

Chapter 8: Hell hole

Lily's POV

"This place is a hellhole, Lily and you'll need a tough spirit to get through it. If there's anyone that can pull it off, it's you."

You know that moment when you really want to hope that something is true because it somehow makes your shitty life feel a bit better?

That was how I was feeling right now, as I sat on the oor and looked at Ren Hawthorne after he said those words.

I didn't know why it felt like a breath of fresh air to not only know that he had no interest in hurting me like the rest of the school populace but that he was also trying his best to encourage me even though he didn't look like he had ever experienced anything remotely close to hardship in his life before.

A thousand bang of bricks lifted off my chest.

Someone like him would never truly know how bad this place was because he was a prince through and through, only used to experiencing the nest and being treated well but the fact that he had acknowledged that this Academy was a hellhole and tried to make me feel better even though he had no reason to made butterflies utter in my stomach.

You are being foolish, Lily, already feeling butterflies because of a kind gesture, my subconscious warned and I remembered that this was how Cade had worn me down too, with kindness and promises and reassurances.

Was that the game that Ren was playing now? Was he trying to be nice to me now and then show his true colours later rather than just show his hatred for me from the beginning like Aiden?

I hated that this might be nothing but a kind gesture and because of my trauma, I was overthinking it.

"Thank you," I answered shyly, freezing when he drew closer, his eyes, intent on something on my face.

He suddenly reached out to remove something from my hair and he nodded, about to say something when there was a sudden bang on the door of the studio.

I froze, transported back to the reality of the fact that people were looking for me once I stepped out of this place.

Flinching, my eyes widened in panic and Ren stood up and turned around to walk to the door.

"Please don't open it." I whispered desperately and he stopped, turning around to give me a reassuring smile.

"Don't worry, it's going to be alright, Lily. You'll see." He answered and even though I wanted to believe him, I could not. Rising to my feet, I ran to the other side of the door and stayed there, my eyes wide with fear when Ren opened the door slightly that he was going to throw me under the bus.

I didn't see the girl's face from where I was standing but when she spoke, I instantly knew that it was the leader of the trio that had harassed me in the gym.

"Oh, hi, Ren." She said with a gasp.

Her tone sounded out of breath like she had been running but she was excited and I had no problem knowing why.

It was the Ren effect.

Even I had not been immune to losing my voice and thinking when I first saw Ren.

"I didn't know that you were here. Your hair looks so good up anyways. I mean, I was telling my girls about how your hair looks better than even some of the girls in the academy and wanted to come by sometime to ask what products you use." She spoke in a low tone that was meant to seduce, like she had all the time in the worlds while I was about to piss myself in anxiety, waiting for the other shoe to drop. For her to ask if I was here and for Ren to hand me over and prove that I was right. That he was like the rest at the end of the day.

But my mouth fell open in shock when he finally responded to them.

"What do you want, Courtney?" He answered, in the coldest voice that I had ever heard and did not think he was capable of making.

I didn't need to see the girl, Courtney's face to know that she had paled in shock because that was exactly the look on my face.

Clearing her throat, she spoke again, this time her voice sounding less irty and more polite.

"Well, we are looking for someone. I don't know if you know her. Scratch that, she is not someone that a person like you would know or care about. But yes, we are looking for a girl. We don't know if she passed by here. She is one of those scholarship degenerates. Lily by name. The Beauregard girl."

The way she spoke about me with so much hatred and disgust made my chest tighten in shame and I wiped the tear that trickled down my cheek.

No matter what I did, I would probably not be able to escape the fact that I was the daughter of Edgar Beauregard, the man that was responsible for nearly destroying the Shadow cove community and tampering with the barrier that protected us.

No matter what I did, I would always be living under his shadow.

"I don't know who or what you're talking about and don't you ever call any of the people on scholarship degenerates ever again, do you understand, Courtney? You are privileged to be here and so are they. Especially because they were actually awarded because of how smart they are, which cannot be said for you."

I covered my hand with my mouth immediately, so surprised at the cold harshness in Ren's voice and if I was not so scared of being found by Courtney and her goons, I would have laughed and said that it served her right to be spoken to like that.

"Isn't that too harsh?" Courtney whined and I saw her stretch out her hand to touch Ren's shoulder but before she could actually do it, he grabbed her hand and dropped it.

"Don't touch me again, ever. Do you understand me?" He said in a deathly cold voice and I swear, the temperature in the room reduced a few degrees.

I was sure that Courtney nodded because her voice was a lot smaller, losing all bravado when she spoke.

"I'm sorry, Ren. But should you see her, please let me know?" She asked and Ren didn't answer, only taking a step back and slamming the door in their faces before turning around to look at me.

His eyes found mine and almost immediately, his mask fell. His shoulders dropped, guilt tinged his face and I got the impression that he was not someone that enjoyed being mean.

"Sorry about that. I'm not usually like that." He said with an embarrassed smile and I nodded, deciding that I had to leave because I had inconvenienced him enough.

"You know what? I'll just leave. I'm so sorry for being an inconvenience. I'll just go now. Thank you so much for not throwing me under the bus." I said and turned around to grab the door knob when he held me back and I gasped at the warmth of his hands against my clammy skin.

Turning me around to face him, he gently released my hand.

"They may still be out there looking for you."

"Yeah, but I can't wait here forever either." I answered, grateful for his compassion.

"Well, technically, you can. Or until at least the end of the next period. That should be enough time for them to stop looking for you. Spend the rest of the period here with me." He replied and my eyes widened in surprise.