck. "I know the feeling. Can I ask you something kind of personal?"

Her friend gestured for her to continue. "Sure. It's refreshing to talk to someone about this who doesn't want him dead."

Bonnie laughed lightly. "How has it been through the years? Dating a vampire long term I mean."
Spencer exhaled and rubbed her cheek. "I won't lie and say that it has been simple because it hasn't. We get into arguments like a regular couple but the topics can range from him drinking to getting farther away from my family. Sometimes he gets all depressed because he thinks he is keeping me from a regular life. But how regular could my life be? I'm a witch. Either way it would be strange and weird so I might as well have what I want."

"What about having a family? And the aging thing?"

"Always at the back of my mind. Every day I get a little older and yet he stays the same. When I was in my twenties and early thirties it didn't matter but lately it's all I think about. I know he'll stay with me for as long as I'm here but I don't wanna be sixty with him still looking twenty. I don't want people thinking he is my grandson, they already think I'm robbing the cradle! Honestly I—I don't know if I could become a vampire. I wanna be with Andrew forever but it's scary. The whole thing is terrifying and we fight about it. He thinks every time I stare too long at a little kid that I'm wishing we'd never met. Like we couldn't adopt."

There was pain in Spencer's voice but Bonnie couldn't decide if it were for the life she was living or the one she could be living with Andrew as a vampire. Naturally being turned wasn't a small choice to make and she probably agonized over it every day. Probably added up the pros and cons over and over but never coming to a conclusion. She could relate except she was certain if she were dying Damon would turn her whether she consented or not.

"I love Damon." Bonnie whispered slowly. "He's not as—well he's kinda a dick sometimes but he's one of the best things that has ever happened to me. I couldn't imagine not being with him. But I don't really wanna be a vampire. I think it might happen one day—that I'll have to decide between death and a new life and…" Trailing off, she took off her glasses. "Truthfully I've nearly died a few times and Damon has always been there. He's made it clear that if it's between dying and being a vampire that he'll turn me. It's fucked up to say but I'm kinda glad he's okay with taking that choice away from me. I guess that sets the women's movement back five years but it is the only choice I'm comfortable letting him make. I don't think I could make it."

Spencer reached over and patted her wrist. "No I get what you are saying. Yeah it's a little screwed up but I understand where you are coming from. If he turns you on his own you're not accountable for it, and somehow that would make it better. At least on your end because you wouldn't have to deal with being the one who made that choice."

"Yeah." She said. "Exactly. And you do know there is a spell for you to have Andrew's babies if you wanted."

"I've heard of such." Spencer wiggled her brows. "But we'll see. I'm just still having fun traveling and getting into places like this because he's okay with compelling people. Doing this helps me not think about the future."

And that was something Bonnie could relate to one hundred percent. However Spencer had the luxury of running for the rest of her life with Andrew if she wanted while she had to return home eventually. If not for everyone else then for her father. She had to keep him safe the best she could.

Settling back into her lounge chair, she smiled as Damon finally made his way outside, pale and shirtless in dark swimming trunks. People had to be wondering why he wasn't burning or freckling up a storm. That thought made her laugh in an "if only they knew" sort of way. He looked good though as usual. Several of the female staff went out of their way to get him whatever he wanted and they weren't even compelled. One was even bold enough to slip her number into his pants' pocket. Bonnie would have let it slide but exploding a bowl of ice cream in her face seemed much more fun.
It had been of course!

He sat down on her right and leaned in close, his lips brushing her ear and making her shiver. "There is another vampire here. Not sure but I think I could take him if he becomes a problem."

She smirked. 'It's okay. He's nice or whatever. His girlfriend is a witch." She motioned to Spencer. "We've been talking about the joys of dating handsome vampire men."

Damon pouted. "What? But I wanted to be the only vampire cool enough to have a witch." He glanced to Spencer, sizing her up. "So, you're with the buzz kill who tried to snake our room?"

Bonnie resisted the urge to groan. "Be nice."

Grabbing up the bottle of sunscreen, he poured some into his hands and then started massaging her shoulders. "I'm always nice. It just caught me off guard how Stefan-like that other guy is but without the murder and death following him around."

Spencer snickered. "Andrew is my other half, yes. And as we are older I think we deserve the big room with the hot tub."

Damon snorted. "If you say so. I'd fight you for it but Bonnie doesn't like when I scramble brains beyond repair."

Chuckling, Spencer stretched her arms high over her head and pulled at her blue swimsuit. "So how did you guys meet?"

"I tried to kill her and when that didn't work I stalked her." He kissed Bonnie's cheek loudly. "And she fell for my considerable charms and amazing good looks."

"You aren't shy at all, are ya?" Spencer mused good-naturedly.

He arched a brow. "I've been accused of being conceited but it doesn't bother me because it's true. Why should I hide or downplay how awesome I am?"

"Opposites attracted huh?" She looked to Bonnie.

"Heh you kinda have to know what we've been through to get it." Bonnie explained lightly. "But don't let him fool you. Damon is a softy when he wants to be." She reached back and stroked his cheek. "He doesn't usually want to be but I think I drag it out of him."

Damon didn't agree or disagree. "I think I'm going to go check in with my brother while you two chat." He stood, giving the back of his girlfriend's neck a squeeze. "Call me if you need me."

Spencer waited until he was gone—not that it mattered, what with super hearing—to say, "He doesn't trust me as far as he can throw me. I wouldn't be surprised if he's grilling Andrew for details."

Classic Damon. "He's very protective of me. We've ran into a lot of people that wanted either of us dead."

Balking, Spencer sat up straighter. "Andrew was right about Mystic Falls then huh? Man that's insane. We've never really ran across anything hazardous before. Certainly no one has tried to kill either of us simply for being together. Yeah my family hates him but they'd never kill him."

Bonnie smoothed a hand over her face. "Damon and his brother make quite a few enemies for some reason. My guess is because they usually end up doing what's right and some creatures don't like
that. You should be thankful you're not on anyone's radar." And then she gave her some very sound
advice. "Definitely stay away from Mystic Falls especially if you never want to be noticed. If other
vampires don't get you then the vampire hating council of humans might."

_No need to mention the werewolves._

A frown appeared between Spencer's brows. "Jesus. How do you live there?"

"I don't really have a choice. I was born there and everything I know is there. Though I do plan to
leave one day. Maybe for college or something." She chewed on the inside of her cheek. "If I live
that long."

~*~

"So everything is okay? No need for Bonnie and I to race home? You're sticking to squirrels and
cute little bunnies?" Damon leaned against the interior of the hotel, making sure that he was hidden
from view but still able to see Bonnie and her new witchy friend.

Stefan sighed, exasperated. "Yes, Damon. Things are fine here. Or as fine as they can be…I don't
know. No one is stuck in a life or death situation."

"Good, good." Damon replied idly. "I'd hate to have to cut our trip short."

"Sounds like you're having a good time." His brother said probably smiling. "I'm glad. Bonnie has
been through a lot and she deserves some down time. You too."

Damon tilted his head to the side. "I suppose. Though all this not running for our lives is making it
hard to find reasons to return to Mystic Falls. At least for me anyway. It reminds me of when I was
just cruising around causing trouble before I decided to bother you again."

Stefan snickered. "Well you could go back to doing that I guess. Although I think you've got too
much of a conscious now."

_Yes, and it's got pretty green eyes and nags sometimes._ "Whatever. I just called to make sure no one
was dead. Text me if someone gets their throat ripped out." Ending the call, he tapped his phone
against his lips and stared at the two women chatting out by the pool. "You gonna lurk in the
shadows all day or come talk to me?"

A tall, fair young man with pale blonde hair stepped from around a corner with his arms folded over
his chest. "I was trying to get a feel for the situation. I did not want you to think I was being
threatening."

Damon grinned at him. "Yeah trust me I know when someone is threatening me. It happens often
enough." Pause. "So you're Andrew."

Andrew nodded and played with his bracelet. It was most likely how he could walk in the daylight.
"And you're Damon Salvatore. I must say you have changed drastically from the last time we ran
into each other. I don't expect you to remember—you were otherwise occupied with a pretty blonde
and it was the sixties."

Damon squinted at him. "And I was probably high. Anyway I'm sure I did something fucked up and
I'm sure that blonde died."

The other man stepped closer. "I'm not angry or here to pick a fight. You didn't do anything to me,
personally so we're okay." He followed Damon's gaze out the window. "You don't have to worry
about Spencer either. She's an amazing woman. I don't think she has an evil bone in her body. She wouldn't do anything to hurt your friend."

*Right. She's all rainbows and sunshine I'm sure.* "I have heard that before and it didn't stick. But Bonnie is usually a good judge of character—including me—so if she trusts her then I'll tolerate her."

Andrew chuckled. "That's good enough for me." He let his arms hang down by his sides. "So um, is it true? About the Originals? I've heard whispers that they were in Mystic Falls recently."

"Oh yeah it's true. Trust me you do not want to meet any of them. Elijah aside they're all a bunch of whining dicks with daddy issues." Damon explained rather bluntly. "But I guess since you're not dead Finn wasn't the beginning of your line. You should mention to your girlfriend that if the Original who made you dies, every vampire they made also dies. Just in case you drop dead so she won't be left wondering why. *Am I really being a nice guy and offering advice? Jesus.*"

"I—I hope it never comes to that but I'll tell her." The other vampire replied softly. "Though that is an excellent argument against making Spencer like me."

"She wants to be a vampire?"

"I don't know. She can never decide and whenever we talk about it things escalate into a fight."

"Ah."

"Does yours wish to be a vampire?"

"No. But Bonnie and I have a deal. If she's dying I get to turn her whether she likes it or not."

"And she would be okay with that?"

"Who cares? She'd be alive and that's what matters."

Andrew blinked at him. "And you would be okay with taking that choice away from her? You would be condemning her to a life of being a monster."

Running his fingers through his dark hair, Damon did not even try to look contrite. If there was one thing he wasn't budging on it was the issue of not having Bonnie in his life because she was dead. He knew perfectly well that she did not want to be a vampire but he wouldn't be the selfish bastard that he was if he didn't totally steam roll on ahead anyway. Of course he felt that she was totally okay to use any means necessary to keep him alive as well.

Except putting his soul in someone else's body. He *loved* his body.

Wetting his lips, he shrugged. "Sometimes when you love someone you have to do what you think is best for them. Would she be upset with me for it? Probably. Would I care? No." He smiled. "Tell me Andy, what would you do if someone tried to punch Spencer's heart out through her back? Or if they actively put her into a situation where she might die? Would you just stand around and let it happen?"

Andrew swallowed thickly. "I honestly don't know."

*Bullshit.* "C'mon no one is that saintly except for my little brother. Love is all about passion and fire, and there is no way you'd let some asshole extinguish your fire without doing everything in your power to stop them. I've *killed* for Bonnie and she has killed for me. That's how I know it's real."
"I would never let anything hurt Spencer." His brows narrowed. "Just because I wouldn't turn her against her will doesn't mean I don't love her with all that I am."

"Okay." Damon responded. "Good luck with that."

Growling, Andrew grabbed his arm when he tried to walk away. "Did you know there are vampires out there that hate witches? That there are witches out there that hate other witches? It's a hard road for people like us, Damon. You think Mystic Falls is treacherous? You'd change your tune if you got onto the radar of one of these groups." He lowered his voice. "Spencer doesn't know about this but yes. Yes I have killed for her. A vampire by the name of Slate figured out that she was a witch and he stalked her, was planning to drain her when I caught up to him first. So I did what I had to do."

Damon wrenched his arm free. "Duh. That's what you're supposed to do. See your problem is that you think it matters. That anyone really matters outside of that chick out there." He pointed to Spencer. "They don't. I give a fuck about two people in this world. I mean like, offer up my life kinda thing. I'd never tell him but my baby brother is one of them. The other is Bonnie. So what I would suggest is caring less about some metaphorical soul you might have or whatever and grow a pair. You're a vampire, not a puppy. Be willing to do whatever you have to do. Because you can't reason with a dick that's got an agenda."

Winking he strolled back outside and dropped his phone into Bonnie's bag. Sometimes he wondered if he and Stefan were just made from a different sort of cloth when it came to things that they loved. Even when he was eating everyone in sight he was only bidding his time until he could free Katherine…the woman he loved at the time. He would have done anything to get her back and that made sense to him. Wasn't that the whole point? For as much as a downer Stefan could be that didn't strike the fact that he gave himself to a jackass to make sure Elena (and him but that isn't the point) was safe.

How could you call yourself in love and not be willing to go the distance?

To be honest he felt like he was even better than most because at first his feelings for Bonnie had been forced on him. Yet he overcame the spell to honestly fall in love with her. And vice versa.

He hated Klaus but the asshole was willing to destroy the world for his family. If that was the only lesson he'd learned from him, he would count it as a good one.

Stepping up to the edge of the pool, he looked into the glistening clear water before diving in and swimming to the bottom. He touched the coral colored designs before kicking his legs and breaking the surface. Strands of silky hair stuck to his forehead as drops of liquid ran down his eyelashes and face. Satisfied that he had the attention of, well everyone, he starts doing laps from one side of the pool to the other.

Before Mystic Falls he did not think about what else lurked out in the world. He knew vampires were real and that was so insane that he figured that had to be it besides witches. Now there were werewolves and hybrids and who knew what else. So what if he one day had to deal with a vampire that hated witches? Could anything be stronger than an Original vampire with a crush on his brother? He honestly didn't think so.

"Hey Damon!" Spencer called. She pulled Andrew down beside her and kissed his cheek. "I was just telling Bonnie about this club down the road that serves excellent margaritas. How about we make it a foursome? But in a totally non sexual way!"

He swam over to the side and placed his arms on the edge for support. "Oh I don't know if Andrew wants to spend more time in my company. I don't think he likes me. Which is par for the course."
She sniggered. "No it'll be fun! We'll dance and have a good time. We haven't really hung out with another couple in ages for obvious reasons. Well…” She made a face. "Some thought I was Andrew's sugar mama so that was different."

Bonnie giggled. "I don't want anything ever thinking that about me and Damon. Not because I would mind that much but because it would totally go to his head, and if he ego gets any bigger it will kill us all."

He flicked water at her. "Baby we've established you love my big ego. Own it."

"Mr. Salvatore?" Damon looked up at the pretty attendant with legs that went on forever. He remembered her from the other day and an incident with ice cream. "Complimentary champagne."

"Well thank you…” He glanced to her name tag. "Lisa. That was very thoughtful of you."

"Very." Bonnie parroted, and Spencer laughed.

Lisa was unperturbed however. "If you find yourself needing anything else please don't hesitate to ask. I am here to make your stay as enjoyable as it can be."

He was just about to tell her how wonderful that was when suddenly she squeaked and her tray went flying as she tumbled into the pool as if pushed. She came up coughing and sputtering, making her way to the ladder. She said she was fine and waved off help but Damon knew she had to at least be extremely embarrassed. He watched her climb out and hurry inside.

"You're bad." He heard Spencer say to Bonnie.

"Maybe a little more than usual lately." Bonnie smirked.

Damon could attest to that. For a brief second he wondered if he should be worried.

*Nah. They were on vacation; what's the worst that could really happen?*

~Fin~
The longer they stay away from Mystic Falls the more they wish they could leave it behind forever.

There were rumbles in the starry night sky and lightning off in the distance but Bonnie hadn't heard anything on the television about a storm. Still these things could pop up at any moment but she wasn't worried. She was sure the hotel had a generator or something; at least they should for what they dared to charge people a night. Though it would be romantic to light a few candles and watch the rain after they got back from the club. Romantic for her anyway since Damon didn't seem to have a romantic bone in his body. Or was it considered romantic when a man would rip out the heart of a hybrid for you?

Sitting outside on a low stone bench in her white baby doll dress, she dug the high heel of her matching shoes into the ground and sunk into the semi quiet of the area. She was early for the get together with Andrew and Spencer but only by a few minutes. Prince Damon was still upstairs cooing over his reflection in the mirror, trying to get his hair just right. It was amazing at times how vain he could be. It made her wonder just how many women—and men—over the years had told him he was gorgeous or beautiful? The number was most likely staggering.

And he's with me. One of the most gorgeous men ever wants me! Is this how it feels to be a Disney Princess?

Anyway though she was looking forward to doing a little dancing and then catching a late dinner with their new friends. Now that she knew Spencer wasn't going to set anyone on fire she could admit that she liked her. She was smart and funny, and she was doing something that Bonnie hoped to do one day. Mainly run away with a cute boy and not worry about all of the bad things going on in the world. Granted she didn't want to be in her forties while doing it but it wasn't the most horrible thing that could happen. It was just—she sort of got the feeling that Spencer was hiding from the matter at hand which was basically the future. If she wasn't turned she would die one day and leave Andrew behind. But if she was turned she would be giving up her family and ever having a truly normal life.

Bonnie didn't envy her decision and she was not looking forward to making it herself one day.

However it would only be logical to become a vampire after spending years and years with someone. Andrew and Spencer were already in a common law marriage and they obviously loved each other. She should just adopt some kids, raise them and hope by the time they're eighteen she still looked as hot as she did now.

Tucking a strand of black hair behind her ear, Bonnie smiled at the elderly couple in matching golf outfits and checked her silver watch. Out of the blue she wondered if she would ever see her mother again or if she even wanted to. What would they say to each other? Did they have anything to say to each other after the way things ended? At this point she kinda just wanted to yell at her and pop the blood vessels in her brain to perhaps gain a bit of closure.
It was weird because before Damon breezed into her life she'd been mostly happy. She focused on other things besides how boring her life was in comparison to her friends; like cheerleading or her Grams odd ravings. She'd never realized how utterly alone she'd been before Damon was there to annoy her and keep her company. He brought mayhem but he also brought a bit of comfort. Had Emily known all along how much she would end up needing Damon? Is that why she linked them together in the first place?

Man that seems like forever ago.

I can't picture going through what I have been through without Damon behind me. There is no way I could have dealt with Klaus being a jerk or my mom without his support.

"Bonnie."

Jerking out of her thoughts, she looked up and smiled at Andrew who looked quite dapper in his black suit. "Vampire stealth. You'd be surprised how often I actually forget about that."

He chuckled and sat down beside her. "I am sorry if I startled you."

She shrugged. "It's cool. So, Spencer taking a while to get ready too?"

He smirked a little. "Yes. Don't tell her that I told you this but she's worried that she won't look as good compared to you. Considering you are younger and everything."

She blushed but was happy for the compliment. "I'm sure she is going to look beautiful. I bet we are the hottest chicks in the club tonight."

Andrew hummed and looked up at the starry sky. "I think meeting you has been good for her. I haven't seen her this animated in a long time. In a way I think she was just going through the motions. Or maybe wishing she could just go through the motions."

Bonnie tilted her head to the side. "What do you mean?"

He wet his lips. "Spencer often tries hard to pretend that we are a normal couple. That I am a normal young man. She doesn't like to see me feed or use my compulsion. I mean she is quite aware of how we are allowed to stay in such extravagant places but I know deep down it bothers her. Pause. "And then here you are with Damon…and you're the opposite of that. You don't mind what he does, do you?"

Well… "I used to. There was a time when I thought it was all bullshit to be honest. Messing with peoples' minds and treating them like happy meals?" She sighed and saw Caroline's face. "But in a way it's all part of his survival and Damon isn't the murdering bastard he was when we first met. He only drinks from blood bags or me, and he doesn't compel people just to be a dick. It's like we have a set of silent rules; he can't kill or hurt for fun."

Andrew nodded, listening intently. "And what are his silent rules for you?"

She thought on that for a moment. Damon didn't really try to bar her from doing anything except for flirting with other guys. "I'm not allowed to put myself into needless danger. He doesn't like it when I'm hurt."

"But you do it anyway I'm guessing." He smiled softly. "For him."

"Yeah." She chewed on the inside of her cheek. "There are people in my life that I can keep safe so I do. A part from my father, Damon is the most important person to me now. Which still strikes me as
weird because we didn't exactly get off on the right foot when we first met. He tried to kill me."

"Spencer mentioned that but I thought she was joking." He whistled in disbelief. "So hate turned to

love?"

Bonnie couldn't help but grin; that was sort of an apt description of their situation. "Kinda. One of

my ancestors linked us together so that Damon couldn't hurt me again, and so that he would have to

protect me. We started sharing dreams and things got really heated between us. Then danger kept

popping up and we kept saving each other." A beat. "We both tried to not fall for each other but it

was kinda written in the stars."

Andrew played with the gold ring on his finger. "It's a little hard for me to think of Damon as

lovesick. His reputation is slightly notorious in the vampire community. I met him once a long time

ago and he was—well he didn't strike me as a nice guy."

I don't think he strikes anyone as a nice guy. "He has his moments. You know you don't need to give

me the 'Damon is a killer' speech because I've heard it a dozen times before. Everyone thinks he is

wrong for me and once upon a time I did too. But not anymore. I love Damon so much that

sometimes it scares me because the thought of anything happening to him makes me feel cold

inside." She touched her chest and pressed down against her heart, a swell of heat burning against

her palm. "I would do anything for him; I learn that more and more every day."

The other vampire lowered his voice. "How did you come to that decision? I love Spencer with all

my heart but—but I don't know if I could kill for her. We've never been in that situation."

Bonnie patted his hand. "Trust me if it were between her or some asshole trying to hurt her, you

would. Maybe not a human but totally if it were something supernatural."

He still appeared conflicted. "I am not sure that I have that killer instinct. I've never liked that aspect

of being a vampire—of having to take someone else's life to survive. I suppose it is because I was

turned against my will. I've always tried very hard to retain parts of my humanity and killing is so

animalistic."

He is a lot like Stefan in that regard. Except I don't think he goes crazy if he has too much human

blood. "Damon enjoys it I think. It makes him feel strong and invincible. But I still think if Spencer

were in trouble you'd be there for her."

Andrew ran his fingers through his pale hair. "I have to admit that I envy you and Damon. You just
—you're so in sync with each other. Spencer and I have been together for years but we still have no

clue what we are going to do on the immortality issue. Damon said...well he said if you were dying

he'd just turn you whether you wanted him to or not. It's foolish and horrible but I can't help but find

him to be a little brave."

"I don't know if I would call him brave." She teased. "He's selfish to be honest but I think in that

situation he would have to make the choice. I wouldn't be able to. Besides all of the danger and near

death stuff has made Damon and I stronger, yeah, but couples go at their own pace. I wish there was

nothing but smooth sailing in our past. I don't like the scars we've been left with."

"It's so hard for people like us. Humans and vampires. Our love never tends to work out." He said

sadly. "Humans die and vampires don't, generally. I could make Spencer like me but she would miss

out on so many wonderful human things. I know she wants a family. At one time so did I. Not to

mention she would have to watch others that she loves grow old and die."

"Andrew you know there are a lot of spells out there. I'm sure she could find one to make everyone
happy." She shrugged; she didn't like his glass half empty outlook. "Spells for kids and longer human lives. For everlasting youth. With magic anything is possible."

He turned his eyes towards the hotel. "Except turning a vampire human."

She blinked at him. True she'd never heard of a spell with that sort of power but there were still hundreds of Martin grimoires that she hadn't read through yet. At this point she wouldn't rule out turning someone into a frog for real. "You never know. Maybe one day you'll get your wish. If I ever find something like that I'll make sure to text it to Spencer."

Andrew laughed lightly. "Thank you." Just as he was checking his watch, Damon and Spencer rounded the corner bickering like old friends; Damon in a dark suit with a white shirt and Spencer in a slinky red dress. "Ah. Here they are."

"Sorry!" Spencer wobbled in her high heels. "My hair kept doing this weird thing and it took a bit to finally get it like I wanted." She flowed into Andrew's arms when he stood and hugged him. "You two look amazing sitting out here together though. I almost have a mind to be jealous."

Bonnie waved a hand. "Oh please you look gorgeous. Red is definitely your color."

She preened a little. "I think we'll be able to keep up with you and Damon at least."

Damon snorted and took Bonnie's hand. "We'll see about that."

~*~

Leaning over the sturdy railing on the second level at the club, Damon Salvatore smirked and watched as his lovely girlfriend dance with Andrew. She looked amazing under the bright flashing neon lights and so happy; the smile on her face so genuine. Being away from Mystic Falls suited her and he really hated the thought of taking her back there eventually. There was nothing waiting in that damned town but death and assholes. Why in the hell did they continue to live there?

Anyway there was something different about Bonnie, something dark and enticing. He hadn't said anything—and wouldn't—but he got the feeling she was still riding the high of the spell that helped them take down Klaus. Bringing Jeremy back to life and all must have been a total rush. He could relate to the whole playing God thing. Now not only could she take out vampires but humans as well…if it ever came to that.

He was waffling between being worried about her dependence on the magic and wanting to worship at her bad ass altar. Really with all the fuckers out there that wanted them dead, it made sense for her to be powered up. That was after all the main reason he could never eat rabbits and squirrels like Stefan. He liked being super strong and super fast and super cool.

Besides it's just a bit of magic. Sure it turned Alaric into a serial killing maniac but he had also died a bunch of dies. Bonnie's never died. And it's not like she's setting things on fire for the hell of it. Not anymore anyway.

Fuck that was awesome.

We had great sex that night.

Out of the corner of his eye he saw Spencer ascend the stairs with a shot glass in each hand. She weaved through the crowd of hipsters and handed him his with a big grin. "Bottoms up!"

He took it and knocked it back effortlessly, hissing as the cool liquid burned his throat. "That hit the
She giggled. "Ugh I haven't drunk like this in a long time! I'm scared what I'm gonna be like in the morning."

He shrugged. "Nah you'll be fine. Besides you only live once, right? The key is just to do it for a really long time."

She laughed and copied his pose, gazing down at the floor. "Bonnie's awesome. When I first saw her I had no idea she was a teenager. She seems older."

"They grow up fast in Mystic Falls." He murmured. "Grow up fast or die quick."

Spencer tucked strands of silky blonde hair behind her ear. "That sucks. It's weird but I get the distinct feeling she's seen more in her few years than I've seen in my entire life."

Damon arched a brow. "Why Spencer, you wouldn't be jealous would you?"

Her cheeks flushed pink. "Not really. Don't get me wrong I don't wanna be running for my life but, I'm so boring! Okay so yeah I'm dating a vampire but that's the only intense thing I've got going on. I've never had to use my powers for much of anything that wasn't like, doing the dishes or making the flowers in my mom's garden grow." She pressed her full lips into a pout. "I can't even remember the last spell I did."

*The grass always seems greener on the other side.* "Yeah but you also don't have to remember seeing your friends die or what it feels like to have a fire poker driven through your chest. Let me tell you…it's not fun. And as fabulous as Bonnie and I look most of the time we're held up in my house. Or her house. Or my car."

"I don't know." She exhaled, twirling her empty shot glass between her fingers. "I *enjoy* my life and before meeting you two I was content but now I can't stop thinking about what I'm missing. I mean where is the passion?"

"I think you're just drunk."

"Ha! Or having some type of mid-life crisis."

"That too. 'Cause trust me sweetie, you don't need someone trying to rip out your heart to bring on the passion. Either it's there or it's not."

"Maybe it's cause I'm older now. I used to be a little wilder. I wonder does Andrew prefer me when I was younger?"

"If he wanted a younger model he'd trade in."

Spencer smiled softly. "True." Licking her lips, she edged closer to him. "You know Bonnie is on her way to becoming a very powerful witch. I can feel her energy even now and it's throbbing."

He grinned. "I know. I can feel her too. It's intoxicating."

She nodded. "It's consuming. I just—just don't let her get in too deep too fast okay? It happens and witches have been known to do some serious damage without meaning to. The magic takes control and that's never a good thing. The witch craves more and more power and they don't care how they get it."
Damon squinted at her. "If Bonnie wakes up one day and decides sinking Australia is a good idea, I'm gonna cheer her on. As long as she's not hurting herself or my brother we're good."

"Damon, it's not a joke. I think one of the reasons that you like her so much is because underneath it all she's a very sweet girl. You wouldn't want that to go away." She bumped his shoulder with her own. "Dark magic would slash away at any goodness that she has until it's completely gone. Do you wanna see her doing horrible things?"

_Honestly? I'm conflicted._ "I'll get back to you on that."

"You're terrible!" She said teasingly. "You're not fooling me one bit."

Damon smirked and continued to watch Bonnie and Andrew dance. They were close together and his hands were on her hips, both of them swaying to the pendulum-like bass that thudded from the large speakers. While a twinge of jealousy skittered along his skin he knew that it was harmless. That there was no reason for him to storm down and attempt to throw Andrew into the bar. _I think I remember hearing he's older than me. That would cause issues if he wanted to fight back._ And anyway there were identical twins practically devouring Andrew with their eyes that looked like trouble.

One in gold and the other in silver.

_This should be interesting._

Seconds passed and then Silver decided to make her move, slithering up onto Andrew's left and flashing a bright smile. She whispered something into his ear and he—ever the stick in the mud—artfully declined. He had total artfully declining face as far as Damon was concerned. When her feminine wiles didn't lure him away, she turned her attention to Bonnie.

"Should we go down there?" Spencer inquired. "Those skanks look kinda evil. They might throw a drink on Bonnie or something."

"Bonnie can handle herself." A light bulb went off over his head. "But you want more insanity in your life? C'mon." He grabbed her hand and tugged, pulling her down the metal steps and into the thick of the crowd.

They made their way through gyrating bodies and drunken people having loud conversations to where their partners stood; Bonnie looking five seconds away from doing something bad. The moment she spotted him however she lost interest in the twins, shoving each of them out of her way to get to him.

"Did you come to stop me from kicking their asses?" She asked smiling.

"No. I brought Spencer to help you." Damon slipped his arms around her waist.

"Sounds like fun." Bonnie turned her attention to Spencer. "You should teach them a lesson so that they know to _never_ mess with someone else's man again."

Spencer looked between her and the skanks that were currently trying to make an Andrew sandwich. "What should I do?"

"You're a sexy witch. Do whatever you want." She leaned back against Damon's chest. "Andrew is _your_ guy and they should respect that."

Biting her bottom lip, Spencer was obviously torn between being a little wicked simply because she
could and just physically removing Andrew from the situation. Damon wasn't surprised that she
decided to be a little evil though when he thought back to their earlier conversation. Welcome to the
dark side. We've got cookies.

She glared at both girls and slowly muttered something under her breath. Silver and Goldie seized up
like they were struck by lightning before yelping and wiggling like they had ants in their pants. They
began to scratch at any part of their bodies that they could reach, arms and legs and shoulders. Tiny
red dots broke out across their skin and quickly turned into a rather painful looking rash. Goldie
noticed hers first and she shrieked, making a beeline for the bathroom like her life depended on it. A
minute later her sister followed, shouting that they needed to get to a hospital.

"Bravo!" Damon laughed. "That was good."

Andrew blinked. "Spencer? Did you—what did you do to them?"

"It's just poison ivy." She shrugged but couldn't hide her smile. "You are my hot boyfriend and if
anyone is going to dry hump your brains out it is going to be me. Now." She put her hands on his
shoulders. "Dance with me."

Bonnie giggled and turned to face Damon. "We're a bad influence I think."

He winked at her. "We're perfection." His bright blue eyes searched her pretty face. "You know if
you wanted to take over the world I'd help you."

"Oh really?" She kissed his chin. "What if I wanted to take over the universe?"

"That too." He mused and dipped her dramatically. "King of the universe has a nice ring to it."

Bonnie chuckled. "You're insane but I love you anyway." She rested her cheek to his chest when he
righted her. "I'm having the best time with you. I wish we didn't ever have to go home."

He ran his fingers through her hair. "Yeah that would be nice. Why do we have to go back again?"

Her voice was soft when she replied, "My dad is there and your brother is there. And all of our
friends are there. Alaric is still on the loose, and so are the leftover Originals. And let's face it; it's
only a matter of time before Elena needs saving again."

All true things. Eh. "We could just say fuck them ya know?"

She looked up at her with her big green eyes and if it were possible he fell a little more for her. "We
could. But that's not who we are. Sometimes I think I could be like that. Sometimes I wanna be like
that but I'm not there yet. Losing Grams and my mom walking out on me again has pushed me more
into that kinda mind set. It's like I can't depend on anyone but you."

And once upon a time that would have scared the shit outta me. Okay who am I kidding, it still does.
"I'll try not to let you down."

He sort of hated it when Bonnie got deep because usually it was sad and depressing. Her lamenting
all of the ways things could go wrong or how much he'd disappointed her. It was scary to think they
were so entwined that she wouldn't be okay without him. Even scarier because he felt the same way
about her.

I think there is a term for this.

Bonnie gave him a squeeze. "You won't. You haven't so far."
Let's hope it stays that way.

~*~

The sky opened up after dinner and in a vacant park, Spencer and Bonnie made raindrops twirl like mini cyclones. They opened themselves up to nature; growing flowers where there were none and whispering quietly to the trees until their leaves shook and their branches stretched high. By the time the foursome finally made it back to their hotel they were soaked but happy, and Bonnie actually felt a part of something that wasn't mired in death or destruction.

She stripped out of her pretty dress and slipped into a fluffy robe once they were in the privacy of their room, crawling up onto the bed to watch Damon undress. He was wet with strands of black hair sticking to his forehead. He peeled off his white shirt, his skin glistening in the soft light of the room. This is real happiness I think. Or at least a part of it.

"I had fun tonight." She said combing her fingers through her wet hair. "We should totally keep in touch with Spencer and Andrew after we leave here."

He nodded. "Yeah they're actually okay. Old Andy could stand to loosen up though."

"He's got a lot on his mind." She replied, her eyes following his pants when they dropped to the floor. Sometimes she thought Damon was allergic to underwear. "But I think meeting us might have helped them. It's helped me. I mean knowing that we could be together for years and then when I get a little older you won't freak out makes me feel good."

He snorted and padded naked over to the bed. "You're gorgeous now and it's obvious you are only going to get more gorgeous with time. Why would I leave you?"

"Why do people do anything?" She sighed. "We can make plans for the future and they could all be blown to hell tomorrow. Frankly, I'm scared what will happen when we go home. Not about us but about everything else."

Propping up the pillows, he rested back to them and nudged her side with his foot. "We've beat shit before and we'll keep doing it. That's what we do. Long as you don't doubt us we'll be okay."

Bonnie rolled onto her stomach and smiled. "I don't and I haven't for a long time. We're solid."

Pause. "So where to when we leave here?"

Damon grabbed his phone off the table. "Anywhere you wanna go, princess. We've got a full tank of gas and no need for money."

We could hit Miami or New York. Hell we could go all the way to Las Vegas and gamble. I bet Damon would love that; he'd be right at home playing poker or something. I guess we could do the same in Atlantic City. "Do you like to gamble? We could go to Vegas or Atlantic City."

He paused mid text. "Vegas has strippers and shows."

She smirked. "Shows sound nice, I don't know about the strippers. Not sure I could watch some girl give you a lap dance."

"Really? I could watch some hot girl give you a lap dance all night." He wiggled his brows at her.

That doesn't surprise me. "We'll see I suppose. But it might be fun. We might win some money and then I could pay for my own college stuff. I don't know. Just not ready to go back to Mystic Falls yet."
Damon finished with his phone and placed it back on the table. He slipped down the bed until he
was face to face with her. "Me either. We'll try Vegas and see how that goes. With any luck we
won't get caught up with some gangsters and I won't have to be all dashing and heroic saving you."

She laughed and kissed him softly. "Yeah maybe I'll have to be all dashing and heroic saving you." A beat. "Is it weird if I say I don't mind that kinda trouble? Like some asshole hits on me and you scare him away? Or some girl tries to get in your pants and I shut her down? Which reminds me I have to remember that poison ivy spell. But it's fun, ya know?" Her delicate fingers smoothed across his chest. "I like the look on their faces when they realize you're with me. Especially vampire girls though I think they'd be shocked either way since I'm human."

"Newbies." He inched closer and nuzzled her throat. "Any sane vampire would immediately get why I'm with you. Hell they'd probably be more surprised to find out that you're actually with me considering how fucked up I am. Witches are a hot commodity in the supernatural world. So far Andrew is the only guy I know that has one willingly besides myself." He placed light kisses on her skin. "Katherine wanted one and fuck, Klaus felt he needed three to get the job done. But it was mine that came out on top. I'm awesome."

Bonnie laughed again. "Congratulations on all your success."

"Thank you." Rising up onto his elbow, he caressed her cheek. "I couldn't have done it without you."

His words made her feel all toasty inside. "I do what I can."

~Fin~
What Happens In Vegas

Chapter Summary

What happens in Vegas doesn't always stay in Vegas.

What Happens In Vegas

"So the town hasn't burned down without me?"

Sitting on the balcony of their expensive Vegas hotel suite, Bonnie stared out at the brightly colored lights of the city and listened as her best friend giggled on the other end of the phone. Old habits were hard to break and that included checking in on the people she cared about more than anything else. Even though she was happy to be away. Even though she was happy to have Damon all to herself. Even though she'd never felt more free than she did with Mystic Falls far in her rearview mirror. She just couldn't shake worrying about her friends a little bit. Damon said it was because she had a kind heart but she wondered; if they needed her right now would she go?

Past Bonnie would have immediately answered yes without hesitation but that was the Bonnie that still had her Grams. The Bonnie whose mother wasn't a vampire and who had not been stalked by a pony drawing hybrid bent on whining and threatening until he got his way. The person that she was now felt harder and more mature.

