

40 | In Your Nature

Chapter 40: In Your Nature

Luke kissed me. He kissed the tears on my cheeks, though I wished he would have kissed my lips. I didn't realize how he cared for me, until yesterday. Yesterday was the sweetest thing anyone had ever done for me.

And he kissed me.

Did I mention that already?

It was the way a friend kisses a friend. Maybe more. Maybe less. You kiss the tears o someone's face and what does that make you?

It's sensual. But I don't know what to call us anymore. The most unusual relationship I've ever been in.

The kiss felt intimate, but that could just be my wishful thinking. He had every opportunity to kiss me properly, but he didn't.

He said he respected me – he didn't say he was attracted to me. Did he not like me that way?

I may not be what you want, but I'll protect you until you don't need me.

Luke considered himself flawed. I called him egotistical, arrogant, cruel, careless... and he believed me. But nothing about last night was selfish. He had done more for me than my own family.

**

"I can't believe no one showed up. The LUCKY girls had a prior engagement and I was sick. I'm so sorry. Should we reschedule? Maybe something between you and me and L-"

I cut Julia o , "I had a nice birthday, so don't worry about it."

We were standing in the hallway beside our lockers. Julia flicked her hair over her shoulder.

"How?" she asked bluntly.

True, I was sad that no one came to my birthday, but I wasn't angry. I had an incredible night and I wouldn't trade it.

How could I be annoyed when everyone acted in their nature? Once Luke had rejected the invite at lunch yesterday, those LUCKY girls were out. I'm not that oblivious. I knew they planted the idea in Julia's mind just to get closer to Luke.

And my sister was being my sister. She stuck to her word – she said she wasn't going to come, and she meant it.

So that explains why they didn't show up. Everyone behaved according to their nature, except Julia. Julia should have been there.

She did have a cough today, but I don't know how much I believed her story. I didn't want to dwell on it though. Friendships depend on trust and if I started to doubt that, then I would be doubting our friendship.

Julia had been the one friend who stuck by me when my boyfriend started dating Kelly Mathers. My exboyfriend. I had trusted him, though he lied to me. That one was a mistake, I'll admit.

Anyway, today Julia wasn't done reliving last night. She wanted to know all the details, wanted to relive every minute of my loneliness. We dodged out of the way as people started going to class.

"Did the restaurant make you pay? How long did you wait before leaving?"

"One hour," I said.

"And then what happened?" she asked while she ate a Mrs Fields' cookie, "Did they kick you out or did you eat something?"

"Luke came."

Julia gasped, and stared at me like I'd just told her a ghost story. "But how? He said he couldn't make it. He said he was busy. If we'd known, we would've-"

"You would've what, Julia?" I asked, "You would've come?"

She awkwardly avoided eye contact. "No, I can't believe you think that. Did you make this up just to test me? Luke never came, did he?"

"Why is it so hard to believe that Luke and I are friends? A er everything I've told you..." I lost steam and stared at her. I changed tactic and asked her something more personal, "Since you're my friend, why wouldn't you think he could see some of the qualities you see in me?"

If you see any in me at all.

I hear again and again how no one wants to be with me, and it's tiring. I just wanted one person to say, "Luke's lucky to know you" instead of the other way round.

Maybe it's wishful thinking.

I waited for Julia to answer but she struggled. The reason I had asked her, was not to press her. It was because part of me wondered it myself. What could Luke see in me that no one else sees?

I understand our dynamic but, sometimes, it's hard to believe.

"You're late, Minnie." A confident voice sounded through the crowd.

Speak of the devil.

Julia looked like she saw a ghost.

Luke has that ability. He changes the vibe the moment he walks into a room. I didn't need to turn around to know that most of our classmates were looking the same.

Luke confidently walked up to me and held my shoulder.

"You coming?" he asked, interrupting my conversation with Julia, "I'll walk you."

We had Comp Gov class together. I glanced at Julia. I didn't know what to say to her. She was so shocked, she definitely didn't look like she could say anything back.

"This a friend of yours?" he asked me and then looked at her directly, "Didn't see you yesterday."

