

And Then There Were Four by Lilith Carrie

Chapter 1

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It had been ten years since I made my way back to Idaho.

My parents separated when I was five, and my mom tried so hard to stay around so I was close to my father growing up— but it didn't work. After five years of being too close to my father, my mom upped and moved us clear across the states to Savannah, Georgia.

My mother, having been a southern belle all her life, loved the sweetness of Georgia, and everything it had to offer. In fact, the only reason she was with my father was because they had met in college, and before graduation she got pregnant with me.

That was why he married her— or kept her around at least.

Mom doesn't talk about it often, and even though I get the occasional birthday gift or deposit of money in my account; I don't hear from him. He always kept me at arms length which broke my heart at first, but eventually I grew to accept.

After some time he got married to my step-mother who had four strapping godsons, and a hatred for me I would never understand. The one time my father came to see me was at my high school graduation, and he brought her. We will just say that she was a stepford wife in the making, and if looks could kill— I'd be dead.

"Ivy! If you don't come on you're going to miss your plane!" My mother hollered from downstairs, causing me to sigh.

I had finished my first two years of college at the local community college until I was able to get the prerequisites done for the university I wanted. However, out of the five that I applied for, my least favorite was the only one to accept me.

And that one just happened to be located in Idaho— where my father was.

I knew the university had been the best for a degree in Agriculture but I didn't want to be close to my dad. Part of me was still hurt that he had chosen my step-mother and her godsons over me.

I am his daughter— his blood.

Yet, it didn't seem to be enough.

Grabbing my suitcases, I pulled them towards the door as I slung my backpack over my shoulder, giving my room one last look around. It was bitter sweet leaving, but if I was ever going to accomplish my dreams I had to take some risks.

Heading down stairs, my eyes landed upon my mother, who stood by the doorway smiling at me. I knew that there was a lot I could say to help change my mind about going, but this was important to her.

My mother would never admit to me she was sick, but after much snooping I had found the truth— stage two cervical cancer.

Treatments were supposed to start soon, and as much as I wanted to confront her and tell her that I knew and I was staying, I knew she wouldn't be pleased. I didn't want to stress her out more than she already was.

She wanted me to follow my dreams— and that meant without me worrying about her.

"It's going to be okay, Ivy." My mother said as she drove towards the airport, "I spoke to your father and he is going to meet you as soon as you get off the plane."

"That's good I guess." I replied, staring out the window, unsure of whether or not I really wanted him to be there. To be honest, I would be surprised if he showed up.

Many times he offered for me to fly out there to see him. Even told me about the magnitude of personal drivers the company had that could take me anywhere I wanted to go. As if that was going to persuade someone like me.

"It isn't going to be that bad, Ivy. I don't know why you feel so negative over the situation. You barely know your father and his family. It will be good for you to go. Trust me." My mother was adamant on me going, and I wasn't quite sure why.

"My birthday is in a few months, and I won't be able to spend it with you."

"Is that really what you are worried about?" My mother asked as she turned to look at me when she parked the car.

No, it wasn't all I worried about. I worried about her being alone through all of what was going on with her. I worried about something terrible happening, and me not being here for her. But most of all I worried about losing my mother, and never getting to say goodbye.

I couldn't help but sigh, "I don't know. I just have a feeling I am making the wrong choice."

"Well, you're not." My mother's tone took me a little by surprise. "You have to do this."

There was no point in arguing with her. She was right to an extent. I do need to stop fighting myself on going to see my father. Spending time with him wouldn't be a bad thing. At least then I could have a reason to hate him if he messed up.

My father was mysterious. He came from nothing, and ended up one of the wealthiest people in the country, owning big corporations on the west coast of the states that not many knew how he obtained.

Other than that small fact though, I knew nothing about the man.

As I walked into the airport with my mom, I couldn't help but have a sense of dread wash over me. Something about all of this just didn't feel right, and the more I looked at my mom I didn't want to go. Tears sprang to my eyes as I thought of leaving her.

"I am going to miss you." I told her softly, causing her to start crying as well.

