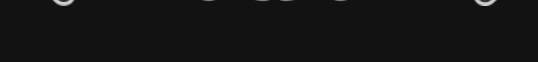


The Dark Side of Fate

Chapter 354



Enough For Both Of Us

~Liam~

Holding Josephine in my arms felt right. I knew I needed to make a move because there would be no right time.

We had been interrupted three times already. I doubted anytime would be right enough to show my intentions.

I thought she would push me away or stop me, but when she responded, Alex and I were at peace immediately.

There was hope that it would work out. Maybe she had feelings too. Only time will tell, but I chose to savour that moment with her in my arms to assure her that there was nothing between Sophia and me.

As Josephine gracefully left the dining room, she appeared unfazed, yet Alex sensed a hint of unease. Observing her take the staircase turn instead of heading for the restroom, I knew something was amiss.

I planned to address the Sophia teases with my cousins. Since it bothered Josephine so much, I could not let them continue.

As I held Josephine's hand against my chest, I could see the bewilderment in her eyes. In that moment, words seemed insufficient to convey my emotions. My heartbeat became the melody, expressing what words couldn't.

"I'm going to talk to them about stopping the Sophia jokes," I said, but Josephine shook her head in response.

"No need, Li. I believe I can handle it," she replied, avoiding eye contact with me.

Her words surprised me, and I felt a mix of relief and concern.

"Now that I know there isn't much between you and her, I can handle it," she continued. "But what happens when she returns? Despite my feelings, I genuinely wish her well and hope we find her. What will you do then? You were planning to confess your feelings to her the night she disappeared. What happened to those feelings, Li? Did they vanish with her, or did you simply bury them?" she asked, taking a step back, her question bearing undeniable validity.

Josephine's eyes shimmered with fear, clearly bracing herself for whatever I might say. Yet, I found myself at a loss for words as well.

"Jo," I started, but she shook her head, urging me to be honest.

"You have to tell me, Li. What happened to your feelings for her?" she insisted, seeking an answer.

Just as I was about to respond, Justin's voice echoed in my mind, interrupting our conversation.

"Everyone should gather in my office. We're meeting with the former Gamma and Delta now, and then we're heading to Grandma's house to investigate the crime," Justin announced, diverting our attention.

Josephine wasted no time, swiftly grabbing her jacket before I could utter a word, leaving the question about my feelings unanswered for now.

"Jo," I managed to say, but she shook her head, clearly unconvinced.

"You don't have your feelings sorted, Li," she stated as she put on her jacket. As she made to leave, I rushed to her side, reaching out to hold her and prevent her from walking away.

"No, Jo, I really do have my feelings sorted out. Honestly, I do," I pleaded, desperate to make her understand.

"I did have feelings for Sophia, but I never acted on them. I never told her how I felt. The plan was to confess that night, but it never happened," I explained, attempting to draw her closer by gently tucking a strand of hair behind her ear. However, Josephine deftly evaded my touch, making it clear she needed space.

"Please, Jo," I pleaded, gazing earnestly into her eyes.

"All I can say is that it was different with you. It took me so long to realise my feelings for Sophia, but it didn't take much time at all for me to fall for you. Everything about us feels right, even destined, Jo. Don't let Sophia's shadow cast doubt on what we have. Whatever I felt for Sophia, it vanished before we arrived at Grizlo; I just hadn't found the right words or moments to express my feelings to you. I doubt I ever will. With you, words seem to escape me, and all I can do is show you how I feel through my actions. Please," I implored, searching her eyes for reassurance.

My heart pounded with fear as I waited for her response. Then, in a moment that lifted the weight of uncertainty, she leaned into my arms, resting her head against my chest. As I held her close, I could feel the gentle warmth of her tears, and it felt like a moment of emotional release and connection between us.

"I don't want to be in anyone's shadow, Li. Please don't give me a reason to fear Sophia's return," she expressed her fears, and I responded by gently stroking her back. She had every right to feel the way she did. I knew that my handling of the situation with Sophia had left her feeling unsure, and I didn't want to do anything to break her heart.

In my heart, I knew that Josephine was someone I wanted to love and cherish, even if she wasn't aware of it yet. I hoped that when the time was right and she discovered my true feelings, she would come to understand and trust in the depth of my affection for her. Until then, I was determined to show her, through my actions, that she was my priority and that I had no intention of letting anything or anyone cast a shadow over what we could have together.

