

Broken | 28: Friendships

28: Friendships

LILY

Today is the day I finally go back to school. I decided that since I only have a few more months left, I'm staying at Ridgewood, and right now I'm regretting my decision.

I could've just transferred and had either Mason or Brittany by my side all day. I don't know how everyone's going to react when they see me.

I mean, last time I was at school, everyone hated me. Including Harry.

"You okay, Lily?" Dad asks from my doorway, making me spin and look at him.

"Just nervous," I sigh, sitting down on the edge of my bed.

"I get it," he says, leaning against the frame.

"It doesn't help I slept like shit last night too," I sigh again.

It was the first time I slept alone, and it sucked. It took me forever to go to sleep, then I kept waking up, either cold or reaching for Mason.

"There was a note on the door this morning," Dad says, clearing his throat and holding up a piece of paper folded in half. "Addressed to 'princess.'"

In a flash, I'm on my feet and have snatched the paper out of his hands, reading Mason's scratchy writing.

Just so you know I'm really tired but still went for a run... Since you're still recovering, I decided to be nice and let you sleep.

Until next week.

I love you.

I smile to myself as I read over his note. Part of me is glad he slept as badly as I did, but at the same time, I feel guilty.

"I thought he would've tried to sneak back in here last night," Dad states, drawing my attention back to him.

“Who said he didn’t?” I smirk, testing his sense of humor.

“I checked,” Dad says with a wink. “I’ll make some cereal.”

I quickly finish getting ready and head downstairs.

“Don’t you have work?” I ask, suddenly remembering it’s Monday. Even when he wasn’t traveling, he’d be in the office by now.

“I’m starting at nine from now on,” he says.

“And finishing at...?” I draw out, wondering if that means he finishes late.

“Five. I told you I’m going to be around a lot more.” He smiles kindly before he smirks at me for the second time today. “Which means when I’m home, if Mason is around, the bedroom door has to be open at all times.”

“Oh my God, Dad,” I groan, feeling my cheeks heat up.

“Just saying.” He chuckles.

Thirty minutes later, Dad has dropped me off at school and I’m standing in the parking lot not able to move my feet.

A few people have walked past me, giving me the side-eye but not saying anything.

“Lily?” a voice says from my left side. I turn to face Jonah.

“Hi,” I squeak out.

“You’re looking so much better.” He smiles before opening his arms and pulling me into a gentle hug.

“Thanks.” I weakly smile as I adjust my bag on my shoulder.

“Does Harry know you’re back?” he asks as we begin walking toward the building together.

“No. I haven’t spoken to him.” I shake my head, biting my lip nervously.

“Oh, so you don’t know about Ava then?” he asks, making me snap my eyes to him.

"I kinda got suspended last week for telling her to shut the fuck up in the middle of the cafeteria." He blushes, stopping at my locker.

"You did?" I gasp as I put some books into my locker.

"To be fair, I've been wanting to do it for a long time," he says with a chuckle, making me nod along. "It was worth it," he adds as I close my locker.

"Did you know about me and Mason?" I blurt out suddenly, feeling the need to know.

"I did. I honestly can't believe no one else figured it out." He snorts.

"How did you figure it out?"

"Well, when Harry first told me about 'M,' he was the first person I thought of. Then seeing the way you looked at him at that first football game gave me my suspicions," he explains as we walk the halls. "But the second I saw the way he looked at you during that volleyball game, I knew. Oh, by the way, that night of the power outage, you were terrible at hiding." He laughs as he holds the class door open for me.

"You knew I was there then too?" I gasp as we slide into seats next to each other.

"You're not sneaky." He laughs, shaking his head slightly.

"I thought I was." I defend with a small laugh. "You never told Harry?" I question, biting my lip again.

"Not my place." He shrugs as the bell rings and students begin filling the room.

"You're not in this class, are you?" I frown, knowing I've never seen him in here before.

"Nope. But I know that bitch Ava is." He frowns at the door.

"Think of me as your personal bodyguard." He winks.

"Sure," I snort, fighting the urge to roll my eyes.

"So, you heard about the state championship?" he asks casually.

I shake my head.

