

And Then There Were Four (Lilith Carrie)

Chapter 214

Chapter 214: Choices for the Future

Cassie.

The moment we arrived we were greeted by the guard, Odin, and Freya. My grandfather's eyes stared at me with surprise and curiosity I wasn't used to seeing. It was as if he was looking at me in a new light—like I wasn't the same girl who had left.

"Welcome home, Cassie." His deep and hearty voice made me smile as he opened his arms wide, and I embraced him into a hug. "I see that you brought someone back with you."

Pulling away from him, I glanced over my shoulder towards Damian. "Yes, I did. It was his time to come home to the garden and fate has deemed he is needed here."

Odin was quiet for a moment, and with his silence, I glanced back at him to see him staring at Damian with complete indifference. Part of me felt like there was a problem, but the other part of me knew deep down that this was meant to happen.

Moving past me, Odin made his way towards Damian without saying a word. The uncomfortable silence that seemed to pass between all of us. I looked towards Finn and Silas, slightly worried for a moment but before I could address anything, Damian spoke up.

"Odin, it's a pleasure to meet you again."

"Yes, it is," Odin replied before opening his arms and embracing Damian into a hug. A sigh of relief escaped me as a smile returned to my face. "Welcome to Asgard, Damian. Let's show you to your room and then tonight, we will dine and you can tell me all about how my family is doing on Earth."

Watching the two of them walk away towards the open doorway of the portal garden was a sight I would never get over. I had spent the last twelve hours worried sick about what was going to happen, about whether or not he would be accepted and it turned out that I had worried for no reason at all.

I was pleased he had been accepted here because the idea of having him around comforted me. "Let's go inside..." Silas said as he came to stand beside me.

"Okay," I reached out to wrap my fingers through his and was taken back when he moved away, not allowing me to seek the comfort of him that I had on Earth. It was as if he suddenly refused to show the affection he once had with me and that was more confusing than anything.

"It's okay," Finn said as he took the place Silas once had at my side. "He has a lot running through his mind right now, and none of it is because of you."

Turning to Finn, I furrowed my brows in confusion. "What are you talking about?"

Finn hesitated for a moment before he gestured his head towards the doorway. "Come on... I'll explain everything to you. First we need food and a drink."

Ten minutes later, I found myself sitting in Finn's room as I once had before, surrounded by the flowing colors of the fabrics he had hanging around his room. To imagine what it would be like in his realm was something I had done often lately. Thoughts of how beautiful it must have been, and what his people were like made me more curious by the minute.

However, looking at Finn, who took bites of fruit and cheese and drank from a silver goblet as if he had no cares in the world was another sight I wouldn't get used to. Finn was a prince of one of the oldest realms in the universe and for someone in his position, you would think him to be a man who was stressed and not easily able to converse.

Instead though, he was a man full of life. A man who didn't take anything for granted and cherished every moment that he made.

"I will say, Cassie... the Earth realm is quite remarkable. Your family definitely has done well for themselves there."

Small laughter escaped me as I lifted my own silver goblet to my lips. "Yeah, I guess."

His celestial eyes looked to me with intrigue as he made his way to where I was sitting. "What's wrong, Cassie? You were happy when we arrived, what changed?"

A heavy breath escaped me as I tried to find the words to express how I was feeling. Between having to leave my family again, Damian dying—even though he was with me—and of course Silas acting the way he was, I didn't know where to start.

"I suppose I'm just confused by the way Silas was acting."

"Ah." He smiled as he settled in closer to me. "Well, I can tell you a secret, Cassie, but you have to promise to keep it between us until it's absolutely necessary to use it."

"What do you mean?" I questioned, our faces only inches apart as he lifted his hand, running it down the side of my face. The deep celestial blue of his eyes were memorizing and though I found myself easily lost within them, I knew the conversation had to be finished before we lost each other in the flesh of our bodies.

"Silas isn't just a dragon. Nor is he just a guard," he started, causing my smile to fall slightly as I tried to understand what he meant. "He is far older than that and when he came here, he was running from a past that sought to destroy him."

"Who would want to destroy him?" I whispered, his lips getting closer to mine.

"The man who wanted to steal his rightful title, a creature that wanted to steal his throne."

The realization of what he was saying slowly began to settle in as his lips brushed against mine, setting my body on fire. Silas wasn't just a dragon who sought comfort in Asgard. He was royalty that sought asylum from those who wanted to kill him.