Josephine pulled away, wiping away her tears with a smile on her face.

"We better get to Justin before he loses his shit again like last night," she quipped, and we both shared a laugh.

"Yeah, he did look like he had a fire lit under him," she said, and I chuckled, finding her description of Justin's behaviour quite fitting.

While his reaction was understandable, I knew that dealing with that video, my parents, and the entire situation couldn't have been easy for him. If my father didn't give him trouble, my mother certainly would have, not to mention Lord Alexei and others.

We had just arrived, and it weighed heavily on me that Justin had to go through all this trouble.

I felt genuinely sorry for the burden he had to bear in the midst of everything.

Josephine and I departed the room, our hands entwined as was becoming customary.

Before we left her room, she took the time to apply her eyeliner, and I couldn't help but smile. I was gradually getting used to the smokey-eye look, and strangely, it was growing on me.

However, what I felt for her went far beyond appearances. Her personality was simply incredible, and I knew deep down that she was someone I could always rely on and trust, no matter the circumstances. Even though she hadn't yet expressed her feelings, I held on to the hope that one day, she would respond positively, easing the worries in my heart. Until then, I was determined to love her wholeheartedly; My love will be enough for both of us.

Josephine and I arrived at Justin's office, finding all eyes on us as we entered.

"You barely ate anything, Jo. Are you feeling okay?" Charlotte asked, displaying genuine concern.

"I'm just saving my appetite for a special place," Josephine replied, giving my hand a playful pinch. I knew she was referring to the food truck we planned to visit later. She must have really enjoyed the food there. However, given the urgency of the current matter at hand, we wouldn't have the opportunity to go there alone in the evening.

So, to ensure she didn't go hungry, I quickly arranged for an omega to prepare sandwiches for her to eat on the go. This way, she wouldn't be hungry while we worked.

Justin observed us carefully, his silence speaking volumes. Suspicion was evident in his eyes, and he didn't seem too happy about the situation.

"I will talk to you later today, Li," he linked me, and a knot formed in my stomach because I knew it had to do with Josephine. After all, I had spoken to him with unwavering conviction about my feelings for Sophia; how could I now take back those words? I was well aware that I would have to eat my own words from that conversation. It was a bitter realisation I couldn't escape.

Marvin stood next to me, his curiosity evident in his link.

"What's going on between you and Jo?" he asked, and I glanced at him. He had been so preoccupied with Layla that he hadn't noticed until now. I shifted my gaze to the others in the group, realising that Marvin wasn't the only one who had picked up on the connection between Josephine and me. Charlotte seemed somewhat suspicious, while Noah and Sebastien appeared oblivious.

It became apparent that everyone else had noticed there was something between Josephine and me. The unspoken feelings and growing closeness were becoming more evident to those around us, and it made me wonder how much longer we could keep it under wraps.

"The Gamma and Delta have already arrived," Justin linked us discreetly, ensuring no one could eavesdrop on our conversation within his office.

"Considering the footage you all saw and the fact that someone was surveilling Li and Jo during their evening stroll...", he said with emphasis on the stroll, and Charlotte chuckled.

"... I suspect the conspirators are from this area. While we can't be certain if the Gamma and Delta are involved, we cannot afford to trust anyone outside our circle. To succeed in our mission, we must gather as much information as possible from everyone here while keeping our findings strictly within our group. It's crucial to make it exceptionally challenging for them to infiltrate our ranks. This is precisely why not everyone from the gang was allowed to come to Grizlo. We need to establish a seamless rhythm before including the rest," he elaborated, and we all nodded in agreement.

"Understood," Justin replied aloud, ensuring that part of the conversation was open for everyone to hear. Charlotte couldn't help but chuckle more, and Justin smiled in response.

"In a few minutes, we'll be meeting with Gamma Lebedev and Delta Sokolov. I expect each one of you to show them respect, even though we are temporarily relieving them of their duties in Grizlo. Their office demands it," he instructed.

"Yes, Alpha," we all agreed in unison, and he smiled before leading us out of his office towards the visitor's room. The meeting with the Gamma and Delta awaited us, and we were prepared to handle it with the utmost respect and professionalism.