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LILY

Two days after my mom came and dropped the biggest bomb of my life on me, I'm getting ready to finally leave the hospital.

Although all morning, Dad and Mason have been acting sketchy.

When I woke up, they were standing in the corner of the room whispering to each other until they realized I was awake.

"I don't want to go home," I whisper to Mason as he helps me sit up.

"You want to stay in the hospital?" He chuckles back, glancing over his shoulder at Dad, who quickly excuses himself.

"I don't want to see my mom," I clarify as Mason helps me take off the gown and slides a large T-shirt over my head.

"Would it help if I promise to sneak over once they're in bed?" he asks as he slides my favorite black hoodie of his over my head.

"It might help," I agree as I slowly change my panties and pull on some leggings.

"But you don't have a phone." I frown, remembering he said he smashed his.

"I'll just take one of Tayla's old ones." He shrugs before bending down to put my shoes and socks on.

"Now we just have to wait." He smiles, standing up straight before coming to sit next to me.

"Wait for what?" I ask, wrapping both my arms around his and snuggling into his side.

"Sarah said she wants to do one last check before you get to escape," he states, kissing the top of my head.

"Who?" I ask, scrunching my face up.

“The doctor.” Mason chuckles as Dad comes back in slowly.

“Sarah’s coming,” he comments casually as he sits down in the seat Mason usually sits in.

“You’re on a first-name basis with my doctor too?” I question, raising an eyebrow.

“She’s been very supportive.” He nods, looking at the door.

As if on cue, Doctor Bale walks in with a smile plastered on her face. “I can’t believe how good you look!” she exclaims, gesturing with her hand for Mason to scoot over.

“How’s the headaches?” she asks, sitting down between me and Mason.

“Getting better. My neck has been itchy,” I answer.

“Try not to scratch—it’s just scabbing up, which is what we want.” She nods, looking at it.

“If it becomes hot, red, and painful, come back to the ER immediately, and same if the headaches get worse,” she orders before giving me another kind smile.

“And mentally, how are you doing?”

“Fine,” I lie.

I feel emotionally drained.

The only time I feel normal is when it’s just me and Mason, or when Brittany and Liam are around.

I don’t know what to say to Dad.

I mean, do I even still call him Dad?

Should I start calling him Murray now?

“Hmm, well, I’ve put in a therapist card for you and Mason each in your discharge papers, just in case.” She nods, clearly not believing me.

"I hope not to see you around." She winks before getting up and leaving.

"Can't you just stay?" I groan, clinging to Mason's neck as I lie in my bed, and he stands next to me.

Dad drove us home and "allowed" Mason to help me upstairs to bed.

"I'll be back soon, princess." He chuckles, placing a soft kiss on my forehead.

"But you should just stay," I groan, tightening my grip on him.

"I wish I could." He chuckles, moving his hands to mine and unlatching them as my dad's throat clears from the doorway, making me sigh and flop onto my back.

"I'll see you in the morning." Mason smiles down at me one last time before he walks out of my room.

I instantly feel alone and vulnerable.

"Lily," Dad whispers as he comes to sit on the free spot of the bed.

"I know you're going through a lot, and I'm sorry," he begins, making me snort and roll my eyes.

"But I want—no, *need*—you to know this," he states, clearing his throat.

"I've always known you weren't biologically mine.

But I've always been your dad, and I never want to stop being your dad."

"Why?" I ask curiously.

"I always said that I never wanted a kid, but when Preston was born I just knew that I was meant to be a dad.

When he died, of course I was heartbroken, and when I found out Heather was pregnant again—

"I knew the baby wasn't mine, but I wanted it to be so badly, and when you were born I fell in love with you."

"I know these past few years I haven't been around much, and that's my fault for letting Heather get into my head about how we needed the extra money and how it would be for your future..."

"But I didn't realize what you actually needed was us."

"I did need you," I agree, wiping the falling tears off my cheeks.

"I kicked Heather out," he says, clearing his throat and wiping his own tears away.

"You did?" I gasp, not expecting that.

"After finding out how she's been treating you and the manipulation she's done to me, I'm just done with her," Dad explains.

"I love you, Dad," I whisper, realizing that he isn't as bad a dad as I thought he was.

He was just manipulated by Mom.

"I love you too, Lily." He cries, wrapping his arms around me as we sob into each other.

"Mason will be back soon," Dad says as our sobs start to stop, and he pulls back.