The person that she was now realized if she didn't take care of herself she'd suffer more than anyone else. And where was the law or rule that said that had to be the case? Not that she was comparing tragedy notes with Elena but how was it fair for her mother to leave to save a child that wasn't even her own? How was it fair that she had to grow up motherless while Elena did at least get several years with hers? Why did the world expect her and others to pay with their lives and happiness so that Elena continued to come out on top?

Frowning at her thoughts, she wet her lips and stretched out her legs under the soft beige blanket. She wasn't sure where that line of thinking originated anymore but sometimes she found this odd sense of resentment where her best friend was concerned. Once she'd said that she would die for her—now she wondered why she'd ever thought that in the first place. Deep down she sometimes wondered if Elena was still really her best friend. There was just so much drama surrounding them. From Elena's crush on Damon to lots of other stuff.

It made Bonnie sad sometimes because before the Salvatores came back to town they were thick as thieves. She couldn't help but wonder where those girls had done.

"Bonnie? Hello? Are you there?"

"Sorry. I'm sorry what did you say?"

Elena chuckled softly. "I said no things are quiet here actually. It's weird to be honest. I guess I'm so used to being scared for my life or whatever that when I'm not, it doesn't seem normal anymore. Is that how it feels for you?"

Bonnie rubbed the back of her neck idly. "Kinda. But at the same time I'm having so much fun with
Damon. Words I never thought I would utter but seriously this trip has been amazing. I feel like—like we've grown so much closer." Pause. "You know when we got together everything was amped up and sometimes I would think that once things calmed down for good, we'd fizzle out and just be stuck with this magical connection. But it's not like that at all. It's been just the two of us for weeks now and if possible I want him more than ever."

"Aw that's so sweet." Elena cooed dreamily. "You always have been the one to get to Damon's core and not get burnt by it."

Bonnie arched a brow. "I've gotten burned, maybe not as bad as others but I've gotten burned. I think the difference is that I burned back."

Her friend hummed in response. "Could be. In any case I am happy that you're doing okay. I know this has been a trying year for you."

Sometimes Bonnie wondered if Elena was as sincere as she claimed to be. "Yeah. Having ones' vampire mother take off on them for a second time doesn't exactly scream best year ever. And all of the Klaus shit…" She rubbed her forehead. "If I didn't have to I'd never come home."

Elena gasped in surprise. "Really? What about your dad? I mean your whole life is here."

**True but it hasn't been much of a life lately.** "My dad who is always gone for work and my life that usually consists of casting spells that may or may not be sending me to an early grave." She tossed back the blanket and stood, walking over to the thick stone railing. "Do you know how much magic I've had to do since Damon and I left? None. Everything I've did has been just for fun and it's been so nice. Screwing with people; this cougar put her hand on Damon's thigh at the blackjack table and I made tiny cinders from this dude's cigar set the back of her wig on fire. It was hilarious."

The brunette was quiet a second before replying, "That doesn't sound like you."

Bonnie smirked at the memory—*I bet it was hard getting out that fire extinguisher cream.* "Well the old me would have called her a tranny mess and glared until she left. The new me likes being more proactive when someone goes after what is mine. Besides it's not like I set her on fire. I knew someone would help her before things got too intense."

Elena shifted around noisily. "Have you been using a lot of magic since you've been gone? I mean—I mean that spell you did to help us catch Klaus was a major one. Even your mother said it might change you."

"I haven't been bringing in the tide but I've been having fun. And *my mother's* advice is worth beans because of how she treated me." Rolling her pretty green eyes, she examined her nails. "She didn't care anyway. She felt guilty about ditching me for a second time so she was just trying to save face."

"I'm sure she loves you, Bonnie. She just—she's lost." Elena said slowly. "Anyway I just think you should be careful when it comes to your power. Using too much might seriously hurt you."

"It's funny how no one cares about my well-being when my magic is the only thing standing between them and death." Frowning, she ran her fingers through her hair. "I could kill myself but it would be okay as long as they're fine."

"That's not true. I *never* want you to get hurt and I—I'm sorry when you do. Especially if it's for me." Elena replied fiercely. "I know things have been strained between us because of Damon but you're still my best friend, Bonnie. You're the only sister I have and I love you."

Bonnie exhaled deeply and pushed down the strange whispers telling her it was all just a smoke
screen. She knew deep down that Elena did care about her; it was just getting harder lately to honestly believe it. Even since that spell she did with Jeremy… "I love you too. Don't mind me. I… wanted shrimp but the hotel ran out and I've been kinda cranky since then."

Elena laughed lightly. "Aren't you guys staying someone totally posh?"

"Yeah but there are several big wigs here and you know how it goes. Damon can't compel everyone." She explained. "Anyway though yeah keep me posted and if you guys need us we'll come home." Maybe.

"I will. Tell Damon I said hi." Pause. "Take care Bonnie."

Bonnie wet her lips. "You too, Elena. Bye."

Ending the call, she tightened her fingers around her cell phone and huffed. *Maybe I'm pmsing or something, that would explain my short fuse where some things are concerned.* She and Elena had basically made up since their small falling out but she was curious as to if her friend still had feelings for Damon. And would it be a problem when they returned to town? A part of her said no but she couldn't read thoughts so she would never know for sure. Not that she could blame Elena—Damon was magnificent on his worst day.

And he was hers.

He was all she had if she really thought about it.

*My father is hardly ever around and most of my friends have hectic life shit going on right now. My mother couldn't leave fast enough after helping with the Klaus spell and my grandmother is dead. And I have no way to get in touch with Cousin Lucy. I could so easily be alone.*

Tears pricked her eyes and she sniffed, suddenly angry. Why her? Why did she have to suffer so badly? What was wrong with her?

Growling, she hauled back and threw her phone off into the distance as far as she could. She hoped that it didn't hit anyone but if it did, oh well. People needed to look where they were going.

"Upset with your data plan?" Damon leaned against the glass doors leading into the lavish hotel room, shirtless with messy bed head.

"I'll get another one." She whispered quickly wiping at her eyes.

He frowned and strolled over to stand beside her. "What's wrong? Elena piss you off?"

She shook her head. "No more than usual. I just…" She sighed. "Remember when we were still feeling each other out, and I had that fucked up dream where Emily tried to choke me? And you said you didn't care if I lived or died?"

Damon nodded and watched her. "I was in denial. Obviously."

She smiled a little. "I know. But what if that had never changed? What if I'd never felt comfortable being linked with you again? You might be with Elena right now and I—I'd be alone."

His brows knitted together. "You wouldn't be alone. You'd still have the hapless wonders otherwise known as Caroline and Matt and what's his face."

*True. But… "It's not the same as having you."* A beat. "You had countless flings over the years—"
some you even really liked—but it wasn't the same as having Katherine. I just don't know when my life turned into this, Damon. When it went from stupid teenage problems to having almost nothing."

Damon reached over and took her hand, entwining their fingers together. "I don't know either, babe. I think your mom is a bitch for all that she's done to you. But you're awesome and you have wonderful taste in men." He nudged her shoulder playfully. "And I get it, you're wondering if there is something wrong with you but there isn't. Other people are assholes. My dad was an asshole and he didn't give a fuck what Stefan and I wanted. If this were 1864 he wouldn't care that I loved you. All he'd see is skin color but maybe more than that the fact that you're a witch. People let you down—it's what they do."

She gazed up at him, falling into his piercing blue eyes. "I won't let you down."

He smirked. "You're not exactly people either, are you cupcake?"

The nickname made her snort but her spirits felt a tad lifted. "Do you think I'm using too much magic?"

Damon checked his watch before wrapping his left arm around her chest. "I think if it makes you happy to nearly set someone's wig on fire then you should do it. It's not like she got hurt or whatever. And she was kinda asking for it by molesting me."

Bonnie chuckled. "My magic used to scare me but it doesn't anymore. It makes me feel empowered, and I don't wanna let go of that. Considering what we have to go through in Mystic Falls having more confidence in myself isn't a bad thing." She turned into him, rubbing her cheek against the cool skin of his chest. "And being a little naughty amuses me. Plus like you said I've only did bad things to people who tried to get into your pants. I'm not going around hurting orphans or whatever."

He massaged the back of her neck. "Lemme guess, Elena thinks you should cool it?" She nodded and he continued. "While I'm sure she's just worried about you I think you're okay. You're dealing with a lot and acting out helps. I better than anyone know all about that. At least you're not taking your frustrations out of family like I did."

Not yet. Slipping between him and the railing, she patted his biceps and smiled as he lifted her so that she could perch on the cold stone. She looked down to the road and cars the many stories below, knowing that if she slipped she would plummet to her death. And yet with Damon's hands on her waist she'd never felt safer. "Are you enjoying Vegas?"

"It has it's good points." He nuzzled her throat, kissing her pulse point. "Winning a lot of money and pissing off people being pretty high on the list. I thought we were going to get kicked of the casino if I rolled another seven."

"Hah they did look pretty mad." She admitted. She wrapped her arms around his neck and played with his hair, just looking at him. "Hungry?"

Damon wiggled his brows. "That an invitation?"

"If you want. I don't mind."

"Mm I know and later I will take you up on that offer, but I'm good. Got plenty of blood bags hidden in our little cooler."

Bonnie never forgot that Damon was a vampire and it wasn't because it was glaringly obvious or because sometimes he took off his ring to shower and afterwards would walk through a beam of sunlight only to curse loudly when he was burned. It was because sometimes he'd say something in
passing about something she couldn't possibly know about. Some event that happened a long time before she was born, and she would stop and say to herself my boyfriend is a vampire. She didn't care anymore but she couldn't help but wonder how his extremely old age figured into his attraction to her.

She was just a seventeen year old at heart, underneath the witchy powers and sassy attitude. Why did he want her when he could have anyone? Hold out for twenty years and maybe find someone better. He talked about things like down the road and forever, and she couldn't shake the feeling that he was actually being honest with her. That for whatever reason he saw himself with her for years and years. Like Spencer and Andrew but without the despair.

But why? Or is it not the vampire aspect but just like any other normal couple? Like high school sweethearts or something. "Do you find humans terribly boring?"

"Not when they're naked." He mumbled against her skin. "Humans have done some interesting shit over the years. Seriously. I mean just look at the washing machine for instance."

She laughed and kissed his forehead. "True but I meant more generally. How do you know that while you're with me you're not missing out on something much better? Or that like ten years from now there isn't an even more amazing witch out that you'd be better off with?"

Damon squeezed her thighs. "How do you know there isn't some other handsome vampire out there for you?"

"Because out of the three that have been interested in me, two tried to kill me." Her mind drifted back to thoughts of Ben and Klaus. "Well I suppose technically they all tried to kill me. So yeah I don't have a good track record with male vampires."

"What you and I had was a misunderstanding." Sighing, he ran his fingers through her hair. "Stop being all depressed, baby. We're having a good time so there is no need to think about what could happen. For the better part of my undead life I chased a pipe dream. I was so intent on freeing Katherine, thinking we'd be together forever. And what did I get? Just the knowledge that she never gave a damn about me. Not one single little bit." He met her gaze, his expression open and soft. "Why would I look anywhere else when I've already found what I want?"

I should be used to the fact that he doesn't mind showing me his softer side but sometimes it still surprises me. Yet I like that it surprises me. "You wouldn't. You're obsessive like that."

He snickered. "Maybe but I think it always pays off in the end. I got you, didn't I?"

Bonnie turned her face so that she could attempt to hide her smile. "I let you get me otherwise you'd still be stalking me."

He shrugged. "The details don't matter. Besides we all know you let me get you because you were dying to have sex with me." He slid his hand up her shirt and cupped her breast. "Practically throwing yourself at me in our dreams. I was lucky to get out alive…so to speak."

She laughed. "I seem to remember it a little differently."

"You've been knocked on your head too many times." He slipped on his harmless human face. "Feel better now?"

Yeah I think I do. "Yes. Except ugh, I'm gonna need a new phone."

"I got what you need to get you a new one. It's in my pants."
"I don't think I can hand that to the sales clerk."

Damon opened his mouth to give what would have no doubt been a witty retort when someone banged loudly on their door. Damon frowned and pulled her away from the edge, setting her onto her feet before sauntering into the bedroom and through the living room to the door. He peeped through the keyhole and reached for the knob. When it was opened a distinguished man in an expensive suit was revealed on the other side, with two bald men flanking him.

"Can I help you?" Damon inquired with his usual air of boredom.

"Mrs. Salvatore I am Mr. Blake. My associates and I would like to invite you to a poker tournament being held in the basement in an hour." Mr. Blake pulled a card out of his pocket and handed it to Damon. "It is by invitation only. I…heard about your winning streak earlier and thought you might like something where the stakes are a considerable amount higher."

Damon looked over the card. "I'll think about it." Before Mr. Blake could say anything else Damon shut the door in his face and returned to the bedroom. "Well that totally sounds legal, doesn't it? And here I thought we were going to have to spend tonight watching tv."

Bonnie folded her arms over her chest. "Yeah I don't wanna go watch you play poker with a bunch of dudes who will probably try to beat you up or kill you after you take all their money." She threw herself onto the bed and stretched out. "I'll stay in."

"And miss the chance to star in our very own action movie?" He stretched his arms high above his head and she followed the line of his body with her eyes, grinning to herself. "Besides what happens in Vegas stays in Vegas which means I could kill them all and you wouldn't be able to be mad once we left."

Yawning, she rested her head onto a pillow. "They're probably horrible people anyway so I doubt I would be that upset to see them go."

Damon sat on the edge of the bed and rubbed her back. "You're getting pretty lax in your judging. Everything okay?"

"Just a little tired." She admitted slowly. "We partied almost all night last night. I kinda just wanna stay in tonight and order tons of room service, but if you wanna go play poker it's cool. I'll entertain myself."

"I thought we agreed you'll only do that when I can watch." He teased. "Are you sure you don't mind me going though? What if I run into more cougars?"

"Then you're gonna just have to fend for yourself." She mused walking her fingers up his arm. "Would you like some pepper spray or something?"

Damon pouted and got up to find a shirt. "Let's hope none of them have vervain spray."

Bonnie rolled onto her back and stared up at the ceiling, letting her mind drift to nothing in particular. "That seems totally unlikely but not a bad idea. It would help us back home—or rather it would help me and Elena I suppose. Perhaps Jeremy too."

Looking at himself in the mirror, Damon popped his collar. "Old Jer will need something now that it's possible his immorality ring will one day drive him crazy if he keeps wearing it."

Frowning a little, Bonnie suddenly realized that they hadn't had one conversation about Alaric. At least nothing of substance if she couldn't remember anyway. She knew that wasn't really Damon's
thing; he didn't like showing he cared too often because he saw it as some type of weakness but she knew he had to be feeling something over his friend turning into a homicidal vampire bent on killing other vampires.

"I'm sorry about Alaric by the way. I know you guys were actually friends." She replied gently, testing the waters. "If you want I could search or a spell that could at least get him back into a normal state of mind."

Damon's face went carefully blank. "I doubt that there is anything that can be done about him now. The Alaric we all knew is gone." Pause. "It'll be easier to kill him if I remember that."

She felt her heart ache for him. "It might not come to that."

He clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "It's us or him. It's already to that. Besides I doubt Rebecca or Elijah will just roll over and let him stake them." A beat. "Alaric was a good guy and he didn't deserve what happened to him. And you didn't deserve to be used as a Happy Meal to get him to turn. None of us deserve the bullshit we've been put through lately."

Amen to that. Which means I need to be practicing more magic instead of slacking off. The stronger I am the more I will be able to handle whatever comes our way. I don't have the luxury to play nice anymore and frankly I don't want to. "I love you."

"I love you too." He smoothed down his hair and blew his reflection a kiss. "Okay I'm gonna go win us some more money or possibly get shot. Either way it should be a fun night." Winking, he strolled over to the bed and dropped a kiss onto her soft lips. "Don't wait up."

Bonnie watched him go and chuckled lowly to herself. "Be careful!" She wondered if he would listen.

The room was almost deathly quiet without Damon shuffling around or teasing her and it made her wonder how she was going to go back to living basically alone after spending all of this time with him. She liked waking up with his arms around her and falling asleep with her head on his chest. She could probably stay with him when her father was away but Stefan would be there and Elena would probably be popping in; they would have no real privacy. And while her home was nice it wasn't a freaken mansion. We should just get a place of our own.

She snorted. Yeah like that would happen any time soon.

It was just when she was in her Damon bubble things made sense. Even if sometimes she questioned why he wanted her she knew deep down it was because he loved her. It was because they were threaded together and willing to die for each other. And he was right—though she would never let him hear her say that—but he had spent over a century loving one woman. Who was to say that he couldn't do it again with her? Better though because she returned his affections whole-heartedly.

Bonnie once thought that the world—because it was so big—was a scary place where anything could happen. However the world apparently had never been the issue. The issue was Mystic Falls. It attracted evil like it was using some type of siren's call or maybe Elena was the siren. Creatures wanted her dead or they wanted to use her for some unknown reason. And since Stefan would never let that happen it meant he was usually in the crossfire. Which put Damon in the crossfire because he loved his brother and wanted him safe. Everyone else just sort of got yanked into the gravity of the situation.
A shiver ran down her spine and she shuddered, wrapping the blanket over her legs. She had a bad feeling in the pit of her stomach and she didn't know why. She just knew it had to do with returning to Mystic Falls. At first she hadn't wanted to go home because she'd been having too much fun but lately it had become more than that. Lately it had become an honest to God fear that something terrible would happen to Damon. There was a darkness shadowing him in her dreams and she had no clue how to make it go away. She supposed she just had to be secure in the thought that if something came after him she would destroy it no matter what.

She would not play fair and she would show no mercy. She'd let the town die if that was what it took to save him. It was a fucked up choice but it was hers to make, and when it came to Damon, it would always be an easy one.

~*~

This is possibly the most screwed up idea you have ever had. Or the most brilliant. Honestly they go hand in hand so much it's hard to tell.

In the era of prohibition and flapper girls Damon had fallen in with an unsavory crowd of gangsters that provided alcohol to local speakeasies. Really he'd mostly just liked the clothes but it had been fun, smoking cigars and compelling the boss to let him be his right hand man. Yeah he could have been in charge but at the time he hadn't cared for that. Getting to rough people up and kill the ones that didn't cooperate had been way more fun. Anyway being a thug suited him. Sitting in the back of a smoky club while some pretty dame serenaded from the stage and people drunk themselves into a stupor; the entire lifestyle turned hard working stiffs into such easy marks. And easy dinner.

Back then immersing himself into the culture was all he could do not to think about Katherine. And by then he'd met Sage many years before and learned the tricks of the trade—he was more or less enjoying being a vampire.

So sitting in a warm basement with shifty looking men brought all of that back to him. Made him feel old for a split second before he remembered how goddamn handsome he still was, and that there was a gorgeous woman waiting for him in bed. Bonnie would have liked that time period though—segregation and shit aside. Had she been a vampire it wouldn't have mattered of course. He wouldn't have let anyone treat her bad or made her feel like she didn't belong.

His point was that sometimes he missed being a gangster and wearing suits and fedoras. Sometimes he honestly forgot certain parts of his life because he'd been alive so damn long. Sometimes he couldn't remember what color his mother's eyes were; that fucked him up even more but whatever. He wouldn't change anything even if he could. Well maybe the Katherine bullshit but other stuff had worked out.

Other slightly off kilter ideas.

It had came to him as he'd puffed out a perfectly cigar smoke O and tossed his Royal Flush onto the table, much to the chagrin of the other players. Especially the guy with a Full House. After winning twenty grand without much effort he'd folded on the next round, saying he wanted to quit while he was ahead. Mr. Blake had not liked that—probably wanted a chance to win his money back—but Damon had grinned, collected his chips and left.

Okay so Blake's chumps had jumped him afterwards in the elevator, it was almost expected really. He'd left them alive but with broken noses. He wasn't sure if there would be anymore problems but he sort of hoped not for Bonnie's sake. Moving to a new hotel or having to leave Vegas altogether when they weren't ready would suck.
They still had to visit those strippers.

After the altercation in the elevator he'd cashed in his chips and compelled the clerk at the desk into thinking he signed tax forms when he'd done no such thing. Then he'd taken his bag of cash and left, opting for a safety deposit box for most of it instead of simply keeping it in the room. The last thing he needed was those assholes breaking in and trying to rob the place while Bonnie got some rest. Though to be honest he wasn't sure who he should be worried about considering she might set them on fire if they tried to hurt her.

Anyway it was a few hours later by the time he returned to their suite thankfully to find the door still on its hinges. The television was on in the sitting room but the place was otherwise quiet and he wasn't surprised to find Bonnie curled up in the middle of the bed asleep. She looked peaceful so he didn't make a fuss as he undressed and crawled in beside her, nuzzling the back of her neck. She always smelled so wonderful. He really liked it when he could detect touches of his own cologne on her skin.

He kissed the soft flesh beneath her ear and exhaled, trying to decide if he wanted to wake her up or not. He could just go to bed and wait until tomorrow but Damon Salvatore was not a patient guy. At one point he must have been considering how long he'd waited for Katherine but he wasn't anymore. And ya know he didn't have to wait for Bonnie because she was always there for him. She went to bat for him and called him on his bullshit. She was perfect and sexy and tasted like apple pie. And his. All his.

The only problem was that in Mystic Falls people—and creatures—didn't respect his dibs as much as strangers they came across. Hell stupid little Jeremy would still get that look sometimes like he wanted to throw her into a car just to get her away from him. He bet there was only a matter of time before Elijah returned and decided he had to have Bonnie. Rebecca too. But as sexy as that sounded on paper he didn't share.

*Oh just do it. Sure it won't make a difference to other vampires or whatever, but it's still pretty awesome. And it might make Stefan shit himself…which is always a plus.*

Smiling, he smoothed his hand up Bonnie's thigh to her waist and gave her a light shake. "Wait up, Bon Bon."

Bonnie grumbled and pressed her face into the pillow before mumbling out, "Don't call me that." She yawned loudly. "What time is it?"

"After midnight." He whispered. "Sometimes I think about the number you've done on me and it doesn't seem real. And yeah I was pissed off as hell when I first found out about the link, and I said and did some fucked up shit but I'm glad it didn't screw us up too bad." Damon licked his lips. "I don't know what I did to deserve someone so awesome but I'm glad you continue to put up with me."

Blinking slowly and become more awake, Bonnie shifted onto her back so that she could see him better. "Is everything okay? You didn't kill those guys, did you? If you did I'm sure they provoked you."

He smirked. "No but they did try to kick my ass after I won big. I just—you make me kinda crazy Bonnie Bennett. Sometimes it's possessive crazy and other times it's just regular crazy."

Bonnie giggled and reached for the lamp on the bedside table, flicking it on. "Are you high or something?"
Possibly. "No but you're introspective thinking earlier was kinda contagious and it made me think about us. Our relationship. We've had so much damn fun on this trip, haven't we? We're like… compatible even when there isn't any danger. Maybe even more so. Honestly I'd wondered and I don't want that to sound like a slight but we did get together because I tried to kill you."

"Yeah but we stay together because you stopped that." She grinned sleepily, and damn it if he didn't find it adorable. "Look Damon, earlier I was—Elena and her magic talk just sort of got to me okay. I'm trying to be friends with her again but I don't think we'll ever be how we were. Sometimes I forget what she did but then when I remember it's like it just happened and I feel that anger all over again. But us? I'm secure with us."

His fingers tapped her lips. "You one hundred percent about that? You wanna be with me forever no matter what? Cause you're young, Bonnie. And not just by my standards but by normal ones. If you think about it, it doesn't make sense for a teenage girl to want someone so old."

"I know what I feel." She replied. "I also know that even if we break up and get back together, no one is ever gonna be there for me like you've been. I never wanna give that up. I never wanna give you up. Besides if we were just high school sweethearts we wouldn't be having this talk, we'd be just going on our emotions. Sometimes love lasts. I haven't loved someone for over a century but if I do, it'll be you."

Damon kissed her then, deep and slow and passionate until she was gasping and reaching for the ends of her tank top to remove it. As much as he wanted to continue her lovely train of thought, he realized if he were sidetracked now he'd never get back to what he wanted.

"So I had a crazy thought." He murmured against her lips. "On which I totally blame on Vegas."

"What?" She arched a brow. "We're not hiring hookers, Damon."

He laughed and produced a little black box from under the covers. "I was thinking something more traditional, actually."

That got her attention. She sat straight up and very slowly took the book from him, like it would bite. "Damon, what did you do?"

He smirked and kissed her bare arm. "Open it."

Bonnie swallowed thickly and pried off the lid. "Holy shit! That's a big ass diamond." She gaped at the shiny ring nestled inside the soft velvet. "This must have cost a fortune."

He shrugged. "Fifteen thousand. It's a princess cut or so sad the hyper sales girl. Pretty sure the commission she got from my sale will put her through college or something. See? I am a good guy."

She looked at him, her eyes round and wide. "Are you asking me to marry you?"

Another shrug; so calm and blasé he seemed about the whole thing. "What if I was? Keeping in mind that we'd probably have a long, long engagement until you were possibly in your twenties. But what if I was? What would you say?"

"I'd say...I'd say-" Bonnie trailed off and pressed her lips together. "I'd say this is one of the craziest ideas you've ever had... I'd say when my dad found out he'd try to murder you. I'd say Elena and Caroline are going to die. I'd say this is so totally insane and kinda unlike you that I'm worried you've been replaced by a pod person." She bit her bottom lip with a tiny frown between her brows. "Oh, Damon..."
She stared at the ring again, getting lost in thought.

And Damon waited.

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

It couldn't last but neither thought this is how it would end.

Bonnie had reached a point in her life where not much scared her anymore if it didn't deal with someone she cared about in danger. Case in point; the gun pointed at her head by the burly man dragging her through the hallway to the underground car garage. Granted having a weapon trained on you wasn't easy but she wasn't scared at all because Damon was right behind her. He was in the same situation but she knew the plan—it had been her idea—and she'd whispered it under her breath while they were still in their hotel room.

Three minutes. Three minutes after Damon basically proposed the door was kicked open and Mr. Blake appeared, telling them to get dressed and come quietly or he would shoot her in the leg. For starters. Naturally Damon could have taken them all out in a second but then they would have had bodies in their room and how did you explain something like that to the police? It would have caused un-needed attention to them when they were just trying to lay low and have some fun.

So they'd went with Mr. Blake and his men listening as he demanded all of his money back or else. She knew she should have been focusing on their circumstances but she let his threats become white noise so that she could instead think about Damon's insane proposal. Seriously was there something wrong with him? On what planet was getting engaged a good idea? And why did it fill her with an odd sense of accomplishment?

Their relationship had not started out normal by any means but surprisingly everything following that night in the news had been wonderful. Almost dying and being stalked by several crazy fiends aside of course. But marriage was a huge deal. Marriage meant moving in together and sharing a mortgage and committing your life to someone until you died. Sure there was divorce or whatever but she didn't want to think about that. She'd been young but she could remember how it'd affected her father and she did not want to go through it.

Damon was different however. Forever honestly meant forever and maybe she was stupid, but she believed him when he said he'd never want anyone else.

Still there were like a million reasons to say no. To hand back the ring and suggest they just keep going like they were going. But—god—for the life of her she didn't give a shit about any of them. Besides it wasn't like they were going to a chapel anytime soon and getting hitched. It was just—it was a gesture to prove how much he loved her. A crazy, heart exploding gesture that would kill her friends when they found out and that of course would be half of the fun, seeing the look on everyone's faces—especially Elena.

Could I even wear the ring around my father? Would he totally freak out? Would I have to put it on a chain when I was around him or would he not notice at all?

The only problem was that nothing was set in stone and she had no idea what the future held beyond
spending as much time with Damon as she possibly could. It didn't make much sense to throw her eggs all into one basket, especially at such a young age but she didn't exactly feel seventeen. And she honestly doubted anyone would care about her the way Damon did. Their connection was in the blood and it was extremely powerful, too powerful to be overlooked or ruined by something like logic.

Snapping back to attention as Mr. Blake pushed them into a secluded area of the car garage where cameras didn't reach; she rubbed her bare upper arms and wished she'd been able to grab a sweater from the room. *Focus Bonnie there are more important things happening than chilly night air.*

"I don't have your money." Damon said leisurely. "Well I don't have *all* of it. The whole point of playing and winning was so that I could buy something sparkly with it. Besides, why should I have to give it back anyway?"

Mr. Blake raised his gun. "Perhaps because I have this pointed in your face? I do not know how things are done where you are from Mr. Salvatore, but strangers do not come into my house and take what's mine. You were supposed to give me a chance to win my money back."

Damon smirked. "You mean cheat and get it back?"

The other man shrugged. "It's a system that has worked for many years now. So this is what is going to happen. You are going to get my money back or…" He turned the weapon onto Bonnie. "I am going to put a hole in your pretty wife's head. Something tells me she won't be so pretty afterwards however."

Damon glanced to Bonnie. "Do I really have to stand here and listen to this anymore?"

She chuckled. "No, go ahead. I think we're in the clear."

Before Mr. Blake could ask what in the hell they were talking about he was crashing to the ground with a broken neck. Damon dispatched his men with much of the same finesse, moving so fast that they honestly had no idea what hit them. They crumpled like a balled up piece of paper, eyes still open but lifeless, staring wide at nothing.

Bonnie had enough decency in her to cringe but she didn't look away, not even as Damon started rooting through their pockets. "What should we do with the bodies?"

"Well we could steal a car, take them out into the desert and hope a coyote eats them." He suggested, handing her their wallets. "Or you could burn them to a crisp and we could get the hell out of his city."

She made a face. "Both of those are gross but I don't wanna steal a car. If the cops caught us with their bodies in the trunk we'd been in big trouble. And you'd probably kill the cops and…I'm not quite there yet."

He strolled over to a water truck and smashed the lock, pushing up the screen to yank out a large jug of fresh spring water. "Then fire it is." He drenched the bodies and looked around to make sure they were still alone. "Do your thing, witchy."

*I'm so gonna need therapy after this.*

~*~

Sitting on the passenger side of Damon's vehicle after destroying whatever footage the cameras might have picked up and checking out of the hotel, Bonnie quietly watched the scenery fly by. She
remembered being a little girl craving adventure but figuring it would never happen. Or at least she would have to wait until she was an adult and on her own. Little had she known that one day she'd fall in love with a crazy vampire that lived by his own set of rules. Had she known she probably would have hid under her bed for the rest of her life.

Chewing on the inside of her cheek, she shifted and gazed at Damon as he drove. The lights of the dashboard danced in his eyes and his expression was calm. Serene even. She reached over and touched his hand, pulling it into her lap so that she could stroke his fingers. "So I have an answer for you if you want it."

His brows narrowed but he kept his gaze on the road. "I was under the assumption your non answer was your answer."

She snorted. "Be serious. I would never do that to you. I'd be totally honest either way because that's important in a relationship. Especially ours." She wet her lips. "Besides I'm pretty sure you know my answer is yes."

Damon grinned. "I had an inkling but sometimes you surprise me. And sometimes you're annoying on purpose."

She laughed and leaned across the seat to kiss his cheek. "Where's the ring?" His hip shifted up and she giggled, sticking her hand into his pocket. "The engagement ring Damon, not the cock ring."

"Ha ha." He said dryly. "Keep that up and I'll toss it out the window."

"You won't." She yanked out the box and opened it, slipping the gorgeous ring onto her finger. "Jesus. I can't believe you got me this."

Merging off the highway and up to a vacant rest area, Damon slid the gear into park. "Okay so technically it was a crazy spur of the moment idea but I like it. Why should we wait until you're in your twenties to get engaged when we can just be engaged now? I want people to know you're mine."

That could sound creepy but it's actually very romantic. "And when people freak out because I'm too young and we hardly know each other or whatever?"

He shrugged, running his fingers through his hair. "Fuck them. Not many people are going to be on board with us anyway so screw them and whatever they might say. You love me and I love you. The end."

Bonnie admired her ring again; god it's big. "You're right. I just—I don't know the thought of people judging us makes me mad. Especially since it'll be mostly you they'll have problems with. My dad has no idea you're a vampire or that vampires are real but he's going to flip his shit because he assumes you're older and possibly taking advantage of me." She exhaled deeply. "Not to mention our so called friends will all have to give their input. I wish things could be easier for us just once. I wish I'd tell Elena and Caroline and instead of looking scandalized, they squeal and immediately wanna know who is going to be the maid of honor. It's like even after all this time people still try to talk me outta being with you and it's fucken irritating."

Damon nodded in understanding. "Yeah but maybe if things were easy we wouldn't be together. Are you happy?"

"Very." She smiled at him. "This is awesome. And like you said we can be engaged for a long time and no one will think it's weird. Though I doubt that will stop me from looking at wedding dress
magazines. But I did that before I even knew you so…"

He squeezed her thigh. "You're cute. So where to now?"

_Good question._ "Somewhere where we can just relax for a bit. The whole mess with Mr. Blake still sort of has me on edge. What were the odds that we'd get caught up in that kinda crap?"

"Pretty good considering our luck." He stared at her. "You okay with me killing them? Seems like you would have had a problem with that sort of thing in the past…"

That was true. She would have been upset knowing that Damon had murdered someone but things were different now. There were bad people in the world and sometimes those bad people deserved to get hurt. "'They were terrible people. Hell they'd probably killed before or beat someone up. Besides it was us or them and I wasn't going to be shot so that they could continue being assholes."

He smirked and shifted a little, leaning his head back to the head rest. "That makes perfect sense to me." The hand on her thigh tugged a little at the yellow fabric of her dress. "C'mere."

Maybe it was silly but Damon could still make her blush. Sometimes all he had to do was look at her with desire in his eyes and she could feel her cheeks burning before her heart would began to pound loudly in her ears. It was a feeling she hoped she never lost; the way he could tell her without saying a word how much he wanted her. Needed her. Possibly even _craved_. She wondered if she had the same effect on him but decided she most likely did.

Bonnie was thankful for the large foot wells of the SUV because it made maneuvering that much easier. She kicked off her dainty shoes and arched, shimming out of her panties to lay them on the dashboard. Damon reclined his seat back a few inches grabbed her hips, lifting her effortlessly onto his lap. She laughed, bracing a hand against the window so that she didn't hit her head against it. They were under a flickering streetlamp in a place where families stopped to stretch their legs but she couldn't seem to get herself to care if a minivan happened to drive up. She was happy. And that happiness only spread when Damon kissed her.

It ran through her veins like wild fire mingling with lust and some other emotion she couldn't pin down. Damon was good at most things but kissing was especially one of them. He could be forceful yet careful at the same time; and he always held her like he meant every single touch or caress. His hand slipped between her legs and she shuddered, leaning back so that she could unbutton his shirt enough to see the paleness of his chest and collar bone. She loved to mark him up even if the marks never lasted.

With the thumb of one hand slip-sliding over her clitoris, he managed to get his jeans unbuttoned and down to his knees with the other. A low muttered _fuck_ was all the warning she got before he was pulling her down onto his erection, sinking into her until there was nowhere else to go. Bonnie whimpered, spreading her thighs further, wanting to feel him as deeply as possible. The windows fogged up in no time and a few times Bonnie's back struck the steer wheel hard, causing the horn to blow but she didn't care. Damon was whispering filthy things in her ear and his cock was hitting all the right places, and nothing else in the world mattered but this moment between them.

~*~

The motel wasn't posh or ritzy—it was actually kinda ho hum but Damon didn't give a shit. He'd stayed in worse places especially since he was born before the invention that was indoor plumbing.
As far as he could tell there were no bed bugs and the sheets were clean so he was okay. He'd offered to find a better place but Bonnie had not made a fuss, saying an Ecno Lodge was better than sleeping in the car. She'd needed to stretch out after their encounter.

He smirked and brought his left arm up over his head, sighing silently into the quiet of the room. He could hear the shower running and see the light shining out from underneath the door. He was so very tempted to go join her but he wasn't sure she was up for another round. Once in the car and then again on their rented bed had already made her shaky enough; the last time with him pressing her face down onto the mattress and making her come so hard that it felt like an earthquake was hitting the room. *Fuck* he loved it when she lost control like that. When she got loud and her power spiked and he felt like a god for pulling that sort of reaction out of her.

He could still taste her...sometimes he thought it was better than blood.

So they were engaged now or whatever— somewhere Daddy Salvatore was rolling over in his grave. Not only was she *not white* but she was also *not exactly* human. Still better than Katherine but his dad was a dick so he probably still wouldn't be satisfied. His mother, well he didn't know how she would have felt about everything. But she had been gentle and loving and there was a chance she would just be happy that he'd found someone who honestly loved him. Flaws and all.

*None of that matters however. They're dead and I've been doing whatever the fuck I've wanted to do for as long as I can remember. The only person whose input I have to deal with is Stefan's.*

Damon could see it going either way with his dear little brother. Stefan believed in love and family and he'd always been the sort of person that had wanted all of that. Even in his selfish Ripper phase he had wanted someone that understood what he was going through. Someone who cared enough to make him stop because he had not been strong enough to stop himself. Enter Lexi. It wasn't surprising that Stefan could forge friendships that lasted centuries. *That* part of him would be glad that Damon was serious about holding onto the person he cherished the most.

The other part—the broody, the world hates me so I might as well live in a hole—part would think it was a rash decision that would no doubt have consequences. *And blah blah blah...like he wouldn't propose to Elena on the spot if he thought she would say yes.*

In all honesty Damon kinda felt like he'd been waiting for his life to start ever since he thought Katherine was stuck in the tomb. He thought she would get out and they would *begin*. Of course that hadn't happened because she was a stupid little bitch so for a while—even with his feelings for Bonnie growing—he'd just been circling the drain, not quite sure of what he wanted. He had tried his hand at all of it before realizing the thing he wanted was right in front of his eyes the entire time.

