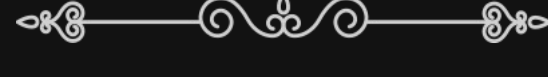


And Then There Were Four (Lilith Carrie)

Chapter 171



Chapter 171: Making New Friends

As the sun filtered through the open window of the room I was staying in, I stretched my arms above my head and realized I was lying in bed alone. Glancing around with groggy vision, I realized I was no longer at my parent's home but back in a room in Asgard where I had been before.

Bolting from the bed with panic setting in my heart, I looked around, trying to understand how it was. I was back. I shouldn't have been back. I still had more time with them, and though I had more time, my body, for some reason, had been cast back into Asgard without notice.

Without me even getting to say goodbye.

Quickly jumping from the bed, I ran towards the door, throwing it open as I made my way down to Odin's hall. I wasn't sure what I was going to do, but I knew one thing. I wasn't going to tolerate this. He couldn't just give me time and then suddenly take it away from me.

The moment I stepped foot into the hall, slamming the doors open, all eyes turned to me, my grandfather sitting ahead of me in his large chair, his brows furrowed in confusion.

"Cassie, what are you doing back so soon? You still had a few hours."

He looked just as confused as I was, and as I glanced at the others, I realized I had made an entrance and a spectacle of myself when I probably shouldn't have. "I don't know how I got back here. I still had time with them. I need to go back. I didn't even get to say goodbye."

Opening and closing his mouth, he gave me a sorrowful look and shook his head.

"Unfortunately, I can't send you back. You must have projected yourself back here for some reason. We only get to visit Earth once a year, Cassie. At least until you're stronger and you can take yourself."

I wasn't sure what to make of all of it, but as I turned, making my way out of the hall and back towards my room, a voice called behind me that I hadn't been expecting. "Cassie, please wait."

Turning and looking over my shoulder, I saw Freya standing there, staring at me with concern. "I know that all of this is a lot for you, and I'm so sorry that you ended up back here so soon. There's still a lot that we don't know about your condition. There's never been anything like it before. Give us some time, and we'll see if we can fix this for you."

If Odin couldn't send me back, then there was no fixing anything for me. Perhaps I was different, but now I was supposed to be like them. And if they didn't know what to make of me, then what was I, honestly? Was I like them, or was it something else?

Refusing to listen to what she had to say, I remained silent and made my way back to my room. One day, I would be able to be reunited with my family. Until then, I would simply have to play my part here and figure out exactly what I was supposed to be doing.

My mother's words rattled through my mind, and the moment I reached my room, I found a small brown-haired, blue-eyed girl standing there before me in a servant's outfit, her eyes cast to the floor as if she was unsure of what to say. "Who are you?"

"My name is Ansley. I will be your servant through the trials."

"What trials? What are you talking about?" I asked, slightly confused as to what she was referring to. There were no trials that I knew of, but according to her, as her eyes looked up at me, she was almost perplexed as to why I wasn't aware of them.

Hesitating for a moment, she stared at me as if unsure of what to say. I didn't mean to make her feel uncomfortable, but with the way she fidgeted with her hands as she kept staring at the floor, I knew that I had. "The Solstice Games, ma'am."

The girl stuttered over her words. I felt bad about what I had done until I realized she was in the same situation I was at the moment. She had to do things she didn't really want to do in order to get by with no way to leave this place.

Or at least that's what I imagined when I thought of what this girl was going through.

"Oh, I understand. It's okay. I'm just a little flustered this morning."

"Would you like something to eat for breakfast before your meeting this afternoon?" Again, she was giving me information about stuff that I had no idea what she was talking about. Yes, I was hungry, but now I didn't know I had a meeting.

"Let's just say I'm unaware of whatever meeting it is that I have supposedly going on. Do you think you might be able to fill me in on this?"

Ansley hesitated for a moment, and slowly, her head lifted, her eyes locking with mine as she furrowed her brows with confusion, opening her mouth before slowly closing it. "Uhhh -you're supposed to be meeting with Odin in an hour to meet a few people. I don't really know anything else. I'm not privy to that information."

Running my hand over my face, I closed my eyes in frustration as I let out a groan of irritation. "I see. Some breakfast actually does sound good. Just something light and refreshing, maybe. I don't know. Oh-and coffee. Lots and lots of coffee."