"What?" I ask, looking at him like he's crazy.

"I told him he can stay until Sunday."

But then it's back to his house.

No sleepovers on a school night," Dad states firmly.

"I have to go back to school, don't I?" I sigh, thinking about how awful it was last time I was there.

"You do."

You can transfer if you want," he offers, picking at his pants.

"I'll think about it," I sigh, dropping back down into my pile of pillows.

I know at Greendale I'd definitely have at least three friends.

But I've always been to Ridgewood.

Isn't it better to stick with the devil you know?

"I can't believe my dad is letting you stay." I giggle the next morning as Mason and I cuddle in my bed.

"I guess I'm just really charming." He laughs, pulling me closer into him.

"Keep telling yourself that," I joke, rolling onto my stomach to rest on his bare chest.

"I'm so glad you woke up," he murmurs with a small smile on his lips.

"Me too." I smile back before I lean down and place my lips against his.

Just as I feel Mason's tongue run along my bottom lip, a throat clears, pulling us apart.

"Okay, that was hot." Brittany smirks as she waltzes into my room, clutching a laptop.

"You have issues." Liam shakes his head, appearing behind her, holding three shopping bags in one hand.

"Shush." She scolds him before worming her way under the blanket between Mason and me.

"Seriously, Britt?" He groans as he sits up on his elbows.

"You shush too," she snaps before opening up the laptop and giving me a toothy grin. "I've made something for you," she smiles before bringing up a PowerPoint show.

Why Lily Bennett should ditch the losers at Ridgewood and come to Greendale.

"You made a PowerPoint?" I giggle as I read the title.

"She's been working on it since she found out about you and Mase," Liam chuckles from my desk chair.

"Okay, so some of the stuff isn't relevant anymore, but we can just skip those parts." She blushes slightly, making it full screen and hitting the arrow.

#1: You can be Brittany's volleyball partner.

"See? Not relevant." She giggles, going to the next slide.

#2: Get to see Brittany every day.

I can't help the giggle that escapes my lips as I look at the photo of her posing with a sad face.

#3: You can be on the winning track and field team.

"I mean, technically I already was. I only lost at long distance," I correct with a little smirk, making her snort and mutter, "Yeah, yeah, yeah," under her breath.

#4: You get to see how lame Mason really is (every day).

"Hey, that one's just mean," Mason states, pointing to the photo of him sleeping sitting up on a sofa I don't recognize.

"Well, you are pretty lame," Brittany sasses as she clicks through.

#5: You will have some really, really, really cool friends.

I look at the photo of the three familiar faces smiling widely at the camera, along with a boy a little older than them down at the lake.

"Who took that?" Mason asks, sitting up straight and leaning in more.

"Ryder did. It was right before we went jet skiing," Brittany answers quietly and quickly goes to the next slide.

"Seriously, Brittany?" Liam sighs, shaking his head.

"I forgot to change it," she hisses.

"Can you send me it?" Mason asks, seemingly surprising both his friends.

“Sure.” Brittany nods.

“That was Callum,” Mason explains to me as he leans over Brittany and goes back to the smiling faces.

I lean in closer and examine Callum’s face.

All four of the Coopers have the exact same green eyes. Mason and he share similar features, but Callum’s hair is blond and he doesn’t seem as bulky as Mason.

“You look alike,” I comment.

“Please, he was short and scrawny.” Mason snorts, going to the next slide again.

#6: You don’t have to see dickface Oliver, Leah, or Ava.

“This is my favorite.” Brittany giggles, pointing to the photo of three devils.

“I think it’s mine too.” I giggle back.

“And number seven is meant to be ‘no one will be assholes at Greendale,’” she states as the slideshow ends.

“Honestly, they won’t. I mean, Mason already knocked out Brock; I’ve told so many bitches to keep their noses out of it.

“Liam threatened the whole cafeteria—twice,” she babbles while I let out a gasp and look at a sheepish-looking Liam.

“Ryder loves fighting, so he has no problem fighting anyone either. Actually, I think the whole football team would throw some hands.”

She keeps going, making me giggle, and Mason tells her to shut up.

“So, did it work?” Brittany asks, fluttering her eyelashes.

“I’ll think about it,” I sigh, leaning back down into my pillows. I really have no idea what to do.

“Well, whatever you do, just know I still expect you to keep me company while these two talk boy stuff.”

Next Chapter

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