So now that he had his priorities in order all he had to do was make sure no one stepped in to fuck them up, which was actually easier said than done. He had a feeling getting Bonnie to trust him was the walk in the park and that everything that followed would be hell. They still had to deal with Alaric and the other Originals and Bonnie's human father.

And all those unforeseen events that would no doubt happen.

*Because to live in Mystic Falls is to constantly be looking over your shoulder. That should be the town motto.*

They all needed a plan. Something besides just sitting around and waiting to see what tried to kill them. Unfortunately he was drawing a blank, his mind too mellow from sex to function properly. *Eh we'll figure something out. We always do.*
His cell phone ringing pulled him out of his drifting thoughts and he reached for it, propping himself up onto an elbow. "Hello?"

"Damon." It was Stefan.

"Hello brother." Damon said. "How are things in the Falls?"

Stefan was oddly quiet before replying. "Damon it—it's Elena. Something has happened."

Frowning, Damon sat up and put his bare feet on the floor. "What do you mean *something* has happened? What's wrong?"

Stefan took a shuddering breath. "It—Rebecca said she didn't want to run anymore. That Alaric would find them no matter where they went." Pause. "I didn't know what she was going to do until it was too late."

"Stefan, what did she do?" Damon asked slowly. "Is Elena dead?"

"She made me save Matt. I should have taken them both; it would have made more sense but he was unconscious and had probably sucked in so much water already. I guess that's what she was thinking."

"Stefan explained absently like he was in a trance. "It was like déjà vu with her parents all over again except this time I was too late to save her. But it all happened so fast and—fuck."

"Stefan—"

"I didn't know what Meredith had done. I didn't know. If I had I would have—but I wanted to respect Elena's choice. She deserved that. She always deserves that and it's not my place to ever take that away from her."

"What did Meredith do?"

"Damon, Elena is in transition. Apparently she was a lot sicker than Meredith let on when she passed out so she gave her some of your blood to heal her."

Damon blinked and tried to process all of this new information. His brain was grinding so slow though, like it just couldn't put two and two together. "She—she's a vampire?"

"Stefan sighed—or sniffed. "Not yet. She might decide not to complete the transition. Right now she's just really confused and I think she probably wants Bonnie. They are best friends."

"Yeah." He murmured. "We'll be back as soon as..." He trailed off. If they didn't make it back in time and Elena decided to die, neither of them would get to say good-bye. "We'll be back."

"Okay." Stefan replied quietly. "Okay."

They hung up without saying bye and Damon groaned, dragging a hand across his face. This was going to crush Bonnie. Yeah her and Elena were still on shaky footing but they were best friends and this was not the kinda thing you wanted for your best friend. Especially one that had spoken out against becoming a vampire in the past. Of course Elena could very well decide not to drink human blood and just die.

*I wonder if Alaric is still alive? His life was tied to Elena's and she's technically dead so probably not. Fuck. He was a crazy asshole in the end but he hadn't always been that way. He didn't deserve to go out the way he did either.*
The bathroom door opened and Bonnie stepped out, rubbing at her wet hair with a towel. "Were you talking to someone?"

He exhaled and patted the spot beside him. "I need to tell you something and I don't think you're going to like it."

She arched a brow but sat down, pulling her legs up under her fluffy robe. "What's wrong?"

Damon took her hands in his. "I hate to do this to you, babe. I mean we're flying high with happy shit and now…" His jaw twitched in anger and a bit of grief. "But you'd wanna know because you're awesome like that. You need to know stuff because you've elected yourself the protector of Mystic Falls and everyone in it."

Bonnie's expression turned worried. "Damon what's wrong? What's happened?"

"Elena's…in transition." He wet his lips. "Rebecca caused some type of accident and Stefan…” He pushed down his irritation at his brother being stupid enough to not save Elena and Matt. "She had my blood in her system when she drowned."

Bonnie gasped and clutched at her chest. "I…" She shook her head. "She's a vampire? What…"

"She hasn't decided if she wants to turn yet or not." He explained. "I just got the call from Stefan. I honestly don't know what she'll do but if you wanna see her we should go now. Otherwise it might be too late."

"What? Oh yeah. Yes." She moved off the bed listlessly—as if on autopilot—to slip on clothes from her bag. "I guess it was stupid to think any of this would last."

Grabbing his jeans off the floor, he stepped into them. "Our road trip?"

With her back to him she put on her bra and underwear. He could still see the bruises on her hips. "Happiness, actually. This time with you is the happiest I've been in a long while and in an instant it's just over. And I—I'm angry because this was our time and once again Elena has managed to mess it up. And then I feel like a bitch because she's dying and I'm worrying about myself, and I've been so mean to her lately because of that stupid kiss and what if she dies before we get back and I can't tell her what I need to say, and she thinks I hate her and…"

And suddenly she's crying so he abandoned buttoning up his jeans to go to her. To wrap his arms around her and hold her close. "She knows you don't hate her. And if anyone is to blame for this it's Rebecca. Hopefully we can figure out a way to hurt that bitch or kill her once and for all." He kissed her temple. "Everything is going to be okay."

"I really doubt that, Damon." She pulled away to continue getting dressed.

Regrettably he kinda doubted it as well but it wouldn't count for both of them to be outspoken pessimists.

~*~

With the way they were speeding Bonnie was surprised they hadn't been pulled over but she knew Damon would just compel the cop to let them go even if they were. Her mind was bursting at the seams with thoughts, accusations and remorse, and honestly she wasn't sure how she was going to react upon seeing Elena. They were still best friends but things were different now—they were different in more ways than one. She knew that she needed to be supportive and she would be but there were other things to consider.
Like for instance the fact that Klaus wasn't actually dead but whiling away the hours inside of Tyler until they could get his body back or find a suitable, permanent replacement. She hadn't told anyone what she had done—not even Damon, especially not Damon—but it was bound to come to light sooner or later. Probably sooner now that Elena was technically dead. He could no longer use her blood to make hybrids. At least it seemed like he shouldn't be able to but she didn't exactly understand the mechanics of it all. In any case that reveal would be a giant shock and she would have to shoulder the consequences but she did not regret her decision.

Sometimes you had to play bad to keep the people you cared about safe. Kol may have turned her mother but Klaus was the father of everyone else. Him dying might affect the other Originals as well and then all vampires would cease to exist.

Right now though she had to focus on Elena and what she was going through. She wouldn't be alone because of Caroline and the Salvatores but it had to be trying and scary. Most likely she would become a vampire but then what? Would she try Stefan's diet or the blood bags? Would she freak out like Caroline and kill some innocent person that happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time? Was Jeremy now in danger just being around her? So many new questions to answer.

It was true that she and Elena were best friends on somewhat muddy ground but she wanted to be there for her. In a way it was in her DNA—the caretaker role and all. She didn't really mind putting aside her anger over the kiss because constantly having it in the back of her mind was exhausting. Perhaps this was how they truly mended their shattered friendship. It was horrible but it didn't have to be completely so. Caroline was managing and Elena would have the same support system to help her.

What if she turns into another Katherine?

What if she goes after Damon again now that they have more in common?

What if she turns off her humanity and you have to do something drastic to keep her in line?

Could you do it? Could you take Elena down if you had to?

Bonnie exhaled deeply and shifted in her seat, feeling the slight twinge from her still sore muscles. The old Elena would want her to do whatever she had to do to keep others safe, so she would. Besides Stefan would never let Elena lose control. No doubt he was blaming himself right now for the entire thing.

I have to find a way to do something to Rebecca. I don't care if it pisses Klaus off. I'm gonna strike out against her if it's the last thing I do. I'm so sick of the Originals and the spirits pushing us around!

"You okay? I can almost hear you thinking."

She nodded a little. "I'm okay. Just worried I guess. This is something that Elena never wanted and now... I don't know. I get the feeling she's going to be looking to me to try to fix it."

Damon arched a brow. "How would you fix it? You can't make her human again. The most you can do is make her a daylight ring and hope she never forgets it."

"Yeah." She whispered. "I can't help but feel crappy though. While we were off getting engaged she was drowning in the same place her parents died."

"Bonnie you couldn't have known what bitch Barbie vamp was going to do, and even if you had it's not like you could have stopped her. This isn't anyone's fault." His hands tightened on the steering
wheel. "Maybe Meredith's but if she hadn't given Elena my blood then she'd be dead either way so…"

"How do you feel about that?" She inquired as innocently as she could. "You basically sired her."

His blue eyes cut to her as if he knew exactly what she was hinting at. "It's not really some big deal like they make it in the movies. I sired Caroline too but we don't braid each other's hair and share secrets. Most of the time she annoys the fuck outta me. It just happened to be my blood in both of their systems. Nothing more." He paused and moved one hand down to brush her wrist. "I'd only feel something if I made you and that would have less to do with my blood and more what you mean to me."

She smiled. "If it ever happens I hope you're the one to do it."

Damon snorted. "Oh it'll be me, no questions about that." A beat. "So when we get back you wanna move into the mansion?"

Bonnie laughed lightly, thankful for the subject change. "I would but my dad might have something to say about that. One of the odd times he's actually home." An image popped into her head of living with Damon and she grinned, wishing it was a reality. "Would it be wrong to get you to compel my dad to let me though? Okay it sounds even more screwed up out loud than it did in my head."

Damon snickered. "Maybe a little but being a good girl doesn't get you what you want as fast as being bad does. And we both know you want to live with me so that you can see me naked all the time."

"I don't think Stefan would appreciate you suddenly always nude."

"He'd get over it. I've done worse."

Giggling, she turned her attention to her ring and twisted it around her finger. She had a feeling it was going to be a new habit. "Things are going to change once we get home, aren't they?"

Guiding the SUV around a sharp curve with a flick of his wrist, he clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "Yes. Not between us but yeah I think they will change in general. But I'm with you no matter what."

Bonnie's eyes grew damp and she quickly wiped away her tears. "Even if I have to do sinister things to keep everyone safe?"

He glanced at her, reaching up to smooth his thumb across her cheek. "Of course. No one more than me understands that sometimes you have to play dirty to win. Considering who we are up against it makes perfect sense." His expression turned sympathetic. "I'll never judge you for what you might have to do to protect everyone. I might not get it or agree with it but I'll know it was in everyone's best interest."

Leaning into his touch, she grabbed his hand before he could pull it away and kissed his fingers. "Then let's go home."

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

There are things that Damon has always wanted to hear but when said they have no effect. Bonnie on the other hand wishes Elena would just stop talking.

Chapter Notes

This tags episodes 4.01 (Growing Pains) and 4.02 (Memorial) and it's more AU with references to things that happened in the episodes. You can probably guess the stuff that didn't happen. ;) Woo finally everything is posted! All parts after this will contain spoilers for Season Four (and onward) so be aware.

Not So Fragile Things

"I don't like that you dragged Matt into this."

Damon's brows narrowed as he stared at Elena, the tiny veins under her eyes slowly dissipating. He'd almost forgotten how she'd always seemed to have a problem with the way he got shit done. Most of the time no one died; case in point Matt wasn't really any worse for the wear. He'd only bit him to lure out the vamp hunters anyway and wow, imagine that it'd worked. Distraction in place and he was free to rescue her and Stefan.

"He volunteered." Damon stated. "He thought it was the least he could do considering it's half his fault you're a vampire now. Besides it worked."

She exhaled deeply and sniffled, looking around the area. "None of this is his fault. I told Stefan to save him because I was ready to die. I was okay with it. I—I didn't know what Meredith had done and I'm sure if Stefan had he would have tried harder to save us both."

He shrugged. "Whatever. You're alive—ish—and Matt is alive so everything worked out I suppose. Except for the crazy people that wanna kill us but that's just another Thursday."

He turned to walk away when she said, "I remember everything. One of the highlights of my transition; I remember everything that you compelled me to forget." Pause. "Like how you and I met first. You were the stranger that told me you wanted me to get everything I wanted from life. Damon, why didn't you tell me?"

Crap. I forgot that happens to new vampires. "Would it have made a difference back then?" When she didn't reply, he shrugged again. "I didn't think so. And I didn't meet you first. In relation to Stefan yeah but… If we're talking your little group I met Bonnie first before she knew about her powers, and I compelled her to forget."

Elena smiled as if it were almost something she expected. "If it had been her on that bridge with Matt, you'd have saved her, wouldn't you?"
He sent her a look. "Do you really have to ask me that? You know the answers." A beat. "Would it have been right? Probably not. But hey I'm a selfish dick and she knows that so… Honestly I might have tried to save Matt too just to save me from hearing her mouth."

She chuckled softly, wetting her lips. "I remembered you telling me that you loved me. That I couldn't remember because you were selfish. A part of me wishes you'd never did that because while I know it's over—so over—it's in my head and I can't get it out. It's like it just happened for me and I hate it because I love Stefan and I want Stefan, but it sort of makes me think I never really gave you a chance. The real you—whatever that is."

Once upon a time this was the type of stuff Damon had wanted to hear from her. Back when he'd convinced himself he loved her for her and not because she looked like Katherine. Back when getting rejected by her over and over was more of a game than anything else. Those days were gone though and even if he weren't with Bonnie he'd like to think he had too much self respect to keep chasing someone that obviously didn't really want him. Because even if she did on some level she wanted Stefan more, and all of his asshole-ishness aside he didn't deserved to be jerked around.

"That was a different time." He replied. "When I wanted things or at least thought I did."

Her big brown eyes softened. "I know. I'm not asking for anything Damon. I just wish it wasn't in my head."

He nodded. "I'd compel you to forget again if I could."

She rubbed her cheek. "It's okay. I do wish I'd taken the time to really see you though. I'm sorry if I was ever flip with your feelings."

Damon snorted. "I'm not as fragile as Stefan. I'm good. And it's not like you were as bad as Katherine was."

She dropped her eyes to the ground. "I'm sure she saw something in you like she liked. You're a good guy, you just have a different way of going about things and it's not always the best way. In another universe I could see myself being with you."

*Her emotions must be going insane right now for her to be having all of this verbal diarrhea.* "Yeah but then I wouldn't have Bonnie, and I'm pretty sure I need Bonnie to help keep me going." He sighed. "I know there is some shit going on in your head right now but it'll pass."

"Damon—"

"I asked Bonnie to marry me. She said yes."

Elena's mouth worked but no words came out for a few minutes. When she apparently recaptured the ability to speak, she stammered out, "Bu—but she's a teenager. I—I just—"

He smirked. "We're not getting married like tomorrow but we will someday. Our summer away from Mystic Falls was great. Maybe you and Stefan should get away. It makes you realize what is really important."

She chewed on the inside of her cheek. "I guess I should call her and congratulate her."

"And maybe also thank her for trying to keep you human because we both know she did." He walked away.

*I assume she did anyway.*
If he found out otherwise he wasn't going to make a fuss. Out of everyone she'd suffered the most trying to keep Elena safe and if anyone deserved a night off it was Bonnie. He had the feeling she was becoming a bit disenfranchised about their whole friendship especially after the kiss incident. It was bad to see them fall so far considering how close they used to be. Willing to die for each other and all that. But hey shit happens so what are you gonna do? People changed; he totally got that because it wasn't like he was the same guy as when he'd first set foot in Mystic Falls again. At the very least he wasn't as angry as he'd been before.

There was probably another Damon somewhere in another world that was still pining over Elena and making a complete ass of himself in the process. Though to be fair that Elena was probably doing nothing to really discourage him either. Anyway though while wanting Elena had made him realize his feelings for Bonnie meant something more he wasn't sure if he had the chance that he wouldn't go back and trade them in. That he wouldn't wish to have wised up sooner that for her it would always be Stefan. Yeah things had turned out basically okay but that was because he'd been too stubborn to let go. Other Damon was probably too stubborn or just too stupid to let go as well when really, he should. It was so much better to be loved completely for who he was instead of just desired for who he might could be.

~*~

It was inevitable that Elena would complete her transition. It was rather inevitable that Elena would become a vampire one day because—let's be honest—she was a danger magnetic and it was either become immortal or die. And because Bonnie knew it was going to happen she didn't exactly break her back trying to find a cure for her best friend. She told everyone that she was looking and put on a nice light show for Jeremy down in the old mansion but in reality she didn't do anything. The spirits warned her it couldn't be done—that horrible things would happen if she even tried and while she loved Elena dearly she was quite finished sacrificing herself for someone who never seemed to return the favor. She would save the possibility of going dark side for Damon…or hell even Caroline or Stefan if they ever needed her help.

She loved Elena like a sister, all of their issues that would most likely never change but she wasn't willing to destroy herself for her any longer. There was only so much a person could give before they realized they were getting nothing in return. All of Elena's focus appeared to go towards her own problems—which was fine of course—but that also meant Bonnie didn't have to share in them anymore. She would help out if her friend needed but no more nearly dying so that Elena could live.

Seriously what would be the point of that?

Why was everyone so willing to die for Elena?

When had she become the Queen they all had to protect?

Honestly it seemed to happen overnight. One day they were all just teenagers trying to get through classes and the next they were throwing themselves onto the proverbial grenade for Elena Gilbert. While she had no problems saving her friend's life it wasn't something she constantly wanted to do, especially not at the expense of the other people she loved.

Besides she had bigger things to deal with like Klaus. While putting him back into his body she'd tapped into that intoxicating darkness again. The one that made her heart beat faster and her skin tingle, that made her want to burn the annoying ass hybrid down to brittle bones if he ever dared to speak to her without respect again. She thought he could see it in her eyes because he hadn't mouthed off or gotten smart afterwards. He'd simply stalked out of the old house and went on his way. The best part was that Caroline wasn't even angry at her for saving him. She understood that saving Klaus unfortunately meant saving them all, and it helped that Klaus—in Tyler—had saved her
from a bunch of crazy Council people bent on destroying all vampires.

It was so weird how suddenly the humans were seen as the bad guys. They were just trying to protect the town and their loved ones so technically they were in the right, but it was more complicated than right and wrong. Nothing was white and black anymore because not all vampires deserved to die. Quite a few were just like they'd been as people. She wasn't excusing their behavior or the blood on their hands but she knew Caroline and Tyler weren't terrible monsters that needed to be put down.

Not yet anyway.

Sighing deeply she shifted onto her back on the white couch and stared up at the ceiling of her living room. Her head was pounding behind her eyes and she felt sort of drug out and stretched too thin. Transferring a soul from one body to another used a lot of energy. It also didn't help that suddenly her Grams had shown up and warned her against using that type of magic. She'd said it was unnatural, and that if she used it again the spirits would punish her.

*I am so fucken tired of a bunch of dead people dictating what I can and can't do. Dark magic is fine to turn Alaric into a vampire hunter but bad when I just wanna save my friends. They shouldn't be able to pick and choose like that. They shouldn't even be able to interfere at all. Surely there is a way to cut off their access to our realm…*

*If there is I am going to find it.*

She heard the front door open but didn't bother checking to see who it was. Her father was out of town—again—and Caroline was probably with Tyler so there was really only one person it could be.

**Damon.**

"I heard you had an *interesting* evening." He said, his voice bordering on anger. "You wanna explain to me why Klaus isn't dead? I figured you'd wanna go first before I tell the *titillating* tale of saving Elena and Stefan from vampire hunters. Spoiler alert, we won."

She gazed up at him. "I had to save Klaus. He said he's the beginning of your bloodline and since there is no way to find out, I couldn't take the chance that he was telling the truth and you'd all die if he died."

Damon frowned at her. "Why didn't you tell me? Why did you keep this from me for an *entire* summer?"

She shrugged listlessly. "I didn't wanna worry you. Or upset you. Klaus is a dick and we all wanted him dead, but the fact of the matter is we can't kill him until we find out if he's the Original you all descend from."

He huffed and combed his fingers through his hair. "Damn it Bonnie, we're supposed to be trusting each other with this kinda shit. This is something you should have let me in on like say, the *second* after it happened."

Bonnie sat up slowly. "I did what I had to do. Isn't that what you always say when you do something insane? There is no fucken way I was going to let you die, Damon. I'd save Klaus a thousand times if it meant keeping you alive." She pointed a finger at him. "And don't stand there and tell me you wouldn't do the same for me."

His sails deflated and he grunted, sitting down onto the sofa beside her. "Yes but you still should have clued me in. That was a bad wife call."
Laughing, she bumped his shoulder. "I'm sorry that I didn't tell you. From now on full disclosure I promise."

"Okay." He kicked off his shoes and once she was laying down again, curled up behind her. "So that pastor guy? What the hell is his deal? Kidnapping my baby bro and trying to kill him? I had to use Matt as bait to get close to their little hunter farmhouse."

"Is Matt okay?" She inquired softly. "Emotional or otherwise. You can be brass when trying to get your point across."

"I didn't choke him if that's what you mean. Do I think Stefan would have let Elena die to save him? No but that's not new I've always found good old Matt to be useless." He nuzzled the back of her neck. "But whatever it's done now and he's broody about how things turned out too. He was all for helping me save Elena and Stefan, and I left him with minimal scarring."

"That's good I suppose." She chuckled lightly. "And how is Elena doing?"

"As well as can be expected. I…told her about our engagement." He tapped his fingers along her side. "It just sort of came out when she was telling me about memories she was getting back. I think Stefan is going to help her."

"Do you wanna help her?"

"Not really. I just think it's a little silly to pretend like she'll never accidentally kill someone. All vampire do it. She's not the special snowflake that will go against thousands of years or instinct."

"Something tells me she's gonna try anyway though."

"Oh yeah. Stefan is gonna make sure she does. It's gonna be one giant cluster-fuck."

"Better than being dead." Pause. "The spirits don't want me doing serious spells anymore. Nothing that isn't rooted in nature."

Propping his head up with his hand and elbow, he studied her expression. "You gonna listen to them?"

Bonnie blinked blankly. "Not really. I never asked for these powers and I sure as hell never asked for them dictating when I can and can't use them. If they are mine then I should be able to do whatever I want with them."

Damon kissed her temple. "That's my girl."

She smiled a little. "Helping people and trying to save them; it just comes with so much pain, Damon. I've lost so much trying to save others. Makes me wish I didn't feel anything at all."

Pressing his lips together, he ran his fingers through her long dark hair comfortingly. "Welcome to the first seventy or so years of my life. But Bonnie you don't have to care about everyone. Hell you don't have to care about anyone if you don't want to. I know they'll continue to come knocking at your door for favors but you don't have to say yes. It's okay to be the bad guy."

Her head turned and she looked at him. She smoothed her fingertips down the side of his pale cheek and over his perfectly straight nose. "You make everything sound so easy."

He sighed. "It can be. Don't get me wrong I get where you are coming from. You care so you wanna
help, but sometimes you can't. Sometimes you have to know when to back off. I'd never want you to get hurt saving the hapless Scooby gang. Besides baby if they don't learn to function on their own they'll never stop calling."

Of course Damon made an extremely good point. They knew she had powers so she was always the easy fix it source to whatever they had going on. She couldn't help but think though that being a witch was not about constantly saving people but about being in tune with nature. Perhaps that wasn't true either since the spirits often used their power however they saw fit. Maybe in the end it was about whatever she wanted it to be about.

I want people safe but...I don't know. Caring just takes too much out of me right now.

"Remember how we used to sneak around and meet in secret?" Damon asked with a smirk. "In the woods or in the park, before the others found out about us."

"I do." Seems like forever ago but I do. "I miss those times actually. Things just seemed simpler when we were worrying about the tomb vampires or Katherine."

He hummed in response. "We should make sure to take time for just us. Fuck the other shit."

That sounds like a wonderful idea. "Okay." A beat. "So how did Elena take the news of our engagement?"

He snickered. "She was shocked. We'll probably get that a lot. But she said she'll call you to congratulate."

Not surprised she hasn't yet. "Yeah. Guess I'll tell Caroline the next time I see her. It is good news after all."

"Have you eaten today?" He questioned out of nowhere. "You look a little pale."

"I guess I forgot." She made a face. "Things were kinda hectic what with vampire Elena and kidnappings and getting Klaus out of Tyler."

Damon sniggered and she hit him. "I'll fix you something then. And we'll talk more about Klaus being inside of Tyler."

"You're so stupid." She said affectionately.

He winked and got up, heading towards the kitchen. She groaned but forced herself to sit up, wrapping the comfortable yellow blanket around her shoulders. It was going to be strange having to do magic with the whisperings of her Grams in her ear, warning her on what she could and couldn't do. It was like when people used to warn her about how dangerous Damon was.

Of course she hadn't listened then so there was a pretty good chance she was not going to listen now.

~*~

The next few days were surprisingly uneventful and quiet after Pastor Young decided blowing up most of the Council was a good idea. There was nothing to bury of course but everyone decided that a memorial service would be the perfect way to say good-bye. The only problem however was that no one wanted to say good-bye. No one wanted to speak of the evil that he'd done which they saw as simply killing several innocent people along with himself. Caroline and the others had all gone to the church to pay their respects but she hadn't been in the mood.
She'd gone into the woods instead and simply enjoyed the quiet. There was so much of that missing these days. You couldn't step three feet out of your door without someone trying to kill you or someone you knew. At least among the trees and animals she didn't have to worry about any of that crap.

And now she was sitting in the park on a picnic table, watching several pretty Japanese lanterns fly higher and higher into the dark night sky. It had been Stefan's idea to light one for all of the people they'd lost—quite a few that Damon had killed, which was awkward and maybe why he hadn't stuck around. It was also no secret that he was mourning Alaric even if he tried to pretend otherwise. Even if he steeled himself against tears that obviously wanted to fall when the others mentioned him as someone they were grieving.

"No way, I'm not doing that." He'd said before stalking away towards his car.

"Damon." She'd whispered. "Come by later."

And he hadn't turned or stopped his stride but she knew later he would be at her house.

The air was cold but she didn't mind; it helped clear her head. She glanced over to where Matt and Elena were talking. He'd heard Elena had feed on him earlier and he had the bandage on his neck to prove it. I wasn't at the church and yet they survived without me. No one died. Maybe it can become a theme.

"You okay?" Caroline questioned sitting down beside her. "You're so quiet."

Bonnie nodded. "Just thinking I guess about all of the people we've lost. I uh, I heard there was some action at the church earlier?"

The blonde huffed. "Oh yeah. Some sexy bald hunter dude stabbed Pastor Young's daughter just to lure out some vampires. He has gloves soaked in something—vervain maybe—and bullets that burn. He's already shot Tyler twice now."

She tapped her fingers on the table. "But you all made it out alive."

Caroline folded her arms over her chest. "True. And Elena learned to compel. But it's obvious this guy is going to be trouble. It would be nice if just once the hunters actually talked to us then they would find out we're not all monsters. That'll never happen though. It's so damn—oh my God what is that on your finger!?") She grabbed Bonnie's hand and stared at it. "Bonnie!"

Bonnie couldn't help but smile because she could always count on Caroline to be a certain way. It almost made her way to cry. "I'm engaged."

Caroline shrieked. "Damon asked you to marry him! Holy shit!"

"Wait, what?" Jeremy inquired in surprised. "You're marrying Damon?"

Interesting tone. "Not tomorrow but eventually, yes. And before you say anything I'm really happy."

Matt's big baby blues were the size of quarters. "Wow Bonnie that—that's weird but if you're happy then cool."

Stefan was oddly silent. Probably judging.

"I'm happy for you, Bonnie." Elena said walking over. "Damon told me earlier and I—I think it's great. Really. There's been so much bad news lately so it's nice to hear something good for a
"Now we get to plan a wedding and go dress shopping and give you a bachelorette party!" Caroline exclaimed. "And I know not now but it's something good to be looking forward to. We just all have to stay alive under you and Damon decide to tie the knot."

Elena laughed. "Um, do you guys mind if I talk to Bonnie alone for a second?"

"You better not be trying to get to be maid of honor." Caroline pouted even as Matt pulled her away.

Bonnie giggled lowly. "So what's up?"

Elena sat down in front of her. "I wanted to thank you for my ring." Pause. "Jeremy told me that you tried to find a way to help me and I really appreciate it. I know if there was any way you would have done it."

"I would have." She said quietly. "How are you adjusting?"

The brunette sighed deeply. Tiredly. "I've been having issues keeping blood down. Animal blood, blood from bags—it's like I think about it and then I can't keep it inside. The only thing I've been able to actually stomach is Matt's. Learning how to be this is hard."

It wasn't that hard for Caroline. I wonder does that make something wrong with Elena or is she just slow? Or maybe once again she has to be so totally different so that she has everyone's attention. What good is a vampire that can't drink blood? "I'm sure you'll get the hang of it though. And you'll have help."

Elena tucked back strands of her hair. "Yeah. It's just scary though, especially with this Connor guy running around. But I'm gonna try to get through this. I'm alive—it might not be the way I want but it's better than being dead." She pulled at the sleeves of her shirt. "I'm sure once everything settles I'll be okay."

A nod.

"So, your wedding." She smiled. "If when the time comes and you want me to wear something with too many ruffles I'm totally on board. And I agree with Caroline we should look at magazines and just...pretend for a while things are normal."

Bonnie didn't think that was possible but she decided to humor her friend. "I have to admit I have wanted to at least browse a few pictures. I still haven't told my dad. I was going to wait but honestly I kinda want a reaction from him. Not like anything he says will change my mind."

"Will you try to track your mom down to tell her?"

"Nope. There are people here that wanna be in my life so screw the ones that don't."

"I'm so sorry about...well...everything."

"I know."

Yet history keeps repeating. You screw up, I fix it and you apologize. We really need to break this cycle.

No time like the present I guess.

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

The more some people change the more others stay the same.

Chapter Notes

This bit tags episodes 4.03 (The Rager) and 4.04 (The Five). Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Know So Well

The first day of senior year was supposed to be some important milestone in a teenager's life but considering everything that Bonnie Bennett had been through, it wasn't even in her top five. Besides school was boring no matter how you tried to dress it up. Granted school in Mystic Falls tended to be sort of like living in a haunted war zone sometimes, she was still expected to learn and do homework and pass all of her quizzes. Going back to that and adding that stress on top of everything else she was dealing with didn't inspire energy to actually go. But she knew that she had to because graduating was the only way she would get to leave Mystic Falls and go to college. Hopefully with Damon somewhere close by.

Also it meant a whole new wardrobe and that she could always get behind.

She'd tried on several different outfits—because danger or not she wanted to look good—before deciding on a slinky green and black dress with an overlay of dark lace. It made her feel pretty and girly and honestly reminded her of a time when that kind of stuff was all she cared about. Looking fierce yet still retaining her own sense of style. There were quite a few things she missed about the past but she could never decide whether she would go back if she had the chance. Being blissfully unaware of vampires and werewolves and hybrids just didn't seem worth losing Damon. Not even getting her friendship back to the place where she and Elena considered themselves sisters was worth losing Damon.

Tried as she might she couldn't help missing her "best friend"; they'd been through too much together for her not to. But it was becoming clearer and clearer that Elena either didn't feel the same way anymore or she just didn't have time to remember how close they'd once been. All she tended to care about these days were herself and boys, which was pre-vampire Caroline to a tee but it wasn't the same. Elena had never been as selfish as she was behaving now. It was as if having so many people willing to go to bat for her to protect her suddenly made her think she was entitled to it. As if the people around her had no other purpose but to serve her.

Honestly her attitude—and those of a few others—almost made Bonnie never want to lift another finger to help her. At least not until she acknowledge that the only reason she was still walking around was because of a group effort that usually hinged on her magic. God help her little group if she ever lost her powers for good.
Blotting her pink lips with a rough paper towel, she tossed it into the trash and fluffed up her long black curls. Satisfied that she looked cute she exited the girls’ bathroom and headed towards her new locker, swinging her shoulder bag around in front of her so that she could put in the books she didn't need. She waved to a group of people that called her name and twirled in the combination, jerking open the metal door open with a loud clank.

Stylish shoes appeared within her eye line and she arched a brow, peeping through the nearly closed slits to see Stefan Salvatore's handsome face. "Stefan."

"Hey Bonnie." He said with a little smile. "How are you?"

She shrugged and swapped books. "I'm okay I suppose. Better than I was a few days ago. You?"

He folded his arms across his chest. "I'm okay." Pause. "I uh—I just want you to know that I support your engagement to Damon. You've been a really good influence on him and I'm happy that he's happy."

She finished what she was doing and then closed her locker. "Really? I mean I don't doubt that you're happy he's happy but I expected a long conversation about me actually agreeing to marry him."

He chuckled. "Believe it or not there was a time when all Damon wanted was to get married and have children. Or at least that is what he seemed to want. After Katherine everything changed." He shifted and leaned against the lockers. "I don't really think it's my place to question your relationship, at least not anymore. It's obvious you two care about each other and marriage is the next step. I do however think it's good that you're waiting."

Bonnie figured she would continue to be surprised by Stefan and his reactions. After his recent Ripper stint he was much harder to pin down. "Well I am still a teenager and Damon is still an ass at the best of times. Besides I don't think either of us is ready to buy and house and settle down. But being engaged *means* something and we both like what it means."

"I understand." His dark eyes glanced around at the faces of those roaming the halls. "You haven't by any chance seen Elena have you? She said that she was coming today but I haven't been able to find her."

It was a harmless question really. Of course a boyfriend would be looking for his girlfriend; that made total sense. But for some reason it rubbed her the wrong way. "I'm not Emily. It's not my job to follow Elena around and keep tabs on her."

Stefan blinked. "No I—that wasn't what I was implying at all, you know that. I just figured you might know because you two are friends."

Bonnie played with her ring. "Not so much lately but it's okay. I'm sure she'll come running when she needs something."

"Elena cares about you. If she's been staying away it's probably because she's been worried about your reaction to her."

"But not Damon's reaction to her?"

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"It means now that Elena is a vampire she feels connected to Damon and you know I get that. He has this way of making it sound sexy and dirty at the same time. But let's be honest here. Ever since
her little crush on him while you were ripping the heads off people she's spent more time with him. And it bothers me. And she knows it bothers me. So we're not exactly besties right now and the only time I see her is when she needs magic done."

"Look I know this is my fault—"

"No you misunderstood me. I'm not blaming you, Stefan. You went with Klaus to save lives and I think that's very noble actually. Elena chose to cling to Damon while you were away and that's on her. She knew nothing would ever come of it—or at least she does now. I don't think for a second she doesn't love you but we both know her feelings for Damon are still simmering. After everything with my Grams and my mom, I just can't be okay with her being into him."

"She would never do anything to hurt you, especially not now with how her emotions are running. We both know Elena's Achilles heel is her compassion."

"Well when she shows some of that compassion towards the people trying to keep her alive, I'll believe you. Maybe you should look for Matt though. He's her food source now and a girl's gotta eat."

Stefan pressed his lips together as if there was more he wanted to say. "I'll do that." He walked away and Bonnie couldn't find it in herself to care if he didn't like hearing the truth.

Sometimes it was all they had.

She adjusted the strap of her bag and strolled leisurely towards her classroom, not really in the mood to learn but it was important. Graduating and going off to college sounded like fun and she desperately wanted to get out of Mystic Falls for good. Maybe she could even convince Damon to going with her if she decided to study aboard. She rounded a corner and jerked when a hard chest nearly collided with her face. She stumbled back only to be caught my strong hands gripping her upper arms.

"Whoa hey, you okay?" Asked the stranger. "Sorry I wasn't looking where I was going."

He was tall and handsome with smooth brown skin and a shiny bald head. She realized almost immediately who he was; this hunter that was apparently causing so much trouble for vampires. And Tyler. "It—it's okay."

He stared at her. "Do I know you? You look really familiar."

She shook her head. "I don't think so."

"You weren't at the memorial the other day." It was a statement not a question. It sort of sounded like an accusation.

"No. I didn't feel up to being in the middle of a big crowd. My Grams died recently and I couldn't deal with anymore grief." She said slowly. "But I hear someone tried to kill Tyler Lockwood."

"Yeah I heard that too. He a friend of yours?" The hunter inquired.

"He is." She replied easily. "I've known Tyler all of my life. I can't believe someone would try to kill him. I mean he hasn't always been the nicest guy but he didn't deserve to be shot. I guess we're just lucky he's going to be okay."

"I guess we are." He held out his hand. "Well it was nice to meet you Miss…?"
Bonnie arched a brow but decided to play along. "Bennett. Bonnie Bennett." She shook his hand. "Anyway I'm late for class so…"

He stepped to the side and she continued on her way, satisfied that he wouldn't suspect her for anything now that he knew she wasn't a vampire. However if he looked into the history of the town and found out anything dealing with witches and wanted to start trouble, she would be ready for him. She had a feeling his magic wood wouldn't work on her.

~*~

Homeroom was boring but it set the tone for what was going to be a hopefully simple day. Bonnie sat in her desk staring out of the window, her mind drifting aimlessly when a loud thump made her jump in surprise. A pile of thick wedding magazines rested in front of her and she snorted, looking to where Caroline smiled widely from beside her.

"What are these?" She picked one up and thumbed through it.

Caroline beamed. "I know you said you're waiting but c'mon Bonnie! Did you really expect me to be able to go on like nothing has changed? You're engaged and there are things you'll need to do!"

A pretty redhead in the desk behind them perked up. Her name was Christine and they'd known her since fourth grade when she'd moved down from Richmond. "You're engaged?"

Caroline grabbed Bonnie's hand and showed off her ring. "Yes she is! And he's older and rich and sexy. It's Stefan Salvatore's brother."

*Ack! That's gonna be all over school before the day is over!* "It's really no big deal."

Christine's eyes widened. "That is one big ass rock. Congratulations."

Bonnie blushed. "Thanks." She popped her friend lightly on the arm. "Maybe I didn't want people to know."

