

## Chapter 13: Secrets Revealed

Quinn's POV

Two weeks had lapsed since I had first met Landon, and it was as if he had been in my life since my first breath. We had been inseparable since our first date, and I felt terrible about how much time he spent at my apartment. I kept asking him if he needed to be home doing work, but he kept insisting everything was covered, but I was still worried. I hadn't been to his place yet, and he said that was because his sister was staying with him while her house was being renovated. No one had ever made me feel more cared for and appreciated than he did, even as simple as picking up my favorite candy on his way over; it all melted my heart. It was hard to imagine ever living without this man, and I couldn't believe how strong my feelings for him were.

Brianna kept warning me to be careful. She told me she liked him but worried we were moving too fast. We were moving quickly; Landon was taking me to a fancy restaurant for dinner tonight. I wasn't sure why, but he insisted he had something he wanted to tell me. It must be something big if he wanted to do it in public, but why want to do it in public? If it was something serious, wouldn't he want to do it here in the comfort of my place?

"You getting ready for tonight?" Brianna asked as I curled my hair in the bathroom mirror.

"Yeah, I thought I should do a little more than the typical day four hair and no makeup look he's grown so accustomed to," I joked.

"Where are you guys going again?" she asked, leaning against the door frame.

"It's called Sapore Romano. It's this little Italian place on the city's outskirts, a super cute little area," I told her.

"Sounds like fun." I could tell she wanted to say something else but was holding back.

"Just tell me what you wanna say; I can hear your brain screaming at me from here," I said, putting my curling iron down.

"I just want to make sure you're taking this slowly. This is the first guy you've dated in a while, and I don't want you to get your heart broken. You know how guys live to love-bomb you one moment and then gaslight you the next," she huffed in one breath.

"I know. I don't know why I feel so much for him so quickly, but I'm keeping one eye open for any red flags." I told her, appreciating that she wanted to keep me safe. She eyed me up, knowing how hard and fast I tended to fall for guys, but something with Landon was different; it felt different.

"I'm serious," she said, giving me a severe look. "If he hurts you, I hurt him."

"Don't worry so much!" I joked, pushing her arm slightly. "Come help me pick out my outfit for tonight." Brie could never pass up the opportunity to dress me, so she rolled her eyes, grabbed my hand, and took me into her closet. The weather was much colder now, especially at night, but Brie insisted on putting me in a dress and heels. I was wearing a mid-length navy blue long-sleeve dress with black pumps in her room. She even gave me a black clutch bag and the tan wool coat she only pulled out for Christmas and Thanksgiving.

"You look stunning!" Brie gushed as she looked over her handy work. "You could use more eye shadow, though."

"I'm going to be late if I don't go right now!" I said, swatting away her hand, with a brush coming right at my eye.

"Fine," she huffed, putting the brush on her vanity. "Why isn't he picking you up again?"

"He would have to go right past this place and back again, coming from his place. I said that was silly and more driving than needed, so we agreed I'd meet him at the restaurant," I told her, checking myself one last time in the mirror.

"Makes sense. Maybe he'll finally take you to his house, and you can stop keeping me up all night with your moaning," Brie laughed.

"I told you to get some earplugs," I laughed, throwing a pillow at her.

"I did!" she complained in a lighthearted way.

"Alright, I've gotta go," I said, going to hug her. "Thank you so much for all your help and clothes; I promise not to let Landon rip them too much."

"You're disgusting, but I love you and have a great time," she said.

"Love you too," I added, running from the room to grab essentials from my purse to put in the tiny clutch. My phone told me I was running late, so I texted Landon to let him know. I was hit with icy air when I walked outside, much colder than expected. Another thing I wasn't expecting was for snow to be falling. How did I not know it was going to snow tonight? Not thinking much of it since we lived in Massachusetts, I climbed into my frozen car, turned it on, and began blasting the heat.

After letting my car warm up for a few minutes, I headed out, hoping the roads would remain clear for my drive home. My car was anything but good in the snow. I loved it and had thought about getting a new one, but being the last thing I had from my grandmother, I found it hard to part with it. When she died, I hadn't gotten to keep much of what she had, despite living with her. It was discovered after her death that she hadn't transferred anything into my name or given me power of attorney. That title had gone to my aunt, who was a spiteful, terrible person.

