

## Her Secret 32

### CHAPTER 32 NO.32

After lunch, one by one everyone dispersed to head back to their designated jobs. Soon, River and Lana were alone at the bench. Lana was quick to move away from him once she had the opportunity. She noticed River's breathing was unsteady and decided to get up. Her sudden movement made him look at her.

"Where are you going?" he asked, his voice hoarse.

"To the forest...?"

"Didn't you say you wanted to go together?"

"Y-Yeah but are you okay...? I'm sorry I was pressed against you like that...you must've been really uncomfortable." She muttered.

River then got up and put on his cap, covering his eyes from Lana. "I'm fine. Let's go, I'll drive us there."

"Are you sure...maybe you should go without me just so you can catch your breath?" she suggested, really hoping that River would consider doing that since he did not look his best right now.

"Nah, stop worrying and let's go." He said as he walked ahead. Lana lingered behind, contemplating the pros and cons if she decided to go with River. But she did not even manage to list one thing on her mental list before River turned around. "Now." He called out.

Lana let out a groan. "Yes, sir." She muttered.

The ride to the forest was accompanied by the radio blasting 90's music and the windows rolled down. Lana leaned her head against the door frame as she stared out the open window, allowing the harsh air to greet her. At that moment, she truly felt at peace. She wasn't sure whether it was the cold breeze or the good meal she had but soon Lana felt herself drifting off. As a slow love song started to play on the radio, Lana allowed her body to relax and closed her eyes.

River was a mess. His mind was in shambles and his chest was pounding irritably fast that he found it hard to breathe. He thought that blasting the radio aloud would at least distract him but he was definitely aware of Lana who was sitting next to him. His grip against the steering wheel tightened as he forced himself to think about anything but her. He was glad that she decided to stay silent instead of bombarding him with silly questions and the open window was helping mask her scent.

Soon, he drove into the entrance of the forest and parked the car. He felt a sudden rush of relief as the familiar scent of the forest eased his hectic mind and body. Even the scent of other werewolves around made it better for him to completely calm down. He then glanced towards Lana, curious why she hasn't said anything or even moved from her seat. He watched her sleeping peacefully and couldn't help but

let out a soft chuckle.

He placed both his arms on the steering wheel as he rested his head on his arms. He silently watched the sleeping Lana as Avery's question started to corrupt his thoughts.

Are you in love with her?

Of course he wasn't. He only knew her on the surface level. He did not know her likes or dislikes, he did not know any of her hobbies, he did not know anything about her other than the fact that she is half werewolf and that her alpha smell has been tormenting him ever since he was a child. If anything, he should despise her and her entire existence. For years, she has made his life a living hell but now he was starting to think otherwise. His own choices led him to where he was right now.

If only he wasn't so reckless that night with the bear, then Lana would've never found out his secret. If only he avoided her even if they were paired together for a report but River decided to tell her everything instead. If only he refused to eat lunch with her earlier, then River wouldn't have to go through the painful sensation of pretending he was okay when he was not.

Everything that led him to where he was now was all his own doing and yet, it was easier to blame Lana for his misery than admit that he was drawn to her. Smell or no smell, he wanted to be around her. But why? River sighed as he couldn't even find a proper answer to that simple question.

"Lana." He called out. She did not stir from her sleep even a little. He moved closer towards her. His face hovered her own and he silently admired her long lashes, her rosy cheeks, her pink and supple lips. He gulped when her scent filled his senses. He leaned down towards her neck and inhaled hard. She smelt sickeningly sweet and it made his mouth water. The thought of biting her suddenly appeared in his mind, he parted his lips and could feel the burn in his throat. He reacted harshly by pushing himself away from her before he could do anything rash.

His head bumped against the closed door roughly and he let out a soft groan as his hands reached to rub the sore spot. The loud sound was enough to cause Lana to stir from her slumber. Her eyes fluttered open as she slowly blinked the sleep away from her eyes. She slowly glanced over at River who quickly dropped his hands to his side.

"Hi." He said suddenly. Clearly acting suspiciously when he was trying not to.

"...hi?" Lana mumbled, her voice full of sleep. "Sorry I fell asleep." She sat up straight and rubbed her eyes.

"Don't apologize. You must've been really tired." River said, the feeling of guilt still lingering over him like a dark cloud. He was mentally scolding himself for almost attacking her while she was asleep, feeling deeply ashamed that the thought even came across his mind. He swallowed hard again, trying to get rid of whatever feeling that was lingering in him.

“Mm...why didn't you wake me? I didn't think of you to be the courteous type.” She joked with a small smile on her lips.

