

DELETED DARKNESS & LIGHT EPILOGUE

Following is the original epilogue from Darkness & Light. This is the extended (very rough and very young) version that didn't make the cut when I submitted to my publisher. Enjoy!

O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O-O

Almost six weeks since the battle in the forest, after being shown the secrets held within the depths of the house, I humbly accept who, and what, I am.

I have failed to alert Nathan to this fact, though. If I should have questions, I still refer to it as: suppose your bedtime story is true But I only do so because I know it amuses him and will use any excuse to encourage the blueness of his eyes to lighten, the laughter lines to surface, and that smug smile of his to show its face.

Besides, he *knows* I believe.

I used to think my life was so easily categorised into darkness and light, night and day, awake and asleep. How wrong I was. Of course, I realise with hindsight, so many of my brightest of light periods came whilst under the cover of darkness, in the form of my dreams; just as I have had plenty of my blackest of darkness periods during times I thought would provide only light. Fortunately, with the precautions taken to ensure my existence stays undetected, my life finally holds only light.

Last night, the moon was full. As usual, my senses were heightened for the entire day. I have plans for this morning, though, and spent the entirety of yesterday preparing.

My plans are intended as a celebration. Four days ago, I received confirmation that Peter has set the ball in motion for our divorce.

The others all know I'm up to something. The way I spent hours hiding in the garage, moving out vehicles, refusing to allow entry or answer curiosity, alerted them. They

obeyed the command to stay away, though—Sean included—and humoured me. But then, they always do.

At my pleas, they ushered Sean indoors for me whilst I dragged in the three bales of hay from the rear of the truck. A local farm sold them to me for a very reasonable price. Without question, Josh helped me haul them up to the raised storage area in the apexes of the garage roof. He watched in amusement as I then proceeded to tear them to shreds, scattering the yellowed strands across the more than adequate platform—all except one, which I placed for cover.

Everything in position, I spent the rest of the day unable to sit still as my body anticipated the upcoming hunt. More than that, I couldn't wait to see Sean's face.

A garment bag travelled out to the forest with me. I'd ignored the strange, sideways looks they all gave, had snatched it from Sean's reach when he asked for a peek inside.

He knew something was coming. He just didn't know what.

At last, with the sky beginning to turn several shades lighter, I am pushing through my change, as is Sean.

At my strict instruction, he doesn't come around to find me. He is on the other side of the bush, where I urged him to with my muzzle, growled at him to stay.

So far, he is complying.

I snare the garment bag from where it lies over my favourite changing bush—my favourite, I realise, because Sean has on many occasions marked it with his scent. Sliding down the zip, I can't help but smile at the revealed white dress. It took hours of scouring vintage clothing sites before I found one resembling the dress in our dream. Thank you, Poppy, for the generous credit card loan.

Attempting to remain obscured, I pull it on, criss-crossing the sash before tying it at the small of my back. Excited, I have to stifle a giggle.

In response, Sean chuckles from his waiting place.

I glance down at myself. On any other day, with any other man, I'd feel ridiculous. Not with Sean. With him, this is perfect.

I step around the bush, lifting the dress to prevent it dragging in the dirt.

He looks up. The moment he sees me his eyes fill with passion, amusement, and hunger. He scrambles to his feet, almost stumbles in his haste.

I smile at him, twirl, dancing back a few steps. "If you want me,"—it is a struggle to contain myself—"come and get me."

I turn and run, giggling like a crazy woman. I can't hear his pursuit at first, and know he's giving me the expected head start. I hear his laughter, though.

With the distance provided, he is on the move.

I encounter the others in my peripheral on my race through the forest. As I give them a second's glance, I giggle at them.

They can't help but stare.

First I—dressed like something from a period drama—then Sean fly past, both on the verge of hysterics. Ethan is the only one amused enough, instead of struck dumb, by the spectacle to laugh.

As expected, I glance over my shoulder, just to see where he is. I circle the next tree I come to, hands sweeping across bark, pausing to inhale its rich aroma. Seeing him gain on me, I laugh before taking off again.

Out of the forest, I break through the trees, weave through the brickwork of arches. I reach the centre of the lawn and twirl. As I face him, a huge gust blows in to swirl my hair, my dress.

Sean pauses, too. He looks truly ravenous, and not for food.

I take a moment for admiration as he stands naked before me, across the expanse of grass. His shoulders are held firm with the effort to hold himself back, to wait.

A grin earns me his crooked smile—the one he gave me that first day when I looked up at him. Aroused, my insides flutter.

I take a step back, followed by another; I dance backward across the garden before racing over the remaining ground to the garage.

His gaze tracks me as I move.

I glance across at him from the garage door.

He starts to approach and my snort escapes.

I disappear inside, and after pulling the door closed behind me, I shoot straight up the ladders loaned by Connor.

Throwing myself down, I roll about for good effect and shuffle to the ledge to watch his entrance.

The door swings open.

Stepping inside, he looks around, takes it all in. He appears overwhelmed for a second, his eyes glistening.

I slap a hand over my mouth to retain my laughter.

A tilt of his face, a deep inhalation, and he closes his eyes. Opening them, he turns toward the ladder. "I don't know why you think I won't find you, Jem." He chuckles as his foot hits the first rung.

I roll onto my back, tug my dress to reveal my legs. Supported by my elbows, I kick backward.

When he reaches the top, he stands over me, amusement clear in his features as his gaze roams my smiling face, the hay deliberately caught in my hair and the disarray of my attire. Kneeling, his fingers stretch out for me, encasing my calves, drawing me to him.

I resist, push him away with my hands, attempt to feebly release his hold on my legs. Not that I have any intention of resisting; it's all part of the ritual, leading to the wonderful act to come.

After a few minutes of faux fighting, he pulls me to him.

I reach out to wrap my fingers in his dark hair as I bring him to me.

We are no longer laughing. Our hunger for one another is so extreme, we can smell it; the air is thick with our desire.

His lips come to mine.

“Sean.” I sigh.

As we kiss, our breaths hasten, mine catching as he leans over until his body presses his erection against me.

Staying there for seconds, he whispers, “You’re amazing, Jem. You look beautiful.” He pushed back, runs his hands the length of my legs.

I tremble with anticipation.

Finding the hem of my dress, he pushes it high, over my hips, and I wiggle to help him.

I can’t help but smile when he leans down to place his lips against my inner thigh and ... well ... the rest is obvious.

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