

Chapter 26 – He's Just A Friend, Mom

Liam speed down the highway, the top of his convertible down. Huge forest trees lined each side of the road and I couldn't get over how gorgeous everything looked. Beside me, Liam wore sunglasses, and his hair blew wildly in the wind.

Liam turned and smiled at me, "What are you thinking about?"

I looked down at our intertwined hands that rested just behind the gear shift. It felt so easy and natural to hold Liam's hands like this.

"Nothing, just thinking about how amazing this weekend was," I said.

Liam's eyebrow raised, "Really?"

I nodded, "Yeah. I mean besides all the shitty Noah stuff, I had an amazing time," I said. And I meant it too. The weekend had been way better than I had ever hoped it could be. When I'd first agreed to go with Liam, I thought it would be nice to see the chalet again.

To sit by the fire and drink the amazing hot cocoa. To gaze at the gorgeous mountains in the distance. But Liam gave me so much more than that.

"Good. That's all I wanted. So, does that mean I won the bet?" Liam said with a grin.

I frowned, not sure what he was talking about, and then it hit me. "Oh my God, our bet!"

Liam nodded, "That's right. If you didn't have a good time, I'd grant you one wish."

"And if I did have a good time, I have to do anything that you say," I said.

Liam's eyes left the road for a second as he just stared at me. There was a rawness to the way he looked at me that made my entire body burn.

"So, what wish would you like me to grant you?" I said nervously.

"Oh, don't worry about it now. It's not the right time. But trust me, when the time is right, I will come to collect," Liam said. He squeezed my hand tight and I took in a sharp inhale that somehow turned into a moan.

I looked over at Liam, hoping he hadn't heard me moan. But the small smile that danced on his lips told me that he most certainly had.

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Liam pulled up alongside my house. He got out of the car and helped me grab the duffle bag of things he had bought for me for the weekend. I got out of the car.

"I'll see you in school," Liam said. He brought the back of his hand to my face and swiped my hair out of my face. "Bye, Ella. Say hi to your mom for me."

"Bye, Liam," I said. I walked up to my house, telling myself not to look back. If I looked back now, I knew I wouldn't be able to leave Liam then. That I would beg him to take me back to his house.

When I walked into my house, it was quiet, "Mom? You in here?" I said.

"In the kitchen!" Mom called out. I set my bag by the door and headed into the kitchen. Mom was looking over one of her cookbooks as she made a meal from it. "Honey! You're back!"

Mom came over and gave me a big hug, kissing me all over my face like she used to when I was a kid and I had been gone all day at school.

"Hi, mom," I said, grinning.

"So how was your mountain top adventure with Liam?" Mom said, her voice dancing at the mention of Liam's name.

"Oh, it was fine," I said.

Mom immediately started to shake her head, "Nuh, uh, no way, you're not getting away with "it was fine". Go on, sit down and tell me everything. From start to finish."

Mom pushed a plate of freshly baked cookies in front of me. She went to the cupboard to pull out a packet of apple cider so that she could mix it for me.

There was no way that I could tell mom everything that had happened at the resort. I didn't want things to get even more awkward between her and the Gravens' if I told her what happened with Noah.

I also didn't want her to start thinking that me and Liam were ready for wedding bells. Because this is what I knew she would think if I told her about how Liam had shown me his wolf form and allowed me to ride him on the mountain. But I had to give her something.

"It was pretty...amazing mom. Liam really pulled out all the stops for me. And he was a total gentleman," I said.

Mom put her hand to her heart and sighed, "I just knew there was something special about that boy," she said.

"Yeah, he's pretty cool," I said with a smile.

"So, when's the next time you guys are going to see each other again?" Mom said, wiggling her eyebrows.

I rolled my eyes, "I don't know mom."

"But he's going to ask you out again, I'm sure," Mom said, nodding her head.

"Again, we're just friends, that's it," I said. I really didn't need her getting her hopes up and living in some fantasy where Liam and I ended up together forever.

Mom swatted my words away in dismissal, "Trust me, friends don't look at friends the way Liam looks at you."

I looked back at mom, surprised, "What do you mean?"

"Honey, that boy looks at you like he wants to gobble you up for breakfast, lunch and dinner."

"Mom!" I said, my cheeks burning.

Mom shrugged, "Hey, I'm just telling it as I see it. You might want to pretend that he's just sticking around because he just wants to be friends, but trust me, Liam Gravens is looking for more than friendship from my baby, as he should. You're amazing."

I smiled, "Thanks mom." I took a bite of the freshly baked cookie. "I do have to grant him a wish though."

Mom looked up from the pot she was mixing, "What do you mean?"

"Well, since I had such a good time and I thought I wouldn't I lost a bet Liam and I had made and now I have to grant him a wish."

Mom thought about it for a second, "Maybe you could have him over for a movie night and we could cook him his favorite meal?" Mom suggested.

My cheeks burned and I looked down at my hands, trying to use my hair to cover them up. I definitely wasn't going to tell mom that that probably wasn't the type of wish Liam was going to ask me to grant. Something told me it would probably be a little more...spicy

Instead, I shrugged, "Yeah, maybe."

I half listened while mom told me about how her weekend had been and all the crazy goings on at work. The rest of my mind was consumed by Liam though. Even though we were just fake dating, things had suddenly started to feel...real. I didn't know what to do about that.

I couldn't get over the fact that this Liam was so different than the Liam I thought I always known. And still, there was so much about him that I didn't even know. Either way, something told me that when we saw each other at school the next week, things were going to be different between us.