

## Dating 48

### Chapter 48

The sight of Liam standing there, with so much vulnerability etched on his face, sent my heart into overdrive. He was wearing a jeans and a white T-shirt and his hands were deep in his pockets, a frown on his face. *www.NoVeLWorM.Com*

My first instinct was to run, to avoid the confrontation that I knew was inevitable. I knew he must have been so hurt about how Td just left him like that. About the fact that I had been avoiding his calls like the plague.

He had called me almost every hour since I'd left him a couple night before at the gym. Even though he'd called so many times and 1 refused to pick up, all he'd texted me was Ella, please pick up. If it was anybody else. If it had been Noah, I know they would have tried to break me. Tried to make me feel guilty.

But not Liam. It was like he knew I needed space to think. That I needed time. And of course, right when I was craving his presence, craving being near him, craving the feel of his hand holding me tightly like he was never going to let me go. That's exactly when he showed up.

I knew we needed to have this conversation. I took a deep breath and nodded.

"Yeah, we do need to talk," I said, my voice barely above a whisper.

We walked down a shaded path on campus in silence for a few minutes. The breeze felt amazing against my burning skin. We found a quiet bench under a large oak tree. The fading light of the setting sun cast long shadows of us. This entire moment was almost surreal.

We eventually got to a bench that was shaded by huge trees above us. Even if someone was around, they would hardly be able to see Liam and 1. Liam sat down first, and I followed, leaving a small gap between us.

I knew what it would mean for us to be too close. That was just too dangerous. It was better that we kept space between us,

He turned to me, his eyes searching mine. "Why have you been avoiding my calls, Ella?"

I looked down at my hands, fumbling with the hem of my shirt. It was one of the hockey team jersey's I had gotten. Ever since Liam and I had been going out, I couldn't believe how much I cared about the hockey team

I had never cared about them before. I used to think that they were just a bunch of huge dumb werewolf jocks. But that was before I started to watch their games and go to their practices with Liam. They all worked hard and loved playing hockey.

I admired that and so, whenever I could support them, I did. That's why I had bought their hockey jersey one random day. Liam totally flipped when he saw me in it. It was one of Liam's favorite shirts to see me in.

I hadn't purposefully had it on today I had just wanted to feel closer to him when I'd slipped the shirt on. And here I was, wearing his favorite shirt. when he finally came to find me.

I grasped the hem of the shirt tighter. "I didn't know what to say, I didn't know how I felt. Everything happened so fast, and I needed time to process it all.

Liam sighed, running a hand through his hair. Tve missed you so much, Ella: Every day without you has been torture. I hated the way you like that."

took off

The sincerity in his voice almost broke me. He would never know how much his just being here, sitting right beside me, tugged at my heart. I could see the longing and desperation in his eyes, and it made me feel guilty for pulling away.

But I knew that's what I had to do to stay sane. I had to do that so that he and 1 wouldn't regret anything that might have happened.

I reached out and took his hand, intertwining our fingers together. I squeezing it gently, I'm sorry, Liam. I never meant to hurt you. I just. I was scared. Scared of what it all meant, scared of what could have happened"

"I figured," he said, his voice quiet but filled with so much longing.

"You know how dangerous it could be if we went all the way. I just.. we couldn't risk it," I said, pleading with him through my eyes. I just hoped that Liam would understand. He just had to..

He squeezed my hand back, his grip firm and reassuring. "You don't have to be scared, Ella. I get it. I just feel like we can figure this shit our together if we hang in there. I just need you stay by my side. Promise me you'll stay by my side." Liam looked at me, his eyes pleading

For a moment, we sat in silence, the weight of his words hanging in the air. The tension between us seemed to ease slightly, and I felt a flicker of hope. Maybe we could navigate this together after all.

ay with him, to *www.NoVeLWorM.Com*

Ever since Liam and I had gotten together, there had been so much that we had gone through. And here he was, asking cominue to deal with all the crazy shit. Was I ready? Was I able to continue to deal with it I really didn't know.

ng me to stay

"I don't even—" I started, but Liam cut me off.

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Liam's expression softened, and a playful glint appeared in his eyes. "You know," he said, leaning closer. I couldn't stop thinking about that moon- shaped birthmark on your abs. The way your body shook when I licked it. It was so sexy."

His words sent a jolt of electricity through me, and 1 felt my cheeks heat up. But instead of feeling flattered, a wave of frustration surged through me. How could he bring that up now, after everything we'd been through?

I pulled my hand away and stood up, glaring down at him. "Liam, we can't to do. And.. no. This is all too tempting, it's too dangerous."

't do this w

We can't just pick up where we left off. I know what you're trying

His face fell, hurt flashing in his eyes. "Ella, I didn't mean to upset you. I just wanted to lighten up the mood. Please just sit down"

I crossed my arms and stayed standing, trying to keep my resolve. "I know, but we can't let things get out of control again. We need to set boundaries *www.NoVeLWorM.Com*

Liam stood up, his expression serious. "I get it, okay, Ells. But you can't ask me to stop wanting you. I can't just turn off my feelings."

I looked away, blinking back tears. Tm not asking you to stop feeling. I'm asking you to wait until we're both ready. Until we know we can handle it Until we figure things out."

He took a step closer, his voice gentle. "Ella, I swear, I will wait. As long as it takes. But please, don't shut me out. Don't just leave me like that again.

His words broke through my defenses, and I felt a tear slide down my cheek. I nodded, finally allowing myself to feel the full breath of emotions that I had been trying to shut away. "Okay"

We stood there for a moment, the silence between us filling the space. My phone buzzed and I looked down at it. It was a text from Noah.

Hi, Ella. You miss me yet!

COMMENT