

## Chapter 8 - Riko

Dinner with dad went fine. I kept worrying that he was going to ask questions about who drove me home. I'm very thankful he didn't.

I wasn't sure how to explain the triplets to him. And no matter how I explained it unless I could say they are homosexual; dad wouldn't like it.

Not only do I not want to deal with that, but I then also run the risk that he'll try to transfer me to an all-girls school. And while I haven't made any friends, unless the brothers count, and only really made enemies, I don't want to transfer schools.

After cleaning up from dinner, I prepped my lunch for tomorrow. I found myself wondering if Darius would eat lunch with me again.

And found myself smiling at the thought of sharing my lunch with him and wishing his brothers were also in our lunch period.

"That's a lot of food for you," my father commented as he loaded the dishwasher. I furrowed my brow and looked down. It was almost double what I'd packed for today.

"Yeah, I guess it is. Today I shared some of my lunch with one of the classmates that drove me home, and they seemed to like it," I explained, not wanting to go into details.

Please don't ask me for more information, dad. You won't like the truth. My dad eyed me for a moment. "Why are you blushing, Riko?" he questioned.

"I'm just warm. We should probably turn the heat down a little. I know it's colder here than in Texas. However, we

shouldn't waste gas more than necessary," I said, trying to recover.

I knew full well I was blushing, having thought about how I fed Darius at lunch.

"Hmm, I suppose I did turn it up rather high when I got home," he said though he didn't sound convinced as he looked at the thermostat. I sighed when he went over and turned it down a couple of degrees.

"I have some paperwork to do. You should go do your homework," he instructed, leaving the tastier lunch options than my oversized lunch away. Reminding myself, I need to focus on school, not the triplets.

"I started the dishwasher. I'll be upstairs doing homework," I said, leaning into my dad's office. "Okay, sweetheart," he nodded, focused on his work.

I was able to focus on doing my assignments, not letting thoughts of the triplets slip in. That is till I took out my physics book and something fell out of its pages. I frowned, leaning over to pick up the paper from the floor.

I laughed softly. Forrest had snuck that drawing of me in Sasuke Uchiha's costume into my book during class. I looked around for a tack and pinned the picture to the corkboard over my desk.

I noticed he'd signed it in the bottom corner with his initials 'FF', and right below his initials was his phone number. "Seriously?" I sighed, shaking my head. He put his phone number on it.

I took out my phone and programmed the number in as 'Physics Partner' if dad looked, then tore the corner of the paper to remove the number, crumpling it up and eating it. Okay, it may be extreme to eat the paper with his number on it.

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But if my dad found it, he would ask way too many questions that I couldn't avoid. Or worse, he could just call it.

Now that was a scary thought. It was probably best he did not see the drawing either. So, I took it down and put it back into my textbook.

By the time I went to bed, I had found myself contemplating that number. Should I text Forrest? Just to thank him for the drawing. I sighed and took the chance. Getting my phone out, I sent the text.

Riko: Thank you for the drawing, Forrest.

It didn't take a minute before I got a reply and quickly realized Forrest put me into a group chat.

Forrest: Any time beautiful ;)

Darius: Sneaky little shit

Elijah: You're just mad you didn't think of a way to slip her your number first

Riko: Uhh, how did I end up in a group chat?

Forrest: You're welcome. Now you can talk to all three of us and vice versa.

Elijah: We don't keep secrets from each other.

Darius: As triplets, we learned to share ;) 4

I blinked and tried not to read the innuendo in Darius' words or that winky face.

Riko: Right... um well, thanks for the drawing. And for the ride home. Night. See you at school.

Darius: Night sweetheart

Forrest: Night, beautiful

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Elijah: Night cupcake 9

I turned my phone off and plugged it in. I shook my head as I lay down. "Those three are something else. I still don't get it. Why are they fixated on me? Is it just because I'm the new girl?" 2

Is it just fun for them to mess with the new girl at school? How many other girls have they done this to?" I found myself frowning. Pulling the blanket up, I closed my eyes and tried to force myself to go to sleep.

In the morning, I went through my usual routine. My dad has already gone to the base. I checked my phone after I turned it back on and found a few missed texts.

Elijah: Do you want a ride to school?

Darius: It wouldn't be a bother to get you if we knew your address.

Forrest: Promise you can ride shotgun if you want it.

I considered their offer but decided against it. I couldn't hide behind the brothers and avoid Jane's friend that was on my bus. Just like I can't avoid Jane herself once we are in school.

