

# And Then There Were Four (Lilith Carrie)

Chapter 217

## Chapter 217: We have a Winner

Lucas.

The cool, crisp morning air left white puffs of clouds coming from my breath as I stood on the starting line waiting for the starting gun to go off. After the conversation with Finn, I made sure to put his words far from my mind. He stood to my left. With Mani at my right.

Both men wore the markings of their people, and though the hungry determination in their eyes would make most people fear them, it didn't bother me.

I didn't even bother to look back to see if Cassie was in the stands. While the other two were distracted by whatever they saw, I couldn't be. I had to stay strong. I had to make sure that my mind was clear and focused—otherwise, I'd fall.

"Get ready!" the announcer bellowed out through the arena, causing us each to take our marks. The dark forest laid ahead, its shadows calling me home. There was no stopping me from getting what I wanted. I was ready to take both Finn and Mani on—no matter the cost.

With the blasting sound of a horn, the three of us took off as fast as we could to the treeline. It was under the shadowed canopies that our bodies disappeared out of sight to those who waited patiently for the winner to come back through.

It was impossible to cheat and skip the line. We had to make our way through the trails, fighting one another only to obtain a talisman at the other end we needed to bring across the finish line to win. Yet, this was always where bloodshed became possible and often people didn't return across the finish line at all.

I wasn't as fast as Mani or Finn, and quickly their figures disappeared from view.

I had to pace myself though. I couldn't allow myself to get winded. That was how I would end up losing this race, and as I continued in a slow jog down the path the eeriness of the forest slowly got to me, my beast on full alert.

Something or someone was out there, slowly stalking me.

Finn and Mani didn't pose the only threats out here in these woods. In fact, these were the same woods I had once visited because of Inanna. Within them were dark beasts that laid in wait to prey on those who ventured too far off the path.

Steady was the only way forward. Keeping my heart calm and steady.

One wrong move, and everything I had worked so hard for would be over. My life would be over.

A flash of light blinded me for a split second as a direct hit to my side caused me to tumble. I hadn't seen the blow coming, and by the time I got my bearings and spun around to take in the creature or person who had caught me off guard, all I saw was the amusing smirk of Mani.

"Did you really think that I would allow you to continue to the finish line, traitor?"

I would never understand why it was this man thought to piss me off at every turn. He had no reason to act the way he did or better yet, be jealous of me, if that was why he acted like a d\*\*k.

"This isn't a road you want to go down. Turn around and continue on your way." To my surprise, I didn't threaten him like I thought I would. I didn't even try to rip his head off. Instead, I saw him for the weak and insecure man he was. If he was smart, he'd walk away.

Laughter escaped Mani as he stared at me shaking his head. "Are you f\*\*\*\*g serious right now? You have a lot of f\*\*\*\*g balls, kid."

"Kid?" I scoffed, "who the hell do you think you're talking to?"

The tension in the air between the two of us was electrified and not in a good way. Mani bulked up huffed like a raving lunatic while I... felt the beast beneath my skin as I always did. As much as I wanted to let it out and let it loose on Mani, I knew I couldn't. If it got out, there was no telling what the hell would happen or if I would ever control it again.

He lunged towards me, moving swiftly to attack. Dodging to the left, I missed his punch but not bouncing back quick enough, I took another hit to my right. Back and forth the fists swung between us. His grasp on my arm tossed me through the air, my body connected with a nearby tree before slumping to the ground.

Mani may have looked weak, but the strength he had was remarkable. As long as I was able to dodge him, I was safe. Unfortunately, I was wearing down and therefore, more easily attainable.

"Did you really think you could beat me?!" Mani laughed maniacally. "I'm descended from Thor! No one can beat me!"

Lifting my head, I spit out the metallic taste of blood in my mouth. My eyes slowly slid up to meet Mani's gaze before I spit towards his feet.

"Yeah and her cousin, you sick fuck."

The rough kick of his boot to my stomach made me cough again, and just as I tensed ready for another, I watched Mani drop to his knees, clutching his neck with a wide-eyed expression. Whatever happened was too quick for me to take notice of until Mani fell completely, and I realized Finn stood behind him, holding a thin blade.

"Now do you understand what I mean, Lucas?" he asked me with a narrowed gaze. "There is no way for you to win this. I could have left you to die and only have to share her with Silas, I'm saving you. I'll never understand why."

"What do you mean you'll never understand?" I snapped, completely confused as to what the f\*\*k just happened.

Straightening his shoulders, he crossed her arms over his chest, raising a brow at me as he scoffed. "You seriously don't see why you would be questionable when it comes to mating with Cassie? You're... less than appropriate for her."