The blonde scowled a little. "If you didn't want people to know you wouldn't be wearing your ring." Pause. "Now let's talk dresses. Have you given any thought to what type of pattern you want?"

*Oh that's right. I should have expected this level of enthusiasm from someone that's had their wedding planned since they were five.* "Not really. The whole wedding thing is something that is in the future. Like after I'm done with college or whatever."

Caroline pouted. "But why? I mean obviously you and Damon are going to be together forever or until he makes you made enough that you stake him. I see no reason to wait."

Bonnie laughed. "You just wanna help me plan the wedding, which you are welcomed to do because I know you won't shut up about it until I say yes. But I wanna be ready for all of the responsibility that being married brings. I don't wanna just do it because it's the next step." She ear marked a page in one of the magazines. "That doesn't mean though that I don't want your freaky planning skills. I'm sure you wanna buy a binder with sections for flowers and napkins so be my guest. A practice session might be a good idea."

Caroline squealed happily. "I can so do that. I just hope Tyler doesn't find it otherwise he might get all freaked out."

*I could totally see that. Man what would I do without Caroline and her girlie excitement for these kinds of things? We've all been through so much and yet she can still find the drive to be normal and*
giggly after being put through so much pain. "Thanks."

"For what?" The blonde smiled curiously.

For being…Caroline Forbes. I really needed to still connect to someone that hadn't changed."

Bonnie grinned at her, sliding a magazine onto her desk. "So, which bridesmaid dress do you like?"

~*~

If you didn't stick your nose where it didn't belong or be nosy there was a chance you'd end up
missing something important. Or something that meant the difference between life and death if you
lived in a vampire infested, werewolf spawning town that had recently acquired a new take no
prisoners hunter. A hunter that had no qualms when it came to shooting the freaken Mayor's son in a
church full of people. So Damon wasn't skulking around the woods because he had nothing better to
do. Although he had tried to convince Bonnie to ditch school and spend the day in bed with him but
she'd declined, so yes this was more of a backup plan. Still answers were needed and it was more fun
than lounging around the house doing nothing.

If by some chance he managed to find the hunter guy and eat him well that would be an added
bonus. He'd be a hero; they would write songs about him and yadda yadda yadda.

He found Connor's trailer out in the middle of nowhere and it reminded him those asshole wolves
that kidnapped Caroline and tortured her. Why did bad guys always stay in some deserted hobble
like a serial killer? He could never imagine living anywhere but the lap of luxury. Though he
supposed if you wanted to lay low the forest was a good place to keep to yourself.

The inside of the camper was a rather organized mess with papers spread across the small table and
some type of chemistry set near the window. He frowned at the syringes and looked around,
reaching for one of the notebooks with slanted scribbled writing when suddenly an arrow exploded
from a hidden panel in the wall, impaling into his thigh. A second followed just as quickly, hitting
him in the left shoulder, inches above his heart. He grunted in pain and exhaled deeply finally
noticing the thin threads attached to each arrow.

Well this isn't good.

He reached for one but felt no slack on the line and followed it back to the wall where it was
connected to some type of explosive. No doubt filled with vervain though he had a feeling gasoline
and fire would do just as well with turning him into a crispy critter. "Um…yeah."

I'm fucked.

Now he had a few choices on how he could proceed. One he could call Bonnie and tell her that once
again he'd gotten into himself into a tricky situation and needed help. He wasn't above asking for
help—he had too much ego to care—but that would entail putting her in danger and he was never
good with that. If she made one wrong move they would both go up in flames and he'd rather die
than be the reason she got hurt. So he would have to go with choice number now that his wing man
was dead. Stupid Alaric. This is the kinda shit you need to be here for, man. I can't believe you died.
Do you realize how fucken rude that was?

Very slowly he reached into his jacket pocket and pulled out his cell phone. He scrolled passed
Stefan's name and Caroline's; not because he cared if she lived but because he figured she'd just end
up getting them both killed. Liz was out of the picture and he didn't want to involve Jeremy so that
left one other person he could call. Hopefully she would come.
"Meredith Fell."

"Are you busy?" He asked. Without waiting for her to reply he continued, "If you are drop everything and get out to the woods, now. There is an RV near the creek, you really can't miss it."

"Damon?" She inquired slowly. "What's going on?"

"I can't talk. Just come and everything will be explained. I...really need a doctor." He hung up and stuck his phone back into his pocket, hoping that he wouldn't have to wait long. That she would in fact come.

*There is a small chance that I might have underestimated this Connor guy. He's obviously not an amateur so I think eating him is out of the question. Fuck, I might need help on this one.*

Damon wasn't against others helping but to be honest he had kinda wanted to handle this on his own. Stefan was busy keeping Elena from taking a long walk off a short pier and Bonnie was in a weird mind set; hence why he'd went off by himself in the first place. This was the kinda thing he used to do all the time before he had allies or whatever. Having someone to plot with was better but messier when things went wrong.

*If I get blown up here Bonnie is gonna be so pissed at me. Probably accuse me of doing it just so that I don't have to marry her.*

*God she's amazing.*

At least fifteen minutes passed of him using idly to himself and trying to remain still before footsteps sounded outside. He hoped that it wasn't super hunter and glanced back just to see Meredith poke her head inside cautiously.

"Why were you being so cryptic?" She demanded in a low whisper.

*Finally. 'Come in. Close the door.'*

She frowned but did as requested, her big brown eyes taking in the scene. "Tell me that is not a bomb!"

He grinned. "Okay. It's a kitten." He motioned with his head from one wire to the other. "It's an adorable exploding kitten."

She balked at him. "Why didn't you call your brother? Or Bonnie?"

He snorted. "Because I'm proud and stubborn, and why would I call my fiancé to come possibly get blown up? That doesn't make any sense. Besides oh look you're already here." Pause. "'C'mon you're not gonna get hurt. All I need you to do is be doctorly—cut out the arrow. I'd do it myself but if I move..." He tapped on the arrow which caused the trigger to shake dangerously.

Meredith looked livid but she exhaled deeply and grabbed a knife. "Okay. Wait did you say fiancé? You're engaged?"

"Yup." He tried to see what she was doing. "You say that like you're totally surprised I could even get a girl in the first place. I'm incredibly sexy or haven't you noticed?"

She pushed strands of brown hair out of her face. "I'm gonna go out on a limb here and say you're a different person when you're with Bonnie."
Duh. "Naturally. I wasn't always though so ya know...She put up with all that bullshit and stayed anyway. She's a keeper."

Meredith paused in her cutting. "That's really sweet, Damon."

He grunted in response when a piece of paper caught his eye. "So how well did you know Pastor Young?" Slowly he picked it up and read over it.

"He was a patient of mine. Always a nice guy."

"Hardly. A nice crazy guy. He wrote a letter about sacrifice and war brewing in Mystic Falls." He held it up so that she could see it.

She narrowed her brows in confusion. "What does he mean a greater evil is coming? Don't we have great enough evil already?"

Damon rolled his big blue eyes. "You'd think." His phone rung but after checking the caller id he ignored the call. 

"Nope. Got no time for vampire Elena drama right now."

Meredith continued with her meticulous cutting. "How did you get stuck on hunter duty?"

Damon jerked. "Stefan had a physics test."

She smiled at his flip attitude. "You are a good brother."

He frowned; where the hell did that come from? "I'm a bad brother."

"You're strung up to a bomb while Stefan plays vampire with his girlfriend. And you're doing a good job of acting like this doesn't suck, and like you're not being protective of the people you care about." She finished with whatever she was doing behind him. "Hence good brother. Okay, that should be good."

He didn't even think, he just reached up and ripped out the arrow, hoping for the best. "Thanks Doc. Couldn't have done it without you." The one in his thigh would probably be easier to remove. "You can split if you want. I can take it from here."

She squeezed his shoulder and left. "Bye Damon."

Now to make this place look like I was never here.

~*~

Instead of going to Rebecca's after school ditch party—no way in hell was that happening—Bonnie let herself into the Salvatore mansion as quietly as she could. It was silly because Damon probably already knew she was inside; had probably heard her car when she arrived but she wanted to try to surprise him anyway. She dropped her stuff soundlessly onto the floor and crept upstairs on her tip toes, trying to avoid all of the creaking spots as she made her way to his room. He stood with his back to the door, naked and fiddling with something on his bed.

She grinned and just admired him for a second, letting her eyes trace over the smooth lines of his flawless back and the toned muscles of his ass. He had a runner's thighs but a swimmer's waist, altogether lean without much body hair to speak of. Damn he was just so fucken gorgeous she could hardly stand it.
Toeing off her shoes, she wet her lips and sprinted across the room, leaping up onto his back with what was supposed to be a low *gotcha*! He grabbed her however before she could get out the *cha* and pinned her to the bed, smirking down at her with the most smug expression she had ever seen.

"You're so cute." He mused. "And apparently in a good mood which is nice."

She growled playfully and yanked on her wrists but he wouldn't let her up. "Sometimes your super vampire hearing can be a real drag. I was going for the art of surprise."

Damon nuzzled her throat. "I'm surprised you're still wearing clothes. Does that count?" He grinned and slid his free hand under her dress, tugging on her panties until they were sliding down her legs. "Oh how was school? Learn anything interesting?"

She blinked up at him serenely. "I learned that Caroline is still *really* into weddings." Squirming, she pushed at his thigh with her foot. "I didn't come here for sex. I just wanted to see you."

He pouted, tossing her underwear behind him. "You can see me while we have sex. That's the beauty of sex." Letting go of her arms, he crawled up onto the bed and coaxed her legs around his waist. "I'll even make it a quickie."

Bonnie flopped back onto the mattress. "Yeah I've heard that before. I think our definitions of the word *quickie* are vastly different." She shimmied out of her sweater and raked her nails down his abs. "Fifteen minutes is a quickie. Maybe even twenty minutes. Two hours is not a quickie."

"It is when you have vampire stamina." He winked.

She laughed, wrapping her fingers around his stiff erection and stroking slowly. She licked her thumb and then smoothed it over the crown, smearing the liquid that was pearling there, smirking when Damon closed his eyes and leaned his head back. She wasn't a vampire but she still had the urge to bite and mark all that pale skin, especially when his hips jerked forward towards her hand.

"Damon I need bourbon to get through Rebecca's party. Yours is better than Stefan's." Elena breezed into the room without knocking only to shriek at the scene on the bed and exit as quickly as she could. "Oh my God! Sorry! Sorry!"

Damon seemed perfectly fine with not moving. "Something tells me she's not really looking for alcohol. Are you Elena?"

"Fine." She said from outside the room, most likely by the door. "I—I want the white oak stake so that I can drive it through Rebecca's stupid smug face. Sorry, Bonnie."

*Eternal cock blocker.* "It's…okay."

Damon shook his head. "Do you think I'd actually leave the last remaining white oak stake where *any* vampire could just walk in and take it?"

Elena huffed. "Can I have it or not?"

He clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth and hopped off the bed, slipping on a pair of fresh jeans. "Sure. Why not? The bitch did torture me."

Bonnie felt as if this was the part where she listed everything that could go wrong with giving Elena the stake but instead she remained quiet. She watched as Damon disappeared for a few minutes before returning, moving into his closet for a shirt. "Elena's got her stake and is now on her merry
"I hope she succeeds." She sat up. "What are you doing? I thought we were going to fool around?"

"We are. I just remembered something I need to do first." He smiled and plucked up his phone. "Getting to screw your brains out is going to be my reward for a job well done." Finding the contact he wanted, he pressed the screen and waited. "Klaus? Where's Tyler?"

"Put it on speaker." Bonnie whispered and he did.

"Tyler is otherwise occupied making big decisions about honesty and what not. Is there anything I can do?" Klaus asked and just the sound of his voice was grating.

Damon moved to the foot of the bed. "I'm going after the vampire hunter so if he'd like to join…"

"Damon." Bonnie frowned at him.

"He wouldn't." Klaus replied without missing a beat. "I on the other hand would love to. By the way is that the lovely Bonnie I hear? How are you doing, love?"

She glared at the phone. "Go to hell."

Klaus laughed. "Oh if only I could get you and Caroline to understand how wonderful we'd all be together. If you're worried about being satisfied I can assure you, there is plenty of me to go around several times over."

"Sorry to burst your bubble but Bonnie's spoken for." Damon smirked. "Or did you not hear we're engaged. Guess you missed the memo. Anyway meet me at the hospital in about twenty minutes. Jeremy should be there with our hunter." He hung up.

Bonnie grabbed his shirt. "What is going on?"

He cupped her face with his hands. "I promise I'll explain everything when I get back. You're just gonna have to trust me"

I hate it when he says shit like that. Means whatever is going down is dangerous and he doesn't want me involved. "I do trust you. Look please just be careful."

"Of course." He kissed her. "Be back soon. Feel free to start the sex without me. I'll catch up."

Shoving him away with a giggle, she flopped back onto the bed. Yes she trusted Damon to the ends of the Earth. It was Klaus she was worried about.

~*~

"I know you don't like it. In fact I can feel you not liking it but if you wanna keep the peace I kinda have to do it. But," Damon held up a finger. "...trust me when I say I'm not going to enjoy it. No one wishes Stefan didn't freak the hell out about blood more than me but he does, so he can't teach Elena about being a real vampire. You don't want innocent people to die? Then someone has to teach her how to feed."

"I said I'm okay with it." Bonnie replied. "Elena learns to feed and no one dies."

"Bonnie, baby, I know you well enough now to know when you're lying. But don't worry. This is just a teaching thing, I promise."
"I know. It has to be done."

It has to be done. It has to be done. It has to be done.

Bonnie wasn’t sure but she had a feeling saying that over and over again still wouldn't make her feel better about the situation. However she was attempting to be positive. Maybe Elena would learn to control herself and they'd even become best friends again. Elena would realize how selfish she was being trying to go after Damon while Stefan twisted in the wind and while he was with Bonnie, they'd hug it out and everything would be okay.

Yeah even I don't believe that.

It was better though than getting angry and blowing out headlights.

The ride to Whitmore College had been easy because they'd kept the conversation light and totally about feeding. Afterwards they'd crashed Professor Shane's lecture and she'd stayed behind for a quick chat while Damon took Elena hunting. Or pre hunting since it was broad daylight and no doubt someone would see if the brunette attempted to feed.

She found her friend and her fiancé in a heated conversation ten minutes later. "What's going on?"

"Nothing. Elena's educating me on the importance of feeling." Damon appeared less than impressed.

Elena rolled her eyes at him. "Did you talk to the Professor?"

Bonnie nodded. "For a second. He found some stuff of my Grams in his office and he's gonna dig it up for me." Hopefully it'll be of some use. "Oh and some guy handed me this." She gave Elena the flyer. "I guess college is just like it is on tv."

"Murder House. Come as your favorite victim or killer." Elena made a face. "That seems tacky. But it is Halloween so..."

Damon grinned. "Oh nice, the answer to all of our problems. A frat party; douche central. Which is why, you'll be eating very well tonight." He rubbed his hands together in anticipation. When Bonnie scowled playfully he pulled her against him. "So what should we go as? Victims or killers?"

Bonnie entwined their fingers together. "Do you plan to feed at this party too?"

He shrugged. "I have to be a good teacher, don't I? I promise not to kill anyone."

"That's not the issue." She said softly. "You just, you haven't been feeding since we got together. Not on people anyway."

"It's just food, babe." He kissed her temple. "You'll always taste better than anyone else no matter who they are." He tugged on her hand. "C'mon let's go find some costumes. We don't wanna have to pick at the leftovers."

Bonnie let herself be pulled and felt Elena fall into step on the other side beside her. By the looks of it Damon already had an idea of who they were going to dress up as. It would probably be scandalous but she didn't have it in her to argue. It was weird to be hanging out with him and Elena now because of their history together. Even more so than when Damon had a thing for Elena which at the time Elena hadn't returned. They had not been as serious as they were now—perhaps that was why.

It would all be so much easier if Elena just stopped. Stopped giving Damon doe eyes like that would
change the outcome of their situation and stopped calling him when Stefan wasn't doing what she wanted. Bonnie still cared about her enough that she didn't want her to kill anyone or starve to death but her friend was walking a steadily fine line lately. And it sucked because while she and Damon were bonded and committed, she still wasn't a vampire like Elena was now. She'd never really understand the urge to grab and drink and rip.

But that wasn't all Damon was anymore either. He was more with her than he'd ever been with anyone else. He was more to her than he'd ever been to anyone else.

It wasn't stupid to sometimes wonder if she should be wary—that was life—but deep down she knew in the long run, Elena would be the very least of her problems in the near future.

~*~

Damon wasn't jealous of Professor Sideburns so he didn't stare when his incredibly hot girlfriend/fiancé—in her incredibly sexy Jack the Ripper era corset—went off to meet him and talk witchy things. Bonnie could handle herself and the guy was human so everything should be fine. Besides he had to teach Elena how not to kill someone and he had to admit it's the first time not killing had been on his list. He didn't understand why she could only eat from the vein and he honestly wondered if she was lying, but it seemed important to teach her a valuable life lesson all vampires needed to know.

He watched her find her prey—some asshole that tried to roofie a girl—and coached her through feeding on him without killing. It was a little rocky at first but she pulled it off and then requested more. So naturally that led to more. He stayed close while she compelled her victims almost in plain sight and ate; no one paid any attention because they assumed it was Halloween mischief. He fed on a few but he was so used to Bonnie's blood that the strangers didn't have the same kick. Tasty but not satisfying…sort of like blood bags.

Unfortunately like with most things dealing with Elena, after drinking her fill until her lips and chin were stained red, she freaked out. She couldn't handle what she had done and was probably headed for a major breakdown of some sort. That or one day soon she was going to flip her switch and end up hurting a lot of people.

And he and Stefan would have to stop her. Or rather he would have to stop her because Stefan wouldn't be able to see past his love to do it himself.

That's why he'd go dark side with Bonnie in a minute. He'd never be able to take her out for the greater good. He'd rather fuck up everything than lose her.

The air was cold outside when Bonnie walked up to find them standing under a tree, Elena fretting and ready to go home. He took off his jacket and draped it around his fiancé's shoulders. "You ready to head out? Elena is anxious to get back to Stefan."

Bonnie nodded. "Elena, you okay?"

The brunette sniffled. "I'm just not cut out for this. I—I don't know who I am anymore. I don't know how I'm supposed to do this."

Bonnie's expression was thoughtful. "One day at a time I guess."

Elena wiped at her mouth. "Let's go. I need a shower." She turned and headed towards the car.

Damon kissed Bonnie's knuckles. "I'll give you details later." He slung his arm around her shoulders. "After we've played around a little."
She smiled up at him—*fuck I love her smile.* "You wanna play prostitute and Ripper, don't you?"

"See that's why I love you so much, Bonnie." He wiggled his brows. "You know me *so* well."

~Fin~

Chapter End Notes

Also I don't know if any of you watch Teen Wolf but for some reason out of the blue I started thinking about how hot Derek and Bonnie would be together so I wrote a little ficlet about them called Touch Starved. Check it out and review if you're curious about how that would work out! =
There is beauty in their twisted madness.

I'd say this tags episodes 4.05 (The Killer) and 4.06 (We All Go A Little Mad Sometimes) but to be honest I didn't even try to stick with the show canon, so there are basically just mentions of events from the episodes.

"Can I ask you something?"

Bonnie sat in the middle of Damon's bed with a candle in front of her, running her fingertips over the hard wax. The more she thought about the nature of vampires in general the more she was having problems understanding the current situation of a certain vampire. She watched her fiancé strut around his room with an old book in his hands, his brows furrowed as he scanned a page before flipping to the next. "Damon?"

"Yes?" He inquired not looking up. "I heard you. What's the question?"

"Well..." She thought back over the past few days but decided there was no delicate way to phrase what she wanted to ask. "So I remember how it was for Caroline when she was a new vampire. She was neurotic for a bit but then she gained control of herself and everything was okay. Is there a reason why Elena can't even seem to get being a vampire right?"

"Heh." He snorted and lay across the bed, tossing the book to the floor. "Honestly I don't know what her problem is. I mean I get the not wanting to kill thing but not being able to drink from a blood bag? Katherine can drink from blood bags and she was a doppelganger too. I don't know if there is another vampire out there that can't drink from an artificial thing or whatever."

"Heh." He snorted and lay across the bed, tossing the book to the floor. "Honestly I don't know what her problem is. I mean I get the not wanting to kill thing but not being able to drink from a blood bag? Katherine can drink from blood bags and she was a doppelganger too. I don't know if there is another vampire out there that can't drink from an artificial thing or whatever."

It was horrible to think so but Bonnie had the feeling Elena just wanted to be another special snowflake. Try as she might she couldn't remember the exact moment her best friend had turned into this annoying damsel that either always needed to be saved or was so different she could hardly function. Granted drinking blood did not look like fun but it was something she had to do now. Caroline—freaking Caroline—had come to terms with it and she used to be a big old mess. Becoming a vampire made her awesome yet did the exact opposite for Elena. She was unfortunately more annoying than ever.

Which explained only one of the reasons why they hadn't hung out in a while.

If Elena wasn't whining about being a vampire she was whining about all of the people she might kill, as if Stefan would ever let that happen. He probably wanted her to keep her blood innocence
more than she did. What a cluster fuck that is now. I can't believe they broke up! Okay so I can sort of believe it because I'm sure deep down she was getting on his nerves too. Not to mention copping an attitude when he was trying to do her a huge favor without knowing or waiting for all of the details...

She realized laughing at Elena killing the one chance to turn her human again made her kind of a bitch but that had been her initial reaction. Only Elena would do something like that. Though perhaps she had been right since Connor did try to kill her first.

"Does Stefan plan to give up the whole turning her human again thing?" She asked quietly. "Now that Connor is dead."

Damon sighed and stared up at the ceiling. "I don't know what Stefan's next move is. I told him I'd help him if he needs it but he hasn't said anything. I do know that Klaus has his hybrid panties in a twist over it, and that the hunter tattoo passed on to Jeremy. Which I think it would have been better off on a gerbil but there you go."

She smiled. "Is it bad if I say I don't care? I mean I care but I just...don't wanna bother. All that drama and stress and for what? Elena? The girl who doesn't come to see me unless she needs a spell? Or Klaus who only gives a crap because he wants to make more servants?" Pause. "You're fine and Caroline is fine so the rest just isn't as important."

He looked at her. "You have become so cynical lately. Do I need to take you out for ice cream and cake to make you feel better?"

She giggled and focused on the candle until a tiny flame erupted onto the wick. "No. Truthfully I feel fine. I'm just not going to hold stuff in anymore. I think I did in the past because I didn't want to hurt Elena's feelings but she's proved the feelings of others' don't matter to her so much anymore. I think the only person whose feelings she would care about now is yours."

He made a face. "I don't like where this conversation may be headed. You'll get angry and my shit will get broken. I'm rich but that doesn't mean I want broken shit."

Bonnie bit her lip to keep from laughing. She poked at the melted wax, rolling a piece into a little ball between her fingers. "It's not the kinda angry you're thinking. If I was a danger to anyone the stupid spirits would no doubt try to strip me of my powers. They don't give a fuck who lives or dies, me included as long as some jacked up balance is upheld. I should have figured that out when Emily possessed me and didn't give a toss if you killed me afterwards or not."

Damon reached for her ankle and gave it a squeeze. "They do tend to be very black and white when it comes to supernatural creatures, don't they?"

_That's an understatement._ "I bet they would let you burn to death right now even though they _know_ how much you mean to me. I wish I could get rid of them and keep my powers. Maybe Shane can help me."

"Professor Sideburns? Do you think it's a good idea to be bringing him into the loop?"

"He's not in the loop. Grams wasn't exactly quiet when she got on her witch rants. He already knew what I was before we even talked. Besides I'm not telling him any secrets, I'm just using him to power up."

"I don't like him."

"You don't like most people."
"True but then most people turn out to be dicks. Something is off about Sideburns though I just can't put my finger on it."

"Give me some credit, Damon. I don't easily fall for a cute guy just because he gives me a compliment or two. Of course I'm wary of him. Anyone so eager to help or get in the middle of our mess automatically pings my bullshit meter."

His bright blue eyes squinted at her. "What kinda compliments?"

Laughing, Bonnie huffed off the candle and stretched out onto the mattress with her head on his stomach and her feet on his pillows. God she loved these moments with him. When it was just the two of them sniping back and forth with the rest of the world rolling on outside their windows. Where she didn't have to worry about evil or danger or friends that were suddenly spoiled brats. "I love you."

Damon ran his fingers through her hair. "I love you too. And you know there is a chance things won't go completely down the shitter. At least we don't have to worry about Klaus and his feeble attempts to kill us. Talk about impotent."

Giggling, she turned a little so that she could see his gorgeous face. "One small mercy I suppose. I feel bad for Caroline though. She has to go out on a date with him, and because she had a hand in killing Tyler's friend their relationship could be over. Another sacrifice made to the altar of Elena. And the body count was so high already. "I didn't know that guy but how fucked up was that? The one hybrid that tried to help and he gets killed for his trouble. I bet the rest steer clear."

He tapped her nose. "Yeah that was pretty fucked up. I'd imagine being sired to Klaus is like having herpes. You think it's gone but it's never really gone."

She snickered before falling quiet. "If we manage to make Elena human again, I'm out. If at any time I have to put myself in serious trouble to help, I'm out. If you have to be in serious trouble I'm out." A beat. "Otherwise it'll never end. There is something always waiting around the corner in this town and it always will be. We should leave again and not come back."

His fingertips brushed her eyelids and she closed them. "What about your dad?"

_Maybe he'd enjoy getting postcards from all over the world._ "If I thought he'd care his opinion would have some type of bearing on the matter but since I doubt he does, screw him." She rolled her eyes. "Okay so yeah I know he cares but he's never home so…there ya go. I'll send him a postcard."

Damon scratched at his chest. "That was always my plan—leaving. After I screwed up Stefan's life I was going to hit the road and keep being a sexy bachelor, preying on defenseless girls and I should probably stop talking now before you make my brains explode."

She pinched him playfully under the arm. "I suppose you just never got around to it huh? Leaving I mean. I thought you'd always planned to stay around until you got Katherine out of the tomb?"

He shrugged. "Yes and no. A part of it was fucking with Stefan. That's what I used to pass the time until the comet passed again. After that shit went down with the crystal I had planned to skip town but by then I was having erotic sex dreams with a certain Bennett witch. And then the Anna shit happened so…there wasn't a good time to leave even if I'd really wanted to," His voice grew soft. "By then I didn't want to though."

Bonnie could hardly remember specifics from that period of her life; so much had happened from then till now. Emotions were easier to get a hold of however. The feelings of despair at not knowing
where she stood with Damon and yet the urge to be around him even when it hurt. His jerky behavior nine times out of ten but man was that tenth time something else. Those moments stood out the most. When she'd be so angry or so upset she could rip his heart out only for him to turn around and do something that totally surprised her.

Be nice or gentle or solid.

Still it had been naïve to think beating Katherine or Damon's crush on Elena would be the last horrible things they ever dealt with. It's like they were cursed; a link perpetuated by living in Mystic Falls because surely nothing was as bad as vampire Elena. If she could have one thing go back to the way it used to be it would be her relationship with Elena. Back to when to when they thought of each other as sisters. Back to when it was mutual.

"Have you thought about what this cure could mean?" She asked. "For you or Stefan?"

"Not really." He said honestly. "I know that Stefan's first priority is getting it for Elena. After that well, naturally he'd want it if it meant getting to do the normal minivan sort of lifestyle with her."

That makes sense. "And you? You don't wanna do the normal minivan sort for lifestyle with me?"

Damon clicked his tongue against the roof of his mouth. "That's a loaded question, babe. I feel like if I say no you'll beat the hell out of me."

She snorted. "Oh please. You know you can be honest with me."

He hummed in response. "Okay. Honestly? I'm at peace with what I am. In my early days the feeding and shit fucked with me but it's been a long time since I wished I could be human. Or completely dead. Unlike Stefan I'm always in control—which sounds even worse when I do something evil—but it's the truth. If I killed when feeding it's because I wanted to, because I didn't give a fuck. I'm okay." Pause. "I don't think I'd know how to be human again if it happened. I'd miss the power. I'd miss being able to protect those I care about. And you know it's not about you. I mean it—it's not that I don't wanna be with you. I do."

It was something she could easily get angry about but she didn't. This was Damon and it was weird how much sense it made. "I get what you're saying. I uh—I think it's the right decision for you because it's a decision about you. I know Stefan kinda strong armed you into being a vampire and everything you did afterwards was to free Katherine so, I'm not mad or whatever. I love you either way."

"Sometimes I think it's scary how you understand me. I thought Katherine got me but you really do."

"Yeah. It makes me wonder if there is something wrong with me…that I understand the homicidal vampire."

"No. It makes you fucken awesome in a way no one else could ever hope to be."

"I'll keep that in mind if things ever go to hell."

Counting your chickens before they hatched was dangerous but it was hard to think bad things about the future where Damon was concerned. It was probably unavoidable that bad shit would continue to orbit around them but she just felt like the one constant in her life would always be Damon. Even before she was born he was saving her, making her life possible by watching after Emily's bloodline. Selfish means or not he'd done it and because of him she was here. She didn't really believe in destiny but if that wasn't an ad for it she didn't know what was.
Rolling over onto her stomach, she shifted on the bed until she was lying on top of him. She smoothed strands of dark hair off his forehead and smiled, tracing his nose with her small fingertips. How was this impossible person that had caused so much pain to others able to bring her so much joy? In a way she felt like she didn't deserve it or perhaps he didn't but she believed in redemption and for all of his faults, she knew underneath he wanted to be redeemed. That his heart was not the cold shriveled thing he wanted everyone to think it was. He was capable of so much love and sometimes she honestly wondered what she'd done to get it.

There had been times in the past she was sure without their blood bond they'd be nothing but now she knew differently. Not only were they lovers and engaged to be married but they were friends. They had meaningless conversations about nothing and joked with each other about everything. She could tell him things she'd only once been able to tell people like Elena and Caroline. He tried—Damon tried so hard for her even though she was sure it went against his vampiric nature at times and it just made her way to cry because that is how touched she was. It made her want to pull him close and never let him go.

And some people wouldn't understand that which was fair. Damon had done quite a few horrible things throughout his long life but nothing was cut and dry with him. Somewhere along the way he'd lost faith in himself and just stopped trying to be a man, letting the animal take over. Maybe he was grieving for Katherine or maybe he'd been lashing out at Stefan by proxy. Whatever the case she was willing to let the past fade away if he continued to be the person he was now. He was so complex and obviously internalizing a lot to this day, and it could be wrong to want to comfort him but it didn't stop her from wanting just that.

It was dumb but Katherine and Sage had helped shape him into something twisted yet she liked to focus on the pieces of light bouncing off his jagged edges. There was beauty in his madness and God help her but she couldn't look away.

She rested her cheek to his chest, rubbing at the patch of pale skin underneath his throat. "Does loving me ever scare you?"

Damon was quiet for a bit before replying, "At first it kinda freaked me out, yeah. But now? Now I think I'd be so worse off without you. Without your support and how well you take care of me. I get that I'm difficult to be with or around or within a hundred feet but I don't know. It's easy for me to shut down or shut everyone out. Someone pisses me off and boom, screw them. But it's different with you." He exhaled deeply. "With you it's easy to pull you in and then shut down."

That made her feel warm inside. "I love it when you sweet talk me."

He smirked. "You gonna answer your own question? Does loving me ever scare you?"

She looked at him. "No. I'm only scared of losing you."

He moved quickly and suddenly they were both sitting up with her straddling his lap. "You shouldn't be. You're kinda too pretty for me to just ditch. Not to mention if we don't get married we won't get like fifty blenders."

"God sometimes you can be such a di—"

Damon's lips covering her own cut off the rest of her words and although she could have pulled away she didn't want to. Instead she wrapped her arms around his neck and pressed as close as she could get, letting herself be washed away by his kisses. He usually tasted like his expensive liqueurs and today was no exception. There was a smoky sweetness lingering on his lips and she sucked lightly, grinning when he growled a little. She was only half surprised when he switched positions
again with vampire speed, throwing her onto her back so that she bounced on the mattress.

Bonnie giggled and watched as he took off his shirt, reaching up with clear painted nails to scratch at the dusting of hair around his nipples. A black marker on his bedside table caught her eye and she grabbed it, writing her name across his impressive abs. Obviously thinking that two could play that game, he pushed up the material of her dress until one flawless inner thigh was revealed. His expression was one of amusement as he took the marker from her and wrote his name—in a lovely script of course—along her soft skin.

"So everyone knows I'm yours?" She teased, pulling at her dress so that she could just take it off altogether.

He unbuttoned his jeans. "Mhm but if anyone except me is close enough to read it then we're going to have another problem."

His words made her laugh as she let her outfit drop to the floor. "I guess you better give me a reason not to show it to anyone else then."

As usual Damon had no problems rising to her challenge.

~*~

Biting her bottom lip hard, Bonnie stared up at the white wedding dress through the store window later that evening but she refused to go inside. She also blamed Caroline for putting more wedding ideas into her head when she'd been happily not thinking about it until she was old enough to accept the responsibility. But with everything going on losing herself with meaningless planning was actually kinda fun. Maybe that is why Caroline headed the party planning committee for so many years. So that she could forget about her troubles at home with her parents.

The dress was silky with about a four inch train trailing behind it. Tiny pearls were sown into the material of the bodice and around back she could see a pretty lace bow. It was nice and she could picture how it would look on her though she wanted something a bit more sophisticated. With a tiara and a veil that didn't cover her face.

I wonder am I going to get those can you even wear white jokes? I could see Caroline teasing me about it. But does it count if I'm marrying the only guy I've ever been with?

"And here I thought Damon was just being his usual charming self when he let it slip about your upcoming nuptials."

Bonnie didn't turn but she could see Klaus' reflection in the glass smiling at her. She frowned and held up her hand, wiggling her ring finger. "Sorry to disappoint you."

He sighed. "So, you're going to marry him are you? Do you really think it's wise to give yourself to the first man that has shown interest? You could be missing out on something so much better."

Throwing him through the window would be fun but not very productive. "He's not the first man but he's the only one I care about." Pause. "And you know Klaus have you ever thought that is you problem? You're always looking for something better instead of treasuring what you have."

He shrugged. "Perhaps. But when you get to be my age sweetheart you realize there honestly is something better always around the corner. Settling is ridiculous."

Says the man who is hated by most of his family and everyone else in this town except those he forces to do his bidding. "Whatever."
"Am I invited to the happy occasion?"

"Hell no."

"Scared I'll speak up when the priest asks why you shouldn't be married, love?"

"No I'm worried you'll burst into flames inside the church and kill my guests."

The hybrid chuckled. "I've missed your sense of humor, Bonnie. I do wish we could have been better friends." He stepped closer, his lips near her ear. "*Much* better. Between you and Caroline I'd be the luckiest man in Mystic Falls."

She jerked away from him. "You should leave her alone. You wanna prove you're halfway decent? Call off this stupid date with her. *Forcing* her to go out with you isn't gonna change the way she feels about you or Tyler."

Klaus clasped his hands behind his back. "We'll see. I can be very persuasive when I want to be. Not to mention Tyler isn't doing himself any favors by having a pretty little werewolf lurking about. If I play my cards right all I have to do is wait."

*Why not go wait somewhere else like Guam?* "Well I guess it's a good thing you can't die otherwise I think you'd be dead before Caroline ever came around to tolerating you let alone wanting to be with you."

He smirked. "I assume as the resident witch of this town you know all about Connor and the Five? I was hoping for your assistance in finding this cure everyone keeps raving about. For Elena of course."

*Of course.* "If I helped it wouldn't be so that you could make more toy soldiers. It would be for Elena. But seeing as how no one has *asked* for my help I'm not involved." *Yet.*

He snickered. "Yes well we all know you will be eventually. This town would fall apart without their little witch."

The smug way he said it made her want to claw his eyes out. "Just because none of us are actively trying to kill you doesn't mean we want you here."

"Hm. And just because I *let* you smart mouth me doesn't mean I couldn't put a stop to it if I really wanted to." He glanced around absently. "I know your Achilles' Heel, Bonnie. One little threat against Damon and you would do whatever I asked. I haven't forgotten how easily him being in danger got you to remove the spell linking my siblings and I together that our mother cast. I want you to know I'm saving that fact for a particularly rainy day." Winking, he strolled off down the sidewalk.

She was tempted, so very tempted to conjure up a storm and have him get struck by lightning but it probably wouldn't do any good. It wouldn't kill him and the last thing she needed was him screwing with her like she was a part of his own personal television show. Besides he was the only person that knew definite things about the cure—something he was no doubt going to use against them in the future. But for all of the tension between her and Elena right now curing her was the best option they had to get her back to normal.

It was just like Klaus however to remind her that he could still be a total pain in her ass or a real threat if he wanted to be. He was right; she *would* do anything to keep Damon safe. It was a bit irrational but it was true and the fact that someone like *him* was willing to exploit it when it suited him made her angry. If fortune ever decided to smile on her friends it would hopefully start by killing
Klaus or sending him so far away he'd never be able to mess with any of them again.

She wasn't going to hold her breath though.

Going up against Klaus right now just wasn't in the cards so she wasn't going to worry about him unless he got too big for his hybrid britches. Thankfully—however icky it was—he cared more about making others like him than he did causing pain and destruction so for a little while they were apparently in the clear. But if he wasn't the threat that meant something unknown might be lurking in the shadows just waiting to rip their throats out. Another hunter perhaps? The tattoo had passed to Jeremy but it wasn't like they knew all of the rules. Also he would have to kill to get more of the tattoo to appear which meant he would be putting himself into danger and onto the radar of vampires that weren't as friendly as the ones they dealt with. And were they really done with the Council?

