

And Then There Were Four by Lilith Carrie Chapter 33

Chapter 33- Uncovering My Secret Friend

A day had gone by, and without trouble from Damian, I fell back into a normal routine.

Even Hale, Talon, and James had made their apologies and explained their wishes to start over and form a better relationship with me. No way did I hold back on showing them how upset I was. That leaving someone in the dark on what everything meant wasn't acceptable.

Remorse was evident, and even though I was angry I forgave them.

Perhaps, I didn't feel the bond like they did because I was human. But it was no excuse for me not to be forgiven because for them the bond is like the air they breathe. When I had cut them off for a short time, it was like I severed an extension of themselves.

Realizing that brought forth guilt I didn't think about-at the time I only was worried about myself.

"Ivy, did you want to have lunch with us today after classes?" James questioned from my open cottage door as I grabbed the last of my items for school.

Looking over my shoulder, I noticed the hopeful glimmer within, "uh-yeah that sounds like a plan. What did you guys have in mind?"

"We like to go to Angelo's, the Italian place in town the night before the full moon. Carbs are good for our wolf, and he knows what we like."

"What's the full moon do to your wolf?" I replied curiously to know why they suddenly wanted me to come.

His eyes widened in realization, "oh... yeah, I forgot you don't know a lot yet. I'm sorry..."

"It's okay." I wasn't going to take it personally anymore. "I'd love to know."

His excitement seemed to spread as he looked around, "full moons are important. Usually, the pack runs together and enjoys in celebrating the moon goddess. It's just a thing we wolves do."

The revelation hadn't even dawned on me before, but to consider the fact they wanted to include me in traditional activities that reflected who they were, was warming. "I would love to go."

Accomplishment filled me as I watched the smile of joy cross James' face.

Nodding his head, he quickly took off in a jog towards the house, no doubt to tell the others of my choice. I appreciated the way they were respecting my boundaries.

Eventually, my way of living was going to change.

I would be moved into the main house, and then from there... be the love of all of their lives.

Or, at least that was what I assumed.

Would I be able to attend school like I want? Or instead, would I move to online education and private tutors? With everything else I had on my plate, I would also have to begin learning how to be a Luna, as Hale calls it.

Luna... to think I am supposed to be someone important... someone regal.

Shaking off the many thoughts I had of the future, I grabbed my car keys and headed toward the garage. Classes started early, and I was looking forward to Caleb's lecture today.

The topic was about how reserves are created and maintained by the government and private contractors. Like the wolves that I was slowly learning laid claim to a lot of nature reserves. It made sense honestly. Humans were free to maintain adventuring during the day, and the packhouses lay on the outskirts of the reserves for access at night.

Talon explained that not all like this concept, but he had seen it before.

"Ivy!" Kate's squeal of excitement as I entered the cafe took me by surprise.

"Oh my goodness, when did you get back?!"

Kate rolled her eyes with a smile, "I know I'm sorry I didn't text you. I got back last night but I was so exhausted with everything that I couldn't keep my eyes open. So I figured I would just surprise you this morning."

"Surprise indeed!" The laughter that left our lips was welcoming. I missed her terribly when she was gone, and now that she was back I felt so much better.

Ordering my coffee, I looped my arm through hers and sat down. "You have no idea how much I have missed you."

"Aww, I missed you too. Why does it sound like something bad happened?" More than anything I wanted to tell her about everything, but at the same time, it was difficult because I couldn't tell her werewolves existed.

She will think I'm clinically insane.

“It’s all a little complicated.”

My answer wasn’t far from the truth. It just didn’t make sense to tell her about werewolves.

“A little?” She replied. “Sounds like more than a little.”

She wasn’t lying.

“It’s nothing really. I will be okay.”

Concern filled her eyes as she nodded, “well if you change your mind you only have to say.”

The rest of our conversation was filled with light humor about what happened on her trip home, and how she wants to bring me back to meet her family sometimes.

The idea of going to visit was not a bad one to have. She didn’t live far from my mom, and to be honest, I wished that my mother was with me now.