“Mason didn’t tell you?”

“Mason hasn’t even mentioned football lately,” I murmur, a little stunned. “He’s been so focused on making sure I’m okay, it’s like nothing else matters to him.”

Jonah shifts his backpack and nods. “That’s actually so sweet. Well, the state championship is coming up. It’s a huge deal. Greendale’s the underdog—nobody thinks they can win. Their only chance is Mason.”

I feel my stomach drop. “So it’s like the biggest game of his life?”

“Pretty much, yeah. Everyone here hopes Greendale loses, of course,” Jonah says before leaning in and whispering, “but I hope Mason pulls it off. I see now how much he deserves it. Being more worried about you than the game. That says a lot.”

My chest tightens with a mix of guilt and warmth. I should’ve noticed, asked more.

But at the same time, I’m touched beyond words. He put me before everything—even the one thing he’s been dreaming about since freshman year.

Before I can ask more questions, I spot Harry walking into the classroom. His eyes widen either at the sight of me or Jonah, or maybe even both of us.

“Hey, babe—I mean, Lily,” he says with a sad smile, as he slips into the seat in front of us.

“Hi, Harry,” I reply, shooting my eyes around the room, watching people watch me.

Leah catches my eye and gags while Oliver sends me daggers.

“Jonah, go to your own class,” Mr. Garcia sighs as he walks into the room, almost like he knew he would be here.

“Can’t I stay today, sir?” he sighs back dramatically.

“The answer is always going to be no,” Mr. Garcia states before his eyes land on me and widen just like Harry’s.

“Fine,” Jonah mutters, standing up. “I’ll see you at lunch,” he whispers, squeezing my shoulder as he walks past.

“All righty, let’s get started,” Mr. Garcia states before getting straight into the lesson, thankfully doing what he did for me when everyone found out about me and Mason.

He never stops talking.

Once the bell has rung and the class is dismissed, Harry stands next to my desk waiting for me. “You want to ditch and talk?” he asks quietly.

“I can’t ditch,” I sigh, knowing I’ve already missed out on two weeks of work. “But we can talk at lunch, okay?” I add as I sling my bag over my shoulder.

“Thanks, Lily.” His lips twitch into a smile. “Come on, I’ll walk you to class,” he adds kindly.

The rest of my classes are pretty similar to first period. Harry sits next to me in third, neither of us saying anything—not until we’re in the hallway heading toward the door.

“Let’s go to the bleachers,” he suggests.

I agree with a simple nod and follow him outside into the cold air.

“I reckon it will snow soon,” I blurt out, not being able to handle the silence between us anymore.

“Hopefully it waits until after states,” he comments, looking up at the sky as if it will suddenly start snowing.

“When are they?” I ask as we sit down.

“Two weeks,” Harry states, making me roll my eyes. “Mason didn’t tell you?” he asks, giving me the side-eye.

“He never mentioned anything,” I mumble, wishing he had a phone again so I could at least text him.

"I'm so sorry, Lily," Harry blurts out before he breaks down into sobs. "I wish I could take it all back."

He sobs before putting his face in his hands.

"I know," I whisper, scooting down a little so I can rub his back. "I wish I wasn't so scared to tell you the truth."

"For what it's worth, he's a good guy." Harry snuffles as he turns his body toward mine.

"I know," I agree, my lips twitching into a slight smile.

"He really loves you." He wipes his nose against the back of his hand.

"First, that's gross. Second, I love him too." I smile, feeling my cheeks begin to burn.

"Oh, I know you do. I saw you kissing at the game." Harry smirks, waggling his eyebrows suggestively.

"Come on, let's go eat," I say, blushing more before grabbing his hand and dragging him toward the cafeteria.

Even though neither of us said it, we both clearly forgive each other.

I just hope that nothing has changed too much between us.

By the time gym class comes around, Harry seems to be acting his normal self with me—just a little more overprotective.

"Lily." Jock nods at me as I slip up to his and Harry's sides.

"Hey," I mumble, looking down at my sneakers.

"Tell your boyfriend he broke my nose," he grumbles, making my head snap up to his smiling face.