"Aww, baby." She mumbled wrapping her arms around me. "I am going to miss you as well, but you know what... this is an adventure you will love. I just know it."

Saying goodbye was harder than I thought it was going to be.

As I moved down the terminal and climbed onto the plane, I let my tears fall, and a sense of numbness washed over me. I couldn't show my weakness, because if I let it out, then I was more than likely going to run off the plane and refuse to go.

Settling into my seat, I couldn't help but think how much my life had changed. I was no longer going to have the security of my mother's home and the safety of the town I had grown up in. Instead, I was going to be in a home that I was never welcome in and in a town that was the farthest thing from home I could get.

I was trading warm weather and sunshine for cold breezes and snow.

Groaning to myself I watched as a bubbly blonde-haired girl strolled to my section, looking at the seat numbers. "Oh this is me!" She said excitedly, causing me to groan inwardly. Great, I don't even get to sit by myself.

As she settled in, I raised my brow, watching her maneuver all of her items into her small space. Her long blonde hair swept into a high ponytail, and her makeup perfectly on point. She must have been the barbie doll type... a contrast from my dark hair, and occasional glasses.

"Hi there!" She said her heavy southern accent flowing from her lips as a small twinkle marked the corner of her eye. "Looks like we get to fly together. Where ya headed?"

As she stared at me, I contemplated my choices. One, I could be rude and completely ignore her or two, I could find chatting with her better to preoccupy my mind and pass the time.

Oh the choices...

"I am headed to Idaho... school." My choice wasn't that hard after all. She looked at me and her eyes widened.

"Oh my God! Me too!" The happy expression on her face made my eyes widen.

This girl is also way too excited this early in the morning.

"That's cool. What are you going to school for?" I was curious about her response because there wasn't much you attended the University of Idaho for.

"Oh, agricultural studies. I want to help the planet and all... not really narrowed down to a specific area yet." Her response was interesting and I knew how she felt. I couldn't pinpoint my specific area either.

"That's cool. I am doing the same."

"Oh wow!" She squealed, "Maybe we will end up being roommates too." She chuckled and I sighed softly, thinking how I would rather that than staying at my father's home.

"Unfortunately, I wish that were the case... but, I am staying at my dad's house. No point in dorms when I can live with him for free, ya know."

She nodded her head, smiling at me, and I couldn't help but feel at ease around her. She was a nice contrast to the bundle of nerves and irritation I had been before.

"Well, regardless it's going to be a wonderful year. By the way, my name is Kate." Holding her hand out to me, I hesitated before taking it.

"Ivy." I replied flatly before the corner of my lip turned up into a small smile.

I had expected to come to this school and not make any friends at all, and yet here I was, making friends with a girl I would never have considered being friends with before we even left the tarmac.

I was more laid back, and closed off. An introvert if you will, and that was the complete opposite of Kate. She was the kind of girl I would have had issues with through high school. The cheerleader type that cared about how she looked and the social status that surrounded her.

Although, in this case, looks were deceiving. She wasn't that kind of person at all and for that I was grateful.

Time passed by quickly as we sat talking and eventually the plane made its descent to the ground, stopping at Fountains airport. It was near the school, but my father's home was still 45 minutes away from there. At least it would give me time to catch up with my dad and get through all of the uncomfortable silence before meeting the rest of the demons from hell.

"So who's picking you up again?" Kate asked as we waited for our luggage to arrive. My eyes searched for my father but not seeing him anywhere.

"My dad supposedly... he must not be here yet." I mumbled before a sigh escaped me.

"Oh my God..." Kate groaned letting a small sigh escape her, "don't look now but there are two totally sexy men standing over there to your right."

My brows furrowed in confusion as I followed her line of sight towards the men she was talking about. They seemed to be arguing with each other, but one of them had a sign with my name on it in their hand and as I read it I realized who they were.

"Are you fucking kidding me..." I grumbled, causing Kate to look at me in question.

"What's wrong?"

"Those two are part of the four brothers. Guess my dad didn't have time to come get me after all." If the day couldn't get worse... it just did.