Walking from the coffee shop, I made my way towards the north of campus to attend my next class. Spending time with Kate had lightened my spirits, but I was far from being okay with everything.

Perhaps she was right though. I really needed a vacation.

“Ivy!” Stopping in my tracks, I looked over my shoulder to see Caleb walking towards me.

“Caleb?” I smiled enthusiastically. “Don’t you have a class to teach?”

A laugh left his lips as he shook his head, “not for another hour. Are you headed to class?”

“Depends, are you going to play hall monitor?” I teased.

“Do I need to?” A smirk trod lightly over his lips.

This banter wasn’t unfamiliar to me but stopping it was a must. I didn’t want Caleb to get the wrong idea about me. I saw him as a friend and nothing more.

“Of course not.” I replied, “I am on my way to class though. Did you need something?”

Rubbing the back of his neck, he smiled at me shaking his head.

"I just wanted to check on you. I have not heard from you since the other night, and I wanted to make sure you were okay."

My mind blank for a moment I pondered what he meant, "oh-yeah. I'm okay, I guess."

"That doesn't sound overly confident." His voice was laced with concern as Kates was.

I knew that I should speak up about what was on my mind, but the thought of burdening others with my issues wasn't something I really wanted to do.

"I'm-" distant shouting grabbed my attention.

Turning towards the parking lot, I spotted the last person I would expect to see walking across the courtyard headed straight for me.

Damian He held his head high, fists clenched, and a sneer across his lips. There was no doubt in my mind that trouble was brewing

I was baffled by his approach, but it was quickly quieted as Damian reached me pulling me behind him and facing Caleb.

"What do you think you are doing?" He snapped, taking me by surprise.

Caleb however didn't seem fazed by Damian's attitude. Instead, he crossed his arms over his chest and smiled, "well hello to you as well Damian."

"What's going on?" I asked softly trying to decipher why there was so much hostility.

Damian turned to me with a cold glare, "is this the friend you were talking about?"

My eyes widened in shock, "he is my friend, yes. Why does that matter?"

"Is he the friend you stayed with the other night?!" Damian's voice grew a little louder. Catching the attention of people passing by.

"Would you please stop acting like this?" I replied, "you're causing a scene."

"She's right. You're being unreasonable." Caleb retorted.

Damian's anger seemed to flare, and without hesitation, he spun back to Caleb with his teeth bared. "You will stay away from her."

"She doesn't belong to you, Damian." Caleb's statement was only causing more issues.

"Please both of you stop it..."

The one thing I hated more than anything was people who caused a scene. It was ridiculous to argue over frivolous things. Not to mention so openly where I attended school.

“She is mine!” Damian roared the gold swirl of his eyes not going unnoticed by Caleb and me.

If I didn’t stop the confrontation going on there would undoubtedly be a huge problem on campus, and not one I wanted to be part of. Placing myself between Caleb and Damian, I pushed against Damian’s chest lightly trying to draw his attention.

“Please stop this. I promise nothing is happening. He was just helping me understand some things.”

Damian’s cold glare lowered to me, and for the first time in a long time, I wished I had walked away.

“He isn’t who you think he is, Ivy.”

“What-” looking between the two men I tried to grasp the turmoil that was running through me.

Yes, I don’t know much about their lives or the werewolf kind. But, Caleb has been nothing but kind to me.

“That’s funny coming from someone who steals other people’s mates, and then lets them die.”

The words coming from Caleb’s mouth moved too quickly for me to process.

Frozen in my place, I stared at them both in disbelief.

Did she die?

Chapter 34: Secrets of Men

Ivy POV

Did he take Caleb’s mate?

The question swirled like a rollercoaster through my mind. And what did he mean she died?

A dull ache in my head began to grow like a rooted tree that refused to give up. My flight response kicked in and without waiting another moment, I forced myself to walk away from them.

“If you both want to act like this then you will do it without me around.” I huffed as I stormed off.

If those two wanted to act like a bunch of children then so be it, but I was not going to wait around to listen to their bickering. Damian and Caleb had both made some wild statements, and out of the two of them, only Caleb had been honest with me so far.