"I'm just kidding. He did give me a nasty black eye, though."

He laughs to himself like he's the funniest person in the world.

"She doesn't know," Harry mutters, making Jock's laughter stop abruptly.

“No one told her?” he gasps, leaving his mouth hanging open.

“Tell me what?” I ask.

“Mason broke Oliver’s nose,” Jock says with a chuckle.

“He did?” My eyebrows rise.

“He punches really hard. I’m surprised my eye didn’t break,” he confirms as he touches his left eye, making him flinch.

“I’m just glad I didn’t get hit by Ryder like Joey,” he adds with a little smirk on his face.

“Hey, serious question—who are you supporting at states?” he asks.

Thankfully Coach Burns blows his whistle, starting class, so I don’t have to answer.

I one-hundred-percent will be on Greendale’s side cheering on Mason, but I don’t know how the rest of the school is going to take it.

My first day back has been mellower than I thought, but me, on the sideline, cheering for our rivals—that may be a whole other story.

Once the bell rings and I’ve changed back into my normal clothes and walked out to the parking lot, Harry and Jonah stop me.

“I’ve been ordered to make you come with us.” Jonah smiles widely, nodding toward his car.

“Huh?” I ask, confused.

I’m tired and want to go home; going out is the last thing I want to do.

“Brittany called me and told me I have to get your ass home immediately, and if I don’t, she will kick my ass.

Apparently, Mason has been bugging her and Liam all day for their phones ‘cause he wanted to call you.”

Jonah drives us to my house where Mason, Brittany, and Liam are all waiting on my front porch.

The second my eyes land on Mason, a smile breaks out across my face.

In a flash, I'm out of the car and in his arms.

"I missed you," I grumble into his chest.

"Me too," he replies.

"Okay, lovebirds, get inside. It's freezing," Brittany teases as I feel her hands take my bag off my back.

"I've kicked your dad out until after dinner." Brittany smiles as she hunts through my bag for the key.

"You did?" I gasp, turning in Mason's arms to face her.

"Of course I did," she sasses, flicking her long hair over her shoulder as she unlocks my front door.

"He said he'd leave money for pizza," she states, ushering us all inside.

"How'd you manage that?" I laugh, pulling Mason onto the loveseat with me.

"She's really bossy," Liam answers, putting down two full grocery bags onto the coffee table.

"Agreed." Harry and Jonah both answer, earning them a scowl.

"How was your first day back?" Mason asks me quietly while the others all start bickering over what pizzas to order.

"Long and tiring." I sigh and snuggle into his side.

"Same," he says, pulling one of the throw blankets over us. "I'm buying a phone tomorrow, because she told everyone not to let me use their phone."

"I wanted to build the tension so I could see the steamy reunion," she says with a shrug.

"Which, by the way, wasn't as spectacular as I thought. I mean, come on. There wasn't even a kiss, you prudes!"

“You’re annoying,” Mason mutters, rolling his eyes, but his lips twitch as he fights back his smile.

“I know. But that’s why you love me,” Britt says, not bothered in the slightest.

“Sorry, Britt,” Mason says with a smirk, “but the steamy-reunion-show you were hoping for is a private affair.”

With that, Mason tugs the blanket up and over him and I, making a little cocoon. I kiss him, slowly at first, then deeply, passionately, like we haven’t seen each other in years.

Just as our kiss turns heated and we start to get breathless—

“Wooo! Get a room!” Liam yells, breaking through our little bubble.

Brittany dramatically yanks the blanket off of us, catching us flushed and dazed. We all erupt into laughter.

“Now THAT is a reunion,” Brittany declares with a triumphant smirk, tossing the blanket aside.

Right on cue, the doorbell rings. Liam springs up and grabs the pizzas, and soon everyone is gathered around the coffee table, grabbing slices and tossing jokes back and forth.

Tonight is the first night in a long time I’ve felt this content. I glance around at my new group of friends—just a few months ago, I thought of them as enemies or strangers.

Now, they’re my best friends. My family.

And the best part is Mason—a boyfriend who loves me exactly how I am and who will never leave my side, even when things get rough.

Next Chapter

Continue to the next chapter of Broken