I felt guilty having this girl wait on me hand and foot as if I was incapable of doing so myself. But as soon as I gave her a command, a smile crossed her face, and she quickly exited my room, obviously in search of the coffee that I desperately needed.

With Ansley gone, I was left to my own devices once more, and with the realization I had to get ready for a meeting with people I had no knowledge of, I made my way toward the bathroom to get ready.

Twenty minutes later and a wonderfully magnificent hot shower, I had cried out all my frustration and prepared myself for whatever it was that I was going to be faced with. If my mother was able to get through everything that she went through with my father's, then I had to be able to get through whatever it was that they expected of me here.

It was clear the more I learned about myself, the more I would possibly be able to go back home. And that was something I really wanted. Even if I was only allowed to go once a year, it was better than not going at all.

In the corner out to my bedroom, I ran into Ansley, a scream escaping my throat as we both jumped, and she quickly spilled some of the coffee onto the floor. "Oh my gosh, I'm so sorry! I'm such a klutz."

I watched as the girl put the cup down on the desk and knelt on the floor using a rag attached to her apron to clean up the mess. I didn't even have a chance to acknowledge what had happened before she was in action. The girl was faster than I had ever seen anybody, and I was slightly curious as to why she was so overwhelmed with the fact she spilled some coffee on the floor.

"Hey, it's okay, I ran into you. Why are you freaking out?" I replied as I knelt down beside her, my hand laying upon hers as she looked at me in fear.

"I'm so sorry. I understand if you want to punish me, I should be more careful--"

"Whoa, whoa, whoa. I'm going to stop you right there," I replied quickly, standing to my feet with my arms crossed over my chest. "First of all, I would never punish you. And second of all, if you're going to be working with me, you gotta calm down. It's okay. I'm not like the other people. I will not get upset over you doing some shit like this. I ran into you. It's not the end of the world."

"I don't understand," she muttered softly. "You're so nice. That's not how things work here."

It was clear I didn't know this place as well as I thought I did, and that frustrated me even more. This girl was fearful of me, worried she was going to get in trouble for spilling something as stupid as a little bit of coffee on the floor and acting as if I was going to beat her to death for it.

"Who the hell were you serving before you came to me?" I laughed with concern edged at the forefront of my mind. "Did someone hit you?"

I hadn't meant to be blunt, and the girl was taken aback by my very forward questioning. She again hesitated as if she wasn't sure she wanted to say anything, but I stepped forward, taking my hand, and lifted her chin to lock eyes with me once more.

"It's okay. What you say to me stays between us. Just tell me what happened."

Tears filled her eyes, she nodded her head. It was clear she was uncomfortable, but if I was ever going to make sure she was okay, I needed to know who it was that had hurt her. "Solina, she was my mistress before I was given to you."

I didn't know anyone named Solina, and as I watched Ansley stare at me with so much fear in her eyes, I couldn't help but wonder what this Solina girl had done to her.

"Look," I sighed, shaking my head. "I'm not like that girl, okay... just work with me. You will see how different being around me will be."

Taking in everything I said, she slowly nodded. "Okay... do you want to get dressed while you eat?"

I had almost completely forgotten I was supposed to be meeting with Odin shortly. My mind swirled over what I was going to have to do and the people I was going to meet. I wasn't a girl brought up in this kind of world, and because of that, I didn't have the slightest clue how I should dress.

"Yeah, actually, that sounds good... but uh-what should I wear?"

Ansley snapped her gaze to me as she raised a brow and a small smile crossed the corner of her lips. "You want my opinion? I'm just a servant."

"So?" I shrugged in response, "do you not know?"

"Well, of course, I do... I have helped others get dressed multiple times," she replied with a sigh as she made her way toward my closet, disappearing into the array of colors and fabric that lined the closet walls.

I wasn't quite sure what I was getting myself into by asking Ansley to help me, but when she came back with a royal blue dress dripping in crystals down one side, I had to admit the girl had taste. "Are you sure this isn't too much for a meeting?"

Glancing down at the dress, she ran her hand over the fabric with a smile on her lips before glancing back up to me. "Nope... you will definitely make an entrance."

And that was what I wanted... if they wanted me to be this heir apparent, then I needed to make them realize I was worthy of the title.

After all, I was an outsider in this world. The last thing I wanted to do was be eaten alive.