Riko: No, thank you. And nice try, but you aren't getting my address. Bad enough, you know my phone number.

Forrest: You wound us, babe. We're just trying to help.

Elijah: And we get it you don't want to get in trouble with your dad

Riko: There is that, and you three may have wealthy parents and a lawyer for a dad, but it wouldn't save you from my dad

Darius: Maybe he'd like us

Riko: Doubtful. He doesn't like boys around me. Now I'm heading to school, so stop texting me and go to school.

I silenced my phone and put it in my bag and went to the bus stop. I stayed slightly apart from the other Ravenwood students as we waited. I saw the brunette from Jane's group huddled with a couple of other girls.

I heard one of the girls call her Grace. So at least now I have a name for my local tormentor. I could feel her glaring at me. "I heard she screwed all three of them in the school parking lot," Grace whispered, making sure she was loud enough I would hear her.

I clenched my jaw. Great. Just what I needed to become known as the school slut. A perfect way to start my second day. I could ignore this, or I could speak up for myself. As they continued to gossip and spread lies about me, I had enough.

"Hey, Grace. Maybe you should fact-check yourself before you start talking shit. And maybe not let your jealousy control you," I called out.

"Did you or did you not get in the back seat of the Frost's SUV?" she sneered, raising an eyebrow. "I did, and they drove me home. Nothing you're imagining occurred. I'm not that kind of girl," I rolled my eyes.

"Oh, and what we should just believe you? We all know the Frost triplets. You don't know shit about them. Don't come into our school and start acting like you're better than the rest of us. You're new, that's all. That's the only reason they are giving you even an ounce of attention. They've dated every other girl in school," Grace snorted as the bus pulled up.

"They'll throw you away like they've done everyone else," she said, flipping her hair as she strode onto the bus.

Her friends shoved past me, calling me a slut as they boarded the bus. What a great start to my day. I sighed and got on the bus and tried to find an empty seat.

"You can sit with me, babe! I don't mind getting Frost sloppy seconds," a guy laughed, and his buddies followed suit. Before I could counter, someone hit him with their bag.

"Knock it off, James. I'll tell mom you're debasing women, and you'll be grounded till Christmas," a girl threatened. "Oh, stay out of it, Cassidy," James glared, rubbing the back of his head. "I was just joking," he grumbled.

"Here, you can sit with me. Ignore my dumbass brother. He's a sophomore and has the maturity of a fifth-grader," Cassidy waved me over, moving her bag so I could sit.

I chuckled and nodded as I took the seat next to her. "Hi. I'm Riko Shiraishi," I introduced myself. "I know. We have 3rd-period art class together," she smiled.

"I'm Cassidy Summers," she added, offering her hand. I nodded and shook her hand. "Sorry I didn't recognize you," I sighed. "Not a problem. I remember my first day at Ravenwood. Its hell being the new kid," she assured.

"When did you transfer to Ravenwood?" I asked. "A couple of years ago. Things never change in how they treat the new kids, well how they treat the new girls," she frowned.

"And that means? Like what Grace said about the Frosts?" I asked, frowning my brow. I've had my reservations about their attention, but if it's true, then there's no way in hell I'm getting any further involved with them.

Cassidy laughed and shook her head. "Oh god, no. Their last name is accurate," she assured. Now I was more confused.

"Okay, just ignore BITCHES LIKE GRACE AND JANE! CAUSE THEY JUST THIRSTY HOES that wish the Frost triplets would give them their real attention," Cassidy began, shouting the insult about Grace and Jane wanting the whole bus to hear that.

"I won't bullshit you and say the brothers are some chaste virgins. They've dated their share of girls at school. Granted, who's to say which brother any girl dated, but I can bet none ever had all three's attention," she said.

"So, ignore the jealous bitches. I don't think a girl in this school, who briefly dates a Frost, could tell you which one. They just call them whichever name they want. More often, they call them all Darius as he's the eldest of them," she shrugged.

"I certainly can't tell them apart," she laughed. "Huh. Well, I can tell the brothers apart. But honestly, I don't know if hanging out with them is worth the hassle I'm getting from the likes of Grace and Jane," I frowned as the bus pulled up to the school.

"Well, that's for you to decide. But if you ever need someone to have your back or to hang with that's not a gorgeous Frost, I'm here," she smiled. "Thanks," I smiled as I headed for my locker.

Of course, any good mood was short-lived when I was slammed into my locker by Jane with her pack of friends, making sure no one could see what was going on.

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