

The Dark Side of Fate

Chapter 353



Chapter 353

The Beating Of His Heart

~Josphine~

Justin vented his frustration towards Liam, who remained silent and took the blame even though I was the one who convinced him to go to the place in the first place. The guilt weighed heavily on me and I imagined what Justin must have endured when the King called, desperately trying to speak with Liam, and Justin having no idea how to reach him.

The King's worry was entirely understandable. The circumstances had led to everyone being evacuated from Grizlo for a valid reason. It was only natural for him to be on high alert when something happened, especially since the incident took place at his mother's house. I recognised the legitimacy of his fear, and I felt awful for causing so much concern and putting Liam in a negative light with Justin.

I couldn't shake off the feeling of blame, fearing that it might lead to problems between Liam and me. As I made my way to my room, I sternly reminded myself not to act impulsively in the future. Justin's concerns were entirely justified. What if we had been attacked in that place? Despite being fighters capable of defending ourselves, we would have been overpowered if they came in large numbers.

The possibility that they might have used weapons as well weighed heavily on my mind. I may be immune to Silver, but Liam wasn't. The seriousness of the situation dawned on me, and I felt an overwhelming sense of remorse for my actions.

While I was in the shower, I heard a knock on the door, and my immediate instinct told me it was Liam. He was the only person who would come knocking at my door this late at night. Covered in soap, I decided that once I finished freshening up, I would head to his room.

The idea of going to his room gave me a rush of excitement, causing goosebumps to prickle my skin. The memories of our time together at the lake and in his room replayed in my mind. The way he spoke and the things he did made my heart flutter. The almost-kiss we had shared at the lake was real; it couldn't have been a product of my imagination. I was certain of it.

After I finished freshening up and slipped into my pyjamas, I decided to check on Liam to ensure he was okay, especially since Justin's demeanour had been serious. Gently knocking on his door, I was surprised when Liam opened it and motioned for me to come in.

As I stood in his room, I felt a bit uncertain about what to say or do. Liam looked attractive in his shorts, and not wearing anything on top allowed my mind to wander for a brief moment.

"Sorry about..." I began, but he interrupted me, preventing me from finishing the sentence. He quickly put on a T-shirt and then guided me towards the balcony.

"I had a great time today, and I don't regret going with you to that place. I'm just relieved that we made it back home safely," he expressed, stepping out onto the balcony. I watched him closely, unsure of how he felt about the situation.

"So you're not upset with me?" I inquired, and he shook his head, offering his hand to invite me to join him on the balcony.

"Not at all," he reassured me, pulling me closer so that we stood side by side, gazing up at the stars in the night sky. In that serene moment, I knew we shared a special connection, and the day's adventure had only strengthened our bond.

As he gazed at the night sky, I found myself studying him closely. It was surprising to see that he didn't appear affected by the incident with Justin. It seemed as though he had brushed it off, which I knew was to my advantage.

I gently reached out and touched his arm, prompting him to look at me. "You know you shouldn't have lied for my sake," I remarked, feeling grateful for his gesture but also concerned about him getting in trouble.

Liam chuckled and replied, "Who said I was lying? I actually wanted to check it out myself; you just helped me make up my mind faster," he admitted with a mischievous grin, causing me to laugh along with him. It was a relief to know that we were on the same page, and our adventurous spirits only brought us closer together.

Not ready to leave just yet, I decided to initiate a conversation with him. "What do you think the housekeeper might have done?" I asked, seeking his thoughts on the matter. He gazed at me, pondering the question.

"Beats me, Jo, but one thing's for sure: we need to be extremely cautious from now on," he responded, his smile fading as he emphasised the seriousness of the situation.

He continued, "We were under surveillance by those perpetrators. They even sent a video. Our parents have already seen it. The audacity! They gave instructions and showed us getting into a cab," he revealed, causing me to gasp in shock.

"That means they were watching us," I exclaimed, grasping the gravity of the situation. He nodded solemnly and drew closer to me.

"It means they could have..." I trailed off, my mind racing to the worst possible scenarios, realising the potential danger we had placed ourselves in due to my carelessness.

Liam held me close, enveloping me in a comforting hug while gently stroking my hair to ease my tension. "We just have to be more careful, Jo. I won't let anyone hurt you," he reassured, and I couldn't help but embrace him tightly, cherishing the safety and warmth he offered.

We found solace in each other's arms, and we chose to savour the moment, relishing each other's presence. The tranquillity of the night enveloped us, and if there had been music playing, I would have swayed to it. However, I wanted to stay focused and present in that serene moment.

"Jo," he softly called my name, and I lifted my head to meet his gaze.

