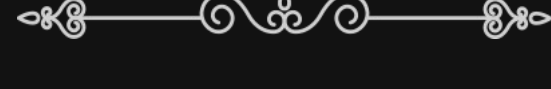


And Then There Were Four (Lilith Carrie)

Chapter 187



Chapter 187: What's Love Got To Do With It

There is a point in life when you finally get tired of people telling you what you're going to do, and there is also a moment in your life when you gain clarity of how bullshit things are, and you can't help but laugh. This was one of those moments, and as Silas' words rolled over in my mind, I couldn't help but laugh.

"You're fucking joking, right?"

With a heavy sigh, he stared at me, "No, I'm not. Why would I joke about this?"

"Oh, I don't know. Because you find shit like this amusing," I spat, rolling my eyes. "It's ridiculous for him to think he can come here and just marry me. It's not going to happen."

"Perhaps... I mean, he does have to go through the games just like everyone else. So there is no telling what could happen," Silas replied, causing my mouth to drop open slightly. Was Finnick participating in the games with everyone else?

"He is royalty? Why the hell is he participating?"

"Uh, because it's the rules your grandfather set, Cassie. He has to abide by them like everyone else." It didn't make sense this prince I had never met before would want me, and honestly, all it did was add to the list of problems I already had. Not that I couldn't handle it. I would adjust to what I was already going to do to include Prince Finnick as well.

"Fine," I gritted out under my breath. "Is there anything else?"

Silas shook his head, clasping his hands in front of him as if he wanted to say something but wasn't exactly sure how. I hated moments like this. I missed the guy who would laugh with me and spend time with me. Since I became what I was, Silas was all business, and I didn't understand why. "No, you can go."

Standing to my feet, I made my way to the door and stopped. "Shouldn't I be the one telling you what to do?" I said calmly as I glanced over my shoulder at him.

Amusement crossed his features as he stared at me, smiling. "Do you want to boss me around?"

The thought crossed my mind for a split second, but I preferred it if he was the one in control. "I'll think about it... I have a lot on my mind lately."

"I can tell," he replied smoothly. "Don't let it get you into trouble. I know you like getting into more than you can handle."

I didn't know whether to be slightly offended by what he said or turned on by what he said but deciding against addressing it, I quickly left his office and made my way down the hall until I finally came to an open exit, allowing the fresh air of outside to filter through.

Stepping out into the cool morning air, I closed my eyes and inhaled deeply with a smile on my face. It was nice to not care about things for once and when I let everything slip from my mind. I enjoyed the sound of the realm that floated into my ears. Birds chirping, the distant sounds of running water from a nearby pond, and even the mumbled sounds of laughter from somewhere nearby were refreshing.

It made me forget I was where I was. For a moment, it took me back to my parent's home and the fact I loved spending time in the woods near my home.

A sense of longing slipped through me as I took in the fact I would never shift into my wolf again. That I would never feel my paws upon the earth and the wind in my fur as I went faster and faster. A part of me that was forever gone and would never return. It hurt, but even though it was gone physically, at least. I'd always have the memories to remind me that once upon a time, I was normal to some degree.

"Enjoying yourself?" a voice called from my left, causing me to quickly open my eyes to find that Finnick was standing there staring at me.

"I was... until you ruined it."

"Oh." He chuckled. Are we all done with pleasantries now?"

Rolling my eyes, I stepped forward, trying to pass him to head toward my room. I had told Ansley to let Sansa know to meet me around lunch, and I didn't want to be late for that. I had to talk to her about what was going on, and I was hoping Trixie was still around. I wanted to know more about who Finnick really was.

"Pleasantries went out the door when I found out why you were really here," I snorted, only to have him step in front of me, blocking the path I needed to take.

"Are you saying that you don't want to marry me? I figured that every woman would dream of being a queen one day."

"Yeah, not me," I muttered, trying to pass him again, only to have him block me once more. "Will you please move?"

The way he was staring at me, slightly brooding but with amusement twinkling in his gaze, made me feel slightly unsure of myself. Of course, he was incredibly gorgeous in that 'all about him' kind of way, but there was no way I was going to let him know I found him attractive. I was not interested in whatever he had to offer. Even if it was being queen.

"I think we got off to a wrong start," he finally mustered up with a small sigh as he reached up, rubbing the back of his neck. "I'm Finn."

Finn. So we were on nickname basis, were we?

"Finn." Saying his name sounded good on my tongue, and by the way his smile grew as I said it, I knew he liked to hear it as well. "I hope you enjoy your stay here... if you need anything. I'm sure the staff can help you."

