## Dating 57

Chapter 57

The next day, the campus buzzed with so much chatter about Ava's new book, Everywhere I turned, students were gushing over her "brilliant" writing. I couldn't believe it. It felt like I was in the twilight zone or something

My heart sank every time I walked by a couple of people and I would hear, "Have you read Ava's new book? It's so amazing. I didn't even know she was a writer."

I should have been the one receiving the accolades. It wasn't even like I wanted the attention. I hated attention. But it just wasn't right for Ava to steal my work like that and take credit for st

Ava for her part, completely basked in all the newfound attention, strutting through the hallways with a smug grin plastered on her face. It was nauseating. She had even started handing our headshots of her with her signature scribbled on the back. Complete with a liule floating heart.

In literature class, the praise for Ava was totally deafening. Our professor, Professor Williams, couldn't stop gushing. "Ava, your novel is simply outstanding. The depth of your characters and the intricacies of the plot are remarkable for someone so young."

I clenched my fists under the desk, my nails digging into my palms. It was my story he was praising. My characters, my plot. And yet, here I was. powerless to do anything about it. Ava was a popular she wolf, and I was just a basic human girl. Who would believe me over her?  $ww.\tilde{n}@(v)el(w)orm.com$ 

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And this was what Ava had been counting on when she stole my work. She knew that I wasn't going to challenge her. And she was right. But didn't expect, was for someone else to call her out during class.

Suddenly, a voice from the back of the room cut through the praise. "Isn't it weird that Ava's novel sounds a lot like the works of Opheliathescribe"

frown on her face.

My heart skipped a beat. I turned around and saw a plain looking girl wearing red round glasses, a

Ophelathescribe was my pen name, the identity I used to publish my stories online. The person who had called Ava out was Sarah, a fellow literature student. I'd never really spoken to Sarah before. She had her own group of she wolf friends

But unlike Ava, Sarah and her friends were more nerly. They weren't popular and they kept to

her hands. But I never would have guessed that she was one of my readers. One of Ophelia's readers

Ava's face went pale for a moment, a flicker of nervousness crossing her features. The room fell

themselves. I had noticed that Sarah was a huge reader like me. She always had a book or two in

silent, all eyes on her. This was it. It was finally happening. She was going to finally admit what she had done, that she had solen my novel and published it under her own name.

But Ava recovered quickly, a sly smile spreading across her face. "Actually Everybody around the

am Opheliathescribe. I've been writing under that pen name for years."

room gasped, the sound echoing through the classroom. I felt as if the floor had been pulled out from under me. She hadn't just stolen my work; now she was claiming my identity. The room spun, and I couldn't breathe. I had to get out of there.  $@ww.m@ve\ell W@rm.cem$ 

chair and bolted from the classroom, tears streaming down my face. As I pushed through the door, I caught Ava's gaze. She I stood

from my up gave me a dirty, warning look, her eyes gleaming with triumph.

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Back in the dorms, I collapsed onto my bed, sobbing uncontrollably. Monica rushed to my side, her face filled with concern,

"Ella, what happened?" she asked, her voice gentle.

"Ava. she's claiming to be Opheliathescribe," I choked out between sobs. "She's stolen everything. My story, my pseudonym. everything." Monica's eyes widened in disbelief. "That's insane! Seriously, she can't get away with this."

1 shook my head, feeling utterly defeated. She already has. Everyone believes her. And why wouldn't they? She's a she–wolf. She has the popularity, the connections. I'm just a stupid human."

Monica's expression hardened. "Do not say that about yourself. Don't let her get to you like that. Look, we're not giving up, Ella. We'll find a way to expose her. We'll make everyone see the truli"

I wiped my tears, trying to pull myself together. Monica was right. I couldn't just let Ava get away with this. I had to fight back, no matter how hopeless and crazy everything seemed right now,

Over the next few days, Monica together to gather the evidence that we needed 1 compiled all my

original drafts, a few emails to Monica discussing my plot ideas, and screenshots of my online posts as Opheliathescribe. We needed something concrete, something undeniable.

something! Look at this,"

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One evening. Monica burst into our room, excitement written all over her face. "Ella, I found

She handed me her laptop, and I stared at the screen in shock. It was a message board thread from

months ago, where I had posted a sneak peek of my upcoming novel under the Opheliathescribe username. The timestamps were clear, proving that I had the idea long before Ava's supposed "breakthrough."

"This is it," I whispered, hope flaring in my chest. "This is the proof we need."

Armed with our evidence. Monica and I went straight to Dean Matthews' office the next morning. He

looked up as we entered, surprise crossing his
face

"Ella, Monica, what brings you here?" he asked.

"We need to talk to you a stomach

about Ava and her new book that's going around campus." I said, my voice steady despite the nerves twisting in my

I didn't want to admit to him that I was the one who had written the works and so I said that it was a

We laid out our case, presenting the evidence we had gathered. Dean Matthews listened intently, his expression growing more serious with each passing moment

friend of mine and Monica who didn't want to be revealed just yet because she feared the backlash

This is very serious," he said finally, "If what yo

you're saying is true. Ava could face severe consequences."

Just then, the door burst open, and Ava stormed in, her face flushed with anger. "What's going on

here!"  $\mathcal{W}$ ww. $\mathcal{N}$  $\otimes$  $\mathcal{E}$  $\ell\mathcal{W}$  $\otimes$ r(m).čo(m)

Dean Matthews looked at her sternly. "wa, we have reason to believe you've stolen the work of Ella's friend and are falsely claiming to be Opheliathescribe."

Ava's eyes widened, but she quickly masked her shock with indignant outrage "That's ridiculous

Ella's friend is just jealous because my book is better than hers

Monica stepped forward, her voice cold. "We have proof, Ava. Timestamps, drafts, everything. You

can't lie your way out of this"

Ava's confidence faltered. But then, she smiled, a cold, calculating smile.

"You think you've won, don't you?" she said, her voice low and menacing. "But you have no idea what you're up against. You think Dean Matthews here is going to help you? Do you know who my

A chill ran down my spine. I knew Ava came from a powerful family. I was already dealing with one powerful family that hated me. I knew I couldn't add Ava's family to the mix. Having to deal with them too would quite possibly kill me

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