There were just so many unanswered questions and frankly she was nervous. Was there something worse than Klaus out there? Well worse in the sense that it actually lived up to its' evil moniker and didn't just troll them because it couldn't get over its' daddy issues?

"No. I'm not going to think about this." She shook her head and pulled out her cell phone to give Caroline a call. If trouble came looking she would take an interest but until then she was going to do her own thing. It wasn't like she hadn't earned a little rest with all she'd been through. "Hey Caroline? I know you're kinda depressed so…I was wondering if maybe you wanted to do wedding crap?"

"Really?" Caroline said softly. "But I thought you didn't want to get too deep into anything?"

"I don't." Bonnie admitted. "But I know you're all upset and what kinda friend would I be if I didn't try to cheer you up. I'm at that bridal boutique near the square if you wanted to meet up with me. I might even be able to be persuaded to let you compel the clerk to let us try on dresses."

"I'll be there in a little bit!" Caroline replied with a touch of happiness. "Thanks Bonnie. We're gonna have so much fun I promise."

And oddly enough Bonnie didn't doubt her for a second.

~Fin~
Everyone chose sides. The point was making sure you were on the right one.

This tags episodes 4.07 (My Brother's Keeper) and 4.08 (We'll Always Have Bourbon Street). I decided to do 4.09 separately so that will be coming soon. If I don't update before Christmas; Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to everyone out there!

Caroline Forbes liked to think of herself as the type of girl who could do it all. She was the head of several committees, she always dressed to kill, she had an active social life and even managed juggling being a vampire. None of this was easy of course but she liked to think that she accepted everything with an air of grace. At least in front of people before quietly breaking down at home. Anyway the point was that she liked being a part of things because they made her feel not so lonely. Even with her mother sort of approving of her being a vampire and her now rather rocky relationship with Tyler, she still needed a little more sometimes. And that is where being the BFF to Stefan and Bonnie came in.

Once upon a time she'd wanted to date Stefan or at least have sex with him but now when she looked at him she just saw a confused, heart breaking guy that was usually way too hard on himself. Sure he'd made mistakes and bad decisions but who hadn't? His problem however was that he constantly threw himself onto the pointy fire pyre for the other people in his life. It was like once Stefan decided you were worth saving he would go all out for you. More people needed to be like him if you asked her.

Currently her broody vampire friend was going through a very depressing break up with her other friend, one Elena Gilbert and while Caroline was trying very hard not to be biased she couldn't help herself. It was hard not to sway one way or the other when all of the facts started coming in. Like she was aware that Elena had some messed up feelings for Damon of all people and that had caused she and Stefan to break up. Apparently becoming a vampire magnified the weird crush-y feelings or something and now she just sorta had the major hots for him. Which okay he was handsome but he was also extremely taken to a point where even Caroline herself wouldn't cross.

And she had crossed a lot of muddy lines in her day.

Then you had Stefan behind the scenes doing all he could to make Elena human again for her own good because—well—not everyone was cut out to be immortal. She was honestly surprised how well she had taken to it and realized some of it had to do with Stefan's kind encouragement. She didn't want to be in the middle of any drama but let's face it, she totally was. She couldn't just stand idly by and arrange flowers for the Miss Mystic Falls pageant while the lives of her friends imploded around her.
Elena being into Damon was just wrong. Maybe in another life it would have made sense but considering that he was pretty much common law married to Bonnie already it was just insane. Human Elena for all of her faults would have never went after her best friend's boyfriend. She'd always believed in being faithful and that cheating was wrong. Now here was vampire Elena making moon eyes at Damon even though she knew perfectly well he wasn't into her. Not anymore anyway and hadn't for a while.

Caroline wasn't Damon's biggest fan by any means because of all the shit he'd put her through but she wasn't blind either. He was different when he was with Bonnie. Not to the point where he still didn't make everyone around him roll their eyes in dismay but his love for her was obvious. He cared about her and he let her know it. She got the feeling underneath all his smirking was a nice guy even if she hardly ever saw it. Bonnie on the other hand kinda flourished with Damon. For a while she'd been so upset over her Grams but with his help she was sassy and blossoming, or whatever. She'd always sort of put her friends first—which was amazing—but Damon was helping her learn that she didn't always have to do that. That it was okay to be a little selfish because everyone else tended to be. She didn't have to be the exception to the rule.

So however she felt about Damon deep down inside she recognized how good he was for Bonnie and vice versa. And she knew that Elena saw it too so it made no sense for her to be sniffing around him like a lost puppy. What did she really expect to happen anyway? That he would dump Bonnie and they'd run off into the vampire sunset together?

Just the thought made her frown in frustration.

Elena was acting strange and Caroline wanted to get to the bottom of it before anything bad happened. So after talking Stefan down from wanting to go on a Ripper rampage while directing young girls on how to perform pageant prep the right way, she made it her mission to get to the bottom of the soap opera she was now living.

With clipboard in hand she watched as Elena made her way over to help with the proceedings. They exchanged a bit of small talk until Caroline couldn't stand it anymore and had to get to the meat of everything.

"So you and Stefan broke up." Her big blue eyes were wide. "And before you say anything; he already filled me in on all the gory Damon details."

Elena sighed deeply. "He did? Is he okay?"

Caroline frowned. "No he's heartbroken."

Elena matched her frown. "Well what was I supposed to do? Lie to him?"

The blonde shook her head. "No. But you also weren't supposed to develop feelings for your boyfriend's brother especially since said brother is engaged to one of your best friends. I mean I just don't see how this works out for you."

Dropping her head, the brunette wet her lips. "It's not like I meant for any of this to happen. I never wanted to be a vampire and I—I never wanted to hurt anyone. None of this makes much sense to me either."

Caroline glanced around. "I get that. Going through transition and everything is scary and all of your emotions are like slamming into you from every which way. I was stuck somewhere between wanting to kiss Matt and wanting to eat him. And we know how that turned out." Pause. "But this is different. I understand breaking up with Stefan because you just weren't feeling it anymore but the
whole Damon thing? That's a disaster waiting to happen and you know it."

Elena nibbled on her bottom lip and fiddled with the flowers in front of her. "I know. It's not like I plan to—to try to break him and Bonnie up though. I'm just confused right now. I need to figure out what these feelings that I have for him actually mean." She tapped the table with her nails. "Maybe if I can do that then I can finally start to move on."

"And what if you can't?"

"Then I don't know. But I mean; I have to do something. This isn't working either. Bonnie and I used to be so close and now… I miss my friends, Caroline. I can't believe a guy is coming between us."

"He's not though, not really. As much as I think Damon is a jerk I have to admit that he makes Bonnie happy. He's chosen her so the only one who'll get hurt in this situation is you if you try to mess them up."

"Sounds like you've already chosen a side to me."

"I'm on Bonnie's side with this, yes. Because Bonnie has always been there for me…and you too. I could never imagine doing anything that would hurt her."

"I don't wanna hurt Bonnie."

"But you have. I mean what Klaus and his stupid siblings did wasn't your fault exactly, but you were the root of it and Bonnie was the collateral damage."

Swallowing hard Elena realized she couldn't argue the truth. "Can we just agree that I need to sort this out before it gets any worse?"

Considering, Caroline nodded. "Yeah but be careful. Last thing you want to do is make all of this blow up in your face."

Professor Shane showed up next and both girls admitted his always popping up was coming off creepier than it was helpful. Caroline especially didn't like the way he was trying to get Bonnie to focus on magic more than usual. She would try to get to the bottom of that just as soon as she juggled everything else on her plate. An everything else that also unfortunately included Klaus making moon eyes at her. She didn't get his thing for her to be honest. It was like he just decided one day he also needed a love interest and boom, she fit the bill. When he wasn't being a general pain in their asses or accosting Bonnie, he was pretending to attempt to woo her.

Luckily Caroline could see right through all of his bullshit. However she had promised him a date in exchange for a hybrid and she knew he was going to make her keep up her end of the deal. Because he was a jerk like that.

Shaking her head, she ticked off another box on her to do list and got back to work.

~*~

"I'm wearing a suit and you're not here to throw yourself at me." Damon mused into his cell phone as he searched for Professor Shane. "I don't see how this is in any way fair or right."

Bonnie laughed. "I thought we had established that you would be coming here after you were done so that I can tell you how amazing you look over and over again?"

He grinned. "I will be but it's not the same without an audience around to hear you. I don't really
know why I'm here anyway if you're not here."

She smiled. "Because you're a founding family and Caroline can be scary when she wants to be?"

"That's probably it." Pretending to be irritated, he strolled into the Lockwood manor and glanced around, hearing the voices of said Barbie vamp, Elena and that April chick upstairs. "I'll call you back later though. I have some things to take care of."

"Okay. Behave Damon." She teased before hanging up.

Like that would ever happen. Behaving never got anything done. And since there was information he needed from someone who would probably be less than forthcoming misbehaving would most likely be the only way to get what he wanted. Not to mention it was fun most of the time.

Damon was looking for Professor Shady because, well he had his reasons and only one of them involved what was going on with his fiancé. Not that he didn't trust Bonnie because he did—more so than he'd ever trusted anyone—the point was that he didn't trust the Professor especially after learning about his calls to Pastor what's his face who'd killed himself. He felt he would be an idiot to ignore that giant flashing red flag so he wasn't going to.

He was just going to ask him nicely what was going on and if he didn't want to talk then Damon was going to persuade him.

With his fists.

And he hadn't been lying when he'd said Bonnie should be there with him. He liked seeing her all dressed up and mingling. Last year he hadn't been fully able to appreciate that fact because of everything else that was going on but now he could and did, frequently.

Smirking, he made his way upstairs to the room where the girls were chattering just in time to hear Caroline joke about some girl wearing a provocative dress. He didn't really know all of the details but felt the need to announce his presence by saying, "She got my vote."

Caroline frowned and launched a little black box at him that bounced off his chest onto the floor. "Get out, lurker!"

He blinked; what the hell was that? "Ouch. Where is Professor Shane?"

Stalking over, she shut the door in his face while adding, "Check the judges table."

Getting on Caroline's nerves was a pastime he hadn't practiced in a while but used to enjoy. Honestly though he was just wondering why she seemed to have an attitude with him when he hadn't did anything wrong. He wondered what was going on in that airy head of hers.

Pushing the door back open he fixed April with a smile. "Red one. Definitely."

And thus he lost about eight minutes of his undead life arguing with Caroline about which dress would be better for a stupid pageant that didn't mean anything anyway. He supposed he only did it to be trifling and really asking Elena for her opinion was just another way to make Caroline fume. He'd been a little surprised when the brunette had agreed with him but the red dress was prettier and the poor girl had lost her father and been stabbed. She deserved to at least look nice.

Damon was almost at the bottom of the lovely decorated staircase when Elena called his name. He stopped and looked up at her. "Still here."
She stared at him. "We need to talk."

He didn't know if he wanted to hear anything she had to say. Not to be mean if it were important but he just wasn't in the mood for anything that didn't pertain to making her human again. Sure it might be a tad hypocritical of him since he was always singing the merits of being a vampire and embracing the blood lust, but he was also in complete control of himself at all times. He didn't rip off heads like Stefan or become so enamored with blood that he couldn't function like she did. Also there was no guilt on his end.

Elena just wasn't cut out to be a vampire and that wasn't a bad thing. Not everyone was. She made a much better human and he agreed with his brother that if there was a cure, she should have it. Hell maybe even Stefan should have it to because he'd never exactly taken to being a vamp either.

"What do you wanna talk about?" He inquired slowly. "Stefan told me about the break up. Sorry."

She descended to stand beside him. "What did he say?"

Damon shrugged. "Oh you know Stefan. Guy just went on and on about it, wouldn't shut up."

She fiddled with her hair. "So he didn't tell you why?"

Damon arched a brow at her. "Nope. But I'm sure it has something to do with you acting weird so, why don't you tell me?"

Elena wet her lips and just watched him for a moment before replying, "You."

Somewhere past Damon is doing cartwheels but that asshole doesn't realize how difficult this will make everything. Not because there are any feelings but because of the people involved. "I don't see how I'm involved."

She smiled just a little. "Are you sure? I— I mean you know what's been going on with me. Right? You have to."

He did and that only made it more fucked up. "Actually I've been going to great lengths to pretend otherwise. Talking about this won't fix anything."

A tiny frown creased her forehead. "It might help me in the long run."

He seriously doubted that. "How so? I don't see this doing anything but hurting you, really. And, well, you're my friend so I don't wanna do that." He paused. "But I will."

A series of emotions passed across Elena's face but neither of them said anything. She wasn't dumb; she knew how this would end so he couldn't understand why she continued to look at him with such affection in her eyes. Why she appeared to be holding onto some weird hope that he'd return any of her feelings that weren't platonic. Once upon a time sure but that ship had sailed and crashed onto the rocks a while ago. He didn't need a substitute for Katherine any longer because he had something better.

Something real. It wasn't perfect but real trumped perfect any day.

"Damon Salvatore." Professor Shane stepping through the ornate glass doors broke the awkward tension between them. "Looks like we're traveling the same circuit."

"Professor Shane. Just the guy I wanted to see." He made a hasty exit from Elena and her big brown judging eyes.
I'll deal with that bullshit later.

Outside on the sprawling lawns of the Lockwood mansion were the many tables that were set up for the dinner portion of the pageant. Damon led the Professor along a meandering path as he told him he was in search of another Hunter. With Connor dead and his tattoo the only way to find the cure, it made sense to try to find another one. And since Shane apparently had knowledge about that kinda stuff it also made sense to pick his brain.

Shane however decided to play stupid. "Hunter? With a capital H? Why?"

Grabbing a champagne flute from a passing tray, Damon waved a hand. "Why does anyone need a Hunter? Loneliness, drinking buddy, forth for golf…"

Shane grinned. "I thought you said you already had a potential…"

Play nice. You can do it. "I did but he ended up being a potential problem."

The other man hummed in response. "Well there is nothing I can do to help you."

And the niceness ends. "Hm well why don't you help me with this. Why are you here? What's in your little lesson plan there, Professor?"

Shane's face was calm. "You think too highly of me, Damon. I'm gonna go find the other judges."

Damon decided to try a different tactic. "Hey, no pity votes for April Young, okay?" He stepped closer, his hand holding onto the jacket of Shane's suit. "I mean just cause her dad blew up a house with a dozen people in it doesn't mean she should get a tiara. But you knew him, didn't you? Because I hear you two racked up a pretty decent phone bill."

It was hardly noticeable but Damon saw the moment the good Professor cracked just a little. Anger—it outed you every time. "If you wanna know something about me Damon just ask."

There were quite a few things Damon wanted to know—especially where Bonnie was concerned as she was sort of working with this douche, but he also didn't wanna put her more onto the Professor's radar if he was in fact crazy so instead he went with, "Okay. How did you convince the Pastor to kill all those people?"

Shane smiled. "Did you just accuse me of mass murder in the middle of a high school pageant?"

Uh, yeah. I think I did. Damon flashed him a fake grin but said nothing as he walked away. While Shane hadn't confessed he also hadn't denied the charges either. It also hadn't helped his probably guilty factor by looking even more damn suspicious while doing nothing.

I am definitely gonna have to watch this guy closely.

That was the only reason Damon hung around. However he learned a few interesting things like the fact that Jeremy was having nightmares about killing Elena, Professor Sideburns apparently knew everyone including Tyler's werewolf girlfriend and Stefan was doing something he shouldn't be doing that was probably dangerous.

Just another normal day in Mystic Falls.

He waited until Shane was alone again before attempting to get the name of a Hunter. If not just to help Elena then to stop Stefan from getting his fool ass killed because that was obviously where he was headed.
The Professor chuckled when Damon entered the room. "Oh you again. I must be the least intimidating mass murderer ever."

Damon frowned in no mood for games. "Well you still never gave me a name and it's kind of urgent."

Shane sighed. "Look there is no name. At any given moment there are five Hunters in existence." He held up five fingers. "Alright, most of them have no idea who they are or what their purpose is. Finding more than one in a lifetime is next to impossible." Clearly done, he swerved around Damon and headed for the door.

Damon being *Damon* decided playtime was over and super sped in front of him, not caring if he outed himself as a vampire. His patience was tried so it was time to fall back on old habits.

"Subtle." Shane said but his eyes were round with shock.

"Like you didn't already know. You have five second to give me a name, or you die."

"You know since it's generally unwise for a vampire to seek a Hunter it means you're interested in the mark. And it's probably because of where it leads but here's the thing, even if you complete the mark and you get the map, the thing that you're looking for is sealed with a spell only a certain kinda witch can perform."

At the mention of the word *witch* Damon's blood ran cold. "What kinda witch?"

Shane smirked. "C'mon Damon."

Damon grabbed his wrist and squeezed until the bone cracked a little though didn't break. He was no longer bullshitting around. "I love pressure points." He needed to hear this asshole say it. "What kinda witch?"

"C'mon you're a big boy I'm sure you can figure it out." Shane grimaced.

"Fuck! Fuck, fuck, fuck! A Bennett witch."

"Aren't too many of those still around as I'm sure you know."

"And I'm sure you know what will happen to you if anything happens to Bonnie."

Shane yanked his wrist free. "I'm well aware of your relationship with her, Damon. I like Bonnie. She's intelligent and an exceptional witch. I would never do anything to cause her harm. But the fact of the matter is; her magic is needed to break the seal and only I can help her access it the way it needs to be accessed. Though I'm guessing you've realized this since it's been five seconds and I'm still alive."

Damon's jaw clenched. "I should just kill you now and save myself the trouble of doing it later."

The Professor fixed his jacket. "You could do that but you'd never find the cure without me. Now if you'll excuse me I have a scholarship to award."

The only reason Damon let him walk away was because he knew Stefan would *never* stop searching for the cure and would just end up deeper in bed with Klaus if that is what he had to do. He'd never been a particularly good brother—not even in the past—but now he wanted to be and he couldn't in good conscious let Stefan get hooked up with Klaus again. The last time that happened Stefan nearly lost himself to his Ripper impulses. Who knew what kinda fucked up shit he'd do to make Elena
human again?

But he couldn't have Bonnie in danger either. That was just not an option. So that meant he had to find out why Shane even cared about the cure in the first place and beat him at his own game. If there was one thing Damon was good at it was being a conniving asshole that was always one step ahead of everyone else. He didn't care what he had to do but he would make sure Bonnie and Stefan weren't screwed up by this.

~*~

Things had been going well the next day even though because of Jeremy wanting (and trying) to kill Elena she'd "sort of" moved into the Salvatore manor, forcing Matt to stay with Jeremy for a bit of human companionship. Even though Stefan then went to crash with Caroline because he really couldn't take being around Elena especially after she'd told him to "let her go." Even though Elena couldn't stop herself from staring at Damon shirtless or Damon drinking coffee or Damon basically existing in the universe. Things had been going well because Bonnie knew without a shadow of a doubt that Damon and Elena would never be sitting in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g.

They would never fall into each others' arms or break furniture in their hurry to climb into bed together. Damon loved her and he'd never cross that line because he knew there was no coming back from it.

Elena had asked if she could stay and Bonnie—good friend that she was—said yes because while they were on the outs she didn't want her friend dead. She also didn't want Jeremy to be later racked with guilt over being the one to kill his own sister. So she was being the bigger person and letting her friend stay somewhere where she'd be safe.

And yeah things were okay at first. Elena kept to her own room and didn't pop up in Damon's for no reason at all. Bonnie got the feeling she might have listened in on their conversations but she did have super hearing now so that couldn't really be avoided. And besides all she heard was them being either too sweet or too snarky with one another, well that and the sex. Having Elena so close inspired Bonnie to wanna claim Damon and naturally Damon put up no fuss.

It had been Elena who suggested a girls' night so that they could all unwind while Damon went away with Stefan for some brother bonding. Bonnie didn't exactly believe that excuse but she knew he would tell her the truth later. Something weird was going on and it wasn't just the talk of the cure either. Damon was cagey whenever she mentioned Shane and it wasn't his usual frowny jealous face; it was something more. Something bigger. He wouldn't come clean and she realized she'd have to trust him which wasn't a problem because she did anyway. But still she didn't like being in the dark about something that could possibly cause harm.

Especially harm to him or her friends.

Anyway though she, Elena and Caroline spent their evening dancing and drinking the Salvatore's expensive alcohol before learning that Elena could now drink from a blood bag. Damon had brought her one during lunch just to see and miraculously everything had been okay. It was nice because it meant Elena as a vampire was normal or settling perhaps. And now she didn't have to hurt people so no more angusting about it. After hearing that good news they got into some special brownies that were supposed to open up your chi and just sort of partied until they were pleasantly buzzed, somehow ending up in Damon's bathtub. Talking and joking around until the subject of Damon came up.

Until then they'd avoided anything deep about him because they were smart and sober. Drunk and buzzed? Not so much.
It didn't bother her when Caroline ragged on Damon because she felt the blonde had a right to. Damon had been a major grade A dick to her and if she wanted to call him such then more power to her. Bonnie just laughed and continued fiddling with her phone, wondering why the ivory of Damon's bathtub felt so smooth. Elena on the other hand had taking the teasing personal for some reason. Before Bonnie knew what was happening she and Caroline were sniping at each other about him with Elena coming to his defense like a rabid fan girl.

"You shouldn't talk about him like that." Elena had snapped. "I know his track record is spotty and that he's done some bad things but he's always been there for me. I—I think I love him."

"Oh you don't love him!" Caroline replied, beyond exasperated. "You're sired to him!"

Things pretty much went downhill from there and honestly Bonnie wasn't sure if it was because rogue hybrids kidnapped Caroline to send a message to Tyler or in spite of it. Even after Caroline was okay and Tyler proved himself to be Alpha, Bonnie still was confused. The only thing she knew about sire bonds were that they made hybrids basically slaves to Klaus' will. How a vampire sire bond worked was anyone's guess.

But it did explain the sudden interest Elena had in Damon most notably after becoming a vampire. How differently she acted around him; like he'd hung the moon or something. What if it were that simple? What if the only reason Elena wanted Damon was because she was sired to him? As complicated as it probably was it also made things so much simpler. She could cope with a mystical reason for her best friend wanting her fiancé. And she'd even try to find a way to end it or reverse it.

Maybe this whole Expression thing Shane keeps going on about could help. Maybe…

It was morning when Damon finally arrived back to the manor. Caroline had since gone home and Elena was cleaning up downstairs. Bonnie lounged on Damon's bed staring at the ceiling, her eyes tracking his movements when he walked in and kicked off his shoes.

"Hey." She said softly.

"Hey back." He flopped down beside her.

She snuggled up against him. "How was your night?"

Damon sighed. "Awful. Yours?"

She chuckled lowly. "Same."

Pinching the bridge of his nose, he frowned. "Um, we need to talk."

Bonnie touched his shoulder. "It's okay. I know that Elena is sired to you." Whatever that really means. "Caroline let the cat out of the bag. She's horrible at keeping secrets. That's what you and Stefan were doing, isn't it?"

He snorted. "Noted. And yeah. Believe it or not but it's happened to me before a long time ago."

I wonder would it happen to me if he turned me? "Is there any way to break it?"

His expression grew tight. "Not exactly. There is no spell that can break it but I can…push her away. Tell her to go off and be happy because that would make me happy."

That seems to easy. "That kinda seems to easy and clean cut. I mean it means she'll still be into you but she'll stay away from you." Pause. "It doesn't seem fair. Elena should be free completely."
"I agree Bonnie but I don't know how to make that happen." He sat up. "And it's fucked up because Elena is my friend and I don't want her sired to me. I don't want her having feelings for me. I know what it's like to want someone who'll never want you back and it sucks."

Bonnie suddenly wished Elena was just crushing on him instead. "We'll figure this out. Maybe Shane can help."

He frowned. "You shouldn't trust him so easily."

She tilted her head to the side. "When did I say I trusted him? He helped us with the Hunter curse but that doesn't mean I'm gonna blindly do everything he asks. But if he can help break the sire bond then that's a good thing."

Damon's brows narrowed. "If."

Kissing his cheek, she pulled him back down so that they were side by side. "This isn't your fault…if that's what you're thinking. No one could have known Elena would become sired to you. Hell it could have been Caroline I suppose."

"God forbid." Exhaling, he turned his pressed his face into the hollow of her neck. "I'm tired."

Her fingers combed through his hair soothingly. "Go to sleep. I'll be here when you wake up."

His eyes closed, his long lashes tickling her skin. "You don't have to be."

That was the whole point though. That's what made everything about them so completely different. "But I will be."

~Fin~
Chapter Summary

It's no secret; Bonnie is the constant that holds everyone else together.

Chapter Notes

This tags episodes 4.09 (O Come, All Ye Faithful) though so enjoy...it's pretty AU.

Anchor

Elena's heat of the moment confession about possibly being in love with Damon had drifted to the back of Bonnie's mind after hybrids kidnapped Caroline and tried to use her to intimidate Tyler; she honestly hadn't remembered it until later when the quiet finally came. Perhaps it was because of the holidays or the drama with Jeremy trying to kill his sister—either way she was surprised how not bothered she was about it. She was annoyed but she wasn't going to be throwing herself onto her bed in a dramatic tizzy anytime soon.

Knowing that Elena was sired to Damon sort of changed her perspective on things. How much was Elena and how much was this crazy link between them? Bonnie felt that she would be the biggest hypocrite on the planet not to acknowledge how powerful blood bonds could be considering that is how she and Damon were thrown together in the first place. And there was still so much they didn't understand about bonds in general; how they worked and what affect they had on ones' emotional state. She could remember quite vividly every erotic dream and every crackle of electricity that Damon's touch caused on her skin. Still caused and would probably always cause, something that made her very happy. Yet it could have gone horribly wrong had they not ended up falling for each other.

She wouldn't pretend that the whole situation didn't pluck her nerves because it did. Even if deep down she figured Elena's feelings were all chemical or magical she still coveted her boyfriend and that wasn't right. Especially since Elena didn't appear to be trying to fight what she was feeling at all. Which was just this side of funny considering how hard Bonnie had fought not to fall for Damon back in the day.

Anyway though with this new information out in the open she'd decided not to burn Elena to death, at least not just yet. Besides there was so much going on it was hard to know what to focus on. It wasn't like Damon would be falling into Elena's arms—or bed—or letting her fall into his so technically Bonnie got that she didn't have to dwell on any of that. Yes it aggravated her whenever Elena made eyes at him or sighed in that way she did, but Jeremy being a homicidal vampire Hunter kinda took precedent over that. And then there was the Tyler/hybrid crap. Both life or death situations that needed to be dealt with.

Something was up with Caroline but she didn't know what. But you didn't call someone and ask about transferring souls unless you were hatching some odd plan of your own. Bonnie knew that Stefan probably had Caroline's back but she was still worried about her friend. When it came to guys
Caroline tended to have tunnel vision especially if they needed help. It was clear she'd do anything for Tyler. And since he would do anything for the other hybrids that put both of them in Klaus' cross hairs. It only took one mistake to screw everything up. Seeing as how she hadn't heard from the blonde since her weird call she kind of hoped things were going okay.

So she had decided to help with the Jeremy thing before he lost his damn mind and tried to kill his sister again or went after Damon. It was an strange burst of luck that Professor Shane knew of a way to curb his Hunter urges but she wasn't about to look a gift horse in the mouth. She also wasn't going to put a lot of stock into the fact that Jeremy had used her to keep his murderous rage feelings tampered down. Though it was cute that Damon had suggested it because usually he did whatever he could to keep her in some sort of bubble away from others that might want her. Not that Jeremy did.

Sitting at the end of the wooden dock and wrapped in a colorful blanket, Bonnie shivered and rubbed at her cold cheeks. After taking Elena back to Mystic Falls she'd turned right around and driven back to the Gilbert family cabin so that she could spend some quality time with Damon. He'd decided to hang behind and train Jeremy for, well, for some fight that everyone appeared to think was coming. Normally she would have been surprised by his selflessness but she knew that deep down Damon liked to help people every now and then. Not to mention she got the feeling there was guilt swarming around in his pretty head because of the sire stuff and his blood being the blood that turned Elena and her doing what he said—even offhandedly—and that leading up to Connor's death which of course had led to Jeremy being called.

He needed support right now and she was going to support him. Besides Caroline and Stefan were BFFs again and they had their secret plans; things that didn't concern her. Also her father wasn't home so there was no reason for her to be either. She wanted to be with Damon and help him in any way that she could. And there was a conversation she'd overheard that she couldn't get out of her mind.

"You're gonna go home. I'm gonna stay here with Jeremy—I'm gonna help him complete the mark. I'll teach him how to hunt, I'll protect him and we'll kill vampires. Without you."

"Damon c'mon. I just wanna—"

"One more thing, Elena. I want you to be an amazing friend to Bonnie. I want you to always take her feelings into consideration. This is what I want. This is what will make me happy."

Bonnie hadn't had a chance to ask Damon about that but she was going to. His thought process when it came to her feelings continued to astound her. She knew he wasn't thrilled with Elena basically stalking him and not just because of how she felt but also because of what it was doing to Elena as well. Yet in the midst of all the chaos he still managed to think about her.

It made her wonder about said thought process sometimes. How he could love her so deeply and yet not give much of a fuck about other people. Not that he had to care about others of course; it was just interesting to her from what she knew about his past as a vampire. She could just imagine how he would be if he'd had a Lexi like Stefan did.

"Hey. Judgy." Damon's thick boots padded down hard onto the wood. "You shouldn't be out here at this time of night all by yourself. What if some kinda fish monster tried to grab you and make you his bride?"

She chuckled. "Then I'd turn him into fish sticks for the both of us to enjoy." Pause. "Besides I came back so that we could hang out. And talk."

He made a face as he sat down beside her. "What do we have to talk about?"
She opened up the blanket and draped it around his shoulders, putting them closer together. "Are you sure it's safe to be here with Jeremy like this? I mean he won't be going after Elena but he's never had the warm and fuzzies for you."

Damon rested his chin to her shoulder. "I can handle some 'roided up kid who thinks he's a Hunter. Not like there is much choice anyway. Either he's trained to kill vampires or he gets himself killed when he meets one stronger than he is. He's okay so far. He didn't try to kill me once while you were taking Elena home."

*Thank goodness for small miracles then.* "I guess that hypnosis really worked. Good."

He cracked his knuckles. "Yes, good that some teenage boy is using my girlfriend to cock block his urges. I feel so good about the chances of this not coming back to bite any of us in the ass. Especially with Professor Shady involved." A beat. "If we didn't need him I swear I would kill him."

Shifting, she slipped her legs across his lap and snuggled into his side. "No matter what happens, we're gonna be okay. I mean we kinda have to be so that we can eventually get married. I haven't been going through letting Caroline plan it just for it not to happen."

A brow rose. "There's going to be a lot of pink, isn't there?"

Bonnie laughed. "I love you."

He winked. "I love you too."

Sighing, she ran her fingers through his silky hair. "I heard what you said to Elena by the way. Was that more for you or for me?"

His bright blue eyes focused on her. "It was more for her actually. Or all of us. If she keeps alienating you—whether she means to or not—you're gonna give up on her. And I'm not gonna deal with her if it upsets you so…” Waving a hand, he licked his bottom lip. "So I think the best thing for her to do is to be your bestest bud and forget about how utterly sexy I am."

She hit him playfully in the stomach. "Easily done."

Damon smirked, his cold fingers inching under her shirt to make her squirm. "We both know that's a lie. Just think, years from now and I am always going to be this hot. You get to wake up to all of this forever."

They still hadn't discussed the future in terms of if she would ever become a vampire someday. Sometimes she felt the *yes* was inevitable and yet others she honestly didn't know. All that she was certain of was that she wanted Damon in her life for as long as he could be in it. She just wasn't sure she'd ever want to give up being a witch. Granted when she was an adult there was a chance all of the drama would finally be over and her powers wouldn't be something needed to keep everyone alive. Not to mention—thankfully—she had several years before she would start to look as old or older than Damon since he by definition was technically older. And she didn't even mean the whole vampire age thing.

*I think we have time to be in limbo about it for a while.* "Mm. And I'm letting you wake up to this every morning purely out of the goodness of my heart."

"Yummy." He growled and buried his face in her neck, nipping at her skin. He bit just *this side* of too hard to draw a little blood so that he could lap at it with his tongue.

"Are you hungry?" She winced. "I could try to find you a poor defenseless bunny."
He laughed. "No thank you I'll manage."

There was silence before she replied, "Do you really think you'll be able to train Jeremy?"

"Yeah. At this point we just need him alive long enough for him to complete the mark. After that who gives a shit."

"Damon."

"What? Look maybe after we get the cure his crazy will pass on to some other unsuspecting idiot. Wouldn't that be the most optimal thing?"

"Yeah."

"Right. So basically this cure—if it exists and if it doesn't I'm eating Professor Shane—is like the answer to all our problems. No more vampire Elena, no more sire bond, no more awkward dinner conversations."

"She said she thinks she loves you."

"And under compulsion people think they're cats. Doesn't make it true."

"How is her sire bond different from what we have? Both caused strong emotions and brought us closer together."

"True but only one was fun enough to let me get to see you naked before I actually got to see you naked. Seriously Bonnie, the sire bond is all about obedience and control; like with Klaus and his hybrids. If I told Elena jumping in the lake would make me happy she would do it. That's not love. Hell it's not even like. It's blind devotion and only a crazy person would want that."

Enter Klaus. "That explains why Klaus gets off on it. It's like forcing extreme friendship."

He nodded. "Among other things. I know it's hard not to compare the two but they're like, totally different. I don't want a puppet. I want you."

Smiling, she cupped his cheeks and kissed his lips. "You have me."

Bonnie hoped there was a cure and she hoped it was the answer to all of their problems. She didn't see how fixing Elena would help Jeremy but now that he could chose what vampire he went after, perhaps he'd be a bit saner. Still she had enough foresight to get that even if Elena was cured there was probably a catch. Nothing ever came free and clear where they were concerned.

Opening the tomb for Damon had calmed his bloodlust but set in motion Katherine's crazy plan with the moonstone as well as let out all of the tomb vampires. Defeating Katherine had brought the Originals to town and they were still dealing with the aftermath of all of that since Klaus just refused to leave. From Ripper Stefan to crazy Hunters to werewolves; they couldn't seem to escape danger. It worried her if she were being truthful. In the span of no time at all she'd lost her grandmother and her mother. The only other person in her circle of family was her father and he was probably only still alive because he was always away. At first she'd hated it but now she preferred it.

"So, you gonna stay here?" She inquired lightly. "I'm pretty sure they have enough rooms."

Damon exhaled, looking back at the cabin. "Yup. I think I can trust Jeremy not to stake me in my sleep. If not for me then for you since you're his cuddly crazy catcher."
Rolling her pretty green eyes teasingly, she huffed. "It's a little creepy that he wanted to use me but if it helps I can deal with it."

Her fiancé snorted. "Oh please. Jeremy has had the hots for you for a while now. As long as this doesn't turn him into your stalker I can deal with it. Gonna focus on Shane anyway. I don't trust him."

Bonnie smiled. "You don't trust anyone new."

He shrugged. "It's served me well though. Just be careful around him, okay? Call it Salvatore paranoid delusions."

*He's so cute.* "Yes sir. I will watch my back." Tired of the cold, she untangled herself from him and stood. "C'mon and I'll help you get settled in."

~*~

Damon Salvatore hardly ever used words like *making love* in relation to sex. Maybe *before* but since Katherine he knew very well that everything he did with her and after her was fucking. It was having extremely hot sex with willing and compelled to be willing partners; a few he even gave more than a damn about. But making love was about sharing yourself with someone on a level that transcended everything else. There were deep emotions involved and it was more than just getting off. It was important—it included feeling safe enough to strip yourself completely for the person you were with and hoping they were doing the same.

Yeah so not every single time he and Bonnie had sex was making love but he could tell the difference and he knew she could to. Sure sometimes he just wanted pin her to the bed with a hand on the back of her neck and pound into her until he knocked everything off his bedside table. Other times he wanted to lay back and let her do all of the work because he *loved* watching her move.

But sometimes—times like now—he wanted to experience everything. Press his face into the smooth hollow of her neck and rock into her slowly while her hands traced patchwork patterns along his skin. The only time his mind wasn't racing with thoughts or plots or schemes was when he *was with* Bonnie. While his sire bond with Elena couldn't be felt, he could sense his connection with Bonnie no matter what he did but when they were together it washed over him like the winds of a hurricane. It was in every tug and every push and every pull.

And as she broke underneath him, as she tightened and panted his name against his lips he felt the eye of the storm in his head before it crashed back onto him so that he could ride it until the end.

It was never enough but luckily they had the rest of their lives.

Rolling off of her lax body, he chuckled and ran a hand through his sweaty hair. She whimpered and shifted onto her stomach, nuzzling her cheek into the pillows before giving a contented sigh. He stared at the ceiling for a second and then closed the space between them, placing soft kisses across her damp naked shoulders. She smiled lazily and he continued down her spine until he reached the dip of her back.

"You…" *Kiss.* "Are you…" *Kiss.* "Beautiful…"

Her eyes were closed as she said, "I feel like every muscle in my body is puddy."

He smirked and reversed his track, heading back up towards her head. "You're welcome." His cell phone beeped and he grunted, reading the text message he'd just received. "Eh be right back. Don't fall asleep. We're going again."
She hummed and he got dressed not expecting her to be awake at all. Jogging downstairs and into the kitchen, he tilted his head at the sight of Jeremy sitting alone at the island with a plate of eggs. "Where's the fire?"