She sold everything that wasn't nailed to the door to milk as much money from her estate as possible. The only reason I had gotten her car was because, after my grandmother could no longer drive, she transferred the title to me. After her funeral, I refused to speak with my aunt ever again because of how she had treated me during the process. She had passed away a couple of months ago from an illness she refused to get treatment for. My life was no different because of it, which says a lot.

The longer I drove, the more secluded the area became. Trees lined the back road, where my GPS said the restaurant was. Who would choose to make their restaurant out here? Indeed, this wasn't a good place with much foot traffic. The snow was falling heavier now, and making it home would be difficult if it kept this up. Finally, I saw the lights and entered the restaurant's parking lot. I spotted Landon's car tucked away between two large trucks.

The cold and snow hit my face as I opened the door, and I greatly regretted my decision to listen to Brianna and wear heels. Clicking my way towards the front door, I saw Landon waiting outside. He had a giant smile on his face when he spotted me and a shockingly light coat for the weather.

"Hey!" he called, meeting me at the bottom of the ramp.

"Hi," I said as he wrapped his arms around me. Kissing me fiercely, my head became dizzy, and I stumbled in his arms, which tightened to keep me upright. Once he released my lips, he kept an arm tightly around me.

"I missed you," he added, opening the front door for me.

"I missed you too," I told him, stepping into the main area where the host was waiting behind a podium. The inside of this place was exquisite vines hanging from the walls and light fixtures, while rows and rows of wine made up partitions, breaking the room into different areas. The lighting was low, mainly from the flickering candles on the tables, giving off a romantic and intimate environment. The woman behind the podium had what looked like a fake smile plastered on her face as we approached.

"Hello Al... Landon," she said quickly, her smile faltering for a moment.

"Hello, Hadley; how are you this evening?" Landon asked, tightening his grip on my shoulder.

"Very well, and yourself?"

"Great, this is Quinn," he said proudly, looking down at me.

"It's nice to meet you, Quinn." How she said my name made me think the words were difficult to get out of her mouth. "We have your table all ready if you'll follow me." She turned and clicked away in her four-inch heels and slinky black dress. She led us through the rows of full tables, and I could not help but feel very watched as we went. People from all directions turned to watch us as we passed, mouths open and some whispering behind their hands.

"You look amazing, by the way," Landon told me as we walked.

"Thank you," I blushed, glancing up at him.

"Here we are." Hadley said, bringing us to a small square table for two. Extensive rectangular menus in black leather backing sat at each white place setting.

"Kyle will be right with you," she smiled, sweet as sugar, but something told me it wasn't as sweet as she had made it seem. After she walked away, Landon pulled my chair out, and I sat down. I took off my coat while he sat and did the same.

"Do you come here a lot?" I asked, noting how well he and Hadley seemed to know each other.

"It's less that and more that I know the owners. I helped them fund this place when they first wanted to open," he explained.

"Wow, that's amazing. It seems like business is going well," I added.

"Yeah, even being way out here. I think they developed an outstanding social media presence, which helped fuel the beginning," he said. Before I picked up my menu, I noticed Landon shifting uncomfortably in his seat.

"Is everything okay?" I asked, curious how long he would wait until he told me what he wanted to discuss.

"Yeah, well, you know how I told you there was something I wanted to tell you, right?" he began.

"Yeah, what is it?" If he were to blow a hole in this relationship, I'd rather have him do it before the appetizers.

"It's sort of hard to explain, and once I do, you'll probably think I'm crazy, but it explains a lot about what's going on between the two of us."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"See, there's a reason we have such strong feelings for one another. A reason why when we touch, you feel sparks and electricity." So the strange tingling wasn't my imagination; he felt it, too. "Do you believe in fantasy?"

"In what way?" I questioned, confused and caught off guard by his question.

"In the way of werewolves, witches, demons, fairies, and vampires," he continued.

"I like reading those kinds of stories, but other than that, I haven't given it too much thought," I answered honestly. Where he was going with all of this was a mystery to me.

"I guess the only way to explain this to you is very bluntly and directly, but all those things are real. Fantasy creatures exist in real life. The reason I know this is because I'm a werewolf." If there had ever been a time in my life when my heart stopped dead, it was now.