"Today was incredible, and I'm grateful we shared it together," he confessed, and I couldn't agree more. Despite the incident, it was a day filled with cherished memories etched in my heart.

Despite wanting to smile, I found myself lost in Liam's gaze. His eyes held a promise that stirred emotions I didn't know I craved, leaving me to wonder if I was merely imagining things or overanalysing the situation.

"Li," I managed to whisper, but my voice caught in my throat. Just as he was about to lean in for a kiss, an unfortunate knock on his door interrupted our moment, and I couldn't help but curse whatever seemed to be conspiring against us.

I could have sworn I heard Liam mutter a curse word under his breath too, which was quite endearing, causing me to chuckle despite the interruption. He looked at me, and I nodded, signalling that he could answer the door.

Feeling tired and in need of sleep, I announced, "I'm going to bed," making my way toward the door. However, Liam didn't seem happy with that decision, and his expression conveyed his disappointment.

Liam opened the door, revealing Oliver, who had a smile that faded when he noticed me. He appeared visibly awkward, and rightfully so, as he had interrupted us.

"Did I interrupt something?" Oliver asked, his tone carrying a hint of guilt. I shook my head, trying to appear nonchalant even though my demeanour probably gave away the truth.

"No, you're good, Oliver. Goodnight," I replied, passing him quickly to make my way to my room. My heart was still racing from the near-kiss moment with Liam, and I couldn't help but curse the interruptions that kept occurring between us.

Once in my room, I let out a frustrated sigh. "Maybe we should stop waiting for the perfect moment and just seize it," my wolf, Onyx, suggested, sharing my frustration.

Three times in a row, our moment had been interrupted, and it wasn't the best sign, but I remained optimistic. I was determined not to let anything else get in the way of embracing what I was feeling for Liam.

I went to bed hoping for a good night's sleep, but it eluded me. If only Liam had been there, I thought, I might have snuggled into his arms and drifted off easily. Unfortunately, sleep seemed to be my enemy that night, and it evaded me for most of the night. By the time I finally dozed off, it was already five in the morning, setting the tone for what I knew would be a lousy day ahead.

When I woke up at eight, I was aware that breakfast had likely been served. Hastily going through my morning routine, I managed to get ready by eight-thirty and made my way to the dining room.

Upon arriving, I found everyone already seated. The only available chair was at the far end of the table. When Oliver saw me, he promptly got up from his seat beside Liam, offering it to me. It was a kind gesture, but it made me feel a bit shy to be the centre of attention.

"Did you get hit by a truck? Jo, those dark circles," Charlotte exclaimed, drawing attention to my tired appearance, as I had completely forgotten to use concealer to hide the evidence of my sleepless night. Now, everyone would be aware that I didn't sleep well.

I mustered a smile in response to her comment and greeted everyone before taking a seat beside Liam. He whispered, "Slept late," and I nodded, grateful for his understanding. I noticed that he was helping me serve my food, a sweet gesture that warmed my heart.

Before I could fully collect my thoughts, Noah's question brought me back to the topic of our investigation. It took a moment for me to connect the dots, given my sluggish morning state. Eventually, Justin responded, "We believe the perpetrators were sent to do something at Grandma Stephanie's house, and the person who sent them blew up the van to cover their tracks," I was impressed by Justin's theory and agreed immediately.

"I guess finding your girlfriend will be fun with all the danger looming," Sebastien said to Liam.

Sebastien's comment to Liam about finding his girlfriend made me freeze. The word "girlfriend" suddenly bothered me, even though it hadn't before. The realisation hit me that perhaps my feelings for Liam were deeper than I had initially thought.

My hands trembled slightly as I lifted the fork, but I quickly placed it back on the plate, hoping no one noticed my unease. The conversation about Liam potentially reuniting with Sophia weighed heavily on my heart.

"What will you do if she returns and finds her fated Li? Will you be able to move on? You've already moved heaven and earth, for Sophia's sake. Aren't we all here because of her?" Marvin teased, and I found it hard to bear. The emotions inside me threatened to surface, but I knew I couldn't show weakness. I stayed seated, not wanting to draw attention to my inner turmoil.

A tight knot formed in my chest, the kind that usually preceded tears, but I forced myself to take deep breaths and regain control. I couldn't let my emotions overwhelm me, especially not in front of everyone. I mustered all my strength to remain composed and steady, even though it felt like a struggle to keep my emotions in check.

"Sophia and I are just friends," Liam replied, attempting to downplay any romantic connection between him and Sophia. However, Charlotte didn't let it slide and teased him about the night she went missing, implying that he had planned to ask her out.

Marvin chimed in with another playful comment, asserting that Liam had practically confessed his feelings for Sophia in the past.