Jeremy reached for the salt. "No fire. I just wanted to talk to you but I thought coming up would be…rude."

Damon grinned. "You could have knocked on the door. Unless you didn't want to disturb Bonnie…"

Jeremy snorted, not amused. "Sometimes it's hard for me to picture the person she used to be with the person she is when she's with you. I still don't get it."

"Obviously you weren't listening five minutes ago. She wasn't just praising God."

"You're a dick."

"So I've been told many times. Anyway what's wrong Tiny Tim? You didn't drag me away from a beautiful, naked girl just to yell at me."

"No." He sighed, pushing his food around with his fork. "You're staying here so that you can help me with my mark. Do you think all of this will actually come out to something?"

Man I hope so. Nothing annoys me more than wasting time on a project that gives no returns. "Professor Asshole seems to think it will so I guess we'll see. I'm more interested in why he gives a damn. He said he wants to find this Silas but honestly digging that guy up sounds like every bad decision every character has ever made in a horror movie."

Jeremy snickered. "What? You think he could still be alive or something?"

Damon nodded. "He's immortal. And since he's been locked up for thousands of years he's probably pretty pissed off too. Last thing we need is another un-killable bastard on our hands like Klaus."

The younger Gilbert pressed his lips together. "Yeah but he has the cure so…"

He better have the cure or I'm skinning Shane and wearing him as a jacket. "We hope."

"Hey, he helped me." Jeremy pointed out.

"Oh like that wasn't purely selfish." Damon countered. "All of this is less about helping Elena and more about whatever the fuck he's up to. Which is why we have to be on guard around him."

"Okay." Jeremy said without any fuss. "But if he's willing to help us with Elena I say we let him. Deal with the rest later."

That never works out for us. "Yeah I'm sure that'll go well."

As long as draining Bonnie of all her magic wasn't a requirement to get into the crypt that held Silas Damon would remain on board. One of the issues that concerned him however dealt with getting in over their heads and it being too late to do anything about it. Though as much as he hated Klaus maybe having him sort of on their side would help. He wanted Elena human to make more hybrids and while he was loathe to admit it, Klaus was stronger by virtue of being older. If anyone could take on Silas he'd be the one. And you know it was better to plan ahead for a disaster than to go in with nothing but hopeful optimism. He wasn't Stefan after all.
Damon rolled his head on his shoulders. "You should try to get some sleep. Got a big day ahead of you of possibly getting your ass kicked." Smiling, he turned and made his way back upstairs as Jeremy glared at him. "Don't forget to eat your Wheaties! You're gonna need them."

~Fin~
The Mayor's death was being ruled an accident but there were certain people that knew that wasn't true and Bonnie was one of them. It was tragic that Klaus had taken his anger about Tyler's part in the hybrid revolution out on her but not nearly as shocking. And honestly it was a little silly to think he wouldn't retaliate in some way but she supposed Tyler thought it would be with him directly. However after seeing the way losing a loved one affected his friends he should have known Klaus would go for that heartache because of how intense it could be.

Still she'd left Damon and Jeremy up at the cabin earlier so that she could show her support with the rest of the town in a sort of makeshift memorial to Carol Lockwood. Adults and authority figures were dropping like flies; the Sheriff really the only one left (if you didn't count the rest of the police department) now that the entire Council was gone. Surely Caroline was feeling some type of anxiousness when it came to her mother's safety especially after already losing her father.

While the turnout for Carol had not been a big surprise, finding out that her very own father would now be acting Mayor or just Mayor was. Besides the fact that he'd never shown any interest in politics before he also wasn't exactly present enough to deal with town issues. She couldn't help but wonder if this meant he would be sticking around more. If so, well, she had mixed emotions about it. On the one hand she loved her father and wanted to spend more time with him. But on the other hand she'd gotten used to the type of freedom that no parental interference had given her. It would be beyond hard to even attempt to listen to him if he tried to throw his fatherly weight around.

His request to meet her for lunch came as no surprised and she agreed, walking into the Grille to find him chatting with Sheriff Forbes. It had never occurred to Bonnie before that her father actually knew about all of the crazy things that went on in Mystic Falls but now it made perfect sense that he did. Even more if he planned to be Mayor. He probably thought she was still in the dark however, witch powers aside. It would be interesting if they ever met in the middle; he'd flip his lid once he found out about Damon. If he ever found out about Damon.

*I don't think Liz would tell him because of Caroline but then again that is the sort of thing the Mayor should know; which citizens are undead and whatever. This could bring unnecessary complications to my already complicated life. Oh joy.*
"Hey Dad." She said once she reached the table. "Hey Sherriff."

"Hello Bonnie." Sherriff Forbes smiled and stood. "I'll let you guys talk. Charles come see me when you have a moment."

Watching her leave, Bonnie sighed. "So, far cry from being a traveling pharmaceutical rep."

"I noticed a few of your friends missing from the assembly. So much for mandatory I guess." He replied, dodging her obvious seeking statement.

She rolled her eyes. "Dad, stop. You can't come in and start making rules."

He shrugged. "I think this town could use a few more rules."

They'd never had more than a fleeting mention of what she could do—what Grams could do—and even then he'd sort of passed it off as Shelia being looped on the liquor. Now however she suspected he understood more about the Bennett side of the family than he'd ever let on. "You're forgetting I can protect the town."

His expression was gentle but firm. "I'm well aware of your gifts, Bonnie. But don't forget I'm your father. That means I get to protect you."

It would lead to an argument but she couldn't help herself. "And how were you protecting me when you were off working and I was here all alone after Grams died?"

Her father sat back in his wooden chair. "I know that I have made mistakes in the past but things are going to be different now. I had no idea Mystic Falls had gotten so bad—it's why I took the job of Mayor in the first place. To help set things right. That includes with you."

Bonnie folded her arms over her chest. "I'm fine, really. And it's not that I'm not happy to see you because I am. But I can't pretend you being here is going to be an easy adjustment for me. I've been on my own for a while now and I'm used to it."

His brows arched. "What happened to that young man you were seeing?"

She couldn't tell if he was fishing or honestly curious so she decided to play it cool. "We're still together. He's done a very good job of watching out for me."

Charles hummed. "We should have dinner again, the three of us. I'd love to catch up."

"Yeah like that's gonna happen. "Sounds like fun."

He chuckled softly. "How are you doing? Really?"

That was a good question. "I'm okay. After a while you get used to whatever you're going through whether it's good or bad, as horrible as that sounds. And I got used to hanging out with my friends while you were away. I still miss Grams though every day."

"Yeah I do too sweetheart. She was really something else. As much as her witch talk scared me I knew you were in good hands with her around." He looked wistful. "Honestly I thought she would outlive us all."

"Me too." She smiled a little. "But hopefully she's in a better place." Pause. "Can I ask what your plans are now that you're acting Mayor? There is a pothole in front of the library that needs filling in."
"I'm not sure yet. I just want it certain that everyone is safe." He explained. "What happened to Carol shouldn't have happened but unfortunately it can't be changed. I'd just like to make sure it never happens again."

"You have to be careful." She thought about her mother. "Very. Ruffling the wrong feathers wouldn't be good for you."

The surprising part was that he didn't immediately say that he could take care of himself. Obviously he realized the severe nature of the situation and was not going to take it lightly. She'd always assumed she'd gotten her savior complex from her Grams but she could see a bit of it in her father as well. He was willing to take on something huge just to protect the people he cared about, just like her. In a weird way it made her proud. It terrified her in others though—she'd freak out if something happened to him.

Dealing with small time vampires would be easy but their problems always stemmed from Klaus and his crazy siblings. The best anyone could do was ingest vervain and hope they weren't in the wrong place at the wrong time. However with Klaus focusing on the cure he hadn't had time to cause town wide damage which—Tyler's mother aside—was a good thing. If he managed to get the cure first, well, that was another matter altogether.

And speaking of other matters her father still had no idea about her engagement. She'd thought about telling him a few times they'd spoke on the phone but ultimately decided it would be a bad idea. Now she was extra happy she hadn't said anything. She needed to find out everything he knew about the vampires of Mystic Falls and whether he knew her fiancé was one. Though she had a feeling he'd have issues with it either way because she was young and Damon was sorta not. He'd most likely tell her she had no idea what she really wanted right now and that it was a horrible mistake.

All things that cycled through her brain immediately after saying yes.

But life with Damon—while a bit scary—was also something she could really see herself doing. He understood so much about her because he'd known Emily first hand and honestly, she didn't think any regular person would be able to put up with the crazy things that often went on in her life. Abby said after losing her powers she decided to never return but Bonnie figured she didn't come back because she knew how Charles would react as well. That he would be furious at her for putting witchcraft (and someone else's family) over her own family.

With Damon she would never have to make that choice because he would be able to be with her every step of the way. And he was strong and brave; she wouldn't have to worry about him (though she still would) because he could take care of himself.

Really Damon Salvatore was one of the best choices she'd ever been coerced into making.

"I don't suppose you'd like to come to City Hall with me?" Her father inquired. "So that we can spend more time together catching up."

That sounded so boring but playing the dutiful daughter might win her some extra points for when she needed to disappeared and do other things. "As long as I don't have to file anything I'm there."

He laughed. "I think we can forego the filing for today. Really I'm still getting acquainted with everything Carol was doing. A lot of festivals and parties. When you're not here you forget all of the history and such that wants to be celebrated."

She chuckled. "I think people also just like free food and parades."
Charles grinned. "I remember how you would to raid every single dessert table when you were little. No matter how hard I tried to keep you away, you'd get your Grams to hide some in her purse for you."

Bonnie snickered at the memory. "You'd get so mad at her for being my partner in crime and she would just be like, well I'm her grandmother what do you expect?"

He took a sip of his coffee. "It's funny but sometimes when I look at you now it's hard to remember you're this beautiful young woman. I still see my little girl with cupcake frosting around her mouth."

She ducked her head. "I'll always be your little girl, daddy. Even when I'm forty or whatever. But you know I had to grow up…it's kinda in the rules."

He nodded. "I know. I just don't want you to grow up too soon. " A beat. "Or be forced to grow up too soon because of an accident."

Not this again. A part of me wants to tell him that Damon is sterile so that he can stop worrying. However that would give him the image of us actually having sex and neither of us want that. "There will be no accidents I promise. There will be college and traveling and jobs but no accidents."

He smirked lightly. "Good to know. Okay let's get down to the office. I need to talk to Liz again as well."

Just as Bonnie was slinging her purse onto her shoulder, her cell phone chimed inside. She dug it out, the caller id flashing Elena's name. "Oh it's Elena. I'll um; I'll be outside while you pay the check and stuff." Meandering towards the front door, she pressed the talk button. "Hello?"

"Hey Bonnie." Elena greeted. "Just thought I would call and see how things went with your dad."

Ever since Damon had told Elena being a better friend to her would make him happy, it was like Elena couldn't help herself. She checked in regularly to make sure Bonnie was okay and offered to listen to any problems she might have. It was just like old times if you didn't factor in some weird sire bond was making her all Stepford. Or that Elena still had wishy washy feelings for Damon which she wasn't allowed to mention because they made Bonnie uncomfortable. However if she tried really hard she could pretend things were normal like they were before Stefan went all Ripper with Klaus.

It wasn't perfect by any means but it made the situation a bit less tense. "Not too bad actually. So far we just talked about him being back in town and taking the Mayor job."

"Sounds thrilling." She giggled. "But your dad is a good guy so I think he'll do a good job. As long as he stays off Original radar of course."

"Yeah I'm gonna try like hell to make sure he does." Bonnie responded, kicking at a loose piece of gravel. "Are you still at school?"

"Yes. I'm actually trying to find April to see how she is doing. We haven't really talked since the whole Miss. Mystic Falls thing. I'm doing a terrible job of looking out for her." Elena sighed. "I thought I'd see if she wanted to hang out or something."

"Sounds like fun."

"We'll see. Um, I actually wanted to ask you earlier but didn't get a chance to, how is Jeremy?"

"His training is coming along nicely. Matt showed up yesterday morning to help."
"Ooh I hope he doesn't accidentally hurt him."

Bonnie pulled at a piece of her hair. "No I think he's being careful with him at least. I'm heading back up there as soon as I can get away from my dad. You could call him you know? He'd probably love to hear from you."

The brunette hummed. "I just don't wanna flip a switch and cause him to freak out. I know he's supposed to be cured now but this whole Hunter's thing is so strange. If there really is a cure I hope we get it soon so that all of this can be over and we can all go back to normal."

*I second that so hard. "Me too." Though I don't know how normal things will be with my dad around almost full time. At least he'll be working though."

"Oh there's April." Elena replied. "Keep me posted about Jeremy, okay?"

"Sure thing." Bonnie mused. "Talk to you later."

They said their good-byes and Bonnie leaned against the side of the building to wait for her dad.

~*~

It took a few hours but after Charles got busy with forms and statements about city infrastructure and building permits, Bonnie was finally able to get away. It was nearly dark by the time she was on the highway leading up to the cabin. She hadn't spoken to Damon all day—though she had left a few voicemails just because—so she assumed he was busy playing Sensei to Jeremy and Matt. And knowing him he was being a dick about it and denying them nice things like heat and food. The thought made her chuckle so she decided to be a wonderful friend and get them some pizza as a reward for no doubt jobs well done.

She was just pulling into the parking lot of the pizza place when her phone went off again. This time Caroline's name flashed across the screen. "Hey Caroline."

"I hate Rebecca so much!" She said instead of hello. "Seriously I want to just pull every strand of blonde hair out of her stupid vampire head and—and make a hat out of it or something!"

Bonnie blinked. "What happened?"

The blonde growled. "First she compels Stefan, Elena and me to like sit in the library and tell her everything we know about the cure. Oh and April? Totally her stupid little worker bee. So after we tell her what we know or don't know she starts in on why Elena and Stefan are being so weird with each other. She huffed with irritation. "She found out all about the sire bond and then would not shut up about it! She compelled Elena to say how much she was into Damon and like, how she thought Stefan saw her as a broken toy—you should have seen. Stefan's face. I felt so bad for him. And it was all just so that Rebecca could hurt Stefan like he'd hurt her ninety billion years ago."

"Caroline—"

"That's not even the worst of it!" Caroline interrupted. "Kol shows up with Professor Shane and I'm pretty sure they tortured him for more information about the cure. Then April starts choking on water like, out of nowhere, and is suddenly stabbed or something so Stefan heals her with his blood. Then we find out Kol had stabbed Shane so—so Shane must have done some wiggy spell to link himself to April." Pause. "Bonnie, Rebecca compelled Tyler to turn and hunt us throughout the school. I found him shivering and naked in the gym."

"Oh my god!" Bonnie exclaimed. All of that information was almost too much to take in. She sort of
expected Rebecca to be bitchy because it was obviously in her DNA but Shane connecting himself to April? Nearly causing her death so that he could cheat it? She would say that didn't sound like him but honestly she didn't know enough about him to make that judgment call. He was driven and those types of people would sometimes do whatever they had to do to get what they wanted.

The question now though was what did Shane want? She was going to be sure to ask him when she saw him again. *This new power he's helped me with could be even more dangerous than messing with the spirits. That shouldn't give me a rush but it does…*

"I'm sorry I wasn't there to help." She told her friend. "Is everyone okay?"

"I guess. Tyler is all screwed up and blaming himself for his mom's death. And I'm pretty sure Stefan wants to punch Damon in the face even though he gets the sire bond wasn't exactly his fault. But he's hurting so…" Trailing off Caroline exhaled deeply. "I don't think he and Elena will ever be the same. Maybe if she's cured but for right now? I think he sort of hates her a little. Not in the rip her head off way but you know what I mean."

*Yeah I do.* "Did Rebecca and Kol get any useful information about the cure?"

The blonde grumbled. "Not that I know of. I mean they basically know what we know about the sword and that Silas dude. I'm so sick of this stupid cure! It better be worth finding."

*I know the feeling.* "I hope the same thing." She nibbled on her bottom lip. "Do you need me to come home?"

The pout could be heard in her voice as she said, "No it's okay I just wanted to keep you in the loop. I'm gonna take Tyler home and institute a cuddle session whether he wants it or not."

Bonnie giggled lowly. "Okay. I'm sorry you had a rough day, Care. One day we'll be done with all this Original bullshit."

"I hope so." Her friend murmured. "Take care."

"You too." The other girl hung up and glanced out the window. "Jesus." Climbing out of the car, Bonnie made her way towards the pizza place and inside. She frowned when she realized no one was inside behind the counter and that the smell of burnt dough hung thickly in the air. "Hello?"

Coughing, she hurried back outside and stopped in her tracks at the sight of the three workers standing in front of her. She was just about to ask if they were okay when she saw their blood stained clothes, the veins underneath their eyes crinkling dark with the tell tale sign that blood lust was about to take over.

The cook in his dirty apron lunged at her and she put him down, exploding the blood vessels in his brain, making him cry out and grab his head in pain. The second employee—a redhead—snarled and suddenly had her pinned against the side of the building, snapping at her throat. Just as she felt fangs graze her skin, the redhead gurgled and the fist in her chest retracted, taking her heart with it. She dropped like a bag full of sand, lifeless eyes still open.

"Now now children," Klaus said smiling. "I thought I told you to stay in the bar until our guest of honor arrived. Sneaking out for a bite to eat was not a part of the plan. Return to the bar or I will do to you what I just did to poor Mindy."

"What are you doing here?" Bonnie snapped.

"Making sure that Jeremy is living up to his Hunter duties and working on his mark." He watched
the other two vampires leave. "And giving him the push he needs. A *push* your charming fiancé was apparently not capable of."

Bonnie rolled her eyes. "So you've been bothering Jeremy while he's been training. Did—did you turn those people?"

He shrugged. "Jeremy needs to kill vampires. There were no vampires so I *made* vampires for him to kill." Pause. "I'm sorry those tried to eat you love but I can understood the urge. You usually look rather delicious."

She swerved around him to head to her car when he grabbed her arm. "Let me go."

Klaus tsked her. "Don't you want to see your boyfriend? He's not at the cabin." Without waiting for an answer, he began to drag her towards some bar with blues music playing. "Besides you're safer with me right now than you are on your own. Newborns can be so unpredicted in their thirst for a meal." He pushed open the door and stepped inside. "Can I buy you a drink?"

Bodies. There were bodies *everywhere*; on the pool tables, hunched over the bar and scattered on the floor. "Wh—what did you do?"

He strolled behind the bar and grabbed a bottle of whiskey. "I told you, sweetheart. Jeremy shouldn't be wasting his time playing the football player in the woods. He should be killing vampires to grow that mark so that we can find the cure. And now he has vampires to kill."

Just when she thought he couldn't get any worse he managed to surprise her. Yes she was actually surprised he'd turned an entire town just for them to be used as some type of cannon fodder. It was low even for him.

She was just about to blast him through a wall and make a run for it when Damon, Matt and Jeremy walked inside slowly, taking in the scene before them and probably thinking the same things she had thought. What the hell?

"I was beginning to worry you boys wouldn't find the place." Klaus poured himself a glass of whiskey and knocked it back.

"Did you kill all these people?" Matt asked, outraged.

"Not exactly." The Original mused. "They're in transition." He stood and moved before Jeremy. "Killing them is *your* job."

"You said you were gonna convince Klaus to do this another way." Jeremy accused, glaring daggers at Damon.

Damon for his part offered a stiff smile. "Well I thought about it and then I realized his idea was better. But before we get into that, what is *she* doing here?" He pointed at her. "Did you kidnap her or something?"

Klaus shook his head. "Of course not. If I had to guess I'd say she was getting food for her strapping young men when she ran into a few early risers, which I saved her from by the way. I know what you are thinking; that I'm going to use poor Bonnie in some nefarious plot. Well you would be wrong. She—like myself—is merely a spectator."

Damon snorted. "You okay?"

Bonnie nodded, making a mental note to talk to him later about his part in this town massacre.
Though she guessed even if he'd adamantly said no Klaus would have done whatever he wanted like always. "I'm fine, present company notwithstanding."

Klaus smirked as the new vampires began to stir. "So why don't we get this show on the road? Debbie there is making sure our new friends complete their transition which means there are about to be quite a few vampires that will need putting down. Have at it."

Jeremy frowned. "Screw you dick. Hunters can't be compelled." He threw his wooden stake to the floor.

Klaus flashed a feral grin and got right up into Jeremy's space. "You're right, I can't compel you. But if your conscious is getting in the way then allow me to make this easy for you because, I can compel them. I'm gonna give you a two minute head start and then I'm gonna send every vampire in here after you." Pause. "You kill them or they kill your friend. Matt."

Damon shook his head. "No. No you turn them, he kills them. That was the deal, Klaus."

The hybrid wouldn't be moved however. "I'm taking artist license."

"You know he can't take them all on at the same time."

"With you as his coach he'll be fine. It's Matt I'm worried about."

Realizing he was stuck between a rock and a hard place, Damon growled. "Jeremy go get the weapons from the car."

"Excellent!" Klaus was ecstatic. "Now while you three try to keep our new friends from ripping Matt's throat out, I will escort Bonnie safely back to the cabin." Damon opened his mouth to protest but the hybrid cut him off. "Use your brain, mate. How safe would she really be out there in the dark with newborns on the loose?"

"About as safe as I'll be with you." Bonnie muttered.

"I promise on my honor no harm will come to you." Klaus replied. "Besides we need a witch to get to the cure. Killing you would be bad business."

None of them liked the current turn of events but they all knew Klaus wasn't bluffing. And while she couldn't stand him Bonnie knew Klaus would keep his word simply because he needed her. Matt was the one in real danger here.

"It's okay." She wet her lips. "I'll see you back at the cabin."

"I don't like this." Damon noted for the record. "C'mon Matt. Let's try to keep you alive."

Ten minutes later and Klaus was escorting Bonnie through the darkened woods while the sounds of the night stirred around them.

I hope Matt and Jeremy will be alright.

"Penny for your thoughts, love?" Klaus questioned pleasantly. "Worried about the human and your boy toy?"

She rolled her eyes. "I can't believe you're okay with some of the shit you do. A thousand years and you're the biggest dick I've ever met."

He laughed. "Really? I hear Damon was quite the rogue when he first came to town. You're kidding
Oh I know very well who Damon is. "I know he does. But you're still worse. You claim no one understands you or wants to hear you out, and then you go and do shit like this. You've had chances to be a better person. Honestly I don't think you want to be. Which fair enough I suppose but don't act like you're being slighted."

He hummed in a thoughtful manner. "So you're saying I could catch more bees with honey? Has it ever occurred to you that maybe I don't care either way how the bees come as long as they come?"

"If that's the case why do you continue to hang around Caroline? So far she's the only one that's told you to go to hell in no uncertain terms that you haven't maimed for doing so."

"I happen to like Caroline's honesty. It's something you two have in common. Of course it could also be the thrill of the chase."

"It's probably that."

They reached the cabin; Bonnie could hear voices inside one of which belonged to Elena. It made sense that she would want to come and check on Jeremy and Matt.

"You know the sooner I get the cure the sooner Elena goes back to normal." Klaus smirked. "No more sired to Damon… and the two of you can go back to your boring love affair."

She stepped onto the porch. "Elena might be human and no longer sired to Damon, but I'm pretty sure you're not gonna just ride off into the sunset never to be heard from again."

He snickered. "I suppose we shall see then." He grabbed her hand before she could stop him, kissing her knuckles. "Well I must be going. Got a Hunter to help motivate."

And with a graceful bow he was gone.

~*~

"I don't plan on letting Elena down her for obvious reasons so, take your time." Stefan smiled as he pulled the heavy door closed. "Just give a shout when you're done."

Bonnie sighed deeply as she knelt beside Damon, smoothing her hand soothingly across his chest. "Why didn't you call me, you ass?"

He chuckled out a groan from his place on the cold floor. "Sorry. I was kinda too busy being compelled to stab myself in the chest before I was compelled to kill Jeremy. If the dick had just shot me like I told him to everything would be fine."

She hit him. "No it wouldn't. You'd be dead and I'd be all alone." Pause. "This is just another setback until we get rid of Kol or get him to reverse his compulsion. Actually you're probably safer locked up down here than you are anywhere else."

Damon shuffled back until he was against the wall. "What about you? How safe are you?"

That is a very good question. Between Shane's craziness and Kol going off the rails, I'm not sure how I am. Though I think I'm holding it together a lot better than usual considering everything that is going on. After learning my fiancé had been compelled to kill a good friend by a freaken Original vampire, I didn't set anything on fire. Breaking Shane's hand after finding out he's three cards short of a full deck doesn't count.
Besides he was totally egging me on. I should have broken his neck.

"I'm fine." She said slowly. "Stefan didn't seem to broken up about keeping you down here."

"Heh well he's still a little sore about the sire bond." Damon pouted. "Though I am a danger to Jeremy as long as I am compelled. Surprised you didn't put up more of a fuss with me being in here."

"If you were out you'd just be hunting Jeremy. Until we can fix this mess…it's the only solution that doesn't involve staking you." She explained, running her fingers through his hair. "It does pain me to see you like this though. I wish there was something I could do but there is no spell for compulsion and—and whatever fucked up shit Shane knows would take years to learn."

He nodded. "Locking me up is the lesser of two evils, I get it. Still…won't be easy. I won't be able to look out for you."

She smiled. "I'll be okay. Worst case scenario I destroy something protecting myself. Worst, worst case scenario I have to ask Klaus for help. "Anyway I'm gonna visit you every day until you're better. Besides Caroline I'm still one of the people Stefan likes."

Snickering, he motioned for her to come closer so that he could rest his head on her shoulder. "Or you could just stay down here with me."

She squeezed his hand. "I would but my dad might have something to say about that seeing as how he's the new Mayor."

"What?"

"Yeah. He's sort of taking over for Carol for right now. He mentioned having dinner with you again but I don't think that's a good idea. I'm not sure how much he does and doesn't know."

"As in if he knows whether I'm a vampire or not."

"Yes. I figure if he did he'd forbid me from seeing you. I don't think the Sheriff would mention it because of Caroline but you never know. It could all be written down somewhere."

"That's encouraging. Guess I am safer down here."

"I think we'd all be safer down here. But we're gonna get through this. We always do."

~Fin~
Mystic Falls was silent and cold with no children playing in the park and no cars on the road. There weren't even any birds flying overhead; it was a ghost town. So quiet and bleak, the sky heavy with gray clouds that threatened sheets of rain. Bonnie could smell blood in the air and taste it thick on her tongue as if it were staining her lips ruby red. It probably was. The bench she was sitting on was harder than usual, the wood digging into her back sharply like tiny pointed stones. She wasn't sure but she thought she could feel a bruise blooming on the side of her cheek and for a moment she couldn't remember why, but then everything came flooding back to her in a rush so heady it made her head spin.

She shuddered out a pained breath and forced herself to remain calm or her tenuous link would snap like brittle bone, and that was the last thing she wanted. If she just exhaled slowly and made no sudden movements everything would be alright at least for a little while. For one minute, for one second—that was all she asked for before the darkness claimed her once again.

She could see it lingering in the corner of her eye, swirling behind the Grille and swaying idly within the leaves of the trees. It would take her. It would rip her away from all that she cared about but unfortunately she did not have anyone to really blame except herself. And Shane of course but by the time she realized she was in too deep it was too late to fully react. Too late to use her exceptional—if dangerous—power to blow everything in her way to kingdom come.

The decisions she had made to bring her to this point played behind her eyes like a movie as she tried to pinpoint the moment she had went wrong. Was it trying to help Elena become human again or not listening to her parents when they tried to wean her off all of the magic? Was it thinking she had a hold on expression only to learn it was no better than having the spirits funnel her power? Perhaps it was her own selfish pride that she could succeed where others failed. Maybe the better question would be was it too late to set things right?

Would she even be able to? By then…would she care?

Bonnie loved the people in her life to a terrifying degree but none more so than two. It felt horrible not to include her mother on that very short list but she hardly knew Abby, and a part of her didn't
want to know her. A part of her would forever resent her for leaving even though she'd wanted the cure for her as well. So the two spots on her list were basically her father and Damon Salvatore. And one of them was currently tucked away safe probably worrying about her.

There were times in the past when she'd idly daydreamed what it would have been like if Emily had never connected her to Damon. What twists and turns their relationship would have taken had there been no passion or desire, just hatred and a begrudging respect that crumbled and rebuilt itself like beach shores after the tide. If he had never gotten over his infatuation for Elena and instead sunk deeper until she was all he saw. All he lived for. It seemed odd and impossible but it was of course one of many infinite futures that another Bonnie Bennett was currently living. She felt bad for that Bonnie because having Damon would always be better than not having him, warts and all. He was impetuous, brash, selfish and impatient but he loved her so completely that she was able to see past his bad qualities. She never forgot them or let the terrible ones go, but she also couldn't pretend that it made her love him any less.

Less wouldn't have been easier so it didn't matter. Besides having Damon gave her clarity. It gave her a sharp peace of mind when the world howled around her like a banshee out of control. With Damon she was never alone no matter what happened and as time went on she thanked Emily more and more instead of cursing her as she'd done in the beginning.

Damon Salvatore was her safe place.

She knew before he sat down that he'd finally found her; it never took long. She liked to think that Damon would and could find her anywhere in the world, and that for some reason if he couldn't he'd never stop looking.

"This what I think it is?" He asked slowly, dropping down onto the bench beside her.

She nodded. "Yes. I don't know why it looks like this though. I have my suspicions but I suppose it's not important." She pulled at the necklace around her neck. "How are you?"

He smirked a little. "Well I was stabbed, choked, tied up, had my neck broken and nearly got my head cut off. But beyond that I'm great. You?"

She chuckled. "I'm okay." It was a lie and they both knew it. "Things could have gone better however. Bright side is that Shane might die."

Damon frowned at the mention of him. "He better hope he does because if he isn't when I get my hands on him, I'm ripping his goddamn throat out."

Bonnie squeezed his thigh. "I'd say no but I honestly think he deserves it. Granted he was led astray by forces beyond his control and his grief over what happened to his family, it doesn't make it right what he did."

Her fiancé slouched. "Guy's an asshole." Sighing, he ran a hand through his hair. "This whole quest was stupid from the moment it was even brought up. Had curing Elena not been the best way to unsire her from me I would have said fuck it and took you to Hawaii or something."

What if that doesn't happen? What if it can't happen? "I would have went with you." Pause. "I think I'm ready to tell my parents we're engaged. My dad obviously knows about vampires since he got in touch with my mom. I'm tired of hiding. I love you and if he can't accept that then he just can't."

He grinned. "Gonna do that first thing?"

"Hopefully." She whispered, slipping closer to him. "Remember when all we used to do in places
Laughing, he nuzzled her cheek. "I do. *Almost* as good as the real thing. I can't believe you made me wait so long."

She snorted. "Are you kidding me? You were sort of hung up on my best friend at the time. That trumped the many, *many* ways that I wanted you. I'm just happy we finally got past that because being with you is unlike anything I've ever experienced before."

*I'm petrified I'll never get to do it again. Please let me get to do it again. Please let me do it all again.*

*Grams, help me.*

His blue eyes were intense as they stared at her. "What's wrong, judgy? Feeling blue because things didn't go as we planned?"

That was the biggest understatement of the year. "Did we even have a plan beyond get the cure? I don't know why we thought this would work for us. We manage to stay alive—that is all we do. When have we ever got the upper hand in a situation before? Katherine killed Caroline; Elijah betrayed us and Klaus toys with us like mice." She swallowed against the metallic tang assaulting her taste buds. "This trip was doomed from the beginning. And you know I just—I think I went along with it because my parents were so against me helping. I hated how they just showed up in my life again and expected me to listen to them. Expected me to give up magic."

He caressed her cheek. "None of this is your fault. You know that right? It's Rebecca's fault if we are being real. She *is* the one that made Elena drown."

"I know and I'm not blaming myself. But there are divisions in the road that I could have taken that would have brought me elsewhere."

"I guess. But okay so this is a minor setback, we've had those before. We'll regroup and everything will be okay."

"I'm not so sure about that."

"Okay I don't like this Debbie Downer side of you. Usually you're the one trying to convince me that everything is going to be alright."

"I'll say it if that is what you need to hear. But I'm tired, Damon. I think I'm more tired right now than I've ever been."

Wetting his lips, he pulled her in for a big comforting hug. "I know you are, baby. I'm tired too but giving up isn't an option for people like us. If we do the world goes to shit." He pulled back and his brows narrowed as he looked at his hands, wet and soaked red. "Bonnie…"

She grabbed his fingers. "It's okay."

He shook his head. "No. What—are you—"

Bonnie felt tears prick her eyes. "I'm okay." The town flickered around them like bad television reception and for a brief moment they were in a dark cave, the smell of death and decay replacing Thursday's special at the *Grille*. "Damon."

Blinking, he glared at her but the town's scenery restored itself. "You're not *fine*. You're fucken bleeding! What happened?"
Hugging her waist, she angled her body more towards him. "There was another Hunter and he got the drop on Jeremy and I. We were trying to get the cure out of Silas' hands and the next thing I know there was this pain in my back."

"So thin; the blade of a knife. So thin and yet so deadly."

He stood and started to pace. "Wake me up right now so that I can heal you."

If only it were that simple. "You're not just dreaming Damon, you're unconscious. Even if I wanted to wake you up I couldn't." A beat. "What happened to you?"

He growled angrily. "The fucken Hunter that stabbed you got the jump on me. He had all these weapons and shit. Took Rebecca out too. I guess Stefan and Elena didn't run into him."

Bonnie's expression was soft. "I didn't see either of them. It was just Jeremy and I until—until Katherine showed up."

The vampire started in shock. "Katherine is here? What the fuck is she doing here? How did she even know what was going on?"

That was a good question that hopefully they all got the answer to. "I don't know. The Hunter was going to kill Jeremy and she just…showed up. Knocked the guy out or possibly killed him." Her voice choked up at her next words. "She—she—we couldn't get the cure out of Silas' hands because he was basically stone. We were gonna use blood and she just—she fed Jeremy to him like he was nothing more than an animal."

Damon grunted. "Not surprised. Fucking up other people's lives is what she does."

"But this is so much worse. "While Silas was feeding on Jeremy she grabbed the cure and ran. I—I thought Silas was just immortal but now I'm not sure what he is. Maybe Kol was right. We should have never gone after him. He killed Jeremy!"

That stopped him in his tracks. "What? Was he wearing his ring?"

Bonnie knew that Damon wasn't Jeremy's biggest fan but that didn't mean he wanted him to die. At least not permanently. "I don't know. I'm not even sure it would work anyway since he could be considered supernatural now." Her lashes fluttered and the image of Jeremy's broken body, staring wide eyed at nothing appeared off to the side. "Silas snapped his neck like a twig after he was done with him."

Sitting down, he cupped her face. "So you saw him? Silas?"

She refused to think back to what she had seen or who she had seen because she knew the trauma would wake her up. And the last thing she wanted to do was leave Damon for the unknown. "I don't know what I saw."

"I'm gonna fix this." He said vehemently. "I don't know how but I'm gonna heal you and then we're gonna figure out our next move."

"I can't tell him. I don't have the heart to tell him. "Staying away from Silas seems like a good next move, though I doubt Elena will be even thinking about that when she finds Jeremy. I honestly don't know where we go from here. It's one thing to lose the cure but to lose Jeremy?"

For as long as she could remember Jeremy Gilbert had just been Elena's little brother, annoying when they were pre-teens and discussing the important merits on which boy band was hotter because
he always managed to be underfoot. He'd burst into his sister's room, making kissy faces whenever she talked about Matt or threatened to tell on them if he thought it would gain him some sort of leverage. And then as the years passed he grew from that irritating little kid into an almost decent young man before the car crash that took his parents' lives. He struggled for a while with his grief but he eventually came out the other side a stronger person. A loving and caring person who didn't care that Elena wasn't his real sister because he loved her anyway.

Then of course came his crush on her which in another lifetime might have actually went somewhere. But even though it didn't meant nothing when Bonnie thought about his kind heart and his bravery in the face of everything they had to endure in the past few years. Surely he was just as scared as the others—maybe more so before he became a Hunter—but he never backed down from a challenge. And now that hero's spirit had gotten him killed.

Although she and Elena were at a rocky point in their relationship she felt so utterly horrible for her friend right now. First her parents, then John, then Jenna, then herself in a way and now Jeremy. Was she destined to lose everyone she had ever cared about? Would Stefan or Caroline somehow be next? Did being the doppelganger also mean that you were cursed to cause the destruction of those closest to you?

Bonnie did not know the answer to those questions but she wished she did. She wished that she could go back in time and stop Rebecca from forcing Matt's truck off the road; that's when their big problems started.

Worrying about a sire bond just seemed kinda silly now in the face of everything. She and Damon could have left town and never seen Elena again. It would have been better than the alternative.

However even in her current state she couldn't help but feel anger at Shane and the part he'd played. Yes he'd been led astray by a very powerful being that used some type of blood magic to induce hallucinations but he'd still caused the deaths of so many people. She had no doubts that if he were still alive he wouldn't be by the time Elena, Stefan or Damon got their hands on him. By dying he would be reunited with his family so perhaps it wasn't the worst thing.

"I can still remember the smile on Grams' face when she'd told me how close I was. How like her it was."

The truth of the matter was that Silas was probably exactly as Kol said; an evil being bent on destroying the world. He wasn't some altruistic soul that bad luck had befallen, willing to reward those that showed faith in him. He was just like the Originals. He was a power hungry maniac and they had helped unleash him onto the world. Maybe they deserved whatever they got for thinking they could change fate.