River's gaze lingered on his lips. “Hah...I tried. You were completely knocked out.” he lied, finding it hard to look away from her lips.

Lana exhaled. “Really? I'm usually a light sleeper. I almost always wake up from a simple nudge or a call.”

“You were probably really tired.” He repeated himself. Lana then looked over at him, causing him to quickly avert his gaze.

“What's wrong?” she asked. “Are you mad that I fell asleep or something?”

“Of course not.” He muttered.

“Then...? You are acting really weird.”

“You are imaging it.”

Lana narrowed her eyes at him while River tried his best not to meet her gaze. She then absent-mindedly nodded as she reached for her phone to check the time. She then suddenly jolted which caused River to flinch.

“Oh fuck! We're late! Ray is going to murder us!” she exclaimed as she pushed the door open in a swift motion. River was afraid she was going to break his door. “Hurry up!” she called out to him before shutting the door. River watched in awe as the girl ran towards the station at an outstanding speed. Once she was out of sight, River let out a long sigh as he leaned back against the car seat.

“Shit...” he muttered, his voice quivering slightly. He held his hand up and watched in silence as it shook. He wasn't quite sure whether it was from the high he felt from almost biting Lana or the guilt of even thinking of doing it that was dragging him down. He clenched his hand into a tight fist, feeling his nails dig into his palm with an agonizing sting. Here he was once again as he tried to regain control over the everlasting desire he had towards Lana Danley.

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“You're late.” Was the first thing Lana heard when she pushed the door of the station open, not only that but she was also greeted with Ray's look of disapproval. Lana tried to defend herself but no words seemed to come to mind. In the end, she lowered her head and sighed.

“Sorry Ray...” she muttered.

“I'm joking. We still have time before the hunt starts.” Ray said, making Lana frown at his strange idea of

a joke. "Where's River?" he asked.

"I'm here." River's voice announced from behind Lana before she could answer. She flinched from his sudden appearance. She was surprised that she did not even sense his presence behind her.

Ray studied the two for a moment, eyeing their matching caps before smiling at the two. He then approached the two and passed them both armbands with the forest ranger logo. "Wear this and put your stuff in the lockers. The event is about to start so meet me outside to be briefed, okay?" He told them.

"Okay!" Lana beamed.

"Got it." River replied.

After a final look, Ray nodded to himself and walked out of the door. Lana and River went to the lockers in silence as they did as they were told.

"It looks a bit cloudy today, do you think it'll rain?" Lana asked as she stared out at the window.

River shrugged, clearly not giving her his full attention as he fidgeted with the armband. Of all the things that happened today, he did not expect that he would be here, struggling to pin the armband on his sleeve. "The event will be cancelled if it does rain, right?" he asked, slowly growing irritated with both the pin and himself.

"Depends on how heavy it is since there are some paths with steep slopes the participants have to go through." She replied.

When River stayed silent, she turned to him and watched attentively at his inability to simply pin the armband to his sleeve. She let out a soft laugh, finding it rather adorable that the embodiment of perfection seemed to not be able to do something so simple. She then approached him, swapping his hand away as she pinned it on for him. River stiffened before her and she could feel his arm muscles clench through his shirt.

"Done." She smiled as she unconsciously patted his arm. She pulled away instantly and watched him for his reaction.

"...Thanks..." he muttered.

Lana giggled at his meek response. "If you ever need help with pinning something, let me know." She playfully said with a wink.

River smiled at her remark, which caught Lana off guard. She was used to seeing him sneer and smirk at her whenever he made his stupid comments but this smile was genuine and she did not know how to react. She did not want to admit that the soft and tender expression that he wore only made him look

more beautiful.

Somehow it felt foreign to see River like this and Lana could not help herself but to stare at him, strangely wanting to imprint this moment in her memory forever. She was afraid that if she looked away now, she would never be able to see this side of the River ever again.

River noticed her staring and immediately frowned. "...that's not a skill you should be boasting about..." he muttered.

Lana shrugged as she tried to hide her disappointment from him. "You can't say that when you were obviously struggling with it." She called back.

"It was slippery!" he said, trying to defend himself.

Lana brushed him off as she made her way to the door, desperately wanting to get away from him as she started to realize that her heart was beating at an unusual pace. She tried to think of the different reasons that this could be happening, maybe it's just a natural response since River is a very handsome man or even because she got excited that she saw a different version of him?

But she felt as though the longer she pondered over it the more conscious she was getting. In the end, she decided to try her best to ignore the fact that her heart was beating at a rapid pace for him.