Of I did not expect Luke to be protective.

"It's OK, she was sick. Let's go," I said, pressing my hand against his arm to push him along.

I noticed a couple girls gasp and quickly removed my hand. I didn't realize it was that big of a deal to touch him – or at least to be comfortable around him.

"She's sick? That explains her face," he commented passively.

"Luke!" I gasped, pressing my hand over his mouth, totally forgetting about the girls' reaction around me, "She's not sick right now!"

He mumbled something incoherently, but I kept him quiet. Then he smirked under my fingers and I felt his warm breath on the palm of my hand. Hot.

**

I sat in my corner during Comp Gov. I wondered if I should ask Luke what he meant by the kiss yesterday. I knew he cared about me in a non-romantic way... but a small part of me hoped...

I shook it out of my mind.

It was already wild that he kissed me at all. The man saw me cry for goodness sake.

Luke was sitting on his desk, talking with Chad and some other guys who surrounded him. The teacher walked in with our homework in his arms. That was the cue for class to start. Luke didn't seem to care.

He looked over and asked me from across the room, "You interested, Millie?"

I glanced up from reading last class' notes. Everyone in between us stared. One girl moved out of the way, since she was blocking Luke's view of me. He really has too much power in this school.

I suddenly felt very self-conscious in my little oasis, while Luke sat like a king in the center of his group.

"Interested in what?" I asked. The kid's cute, but he's delusional if he thinks I've been listening to his conversation, hanging on to his every word.

"Chad's place a er school."

I glanced at Chad, who did not look pleased about this. But before I could respond, Mr Laghari started class.

"With Mr Dawson's permission, I would like to begin," Mr Laghari announced, sarcastically.

Luke turned around on the desk, almost surprised to see the teacher in his own classroom. "Permission granted."

Luke then turned to me with an I'm waiting for your responsbook.

I'll write youj mouthed, pointing at my notepad. I didn't want to speak during class.

Luke shook his head and mouthed back a clear, No.

But I didn't listen. I was already leaning over my notepad, scribbling a message onto a spare page. It was exciting to write my first note to a friend in class. I see people do it all the time. It looked fun.

I folded it and asked the girl next to me to pass it on to Luke.

She looked at me weirdly, took the note... and opened it.

She opened itI stared at her, "Uh, that's private."

She read it and passed it along. The next person also read it before passing. Is this what usually happens?

I looked at Luke. His arm was leaning against the table and he dropped his head against his hand. He was embarrassed for me. This must've been why he didn't want me writing notes to a him.

Oops.

He knew this was going to happen but, of course, I hadn't listened.

Finally, it landed on his desk. He sighed and flicked it open.

I concentrated back on class, knowing that I was not going to be receiving a response from Luke any time soon.

I waited until class ended before running over to his desk to apologize, "Sorry, I didn't realize-"

"It's fine," he said, slinging his backpack over one shoulder, "But you know you could've texted me, right?"

I don't know why that didn't cross my mind.

"I never had many chances to pass notes to friends so I-"

"I get it," he repeated, "But to answer your note, it's 15 Mont Carson Street. I'll drive you."

He walked out of class, leaving my note folded on his desk. I picked it up. Why wasn't real life like the movies? Everyone passed notes in high-school TV shows. I really thought this was still a thing.

I heard Luke's voice from the other side of the class door, "Mills, do you have a bathing suit with you?"

I stared a er him. "Why would I need that?"

I don't come to school with a beach bag. Why would I need a swimsuit?

He disappeared, and I called out, "Luke! I'm not beach body ready!"

Maybe TMI. But he needs to know. A girl can't be surprised like this.

I had no idea what was in store for me. All I know, is that this was the first time Luke asked me to go somewhere with him, no favors attached.

That doesn't count as a date, does it?

**

A/N: Major thank you for your votes and comments. I try to go through every single one and respond. You took the time to read my story, so I want to take the time to hear your views. It gets a bit harder to stay up-to-date while also posting 2-3 new chapters every week, but I want you to know that I'm trying my best. <3

I also want to incorporate any suggestions / favorite scene ideas you want to see happen. So let me know!!