"I'm gonna find Katherine and do what I should have done a long time ago which is kill the bitch." Damon sneered. "Things might have worked out had she not interfered. What the fuck does she even want with the cure anyway? I always thought she liked being a vampire."

"Maybe she wants to use it as leverage against Klaus. She is still running from him." She suggested softly. "Or maybe all of her pro vampire stuff has just been a smokescreen. I always got the impression a lot of her personality was bravado. Underneath it all was just a scared girl running from her nightmare."

He rolled his eyes, clearly not caring about her reasons for being an evil tart. "She was probably the one keeping Jeremy safer earlier though. So that she could use him to get to the cure. Least one mystery is solved."
Bonnie rested her head on his shoulder. If it were possible to feel run down while not being awake then that is how she felt. She had lost a lot of blood however so it made sense. "We should talk about something else. Something happy." Taking his hand, she entwined their fingers together. His hand felt colder than usual or perhaps that was just her. "I know I said I wanted to wait to get married but now I don't know. It might be fun to do it this summer."

He snickered. "Could Caroline plan a wedding by this summer?"

She bumped his side. "It's Caroline. She could plan a wedding tomorrow and it would be awesome. Though I don't know who would be our flower girl, and people might not be up for celebrating."

Damon sighed exasperatedly. "We can elope then. Snatch up the ones that matter and do it in Vegas in some stupid little chapel with an Elvis impersonator as the priest. We'll get you a dress though because I know how important looking pretty is to you."

_I love you. I feel like I didn't tell you that enough but I do._

I would rather die your wife than not.

_Klaus is probably free by now. I hope Caroline and Tyler are okay._

Smoothing the fingers on his free hand up the side of her neck, making her shiver, he turned to speak directly into her ear. "Why the park? All of our past meetings were in my room and there were considerable less clothes involved."

A shrug. "I don't know. I didn't pick this place to be honest. I thought you did."

He snorted. "I don't love the town that much." The question was there—lingering—but neither of them brought it up. "I'm gonna have to eat so many people to get my strength back up. I wanna start with Shane. Will you explode if he's not around now that Silas is free?"

"I hope not." She whispered. "I won't know until the dust has settled."

Something tugged at her and she gasped; the shadows taking it as a sign to dance a little closer. The sky cleared a little with a peek of sunlight but it didn't make her happy at all. Something…or someone was trying to wake her up but she didn't want that. If it meant leaving Damon then she never wanted that. Yet the tug came again as if from inside, wrapping around her lungs and squeezing until she couldn't breathe. A low hum started in her skull and she jumped up, glancing around feverishly.

"What's wrong?" Damon inquired, suddenly on alert.

"Keep me here." She begged him. "Please, keep me here."

Obviously he wasn't sure what to do but he grabbed her and kissed her, pulling her as close as he could get her. Bonnie let everything else fall away and just focused on that kiss; on her fingers in Damon's soft hair and his arms around her waist. The binding around her lungs faltered, overpowered by the infinite possibilities of her connection to Damon Salvatore. No matter what happened as long as she had that there was a chance she would be okay.

There was a chance she would make it out of this alive…if slightly scarred.

They broke apart slowly so that they could breath, and he rested his forehead against hers. "There is something you're not telling me. I can _feel_ it. You're terrified."
Pressing her face into his chest, she exhaled. "I'll be okay."

Damon squeezed her upper arms. "Don't bullshit me, Bonnie! You've never been afraid to give me bad news before. What are you trying to keep me from finding out? Do you think I can't handle it?"

_I know you can't. I hardly can._ "I think this is bigger than anything we've dealt with before. I think if I concentrate on it too hard it'll pull me away from here and I don't want that."

Aggravated, he released her and took a few steps back. His gaze was cold and calculating but not unkind. Never unkind. "What am I missing? I mean you can't be dead. If you were I'd damn well know about it."

_Some things are worse than death._ "No, I'm not dead. But I—I'm not exactly in a good place either. I'm not sure where I am…"

Her fiancé looked pained. "What does that even mean? Obviously you're stuck in that damp ass cave the same as I am. The only difference is that I'm steadily healing while you're not. Fucken Katherine, she could have at least healed you before rolling out of Dodge."

Bonnie smoothed a hand over her face. "You know being kind is not Katherine's strong point. But if she thought she was in trouble before she has no idea what she is in for now. Whether she meant to or not, Jeremy is dead because of her and I don't see anyone who cared about him letting that go."

In the end her relationship with Jeremy had been close and comfortable. He'd stepped up to help her when Damon wasn't able to and she would forever be grateful to him because of that. If there was any way to bring him back safely she was going to try. Not because of Elena but because of _Jeremy_ who deserved to live and have a life of his own that didn't revolve around what he could do for someone else. He was safest when he'd been compelled to leave Mystic Falls, maybe if everything worked out they could get him to leave again.

_What if this is it? What if Jeremy is just gone? At least he might finally find peace and get to see everyone he has lost again but is that really a fair trade?_

_Why do all of the people that I care about have to go so violently?_

"I bet my parents are really worried about me." She said idly. "You'll make sure they are okay, right?"

"I won't _need_ to." Damon replied, antsy. "I'm gonna heal you. You're not gonna die so don't even _think_ like that. If it's too late to heal you then at least if you die with my blood in your system you'll come back."

She liked being a witch—most of the time—but being a vampire would probably be safer these days. "Let's hope I don't end up sired to you as well. That would be a drag."

His lips curled into a semblance of a smile. "Yeah. I much prefer you giving me grief about everything instead of doing what I say."

When she felt the pull at the back of her neck she knew sadly that this time she wouldn't be able to resist it. Consciousness was slowly brushing across her eyelids, coaxing her out of her deep dream state. She threw herself into Damon's arms and hugged him tightly, even as the illusion of Mystic Falls began to fade around them.

"I love you." She curled her fingers into the fabric of his shirt. "I love you so much that it hurts. No matter what happens just remember that."
"Bonnie… Bonnie!" Damon's voice weakened, sounding thick like she was under water. "Just hold on! Hold—"

With a gasp her eyes opened and she blinked as the hazy figure hovering over her took shape. There was a face with eyes staring at her methodically. Even though she was terrified to speak she couldn't help herself and uttered one single word.

"Silas."

~*~

Damon awoke with a muttered fuck feeling like ran over shit. He rolled onto his back and wiped at his bloody nose, staring up at the meager light filtering into the cave. There was a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach that he was nervous to focus on because of what it meant. But he wasn't an idiot. He knew Bonnie was in big trouble and he also knew that he was maybe too weak to reach her. But there was more—so much more.

He'd said before but not much actually scared him anymore. Being a kick ass strong vampire made the things that went bump in the night nothing but shadows. Even when faced with people like Kol he wasn't that worried; the Originals never seemed to be able to kill any of them effectively anyway. However when it came to Bonnie he could admit to feeling fear. Yes she was a powerful witch but she was also a fragile hot commodity among the supernatural world. More people apparently wanted witches than they did immortality. And from the way she had been reacting in their dream, something besides Jeremy dying had gone on.

_Fuck. Jeremy. The kid got on my damn nerves but I didn't want him dead. Not really…_

He couldn't concentrate on that right now though. Bonnie needed him and the thought of not reaching her in time made his heart shrivel inside of his chest. Her dying was not an option; it was never an option. Maybe Stefan and Elena would find her and help her though he knew he couldn't count on them to do what he'd promised to do, as in keep her safe.

So he was going to pick himself up and go get his fiancé no matter the cost. He wasn't going to allow himself to think about the whispered name floating through his mind, or the fact that _he'd awoken to kill Jeremy because it didn't matter_. Just like Klaus hadn't mattered or Elijah or any of the other sick fucks he'd had to tangle with to protect the people he loved.

He'd made a promise to the woman he loved and he was damn well going to keep it. Somehow.

~Fin~
Handle With Care

Chapter Summary

Precious and fragile things need special handling.

Chapter Notes

This update is a mesh of 4.15 (Stand By Me), 4.16 (Bring It On), 4.17 (Because the Night) and 4.18 (American Gothic). Summary lyrics by Depeche Mode.

Handle With Care

After their fucked up shared dream Damon thought he would have to comb the entire island looking for Bonnie. Actually he thought he would have to storm the castle and rescue her from a Silas shaped dragon but then he tended to be irrational when things didn't go his way. However seeing her wander out of the bushes without a scratch on her had been like being doused with cold water when you were on fire. Naturally he'd feared the worst before; that she was dead and crossing over or trapped somewhere where he couldn't reach. And the more he'd laid in that cold dark cave and thought about it, the more he'd wanted to slit everyone's throat and flip his switch off so hard that he broke it so that it would never come on again. What was the point of having humanity if Bonnie was gone?

Even before becoming a vampire he'd never put much stock into religion or God. Growing up in the time he had with the father he had there just didn't seem to be a point although he played along when he needed to. But the moment he realized Bonnie was fine, the moment he pulled her into a big hug and felt her melt against him he relented that maybe there was a God. Why he would be on Damon Salvatore's side...well that didn't make any sense but he could roll with it. He'd shake hands with the Devil himself if it meant the woman he loved would always be okay.

Not that she was exactly okay. Physically sure but mentally? Well he understood that dealing with all she'd been going through lately had to be heavy but the deeper they got into this Silas mess the odder their conversations started to go.

"Where have you been? How did you find me?"

"Shane led the way. He told me what to do, Damon. I know how to bring Jeremy back."

From there she'd gone on and on about completing a triangle and needing twelve witches to do it. Now Bonnie had never been the type to scare easily—like him—but there were certain rules that she lived by because even as a witch she was somewhat human and still had a moral center. She would do what she had to do for those she loved but usually while also trying to minimize the body count. So listening to her on the plane ride back to Mystic Falls as she talked about sacrificing for the greater good and destroying the veil to the other side, well, needless to say he realized quite quickly that something was off with her.
Silas had obviously gotten inside of her head. Which okay he'd also apparently healed her and saved her from certain death but the scale wasn't nearly as balanced as it should have been. The worst part of course was that there was nothing he could do about it. He couldn't yank whatever weird thoughts uber Immortal had put into her mind out. Hell he couldn't even seem to talk any sense into her because she was one hundred percent sure the only way for all of them to get what they wanted was to break the line between the living and the dead. Okay yeah bringing back a few dead folk that went before their time—like Jeremy or Jenna—or Shelia—sounded awesome but naturally there was a catch. Mystic Falls sat on a hill of catches.

One person wouldn't just come back, they would all come back. As in Mason and Lexi and all of the tomb vampires that had died; basically every person Damon had ever killed ever and all of the ones that he hadn't. That was like thousands of enemies probably just salivating at the chance to rip his balls off. How were they supposed to fight that shit? Even if Bonnie desperately wanted her Grams back she'd never put them in that amount of danger and the fact that she was so set on it made it perfectly clear to him that someone else was most likely pulling her strings.

That someone of course had to be Silas because even Klaus wasn't that powerful or that smart.

Damon had wanted to focus all of his attention on Bonnie but apparently locking her up in their dungeon was not good boyfriend etiquette. Even if it was for her own good. Unfortunately that wasn't the only thing he had to deal with. Of course the moment he decided to be a good brother Stefan would cash in on that and beg for help with Elena since she was sired to him and he could talk her down off the cliff she'd been circling. He got it. She didn't want to believe that Jeremy was dead but he was and…that was that. It was sad and horrible but sad and horrible shit happened all the time. Surely he knew the risks going in like they all had. Granted none of them had expected Katherine to show up and throw a wrench into their plans but that was their luck.

Anyway helping Stefan meant side-eying Bonnie and trying to pull off a spectacular juggling act, because as strange as Bonnie was acting she still told him to help Stefan. That is why she was so goddamn perfect. People waxed poetic about Elena and her compassion but he was pretty sure Bonnie had her beat. No one sacrificed more for her friends than Bonnie Bennett.

And there she was again willing to do whatever it took to bring Jeremy back because she knew Elena needed him. Sometimes Damon thought Bonnie was too good for him.

Naturally things only got worse though when he attempted to help. While sympathetic to Elena's grief over losing her brother and wanting to help, making sure Bonnie wasn't doing anything stupid for Silas was his top priority. So you know getting Elena to turn off her emotions so that she wouldn't be in so much pain had seemed like a wonderful idea at the time. She'd be okay, he could concentrate on Bonnie and Stefan could look for the cure without worrying about Elena's state of mind. It might have worked if Elena hadn't decided burning her house down with Jeremy's body inside was the next best course of action.

Dramatic much?

Afterwards it was just one thing after the other really.

Without her emotions Elena started acting like Katherine-lite and she was unaffected by the sire bond. Caroline and Stefan babysat her at some cheerleading thing while he took care of a drained and tired Bonnie. He tried his best not to be angry when she mentioned "Shane's plan" which was really Silas' plan but sometimes it slipped out. And she would just look at him sleepily and say it's all going to be alright. Fuck he'd wanted to believe her so badly but known he couldn't. It was all artificial and not even her words. They were words planted into her brain by that son of a bitch.
However Damon's downtime with Bonnie had been eventually interrupted by Rebecca who was still searching for the cure on her own time. One strategically placed threat and he'd been roped into helping her. Though to be honest his train of thought was more along the lines of get the cure, shove it down Silas' throat and free Bonnie form whatever whacky mind mojo he had over her. Having an Original around just in case was like the icing on the cake as long as she didn't figure out his master plan. At the end of the day unfortunately all they'd found was a vampire infected by a werewolf bite and not much else—at least that is what he'd let on. He'd known the vampire from way back when and he was pretty sure said vampire was still running fake ids for people like them.

Which also meant people like Katherine.

There was also a party and a thing where Elena tried to kill Caroline but hey, he had enough to deal with okay? *Considering Caroline is older than Elena she should have been able to take her.*

Everything else was just a steaming pile of bullshit. Elena overhearing him telling Stefan about Katherine and New York, and then deciding that stealing his car was a good idea, with Rebecca along for the ride by the way. Having to leave Bonnie to track the bitches down because if Rebecca got the cure they were all screwed. The only bright spot was Stefan promising to keep her safe because Damon knew Stefan was a man of his word. He would watch Bonnie like she was family because she essentially was.

New York? Boring memory lane where he got his neck snapped for his trouble as the Wonder Twins got away again. With his car! Again!

It annoyed him to massive levels when he then discovered Bonnie nearly got stabbed to death by a bunch of knife happy witches—*twelve, the exact number needed for all the badness*—and instead of Stefan helping he'd just twiddled his thumbs or something with Klaus standing by doing the same. Caroline of all people had been the one to jump into action and while the death of the witches meant Silas was one step closer to his evil plan, Damon didn't give a shit because the alternative had been Bonnie's death.

Long story short; Stefan had joined him, they'd found Elena, Rebecca and Katherine—who was dating Elijah now or some shit—yet managed to lose the cure again all in one afternoon. Elena was still a bitch, Katherine was gone and Elijah had the cure. What he planned to do with it was anyone's guess.

Also for future reference? Getting your head shoved into a fish tank full of vervain water was *not* fun at all.

Damon was going to back burner all of that nonsense though to make sure that Bonnie was *okay* now. It seemed whatever hold Silas had on her was gone, including her memory after watching Jeremy try to pry the cure from his desiccated hands. While he was glad that she was herself—hopefully—breaking the news to her about Jeremy and Elena for the second time sucked ass. Having to watch her go through those emotions as if they were fresh and new…man he hated everything about their situation. Not to mention he wasn't totally certain that *Expression* shit Shane had taught her was out of her system.

But hey that asshole was dead so silver lining!

"Are you sure you wanna do this? I don't need it."

Bonnie's voice snapped him out of his thoughts. He sighed and ran a hand through his dark hair, patting her ankles currently resting in his lap. "It's bound to come up don't you think? I mean with everything going on."
She shrugged. "Not really. I think it's because of everything going on that it's not being focused on. Besides I don't know if it'll help. It's not just you that would be in danger if things went wrong."

He grinned. "Then we'll stick to the original script. You have to admit I need to make an appearance or he might get suspicious." Pause. "But ya know he did take your mom being a vampire pretty well."

She shifted and rested her head on his shoulder. "I don't think he had a choice. Abby is still my mom and he just wanted her to help me. I think he would have asked for her help even if she were a turtle now."

Chuckling, he kissed her forehead and tried to look on the dim side of things. "Yeah but he didn't stake her so... that's good I suppose. Even with all of the vervain he has floating in the water system. I gotta say for a regular guy your dad would make a pretty kick ass vampire hunter. He's pulling things even the Council didn't think of."

Her big green eyes rolled. "Whatever. With the exception of the Originals the only vampires in town are actually sane. Well and Silas if he even is a vampire." She frowned deeply. "I wish I could remember my time with him. It's all so fuzzy like a dream you can't get a hold of. It's frustrating."

He totally agreed with her there. "It's okay. Maybe it's better that you don't remember what happened."

Another shrug. "I don't see how. I—it's—just because I can't remember doesn't absolve me of my part in what happened. Those witches died because I helped set them up. Now I'm just flying blind. Without my memory I don't know what Silas' next move is or what part I might play in it."

*I have to admit that freaks me out. Even with the triangle complete there is still the matter of snapping the lock on the other side. No doubt she'll be needed for that. "You wanna talk about something else for a change?"

She smirked, just a little. "Like what? Prom?"

Damon smiled. "Sure. It's right around the corner and I was led to believe that teenage girls *love* the prom. You're going, right?"

She nodded. "I am. It's a normal right of passage that I want to be a part of. Also if Elena is going then we have to go and make sure she doesn't kill anyone." Her tone was bitter. "Can't you just make her turn her emotions back on?"

He'd already explained to her once why that wouldn't work but it had been wiped along with everything else. He wondered if she remembered their dream. "No. At this point she has to *want* to turn them back on. I get why she doesn't want to but yeah, no emotions Elena is a real bitch."

A tiny laugh escaped her. "Guess I'll get my first taste of it on prom night. I can't promise that I won't destroy something if she annoys me. I... don't know my power level."

*Setting the prom on fire, sounds like our kinda night.* "Do what you have to do. I'll roll with it."

Kissing his cheek, she exhaled and smoothed her fingers across his chest. "Thanks for never giving up on me. I don't need my memory to know you never did."

"And I never will." He said truthfully. "I'll always try to save you if you can't save yourself. I know how important girl power is to you so..."
"Oh shut up." She smiled and he was so happy to see it. "Mm. This is the best part of my day."

"Did your dad question you about the witches?"

"Yeah but he knows I don't remember anything. And there are no bodies so I guess he assumes they cured me and went home."

"I owe Barbie a fruit basket for looking out for you. Stefan was utterly useless."

"Hey c'mon you know how powerful witches can be. Caroline said they would have killed him if he'd tried to interfere a second time. She just got lucky I guess. Got the drop on them."

"Either way you're alive because of her so good job well done all around."

"Hm. Still I'm sad all those people had to die."

And there was the Bonnie he knew. "It wasn't your fault, babe. Silas totally had you mind roofied since the island. He made you think killing them was the only way to solve all of our problems." A beat. "As if bringing back thousands of dead enemies would make everything better. So far the only thing he's done that is even remotely interesting is fuck with Klaus' head."

Bonnie snorted. "While amusing that much power doesn't bode well for the rest of us. I think Silas is willing to do whatever he has to do to get his hands on the cure so that it can't be used against him."

I guess Kol was right and not just a crazy bastard after all. We probably would have listened to him. Oh well. I wonder if he's beating the hell out of Jeremy on the other side for killing him? "If I am correct it's Katherine or Elijah's problem now."

Her fingers fiddled with the buttons on his shirt. "Do you think they'll give it to Klaus?"

He nodded. "Katherine wanted to use it to get Klaus off her back. He wanted Elena to have it so he could start making hybrids again but now that Silas is in the mix, I don't know what he'll do with it. Preferably choke it down himself so I can rip his throat out."

The witch chuckled. "What if Klaus taking the cure turns his entire vampire line human?"

Damon opened his mouth to reply but the gravity of her words hit him harder than expected. That sounded like something that could actually happen. If killing an Original destroyed their entire line it made sense that turning one human might have the same effect on all of the other vampires. Holy shit he could end up human! No, no that is just a theory. And even if it's true it's not like Klaus would just let someone force the cure on him. Besides we still don't know for sure if he was even telling the truth about that.

"That would be...something." He said slowly. "I'm sure Stefan and Caroline would enjoy themselves. Especially Stefan."

"Yeah and Tyler." She sent him a look. "I know it's not what you would want. It's okay, Damon. I've always known that."

"It's just the whole being weak thing. I've been a vampire for a long time. It's who I am now." Who he wanted to be. "Besides the whole growing old thing would be such a drag. Can you imagine all of this just wasting away?"

She lightly pushed at him. "You would probably look very distinguished as an older guy. And to be honest I'd always thought your Uncle Zach was hot."
He gasped in faux shock. "I am appalled! And he was my nephew if we're being technical."

"He was hot."

"Stop saying that! I'm gonna get images of things!"

Laughing, she grabbed his face with her small hands and pulled him into a kiss. He went without complaint or hesitation, wrapping his arms around her waist and lifting her into his lap. It felt so good to be able to kiss her again and touch her again; to know that she was safe and sound. That her mind and body were on the same page. Even if she wasn't completely cured it felt like their summer away from Mystic Falls before Elena turned and all they had to worry about was waking up in time for breakfast.

*We should definitely do that again but go farther away this time. Hawaii or London.*

The back door opening and closing caught his attention so he gently eased Bonnie back onto the couch, squeezing her thigh as her father rounded the corner. Charles Bennett eyed Damon speculatively before putting his house keys on a hook on the wall. "Hello Damon. I haven't seen much of you lately. I assumed you and Bonnie were no longer seeing each other."

Damon plastered on a harmless smile. "Hello sir. Actually my brother has been going through a rough time lately so I've been helping him cope."

Charles nodded slowly. "Do you know what has been going on with my daughter?"

Bonnie sighed. "Damon and I don't have any secrets."

"If that's true why didn't he attempt to help you?" Her father inquired.

*He's fishing… "Not much I could do against a powerful witch. I'm sure you faced the same road block."*

"Perhaps." Charles replied.

"I don't think getting into this will help. It won't change anything." Bonnie folded her arms across her chest. "I'm fine now so let's just leave it at that. I…learned my lesson when it comes to witchcraft. The only thing I wanna think about now is prom."

Her father's brow rose. "Are you sure that's wise? Maybe you should take it easy."

She hunched her shoulders. "No. I'm not missing prom. It's something my friends and I have been dreaming about since we were little girls." Wetting her lips, she got up and moved over to him. "I'm okay now daddy, really. And if anything weird happens I promise to come to you."

His expression was thoughtful but Damon got the sense that he didn't really believe her, not completely. *Smart man. "Alright. You can go to prom."*

She grinned and hugged him. "Thank you. I'll even let you take a few pictures to send to mom."

He chuckled. "I'm…sure she would like that. Do you need money for a dress?"

"No, sir." Damon stood. "I'm gonna take her shopping as a sort of glad you're better gift. I have to go get a tux anyway."

Charles hummed.
Picking up on the tension, Bonnie stuck her feet into her shoes. "We should go do that now before all the good ones are taken." Pause. "Talk to you later, dad."

"Be safe." He told her.

"She's always safe with me." Damon responded, letting Bonnie tug him outside and to his car. "He is very suspicious of like, everything."

"I know." She grumbled. "I can't get a read on if he knows what you are. I don't think he does. Just like with Caroline. I mean I'm sure the Sheriff wouldn't tell him."

"I think if he was one hundred percent sure there would be vervain in my hair gel." Snickering, he opened the passenger side door for her. "I'll uh; I'll look out for him while all this shit is building up. Maybe if he finds out and I save his life he won't stake me. Or at least maybe he'll miss on purpose."

She kissed him again. "I love you."

He smiled. "I love you too. And you know I don't get what the big deal is. I mean as a boyfriend I'm kinda perfect. Okay so, yes I might accidentally eat you but barring that I'm great. I'm strong and fast so I can protect you and I can't knock you up. Hell I should go on The Bachelor or something I'm so cool."

Bonnie laughed hard especially when he pouted. "It never fails to amuse me—the high opinion you have of yourself. However did I catch such a fish?"

Without any real effort he pushed her into the car. "I did the catching. Because I got a big hook." He shut the door on more of her laughter. "You know it's true!" Crossing to the driver's side, he got in and started up. "If you're making fun of me you must be feeling better."

She snuggled back to the leather seat. "I feel more in control, yes. And I haven't seen Shane—Silas—since he told me about the witches. I—I hate that Caroline carries the burden of knowing she killed them but a part of me is glad she did. That I... didn't."

He glanced at her out of the corner of his blue eyes. "Even if you had it wouldn't have changed anything. You were being coerced at the time."

Her voice was shuddery as she said, "Yeah but it would have been something I would have had to live with for the rest of my life."

As someone who had killed a lot of people and never really thought about it, he tried to relate just the same. "I'd have helped you deal. Or made Stefan help you."

Her hand curled around his. "I know. Geeze. Are we stupid to be thinking about prom when we've got this giant threat looming over us?"

Yes and no. "I think you gotta enjoy the good things even when shit is happening or you'll go crazy. Silas is the real deal and yet all Stefan can think about is curing Elena. Is that smart? No but I get it. If the situation was reversed and it was you I'd be the same way. Love really fucks up your priorities."

She giggled. "You speak so highly of our connection." Yawning, she gazed out the window. "I wish we could just have one night where no one died and there was no danger. I wish I could just put on a gorgeous gown and dance with the man I love."

And he wished he could give it to her. "I can't promise you'll get the whole night but some of it? Definitely. I'll make it happen." He'd try like hell anyway. "We can even do the hotel thing
afterwards.

His girlfriend sniggered. "Why am I not surprised that's on the list? Still it sounds like fun. Also fun? You buying me an insanely expensive dress so I'm the prettiest girl there."

"You could wear a sack and you'd still be the prettiest girl there."

"Aw."

"And yeah I'm still buying you an insanely expensive dress."

"Yay."

Damon snorted and drifted along in his own thoughts for a minute. So Elena didn't want to be cured and she didn't want her emotions back on because the grief of losing Jeremy was too much for her to handle. However the longer she went around acting like a fake Katherine deeper was the hole she dug for herself. Naturally whenever she did get it together she'd feel bad about all the things she'd done; like trying to kill Caroline and killing that waitress from that diner. Hell she might even feel bad about stealing his car and running off with Rebecca. And then she'd basically be Stefan with boobs.

Yet he didn't know how to fix her now that she didn't give a fuck about the sire bond, which was a blessing and a curse.

Then there was Silas and his spell to unleash what could turn out to be hell on Earth. Damon had a horrible sinking feeling the only one that could really stop Silas would be Bonnie. Yeah they'd have to help but she was the only one powerful enough right now to incapacitate him or something. They just needed to discover a way to do such a thing. Would giving him the cure and killing him really solve anything? Or would he be able to whisper from the other side and put more thoughts into his fiance's head?

*I hate not having all of the answers. I hate that I can't just go break a few bones and solve this problem.*

If he thought it would help he'd swallow his pride and loathing and ask Klaus for help, but he'd proved useless as well. Mr. Big Bad Original was just as soft as the rest of them when it came to Silas. It would be funny if it wasn't so damn terrifying.

Easing his car into a parking space on the street in front of one of the boutiques, he cut the engine and sighed. No matter what they were going into the next couple of days or weeks blind, so yeah focusing on one thing might help. It would at least give him a sense of powerful over *one* situation, even if that situation meant nothing in the long run. Seriously couldn't he just buy his girl a dress in peace?

*Guess we'll find out.*

~*~

The entire town was on vervain in one form or another whether from knowing about it and consuming it, having it on their person or accidentally swallowing some while in the shower. A little was easy to get around if ingested and most of the vampires she knew felt that having some in their system worked out in their favor so that they couldn't be compelled. Bonnie though wasn't on vervain—unless her father was slipping it to her without her knowing—because she liked it when Damon fed on her.
Her mind was very fuzzy on the events after finding Silas in that cave and leaving Shane to fend for himself. It was possible that by not helping him with his broken leg she’d helped kill him but she didn't care. He wasn't innocent by any means and because of his lies they were all in serious danger. Because of his lies Jeremy was dead.

Jeremy was dead.

It didn't seem right to say it or think it but it was true. It brought all of her memories about him to the forefront of her mind from the goofy little boy that threw dirt clots at his sister to the young man suddenly rippling with muscles. He was—he had been just as big a part of her life as anyone else in their small town and now he was gone too soon, just like her Grams.

She wouldn't lie; Silas' scheme did sound a little good to her. Having those people back that were murdered or forced away looked good on paper but nothing was ever as it appeared to be. While she would give anything to have her grandmother back she couldn't just unleash all of that evil into the world. She couldn't put the people she cared about through that horror. However she worried she wouldn't have much of a choice. That Silas would get into her head again and get her to do whatever he wanted her to do.

*I'm just thankful he didn't make me go after anyone I cared about.*

Honestly she felt like she'd been in a deep sleep like sleeping beauty, waking up to a world where nothing made sense. Elena didn't give a fuck about anything or anyone because her emotions were off. Once she'd wished for her best friend to stop whining about being a vampire. Whoever said be careful what you wished for had never been so right. Elena was a danger to herself and those around her which meant she had to be dealt with. Of course Bonnie had no issues dropping her if she came after her. It was bad to say but a small part of her might even enjoy it.

Still Elena acting like a pain wasn't the gigantic issue they had to face. Silas was going to rip down the other side; it was only just a matter of time before he was totally ready. And she hadn't said anything to Damon but she sort of felt like she wouldn't make it to the end. If it came down to stopping him and sacrificing herself she would do it. It was scary and she didn't want to die but she would because that kind of evil had no place in the world.

Right now though she was going to attempt to focus on the trivial matters in her life and find out what her father knew about the vampires in her circle. Probably nothing that went beyond her mother but looking into it didn't hurt either. Abby would make a good case however if he found out and decided they all needed to die. If she was good didn't that mean others could be good as well?

Pulling her knees up to her chest, she looked down to where Damon slept unaware beside her, the sheet barely covering his naked ass and legs. She brushed strands of dark hair off his forehead and exhaled deeply; trying and failing to regain the memories she'd lost about him after the island. She remembered looking for Silas with Jeremy and then…waking up to find Stefan hovering her over in her bedroom. Had she been with Damon like this since the island? Had she touched his skin and tasted his lips? Had he made her feel like the most important woman in the world? Had he held her and loved her and worshiped her?

She hated thinking she'd lost those moments even when they could make more. Every moment with Damon was precious, even the ones where they didn't see eye to eye.

Very slowly she leaned down and pressed a lingering kiss to his forehead before crawling out of bed and slipping on his fluffy robe. She tip toed out of his room and downstairs to find Caroline in the kitchen, staring out of the window with a lost look on her pretty face.
"Hey."

The blonde blinked. "Oh hey. How you feeling?"

Bonnie smiled. "I'm okay. You?"

Caroline shrugged. "I'm...better actually. What happened was terrible but it's not like I could let them kill you."

Bonnie crossed the room and hugged her tightly. "Thank you."

"I know you'd do the same for me." Her friend said against her hair.

That I would. "Of course. So, Damon kinda had the idea that we should just think about prom for now. He took me dress shopping today."

"If there is one thing I can still get excited for it's prom!" The blonde exclaimed. "Of course I—I thought I'd be going with Tyler but... Anyway I'm still going. I need to get a dress though."

"I'll go shopping with you." Bonnie offered. "And tell you that you look gorgeous in everything and it's too hard to pick just one."

Caroline laughed lightly. "That might lighten my mood, I'm not gonna lie." Pause. "We'll go to prom and look fabulous and pretend everything is fine. As long as Elena doesn't kill anyone we should be okay."

Bonnie smirked a little. "I'll make sure she behaves herself."

The blonde nodded. "If you wanna explode her brain once just because, go ahead. She deserves it trust me."

I have no doubt. "You know I will. I will do whatever it takes to make sure we all get one perfect night."

~Fin~
Not So Perfect

Chapter Summary

There really is no such thing as perfect.

Chapter Notes

Before I continue I'm gonna pimp myself lol…if anyone watches Pretty Little Liars I wrote a Caleb/Mona one shot. It was sorta spur of the moment and it's really just porn with plot but if anyone wants to check it out it'd be much appreciated! Next this update tags 4.19 (Pictures of You) and 4.21 (She's Come Undone). I'm skipping 4.20 since it was about The Originals and I'm tackling 4.22 and 4.23 in the next update. Heads up: I'm gonna be ending this fic as soon as I can so maybe 2 or 3 more installments until it's completely done. I'll touch on future plans in my last A/N. =)

Not So Perfect

One night.

One night was all Bonnie wanted where she didn't have to worry about anything supernatural for a change. While she was sure something was going to go down especially with Elena terrorizing everyone she had already made up in her mind that she wasn't going to focus on it. She wasn't going to drop what she was doing to help anyone unless it was a life or death situation. She wasn't going to put aside her happiness to make sure someone else was happy. There would be plenty of time to play the hero tomorrow but for one night she was going to be selfish. Since the vampires came to town and she learned she had powers, she'd selflessly gave and gave of herself whenever someone was in trouble, and honestly she only minded a little. But after a while it just got to the point where she was being taken for granted and used as a fix it machine. So for one night—tonight—she wasn't going to fix the problems of anyone else but herself.

Hopefully however she didn't actually have any problems.

Sitting in the back of the black stretch limo with Damon—who looked amazing in his tux by the way—she couldn't help but smile at all the trouble he'd went through for her. Renting a limo and actually getting her a corsage as if they were just two normal people. He hadn't even put up a fuss when she'd asked if Matt and Caroline could tag along with them since neither of them had dates. Considering how he felt about Matt and Caroline she knew he was just being a sweetheart and humoring her. However Caroline had bailed at the last minute because her dress went missing, which they all knew was code for bitchy Elena stole it. Caroline had wanted to bash her head in but Stefan begged them to kill her with kindness in the hopes that she would turn her emotions back in. Killing her with something pointy though seemed like the easier course of action.

Bonnie long since decided to steer clear of her former best friend, worried that she would seriously hurt her because of her unstable magic. On some level Elena deserved it of course—a lot—but
Bonnie also realized it was because she'd lost Jeremy and without him she was truly alone family wise. As angry as she could be at Elena she also couldn't help but feel sorry for her. It had to be rough outliving everyone you loved. Dealing with the guilt that it was somehow your fault. Still it didn't give her just cause to treat them all like crap when they were just trying to be nice to her. As much as Bonnie wanted to help her she also wasn't gonna be a push over either. If Elena started shit Bonnie was gonna be the one to finish it.

*I hope Caroline finds a dress! I can't believe she's asking Klaus. I'd rather wear a garbage bag but this is Caroline.*

Smoothing down her slightly crumpy hair, she glanced to Damon where he sat gazing out of the window. It was so strange to think of him as over one hundred years old and yet so totally willing to escort to her what was basically a school dance. At times she didn't understand how vampires were so okay with hanging out with a bunch of teenagers but it wasn't like they had teen problems. *Man that would be easy.* Yet it was amusing to contemplate all the times Stefan had graduated high school. She knew that would *never* be Caroline or even Elena for that matter. Once was enough for them...if they made it that far.

Silas was still out there somewhere with his master plan. And at any time Klaus could throw a temper tantrum and destroy half the town. Waking up in Mystic Falls was truly a miracle whether you knew it or not.

"You okay?" Damon inquired, his voice breaking her thoughts.

She nodded with a smile. "I'm perfect. Just thinking how I'm that girl. You know the one with the sexy older boyfriend who's in college or something yet totally comes home to take her to the prom."

He laughed. "Ah right. You are that girl and I am *certainly* that guy."

She snorted. "Your modesty never fails to astound me. How did I get so lucky to get the cockiest vampire in the world?"

Grinning, he kissed the back of her hand. "You said your prayers and ate your Wheaties."

She chuckled. "So that's what it was? Thanks for cluing me in." Pause. "Man, I can't believe I'm going to my senior prom already. This year went so slow and totally fast at the same time. Soon I'll be in college."

His brows arched. "You going?"

*Anything to get out of this town.* "Maybe. I sent off my applications so now I'm just waiting to hear back from a few places." Biting her bottom lip, she touched his face. "You're coming with me, right? I mean you don't have to go to the school but you could maybe get an apartment nearby."

His smile grew. "Of course. Like I'd stay in this fucked up town without my witchy protector. Besides it would be weird to let my fiancé go off and be around a bunch of college dickheads that just wanted to get her in the sack."

Bonnie fake pouted. "So does that mean I can't sleep with other people?"

Damon rolled his pretty blue eyes. "No of course you can if you want me to rip their throats out. Unless it's a hot chick then that's okay."

His words made her giggle but they didn't surprise her. "I'll keep that in mind."
Slowly the limo pulled up before the school where a red carpet was stretched out; the driver exiting and opening the door for them. Look at Caroline making us all feel like movie stars. Damon took her hand and helped her out, smiling as he led her towards the open doors of the gym. The entire set up was gorgeous to be honest. Several screens lined their lit path of dangling lights, brandishing pictures of the senior class all the way back to freshmen year. Photos of them younger and smiling without all the cares they had now or in their cheerleading uniforms screaming their hearts out at some game. Matt with fluffier hair along with all of the people they'd lost as well.

The inside of course was even more beautiful; it hardly looked like their gym. The tables were draped in red cloths and the lights were twinkling like stars. A stage was set up to announce prom queen and king, and there were more screens inside with people reminiscing on the good old days.