Distracted and slightly caught off guard by my response, I stepped around him and hastily made my way towards the door back inside. I didn't want to give him a chance to be able to stop me again, and as soon as the door closed behind me, I glanced over my shoulder to look at him once more through the glass.

Finn stood there, staring at the now closed door with an odd expression that made me wonder what it was going through his mind. Was he actually interested in getting to know me or was this man here for other motives?

The moment he turned away and seemed to speak out to someone out of sight, I turned and made my way down the hallway towards my room. Sansa would be meeting me there, and I couldn't wait to find out more about this man. As well as the other contestants. If I was going to get through this then I needed to know everything there was about Prince Finnick and the games that were about to change my life forever.

Lucas.

The morning started late for me, and when I had entered the dining hall to see Cassie leaving after what looked like an entrancing conversation with the man in front of her. a twinge of jealousy filled me. Here I was trying to prove to everyone I wasn't some cold-blooded killer and she was flirting with the opposition?

I shouldn't have been surprised with the amount of men who filled the room looking to win a place next to her. The only thing I had going for me was that she wasn't going to let them win a place in her heart.

After last night, I was fairly confident she felt the same about me as I did her. The only problem was I hoped my personal feelings toward this whole situation wouldn't stand in the way. I was still a mess from the fallout, and I had tried so hard to stay away from her, but for some reason, fate kept pulling me back.

I loved her, and I was foolish to think I could simply let her go.

Nothing would stop me from winning that seat next to her. I didn't want it for the title or fame. I wanted it because I wanted her, and I'd gladly give everything up to prove I deserved that place next to her.

"Lucas, what are you doing here?"

Freya walked towards me as I stood near the doorway, watching the others finish their breakfast and vacate the hall. Odin had been busy with some woman I hadn't recognized, and when I turned to Freya, I could see the confusion in her eyes.

She had been the only one of the gods who hadn't judged me so harshly. "I came to join, but it seems I came to late."

My eyes traveled up and down her body, taking in the more modern clothing she was wearing. A pair of jeans and a light blue button-up blouse with heels. It was normal for a woman like her to wear something like that where I had come from but to see her wearing it here, I couldn't help but smirk with amusement.

"What's so funny?"

"Nothing," I quickly replied, shaking my head. "Did Cassie rub off on you?"

She frowned with confusion as she glanced down at her attire, seeming to realize what I was talking about, and smiled. "Ah, yes. I took note of her style of dress, and I had to try it for myself. I have to admit that these clothing choices are rather comfortable. Not to mention, I have more free movement than I did in the dresses."

"It looks nice." The compliment made her smile widen before she cast her glance into the hall where I had turned my gaze once more.

"So, I heard that you signed up for the events. Does this mean that you have changed your mind about your situation with Cassie, then?"

Freya knew very well how I felt about Cassie and how adamant I had been to keep my distance from her. Yet, here I was going against everything I had sworn once upon a time.

With a heavy sigh, I crossed my arms over my chest and nodded. "Yes."

"Good," she said with confidence. 'I was wondering how long it would take you to change your mind. I'll have to let Frigga know she owes me."

"Owes you?" Turning my gaze to her, it was my turn to be confused and as she glanced up at me she couldn't help stifle the giggle that was trying to escape.

"Yes, she owes me. We made a bet, you see... I told her you would cave before the games. She thought that you would interrupt the final results and confess your love."

Great. Even the gods are making fun of my longing to be with my mate, even if she wasn't technically my mate anymore. "That's nice to know."

"Oh, don't take it so seriously. We have to have some kind of entertainment here."

Rolling my eyes, I glanced towards the strange elf walking towards our direction with a look of determination on his face. "What's the deal with the elf?"

Freya was silent for a moment as the elf passed us, disappearing down the hallway from which I had come. My eyes instinctively followed to see where it was he had went before falling back upon Freya again.

"He wants Cassie just like the others do," she replied softly, "the difference is he has a higher claim than the others. Besides you, of course."

"Higher claim? What the hell does that mean?" My beast perked up in attention to what she had said and as I looked down the empty hall once more I found that he was long gone.

"It was foretold in a prophecy of his kind that his mate, or fated one as they call it, was here in Asgard. He believes that person is Cassie, as do many others."

There was no way I was going to let this prick try to win her over. Not when I had worked so hard to make her understand last night that I was the man who wanted her. Hesitation and uncertainty filled me as I thought over this elf trying to sweet talk Cassie into leaving with him.

"No elf is going to get Cassie."

Laughter escaped Freya as I glanced at her one more time. "He isn't an elf, Lucas. He is Fae, and from the interaction I have seen between the two of them only briefly this morning, it's obvious there is something between them."