Still, I wasn't sure what the f\*\*k he was talking about, even though I was pretty sure he was insulting me. Regardless of my confusion, Finn, a man who barely knew me, saved my life all because the woman he loved desired me.

That on its own was interesting.

"I suppose a thank you is in order," I stated slowly as I climbed to my feet. "However, I don't understand why you would save me and not think I'd still try to beat you to win."

"If I thought you were that stupid, Lucas, I would have let Mani kill you. Yet, I didn't. So let's try not to be f\*\*\*\*g stupid right now."

The statement was tempting to defy. However, he was right. There was no need to be stupid. It was clear that Finn was more than able to kill me without a moment's notice if he really wanted too. He willingly let me live for Cassie, and I appreciated it.

Maybe he was exactly what she needed in life. He could be a lover and a protector.

"Fine, go get our girl."

My response, though not fully thought through, was clear for Finn. I was accepting the offer, and that was exactly what he wanted to hear.

"Good, but how about we go get her together."

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Cassie.

Dread filled me the moment the gun shot off into the air and the guys took off running down the field until the tree line swallowed them whole. There was no telling which of them would win, but the fact that Mani was even an option made me sick to my stomach.

I didn't miss the way he looked at me before the race started. The eagerness and desire not be with me but prove that he was right. He wanted to prove I wasn't able to do anything and by winning me, he won the title he wanted. He could give a s\*\*t less who he was bound to.

"What happens if neither of them come out?" I muttered softly, my eyes refusing to glance away from where they had disappeared, but seeking Sansa's confidence that they would be okay.

"Cassie, did no one explain to you what typically happens in the race?" Sansa replied, finally causing my eyes to slide her way.

The fact that she was asking me this filled me full of dread. Of course no one bothered to tell me what happened during this race. One, I had been gone, and two, people seem to automatically think I know everything about this place.

Granted, I was far more confident now then before I had gone to visit my parents.

"Cassie." Damian's calming voice wrapped around me as he leaned forward over the back of my seat to give me a soft squeeze before kissing the top of my head. "Stop worrying."

"How can you say that? You barely know either of them," I replied to him before turning back to Sansa. "Tell me what can happen."

She was reluctant, but finally caving in, I felt like I was going to explode. "Well, it's free for all. People usually don't often come out alive. They have been known to kill each other. The forest is dark, and there has always been something wrong with it."

Oh my god! They are going to die because of me!

The anxiety that washed over me was unexpected. Heavy breaths come out of my mouth, slowly at first but then picking up quickly. "They... they can't. I—I can't lose them."

The low blow of an airhorn resonated through the air, causing my heart to lurch from its place. I wasn't sure what the airhorn was for, but whatever it was had the crows of people who had come to watch cheering.

"Damn, they move fast." Sansa laughed. "Either one of them works quick, and took out the others—"

"Sansa!" my father snapped sternly. "There's no need for that type of conversation, especially now."

Sansa stared at him, mouth wide open. She couldn't believe my father would speak like that to her. But it was something she would have to get used to. Damian was very old-fashioned, or should I say just old. When it comes to how things were done. The last thing he would settle for was negative talks about death or anything else.

Turning my eyes towards the field, I slowly saw the figures of two men escaping the treeline making their way towards the finish line near where I sat. My heart leaped to see that the two faces of the men I cared about were both okay, though Lucas seemed to have seen better days.

"There alive," I gasped with a smile on my face. "Sansa, they're alive!"

I watched as Finn turned to Lucas, a moment of silence seeming to pass between them as Lucas waved for Finn to continue. Something I didn't expect, but as I looked over my shoulder at my father, I saw the twinkle in his eye and the smile on his lips he usually got when he knew something no one else did.

Lucas was going to let Finn win, and though I didn't understand why, part of me was glad for it.

The moment that Finn crossed the finish line, the crowds erupted into cheers. The games were finally over, and the Prince of the Fae realm won my hand in marriage. Something, if you had said it to me years ago, I would never have believed it.

"It would seem that you have your match, sweetie," My father whispered, causing me to look at him once more with curiosity.

"You knew though..."

Nodding, he scoffed with laughter. "Of course I did. It was the best choice Lucas could make."

"Why do you say that?" I asked, trying to understand what he knew that I hadn't been privy to.

Standing at his feet, he looked down at me with a gaze in his eyes I had seen so many times growing up. It was the look of understanding that he had often given my mother and my other fathers. A look that showed he knew more than he was telling, and though I'd never understand it completely, it made me trust the process a little more.

Whatever was going on was planned, and I would have to follow the process and see it through.