This teasing banter was common in Mountain, and it had never bothered me before. Yet, this time, it struck a nerve, and I felt a surge of emotions rising within me.

Unable to bear it any longer, I pushed my plate away and stood up to excuse myself, pretending that I needed to use the restroom. I calmly walked away from the dining room, but the moment I was out of sight, I hastened up the stairs, desperate to reach my room and let my tears flow in private.

Once inside my room, I allowed myself to release the emotions that had been building up. I breathed deeply, trying to regain composure, but tears streamed down my cheeks uncontrollably. It seemed that this teasing about Sophia and Liam had hit a sensitive nerve, and I needed a moment to collect myself and process these unexpected feelings.

Sitting on my bed in my room, I couldn't help but berate myself for foolishly entertaining the thought that there might be something between Liam and me. It was crystal clear that he cared deeply for Sophia, which was precisely why we were in Grizlo in the first place.

With tears streaming down my cheeks, I allowed myself to cry freely. I needed this release, to let out the emotions that had been building up inside me. Deep down, I knew that once I shed these tears, I would start to feel better, and Sophia's name wouldn't affect me as much.

A part of me recognised that distancing myself from Liam might be necessary to help me move on and forget any feelings I had for him. While it saddened me, I knew it was the right decision to protect my heart from further pain. So, as painful as it was, I made a silent resolution to create some distance between us to heal and find my own path forward.

As someone knocked on my door, I quickly wiped away my tears. However, I knew my eyes were probably swollen and red, giving away the fact that I had been crying. Reluctantly, I decided not to answer, hoping whoever was outside would leave.

"Jo, it's me. Open up, please," I heard Liam's voice, and I couldn't fathom why he was at my door. I felt a mix of emotions, including anger, as I stood up, preparing myself to confront him.

I was determined not to be used as a substitute until Sophia was found. I refused to be anyone's second choice or consolation prize. If Liam thought he could come to me whenever he pleased, he had another thing coming. I was ready to tell him off and make it clear that I wouldn't be treated that way.

I reluctantly opened the door, trying my best to maintain a calm exterior despite my inner rage. Liam stood there, looking genuinely worried, but I didn't care. He was interrupting my much-needed healing session.

"What is it?" I asked him curtly, not hiding my irritation. He seemed taken aback by my response.

"Jo," he managed to say, clearly thrown off guard by my tone. I folded my arms, waiting for him to explain himself.

"What is it, Liam? I don't recall signing up for the role of a substitute, so stop bothering me," I lashed out, my frustration evident. To my surprise, he entered my room and closed the door behind him.

"Who said you're a substitute?" he asked, looking genuinely confused. I couldn't believe his audacity.

"If I'm not Sophia's substitute, then what am I?" I questioned, feeling utterly bewildered by his words. He moved closer to me, causing me to instinctively back away, but I wasn't fast enough, and he caught me, pulling me gently towards him.

"Jo, don't pay attention to them. You know they like to tease me," he said softly, tucking a strand of hair behind my ear. I tried to turn my head away, fighting the flutter of butterflies that arose within me at his touch.

"Jo, look at me," Liam urged, but I resisted, shutting my eyes tightly and shaking my head. My actions might have been childish, but I didn't care; I wanted to protect myself from further heartache.

Ignoring my reluctance, Liam gently touched my chin and lifted my face to meet his gaze, forcing me to open my eyes. His intense eyes locked onto mine, and I struggled to resist the overwhelming urge to melt under his gaze.

In an unexpected move, Liam pressed his lips against mine, catching me off guard. At first, I was shocked, but as his tongue sought access, I gradually surrendered to the soft and sweet sensation of his kiss. The turmoil inside me intensified as Onyx, my wolf, howled in my head, and butterflies swirled in my stomach. The kiss was a mix of emotions, leaving me feeling both vulnerable and ecstatic all at once.

Liam deepened the kiss, and I was taken aback by his emotions. I responded eagerly, fully embracing the stolen moment that had eluded us three times before. This time, it felt right, and I was determined to make it count.

As we broke the kiss, both of us were left breathless. Liam rested his forehead against mine, and in the intimacy of the moment, he opened up to me. "I've been wanting to kiss you for a while now," he confessed, making me giggle softly.

"Sophia is my friend. That is it. You are special to me, Jo and I want us to give this a try. Please do not listen to what they say. You can never be a substitute for anyone in my life, Jo. I can't tell you how I feel."

Taking my hand, he placed it against his chest, and I could feel his heart racing.

"No one has ever made my heart beat this way, Jo. None but you," he confessed, baring his feelings in a heartfelt moment that left me both surprised and elated.

In that instant, I knew that the connection between us was genuine, and my heart swelled with happiness, knowing that we were taking the first steps toward something special.