Why had we been in such a hurry to grow up? What made us think it was better than just enjoying being teenagers?

Glancing around, she fluffed out her long black gown so that she didn't step on it and admired a few of the other girls' dresses. She still didn't spy Caroline but she waved when she noticed Matt, hugging him when he was within reach. "You look so dapper tonight."

He blushed. "Eh. You know Caroline helped dressed me. I feel like this is all one big rehearsal for her future wedding."

Bonnie snickered but she could see that. "You know it probably is. But she does know how to plan a party."

"She does." He agreed. "I thought she would be here by now but she probably wants to make an entrance."

That sounds like our Caroline. "You can hang with us until she gets here if you want."

"Yes. Please." Damon said flatly. "It's not a party without the quarterback."

Bonnie hit him in the arm. "You said you were going to be on your best behavior tonight."

Matt snorted but he didn't appear offended. "It's fine, Bon. I'm in a pretty good mood tonight. I don't think even Damon's brand of humor could bum me out."

She squeezed his arm. "Good. And hey save me a dance okay?"

"You got it." Smiling, Matt wandered over towards the punch.

Bonnie poked Damon in the chest. "Be nice. Matt's been through enough and he deserves a mellow night just like the rest of us."

Damon sighed. "I was just messing with hm. I promise not to bring down the football player." His brows narrowed. "Stefan's here."

Following his gaze, she watched as Stefan walked in with Elena on his arm…in Caroline's dress. Naturally. They both looked nice however and it was kinda sad that this wasn't happier times. That they weren't two couples in love and able to enjoy each others' company. Almost immediately Elena broke away from Stefan to disappear into the crowd. They would be lucky if she didn't kill anyone.

Next Rebecca breezed in, her round eyes settling on Matt before she began to make her way over to him. The teens of this town are like vampire catnip or whatever
Except for Caroline who has also been werewolf nip.

She was just about to comment on it when Elena was suddenly in front of her. "Hey Bonnie."


Elena grinned. "I thought so too." She picked fake lent off it. "You look nice; though I am a little shocked you actually brought Damon. I mean I know he's your boyfriend or something but he's kinda old for this sort of thing. He really stands out."

Bonnie wet her lips. "Well he loved me enough to come anyway so…"

The brunette shrugged. "Remember when he was like totally in love with me? If things had worked out differently maybe he'd be my date tonight. I have to say I don't know whether to be amused or sad that you actually took him back after finding out how he wanted me. But I guess if you waited for someone who wanted you, you'd still be alone."

Damon tilted his head to the side. "Said the girl wearing a hand me down dress that accepted a pity date from my baby bro." A beat. "That's your best friend you are talking to. You've been through a lot together. Maybe you could try to remember that."

Elena waved a hand. "Are you trying to take me down memory lane, Damon? Stir some feelings? Ironic since you my sire were the one that had me turn them off."

He put his arm around Bonnie's shoulders. "Yeah well hindsight is almost a bigger bitch than you."

"Whatever." She said before strolling away without a care in the world.

God I want to rip her hair out and beat her with it. Being nice to her isn't going to change anything. I think we should move on to phase two and use violence.

Damon kissed her temple. "I'm gonna go talk to Stefan right quick. You gonna be alright?"

We'll see. "Yeah I'm good."

He didn't really seem to believe her but he walked off anyway because he knew she could take care of herself. Bonnie exhaled slowly to push down her rage before deciding perhaps getting some air was the best course of action. She gathered up the long skirts of her gown and hurried outside, making sure to stay under the lights just in case. She didn't think Elena would try anything but if she did she wanted to see her coming.

When Stefan had came up with the idea to be nice to her Bonnie had idly wondered if she'd be able to seriously hurt the brunette or not. Now she knew without a doubt that she could if she had to. She wouldn't even hesitate.

The night air was cold to her bare shoulders but she didn't care. She could hear the music from inside leaking through the walls and she turned her attention to the flashing pictures, smiling sadly when Jeremy's face appeared. It was a shame he'd had to die for what basically added up to nothing. She just hoped he was okay on the other side; that someone was looking out for him.

Lord knows there were enough people they both cared about up for the job over there.

I was stupid to think tonight would be any different. That the drama would stay away on freaking Prom. I guess I should just be glad no one has died. Yet.
A well dressed figure caught her eye and she blinked. "Jeremy?" He smiled and for one brief second she thought it was actually him. But her rational mind told her that it couldn't be. That ghosts were only visible to her during spells; she'd never had his gift to see the dead anytime she wanted. Otherwise she'd constantly have conversations with her Grams. "You're not him."

Jeremy took a few steps closer until he was right in front of her. "I can be someone else if you like. Damon perhaps?"

She swallowed hard. Her mind was a black hole when it came to her interactions with Silas but she wasn't stupid. She knew this had to be him. "Silas. Get away from me."

He grabbed her arm roughly, sensing that she was about to flee. "You need me Bonnie, and you don't even realize how much."

Instantly she tried to get loose, her heart pounding in her chest. "I don't need you. I don't want anything to do with you."

He sighed, staring at her intensely. "You have no idea how dangerous you are. If I don't help you you'll kill yourself."

"You're trying to get in my head."

"I'm just asking for your help in return for mine."

"Leave me alone!"

"Wake up on fire recently?"

"Did you do that to me?"

"Please Bonnie let me help before you hurt somebody or yourself."

Right because you're so altruistic. "You don't care about me! You only care about bringing down the wall and I won't do it!" Before he could reply she hurried back into the gym and made a beeline for Damon where he stood talking to Stefan and Matt. "I just saw Silas."

"That's just what we need." Damon frowned and pulled her into his arms, giving her a comforting hug. "What happened?"

She burrowed against his side and tried to stop trembling. "He—he looked just like Jeremy but it was more than that. I could touch him. It's like he was there or something."

Stefan nodded somberly. "That's what he does. You can't let him get into your head."

Damon squeezed her waist. "Yeah because last time you ended up all crazy and brainwashed. No offense, babe."

Okay I will get right on stopping the super Immortal from getting into my head. "Easier said than done I'm guessing especially when I don't even remember the first time it happened."

Stefan frowned deeply. "Maybe you should take her home."

His brother made a face at that idea. "No she's safer here in public, with me. There is no way Silas is gonna make a move with all of these people around."

Matt jumped in with, "Okay in the meantime, how do we look out for a guy who can appear as
anyone?"

Obviously no one had an answer to that question. This sucks.

April Young’s voice from the microphone on stage made all of them turn and look at her. "It is my honor to announce this year’s King and Queen!" She grinned and opened her little envelop. "Alright the King and Queen are…Matt Donovan and Bonnie Bennett!"

Bonnie blinked and glanced to Matt who looked just as shocked as she did. Being Prom Queen had never even crossed her mind for obvious reasons—such as it was totally something that Caroline had on lock because she was Caroline. God it was just so normal though that she couldn't look down on it. In fact she took Matt's arm and they made their way into the stage all smiles. She got her shiny crown and smirked at Damon as he clapped, idly wondering if he had anything to do with this. Nah it probably hadn't crossed his mind either.

For the next few minutes she and Matt posed for pictures for the yearbook and accepted their congratulations from their classmates. She scanned the group for Caroline but didn't see her. It saddened her that they weren't all together like they'd planned so many years ago. The night would be some sort of fantasy come true if her friends had been around to squeal in delight with her. But nothing stayed the same, which was a good thing and a bad thing. Especially for the people she cared about.

"I'm gonna go get something to drink." She whispered to Matt. "Then we can have our royal dance."

He sniggered. "Sounds good to me."

Ducking behind the lace curtains into a little lounge area, she removed her crown and placed it on a table. It was silver with sparkling gems and very pretty. She was just about to trace her fingers over the tiny peaks when Elena waltzed through the curtains like a woman on a mission. "What do you want?"

Instead of answering, Elena grabbed her shoulder and dug her nails into her soft skin. Bonnie gasped and clutched at her wrist, watching as her former best friend suddenly clawed at her temple in pain. The scary thing was that she wasn't even trying to explode Elena's brain, it was more of a built in defense mechanism that she didn't even know she had. But it felt good. It felt amazing and honestly she didn't wanna stop. She wanted to pop Elena's head like a grape because it was what she deserved.

Just as a hefty wind kicked up out of nowhere, Matt hurried back to see what was wrong. She could feel her power wanting to latch onto him as well but she managed to stop. She shook her head and hurried out of the gym completely before she did something she would regret. She would never forgive herself if she hurt Matt; sweet gentle Matt.

The next few moments went by in a blur and she kind of felt like she was on the outside watching her body do things. Silas once again appeared as Jeremy before her, attempting to drag her over to his side. Angrily she yelled at him to get out of her head and he disappeared as car alarms blared to life around her. Respite however wouldn't come. Instead Elena attacked her from behind, ripping a fleshy plug out of her neck that surely was meant to kill her.

A switch clicked in her brain as the skin of her throat knitted itself back together and Elena choked behind her. Having been driven to her knees she stood and turned, staring at the girl she'd once told all of her secrets to. A rage she had never experienced until now wrapped itself around her heart and clenched tight. Only pain would get Elena to see the truth. Only death would teach her a lesson.
And Bonnie could be the bringer of death.

It was _so easily_ to lash out at the brunette. To break her legs and send her screaming to the cool grass. To twist her arm around until the bone shattered with a sickening crunch. To focus on her idle brain and turn it into hot soup as Elena cried out loudly and begged for her pathetic little life. She could kill her right now and not bat an eyelash. Who would miss this bitchy waste of space when she was gone?

"Bonnie? Bonnie!"

It was the familiar hand on her shoulder that snapped her back into the moment. "Damon?"

"Hey…" He pulled her around to face him, his hands cupping her cheeks. "It's okay. Everything is gonna be okay."

Stefan helped Elena up, catching her as she rocked from side to side. Next he jabbed a syringe into her side and she slouched against him unconscious. "I'm gonna take her back to the manor and lock her up."

Bonnie watched Stefan carry the brunette away. "I—I don't even really know what I was doing."

Damon shrugged. "It's okay. She kinda had it coming."

_True but still…_ "I wanted to kill her, Damon. God I wanted to break her into a million pieces because of what she'd done to me. That's not right. None of this is right."

He sighed and wrapped his arms around her. "I know, baby. But we're gonna get through this. We're gonna make Elena turn her humanity back on, and then we're all gonna take on Silas."

Her eyes filled with tears. "This was supposed to be our perfect night. I should have known something would happen to screw it up. All the others were screwed up. Why would this one be any different?"

Pressing his lips together, he gestured to the cars. "Can you cut out this noise?" Sniffling, she focused on the alarms until one by one they were silenced. Now that they could hear the music from inside, he tucked her against him and slowly started to sway to the melodies. "Least we get to have our dance."

His actions of course made her tear up more but she clung to him anyway, resting her head to his chest as they danced. They wouldn't be able to have moments like this in total peace until everything was squared and settled away. That meant Elena with humanity and Silas…dead. As much as it all sort of scared her she knew what she had to do if she ever wanted a chance at a normal life with Damon—well normal in the sense that some jacked up Immortal didn't try to slither into her head whenever she wasn't paying attention.

So first she was going to just drift in her fiance's arms for a while and attempt to calm down. Afterwards? Well she knew what she had to do.

~*~

Damon could put up with Elena being a bitch and killing random people. However the moment she decided Bonnie needed to die was the moment he basically stop giving two fucks about her. Honestly he would have let Bonnie crack her ass like an egg had Stefan not been there to see it and intervene. His brother…always believing people could be saved. He was like the delightful idiot at a party with the lamp shade on his head.
Anyway though after that it was easy to torture Elena. Setting her on fire had to be one of the highlights of his afternoon. Stupid bitch refused to break though. He could almost admire her stones, almost. But yeah the whole humanity off thing wasn't interesting or flirty or funny anymore, and he realized it would take something big to snap her out of it. He was just surprised when Katherine kicking Elena around hadn't been big enough.

And what all that shit about Klaus having skipped town? He would as soon as things got too hot in the kitchen.

Yeah so…he'd snapped Matt's neck and Elena had actually given a damn. For once the jock was actually useful by being used as a yellow crayon. Thankfully though Elena was on her way to a recovery so no more bitchy cakes.

*It would be good but now she wants to kill Katherine in some stupid revenge plot. Sure Katherine has done a lot of shit but really it all started with Klaus. He hunted Katherine, sent her on the run and right into the path of Stefan and I.*

Stefan of course wanted to keep the peace but Damon found he didn't care one way or the other. If Elena wanted to go on a suicide mission against a vampire centuries older than her well, good luck to her. He had to focus on Bonnie—whom he hadn't spoken to in twenty-four hours—and Silas. Because he had a feeling that Silas wasn't going to take anything lying down. Asshole was probably off somewhere plotting and planning like a villain from a black and white movie.

But how did you kill someone that could be anyone? Oh and where was the cure? Their best bet would be to shove it down his throat and stab him a hundred times but since Elijah had it or whatever, that was out.

Really they would need some kinda miracle to defeat Silas. And that is what un-nerved him.

~Fin~
Stay

Chapter Summary

You're the reason I hold on.

Chapter Notes

After re-watching the last two episodes (4.22; The Walking Dead & 4.23; Graduation) again I decided to not really follow anything from them, only include tidbits that I liked. I was going to attempt at least two or three more chapters but unfortunately I couldn't do it, so this is the final chapter of What Lies Beneath. It feels weird to type that but we all knew it couldn't go on forever though I am bummed I couldn't make it to 100 chapters! Still I've enjoyed reading your reviews, re-working the episodes and putting Bonnie and Damon into interesting situations. As for the future…I'm not sure how things are gonna play out. I won't say I won't ever come back and add more to this fic if season 5 isn't utterly horrible but for now this is the last chapter. Thank you again for all of your support!

Stay

Some people believed in fate and destiny when it came to making decisions about their life. They figured everything was pre-ordained anyway so attempting to deviate from that path would just be a waste of time. If that was true then Bonnie Bennett wanted a do over when it came to her family and friends. Not one of them had gotten out of their situations without scars that would never fully heal. There was so much death and sadness that sometimes she wondered if they would ever be happy again. She wondered if she'd ever be able to have a quiet moment without reliving all of the horrors she'd seen. Would she ever get a good night's sleep again?

Yet there was always a light at the end of the tunnel if you believed hard enough. It just wasn't always in the form you thought it would be. She'd never in a million years thought her light would arrive in the form of Katherine Pierce.

Katherine was selfish and bratty and only out for herself, though for some reason Bonnie believed her when she lamented the loss of Stefan. She knew all about bravado thanks to Damon, and it was obvious Katherine had that going on in spades. It was a defense mechanism and well if it had worked for her for over five hundred years she was entitled to it. With all of that aside one thing Katherine understood was self preservation so that is how Bonnie had ensured her help in getting the tombstone. Well that and a spell linking them together but that had been more for insurance just in case Katherine tried to super speed away.

Going up against Silas wasn't something Bonnie wanted but she had known no one else could do it. Certainty not Elena or the Salvatore brothers. They were powerful in their own rights but she was the one with it coursing through her veins. She was the one willing to die to finally be rid of him, not just for Mystic Falls but for herself as well. It was crystal clear she'd never get a normal life until he was
dead and gone.

*I just wish it had been easier.*

Her head was still aching from the amount of power she'd used to defeat Silas—to turn him into stone deep within the caverns underneath the town—even though two weeks had passed. She felt weak and out of sorts, which basically meant Damon was holding her hostage in the manor until she was one hundred percent again. She didn't have the heart to tell him she wasn't sure that would actually happen. It had taken all of her *Expression* magic to get rid of Silas, bring Jeremy back from the dead and lift the veil back into place. While the witches on the other side were happy and proud of her, they were also holding back their harnessed collective power that she'd summoned back when Klaus was the only threat. So she was basically back where she'd started magic wise—aka the beginning.

It wasn't bad however, just different. Slower. Like she could float feathers but she couldn't conjure up wind storms or stop someone's beating heart. Bringing Jeremy back was what did it. But really no longer being able to control the elements was such a small price to pay to save a life, especially Jeremy's life. His miraculous reanimation would be weird to explain to a town that thought him dead, but they'd deal with that when the time came. Right now everyone was still trying to come down from their near death experiences. She was still trying to get over seeing her Grams again and desperately wanting to resurrect her as well.

There had been a moment when Bonnie was pushing life back into Jeremy that she'd nearly died. The strain on her heart had almost been too much for her, and it was bad to say but she could have given up. Almost wanted to just so that she could be with her Grams again forever and perhaps get some much needed rest. But then she'd thought about all of the people she'd leave behind—people that would miss her terribly and probably blame themselves for her death.

In the end the choice had been easy.

Perched in the window seat of the Salvatore mansion, she pulled her legs up to her chest so that she could rest her chin to them. Sleepily she gazed out at the world and tried to decide on her next move. Graduation had come and gone with the usual murder and mayhem but things were quiet now. Stefan had left town to dump Silas' desiccated body into some never ending ravine, Caroline was making up for lost time with Tyler now that he was free of Klaus and Elena was spending time with Jeremy while Matt toured the world with Rebecca.

Oh and Katherine was human but no one knew where she was, just that Elena had shoved the cure down her throat—literally—to keep from being murdered. Bonnie kinda felt bad for her because she knew Katherine didn't wanna be human anymore than she wanted to keep running from Klaus. Life would be hard for her now especially since she didn't exactly have any friends to turn to. Stefan and Damon (more so Damon) would most likely relish the chance to blow her off without any consequences cropping up.

She'd heard about an almost romance with Elijah but like Klaus he was New Orleans bound now so that was a bust. Katherine was just lucky the veil was up again or she would have to deal with all of the souls she had screwed over.

*That damned cure. After going through so much fucken trouble to get it, Elena doesn't even use it once it's in her possession. I mean I get Katherine was going to kill her but still...I can't help but feel cheated. Jeremy died for that cure. Damon got a face full of vervain water for that cure. Stefan tortured vampires for that cure. Now it's just gone.*

*What a let down.*
Even though Stefan was gone Bonnie had a feeling he and Elena would find their way back to each other. Time a part however would do them some good because near the end things were hectic and kinda horrible. No emotions Elena had plucked everyone's nerves by the time she was finally fixed, and bent on revenge Elena hadn't been that much better either. But Stefan had championed her even when times were at their darkest, refusing to just give up on her. Loyalty like that didn't just go away because one party was upset or licking their wounds. And now that Elena was Elena again she felt the need to just apologize constantly for all of the bad shit she had done.

She was mostly forgiven. Mostly.

The summer was looking to be peaceful and Bonnie was happy for it. Yes her father hadn't taken the news of her engagement as well as he could, but he hadn't staked Damon either so that was a plus. Nevertheless she could still see that vein in his forehead throbbing as she laid it all on the line for him...

"Are you sure you wanna do this?" Damon asked slowly. "We could just go on pretending I'm your incredibly handsome older boyfriend until we actually pick a wedding date. Or until we're actually married. I could just compel your dad not to make a fuss."

Bonnie chuckled and shook her head. "No I wanna tell him. After everything that has happened I think he deserves to know the truth. I—well I sorta wish Abby was here too to hear it but I'm sure he'll tell her." She sighed with a shrug. "I'm tired of hiding one of the best things to ever happen to me. Besides he knows about vampires and stuff, he should know this too."

Damon snorted. "And when he comes after me with a stake or bottle of vervain water? What should I do?"

She smirked at him. "I didn't say we tell him you're a vampire. We just...tell him we're engaged. The age difference is gonna be an issue either way; let's leave out that you're like over one hundred."

He pointed at her playfully. "Hey! I'll have you know I don't look a day over fifty."

"He settled down beside her on the couch. "Are we ever gonna tell him I'm one of the undead creatures he can't stand?"

That's a good question. "Eventually. He's been doing really well with my mom. I think if he knows you're not all blood thirsty he'll be able to deal. I'll also make sure to tell him about all the times you saved my life and how Grams actually thought you weren't so bad. That has to count for something."

Her boyfriend made a face. "I suppose we'll see. He's here."

And suddenly she was nervous. She couldn't help but think about all of the ways things could go wrong but she owed her dad this honesty. He'd been powerless to stop her from helping Elena or putting her life in danger. He knew all about the terrible moments; it was time he was let in on the good ones. Even if he didn't see it that way just yet.

The front door opened and Charles Bennett made his way into the living room, arching a brow at the sight of them waiting for him. He removed his coat and hung it on the rack by the door. "Hello. Why do I get the feeling I'm about to get some bad news?"

She smiled sweetly. "Why would you think that, daddy?"

He tilted his head. "I've seen the Lifetime movies. Please tell me you're not pregnant."

She blinked. "What? No. God no." Snickering, she glanced to Damon. "But we do have something to tell you. It's not bad though."
Charles folded his arms over his chest. "I'll be the judge of that."

She hated when he pulled that face. "Well Damon and I have been together for a while now and we— we've been through a lot. He's been there for me when I really needed someone and I've returned the favor to him." Pause. "He—uh he asked me to marry him and I said yes." She pulled her ring out of her pocket and showed it to him.

*Her father's eyes stretched wide. "You're engaged? But you're seventeen years old. What in the world do you know about marriage and—and being married?"

And here we go. "Daddy we don't plan to get married until after I'm done with college. But yeah I'm engaged. And I know how it sounds okay? It sounds crazy because I'm still so young and he's older...but it's not. I love Damon."

"I'm sure you think you do." He said easily. "First loves are always very powerful however I don't think you've really thought this through. You're going to be going off to college soon and meeting a lot of new people. No offense to Damon of course but do you really wanna be tied down to one person?"

*Damon's expression was blank. "None taken. Sir."

Bonnie resisted the urge to facepalm. "I've thought about this." Patting Damon's thigh when he scoffed, she continued. "And honestly it just seems stupid to go looking for what I want when I already have it." Getting up, she tucked dark hair behind her ear. "Dad when mom left I saw how upset it made you. I was young and I didn't understand it all but I get that you were sad, and that it was her fault."

Charles' face softened. "Bonnie..."

She shook her head. "It's okay. I know you did the best you could. That you threw yourself into your work because you were hurting." A beat. "It affected me though. I never thought I would ever wanna get married after the way you and mom ended. Not to mention then Caroline's parents broke up and Elena's parents died. Matt's mom was no sort of role model and the Lockwoods had enough issues to fill a grave. Yet after all that I found someone that I could spend the rest of my life with."

*He reached out and grasped her shoulders. "I just don't want you to make a mistake that you'll end up regretting."

She totally understood that. "I know. I know that you're just looking out for me but I'm not a kid anymore. I've fought the forces of evil and lived alone," she joked lightly. "And like I said Damon and I aren't getting married tomorrow or even the next day. Our being engaged is a promise we're making to each other that there will never be anyone else for either of us. I—I don't know what the future holds but right now I can't imagine a future without Damon in it."

*Damon took that moment to jump in. "Mr. Bennett I love your daughter very much. I'm not lying when I say I would give my life for her in a heartbeat. I know she's...younger than me and that we come from different worlds but it doesn't change how I feel. Whether it's tomorrow or years from now, I'm always gonna wanna marry her. I just went ahead and asked now."

Charles eyed him speculatively but he didn't look angry, just contemplative. "Well I can't say that this makes me happy because it doesn't. Really I think you're both too young to be thinking about marriage." He smoothed a hand across his face. "However it hasn't escaped my notice that Bonnie will be eighteen soon and going off to college. Or that you make her happy. I suppose all I can do is hope for the best."
It wasn't much—or his blessing—but it wasn't screaming and yelling either. "Daddy you gotta trust me on this. Everything is going to be okay."

"You're really gonna wait until after college to get married?"

"I promise. Besides it's gonna be a big affair if Caroline has anything to say about it and she'll need time to plan."

"And this won't affect your grades?"

"Nope. It's not like I think about it every second of every day."

He rolled his eyes playfully. "If you wait and don't flunk out of school I suppose it's not the worth thing in the world. At least you're not pregnant."

She laughed. "Right." Smiling, she wrapped her arms around her father for a big hug. "Thanks, dad. I know this is weird for you."

He nodded but hugged her back. "Very much so. But your happiness is all that matters to me and you're a smart girl. I know you won't get in over your head."

Never again hopefully. "Not when it comes to this I won't."

He grinned. "Okay." And then his eyes shifted to Damon. "I'm going to be watching you however. Maybe even more than before."

Damon waved a hand. "I honestly expected as much."

Smirking, Charles kissed his daughter on the forehead before heading upstairs towards his room.

Bonnie exhaled and threw herself into Damon's arms. "No one got maimed!"

Damon snickered and situated her nicely onto his lap. "Nope. We'll save that for the big reveal down the road."

The thought of telling her father that Damon was a vampire still managed to make her stomach bubble unpleasantly. She could face homicidal witches, ghosts and werewolves but when it came to that subject and her dad, she felt utterly out of her league. It sucked that she couldn't just not tell him for the rest of their lives. While it sounded nice she realized if she didn't come clean eventually he'd probably find out on his own which would be so much worse.

I will tell him one of these days but not now. Not when things are mellow. Maybe I'll call him from school and leave a message on his answering machine. "I guess it's official now...more than it was I mean."

He nuzzled her throat. "What are you gonna do when Abby finds out? She knows all of the gory details and she might not be too keen on your decision. Not to mention I could see her opening her trap to your dad to get him on her side."

That was a possibility. "I'll tell her myself. Next. And I will make sure she knows exactly what my dad knows; that you're the one I want and if she can't deal then I don't need her in my life. If she can't respect me or my decisions I'll make sure she's never around us again."

"I love it when you get all take charge."

"Hah shut up."
"Ooh yeah boss me around some more."

"I'm gonna punch you in your perfectly chiseled face if you don't stop teasing me."

"But you're so cute."

"Well...I am cute."

"You are. Almost as cute as me..."

Then Bonnie had attempted to punch him but of course he'd simply caught her fist and teased her some more. But it had been nice to be that playful just for the sake of it and not because they were trying to deflect from some melancholy mood. It reminded her of their road trip, which man, they really needed another before the fall semester started.

Stretching her arms out with a groan, she forced herself up from her perch and trudged downstairs. The manor was quiet but she knew people were around; they had nowhere else to be after all. Slipping into the kitchen, she decided a nice cup of tea would perk her up so she started to make some. Damon hated tea or anything without a kick but thankfully Stefan was more open to "bland" tastes.

Yawning, she searched under the cabinets for the tea kettle and filled it with water after finding it. She was setting it on the stove when footsteps sounded and Elena walked into the room, looking more like her old self than she had in a very long time. "Hey. I thought I heard someone down here."

Bonnie smiled. "Hey. Just uh, making some tea. Do you want some?"

The brunette nodded and plopped down at the table. "Thanks." She cleared her throat. "Bonnie I know I've apologized before but I just wanna say how sorry I am again for being such a mega bitch. When I think about what I did to you and what I could have done? God. It makes me wanna lock myself back up in Stefan's safe. I was such an idiot."

Yes... "You were also grieving."

Elena pouted. "Yeah but everyone has grieved at least once in their life. Caroline lost her dad but she didn't turn off her humanity and start killing people. And okay Damon told me to turn it off but he didn't tell me to keep it off. That was all me." Scrubbing at a nonexistent spot in the wood, she wet her lips. "I knew when I became a vampire that I'd be fighting the urge to drain people, but I—I killed for sport. That poor waitress; what if she had a family?"

It was probable that she had. "I suppose if you're wanting absolution then you should actively make a pledge to never kill another human again. Caroline and I have already forgiven you for the things you did, but honestly I like that you haven't forgiven yourself. It's how I know you're really you."

Elena chuckled softly. "I'm never gonna be that way again. I don't care what happens my humanity is remaining completely intact." She gazed at her. "It's because of you that I'm better you know. I mean because you brought Jeremy back. I could never begin to tell you how amazing you are for it."

"You're still welcome," Bonnie searched for two cups. "To be honest I'm glad it took the last of my Expression magic. It was based in death and totally un-natural. I might not be as strong as I was but I feel better. I can watch a scary movie or have a nightmare without accidentally setting the bed on fire."

"That's good." The brunette mused. "I feel better too. My heart is still hurting for the things I've done but...I feel lighter." Her big brown eyes focused on nothing. "I miss Stefan though. I never got to
apologize to him."

"He's coming back." The witch said. "After he is settled I think you two should have a long talk
about everything. Clear the air."

"I really want to." Elena nibbled on her bottom lip. "There is so much we need to get out into the
open. And we need to decide what to do about Katherine."

"Do you think you and Stefan will get back together?" Bonnie inquired innocently. "Is that
something you would want?"

"I…" Elena shifted. "Maybe? I know that I still love him, just not sure how he feels about me
anymore. I was a terror to him. I think I'll try being his friend first though and if it develops into more
then…great. Not like we have to rush or anything."

So true. "Perhaps you can get him to go to school with us. Get the gang back together."

Her friend grinned. "That would be cool." Pause. "Do you think it's stupid that Caroline and I are
even bothering with college?"

Bonnie giggled. "Not really. I mean if you were like fifty then maybe but you're still just eighteen. Of
course you wanna experience college and stuff. If you live a normal life but as a vampire I don't see
anything wrong with that. I'd welcome the peace."

The other girl nodded in agreement. "Oh yeah. After the past couple of years I'm praying for normal
so hard right now. I also wish I hadn't burnt down my house."

Laughing, Bonnie jerked as the tea pot let out a loud whistle. She lifted it from the stove and poured
two cups full of water. "Yeah that wasn't your smartest move."

Elena hid her face. "All those memories and pictures—ugh! I'm such an idiot!" Slouching, she
gathered her hair up and off her shoulders. "I'm so thankful my parents' cabin is still there or I really
would have nothing."

After finding the tea bags and honey, Bonnie sat down in front of her. "I think we all acted stupid
this year in one way or another. I'm looking forward to a fresh start in college. Not sure how I feel
about living with Caroline though. Her clothes are gonna dwarf our clothes."

Elena snickered. "Oh yeah. We shouldn't even unpack because she is going to take all of the closet
space. I'm glad to be able to be here to yell at her though. I'm so thankful that we all made it
out alive." Her nose scrunched up. "Kinda shocked Matt went off with Rebecca considering how he
used to feel about her. But I guess he just needed a break."

Bonnie felt that was true of them all. The last few years of high school and life in general had been
totally exhausting where they went from one extreme to the next. She didn't personally trust Rebecca
since she'd been threatened by her before, however she could see the appeal of traveling with a rich
vampire that could get you whatever you wanted. And Rebecca had taken good care of Matt—saved
his life even—when the dead Hunters had returned for their revenge. She would probably show him
a good time.

For the first time in a long time Bonnie could feel a sense of normal seeping into her bones. Not a lot
of it with vampires being real and most of her friends being one, but enough where she didn't get the
urge to pull all of her hair out. If she closed her eyes she could almost pretend Elena and Caroline
were regular teenagers like herself…until they whipped out the blood bags.
"I think things are going to be okay." She said idly. "Don't quote me on that but it's just a feeling I have."

"I hope you're right." Elena whispered. "Though even if Klaus comes back to be a dick I won't care. Jeremy is alive and that's all I've wanted for months now. Thank you again."

"You're welcome." Pause. "Again."

~*~

So Damon Salvatore wasn't psychic and he couldn't read minds, but he had an innate knowledge about people that he was close to. Like he knew Caroline would continue to steal blood from him even if Tyler said he could get them all they needed. He knew Jeremy would move in the second he was breathing again—ugh—and then proceed to just make a mess of everything by constantly being in the way. And he knew Elena would turn herself blue in the face by apologizing and apologizing but the latter he actually agreed with. She'd been a bitch and she needed to make amends, simple as that. He wasn't sure about the Stefan of it all; why his brother had wanted to disappear with Lexi to get rid of Silas but he had an inkling. Things between him and Elena were on wobbly wheels and for once he was running instead of attempting to fix what was broken.

Maybe he just needed a vacation.

Mystic Falls was almost back to something that he could manage. Almost. It would never be as it was because Alaric was dead, and for all his nagging he'd made things more interesting. If there was one reason Damon wished the veil could have remained down it was for him. He missed his best friend more than he liked to admit. It was also amusing how two of the most important relationships in this life started with him trying to kill the other person. He supposed that meant Bonnie and Alaric were special…or insane to put up with his bullshit.

*If Alaric hadn't died I would have made him a groomsmen. Heh imagine that?*

It was strange because he wasn't quite sure how they'd managed to win but they had. Silas was gone, Klaus was gone and things were quiet again. Probably for a split second but he was okay with that. Gave him time to focus on helping Bonnie get over the trauma of bringing Jeremy back. He…tolerated the kid but in all honesty he could have done without him. Just the thought of Bonnie dying for him made his face muscles twitch unpleasantly. To be hair however the thought of Bonnie dying *period* made his face muscles twitch. But he knew that had to be the reason he'd found her barely conscious down in the caves with a stunned looking Jeremy babbling about having a heartbeat.

Bringing someone back from the dead was epic. His fiancé was…there were no words to describe her.

Sometimes he thought it was dumb how much in love with her he was. Not in a bad way but Stefan was the one that fell for people and continued to love them for like decades. *He* was the guy that could barely tolerate people even when he felt remorse over feeding and killing. But he supposed he just hadn't met the right person, not to mention that Katherine had probably screwed him up so badly with her mind games. He'd thought he'd seen a future with Katherine but in reality it had all been a pipe dream.

Things with Bonnie were *real*, and he wasn't even freaked out by them. He always felt like they were working towards something—like there was a reason they were bound together beyond protecting one another. Hell maybe the reason he'd really saved Emily's kids was so that Bonnie could eventually be born. Maybe Emily had known it all along.
Being a vampire wasn't exactly about living, it was about drifting. Being with Bonnie was the first
time in a long time that he felt like he was actually living a life, not just coasting through the years
and watching technology change.

Probably helped that she was such an old soul.

Snapping out of his thoughts, he put down the glass of Bourdon and made his way upstairs to his
room. He couldn't hear Elena and Jeremy but he figured they were around somewhere. Jeremy was
pretty much on house arrest until they came up with a plausible story for him being alive. Damon had
wanted to go with zombie but no one felt that would be prudent. Still the idea of Jeremy being
chased by townspeople pitch forks amused him.

"Hey judgy." He said upon seeing Bonnie in his bed, reading. "Where are the houseguests from
Hell?"

She laughed. "Jeremy was feeling cooped up so I think they went for a walk in the woods. Where
have you been?"

He slipped off his shirt. "Filling Liz in on all the gory Silas details. She's happy he's dead or
whatever after that stunt he pulled at the hospitals. With Klaus gone she thinks things might actually
get back to normal. I didn't have the heart to tell her nothing will ever be normal again."

Bonnie bookmarked the page she was on and closed her book. "Maybe normal is overrated anyway.
If you were normal you'd be dead."

*True.* "Yeah. And things would be so boring around here." He grinned and crawled up beside her.
"How ya feeling?"

She kissed him softly. "A lot better today. I'm getting stronger every day Damon; there is no reason
to worry."

*Impossible. I always worry.* "I'll be the judge of that. Until you're fit and perky you're gonna rest and
let me annoy you by playing nurse."

Her eyes sparkled as she teased, "Does that mean you're gonna dress up like one too? 'Cause I do
think you have the legs to pull off that little white dress."

He smirked. "Damn right I do." Shifting closer, he slipped his arm around her shoulders, trailing his
fingers along her arm. "Promise me something? Never pull another stunt like you did with Jeremy.
Or anyone else for that matter. You're—fuck you're ten times more important than anyone else."

She looked up at him. "I just wanted everyone to get a happy ending."

"You're *my* happy ending. Why should we suffer so others get to smile? We deserve to smile too."
He kissed her temple. "I get it—you wanna save the world. I love you for it. But I also *need* you
here."

"I *am* here." She whispered, snuggling closer. "I will always be here no matter what. I don't think
there is anything that could ever keep us a part. Not even death. I think we'll always find our way
back to each other."

Damon wanted to believe that but outside forces made it hard sometimes. However if he had faith in
anything it was Bonnie. "We better. You make me wanna be a better person."

She smoothed a hand across his chest. "You don't have to be better for me. I love you just the way
you are." Pause. "I don't know what's going to happen tomorrow or a year from now, but I do know that I can't see myself living without you. I know that's dramatic but you're one of the main reasons I fight so hard to fix the bad things. Life hasn't been very fair or kind to you...so I wanna fix it so that now it can be."

His bright blue eyes met deep green. "You're a real piece of work, you know that?" He inquired playfully. "I've met tons of people throughout the years and none of them were like you. Everyone has wanted me to change but you take the bullshit and never cut me any slack. I know now I was a fool to ever think we'd ever just be fuck buddies."

Bonnie giggled. "Are you admitting that you were wrong?"

He scoffed. "I wasn't wrong...I was misinformed." He entwined their fingers together. "All along I knew there was something...just never figured it would be this. I thought Katherine was what I needed but it was this. It was you."

Her cheeks flushed pink but she looked utterly pleased by his words. "So, we have the rest of our lives together Damon Salvatore. What do you wanna do next? Keep in mind at any time some grand evil might pop up to interrupt us."

What do I wanna next? That's easy.

"That's a tough one." Sitting up, he cupped her face and gazed at her lovingly. "While I contemplate that truly profound question, we can just do this." Leaning down, he kissed her as she chuckled, his fingers going for the buttons on her blouse. "I'm sure it'll come to me in the meantime."

Pulling him closer, she sighed happily and ran her fingers through his hair. "I'm sure it will..."

~The End~

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