Which honestly just complicated things a hell of a lot more.

Silas.

Walking away from Cassie like I did killed me. I didn't want to brush her off the way I did but now that we were back in Asgard, my duties resumed and I was no longer able to be free with her like I wanted. Odin had made his sentiments clear on that front, I was a guard and nothing more.

However, it didn't stop the ache in my chest from the hurt leaving her created.

"Silas, how did things go?" Freya asked, coming to meet me in the hallway as I made my way towards my room, needing a reprieve from everything going on.

"I don't feel like talking right now, Freya."

My cold and brushed-off tone only made her smile more as she fell in step with me. A smile was upon her face as if she knew exactly what happened and only had wanted me to clarify it.

"Come on, don't act like that. I can sense her all over you, Silas. She is your mate and your dragon has claimed her as his, hasn't he?" she asked, causing me to stop in my tracks as I turned to face her with a narrowed expression.

"It doesn't matter," I snapped in a low tone. "Odin made it clear what my job was here. My dragon will have to obey as I do, regardless of what it may claim."

Just saying that made my beast claw at the surface of my skin, angry I was rejecting the idea of being with the woman fated for us. Dragons were known to be possessive creatures and never shared anything. It already shocked me that he was quite fine with sharing Cassie with Finn, and possibly Lucas.

If Lucas was even still in the picture.

"It doesn't matter what Odin says, Silas," Freya replied, crossing her arms over her chest with a smug expression. "The rules of the tournament apply no matter the ruler. Tomorrow, Finn, Lucas, and Mani will compete against each other in the last stage of the tournament. The winner will get to decide what happens to Cassie."

"Mani isn't going to win," I gritted out, knowing exactly what it would mean if he did. The man would submit Cassie to the gallows if he was allowed. He would ensure she stayed under lock and key and would force himself upon her to create an heir and secure his claim to the throne.

"You don't know that, Silas. Time is running out, and more than ever right now, you three men need to band together under some kind of agreement."

Scoffing, I shook my head in disgust. "Agreement? She isn't a contract, Freya. She deserves so much more than that, and I won't be the one to force her into something she doesn't want."

"And how do you know what she wants when you haven't even discussed it with her."

Touche.

She had a point. I had avoided talking to Cassie about any of this and the discussions that Finn and I had never really went anywhere. Other than we agreed she belonged to both of us.

"Look Silas, just think about it. Though, don't think too long. In the morning, the three men will compete to the end to claim Cassie. Her future hangs in the hand of what choice you make. Guardian or prince... that's for you to decide."

Freya didn't bother to let me address what she said before she was disappearing back down the hallway from where she came. Over the years that I had known her, I had seen the woman get into some crazy s**t, but never has she ever been so invested in something as she has been with Cassie.

Standing in the hallway, I ran my hand through my hair as irritation and anger built within me. My mind raced over what Freya said, which caused me to turn and punch the wall with a roar escaping my throat. "f**k!"

How could I have let myself fall so deep?

Turning, I made my way in the opposite direction from my room. I needed to see Finn about tomorrow before it was too late. If we were going to make things work then he was going to have to step up to the plate and ensure that he won.

The closer and closer I got to his room, the more I sensed Cassie within. She was here with him privately and with his guard standing by the door, I wasn't sure I'd be welcomed. Just because things were kosher between us on earth didn't mean that he would feel the same way here.

"He isn't taking visitors." His guard stated clearly with an indifferent expression. "He is resting for the evening. You will have to wait until tomorrow."

"I don't have time to wait," I snapped trying to calm myself. "I need him now. Step aside or go get him. Either way, I will be speaking with him."

The man's eyes narrowed as he stared at me. "I don't think—"

"Calm down," the sound of Finn's voice filled with amusement was a welcome sound. The last thing I wanted to do was put his guard in his place, but I would in order to speak with Finn about Cassie. "Silas, Cassie just left only a moment ago... did you want to join us?"

"No," I sighed, though glad Cassie wasn't still here. "I need to talk to you about something important."

"Of course, Silas. Come in... my home is your home."

Unsure of how I felt about that comment, I followed Finn into his room, prepared to discuss with him what needed to take place at tomorrow's event, and I was sure he wouldn't be overly pleased with what I was going to suggest.