So why would I doubt him? He had never given me a reason not to trust him.

The pounding of feet upon concrete echoed from behind me. Looking over my shoulder, I watched Damian’s figure moving quickly to keep up.

“Where are you going?” Damian asked, stopping me in my tracks again.

“Away from the both of you.” I retorted, stepping around him.

He was more than persistent as he caught up, and kept in step with me. I wasn’t sure what he was trying to do, but I had a class to get to and wasn’t going to waste another minute on their arguing.

“Will you wait a sec-” His hand reached out, gripping my upper arm, and forcing me to stop.

The feeling of his touch against my skin sent sensations to my heart I tried to ignore.

No matter how angry I got with him, I couldn’t deny my attraction.

“Wait a second, for what?” I snapped with my brows narrowed, “what do you want?”

“I want to explain myself.” He said.

Nodding my head I smiled, “okay. Did you take his mate?”

A look of confusion stared back at me, “it wasn’t like that.”

Wasn’t like that? Out of all the answers he could have given me, that was the one he wanted to go with. For a man that was supposed to be a leader or Alpha as they call it, he wasn’t the wisest of choices.

“Right... well, you either did or you didn’t.”

“You don’t understand, Ivy.” Damian replied, crossing his arms, “she wasn’t a stable person.”

“Again you’re not making yourself look better.”

Groaning in protest his eyes darted around before he gripped my hand, and began to drag me towards the parking lot. "Where are you taking me! I have class!"

"Just come on. I can't explain things here."

As much as I wanted to get to class, my curiosity got the better of me.

Damn it, hopefully, Mandy can get me those notes.

Kate POV

That'd lying.

My entire life I had grown up on the philosophy of not lying if I didn't have to. I mean what was honestly the point, right?

Yet, here I was lying to Ivy.

There was so much that I wanted to tell her, and had to hold back on. I felt bad for the girl. Everything she had known about her life wasn't what it was supposed to be. Instead, she was fed whatever truth people wanted to give her.

Something that irritated me.

When I went back to Georgia, it wasn't for a family emergency or respite from the semester. No, it was because had to regroup for my mission. Things were becoming more complicated by the second, and the council demanded action.

It was the reason I was where I was now.

The shadow of the library building concealed me from where I watched. I had always felt that Caleb was up to no good, and as Damian made his way across the courtyard, I knew nothing good was going to come of it.

Caleb might have been a professor on campus, but there was no doubt interest lurking beneath his gaze. I had seen that lust-filled look many times- he gave it every time he looked at Ivy.

"What are you doing?" Mandy replied from behind me causing me to jump.

"Don't do that!" I exclaimed.

"Sorry," she replied sheepishly. "I had to come to see what you were doing. You're being odd."

"That's because I AM odd." I retorted rolling my eyes.

“Yeah, that’s true. But it’s more than usual.”

Mandy was a sweet girl, but for some reason, she seemed off to me.

The first day I met her, I could sense she was going to be trouble. Mandy seemed shy and naive, but as my eyes drifted toward her intriguing figure, curiosity filled me with who she really could be.

The day I met her, Mandy dressed like she was the most high-end girl on campus, but her personality didn’t reflect the way she seemed to want to present herself.

“As that may be. I was simply making sure Ivy was okay.” Turning away from the corner of the building, my feet carried me towards my car in hopes of being able to get rid of Mandy.

“Can I come with you?” She called out.

Groaning, I spun to face her with a smile, “sorry. I have some personal stuff I have to do. We can catch up later though.”

Lying again. Letting out an exasperated sigh, I pulled out my phone checking to see if the message I had been waiting on had come in.

Much to my dismay... it hadn’t. Go figure.

Looking back over my shoulder, I watched as Mandy slowly turned and began to walk towards the direction Caleb and Damian had been arguing. It wasn’t the wisest of directions to go, but knowing her she would get in the middle because Ivy was there.

Her funeral.

I didn’t trust that girl. She was a snake in tall grass waiting for someone to make a mistake. On more than one occasion had I caught her watching Ivy. Each time she played it off as if she was in the wrong place at the wrong time, but I still didn’t trust it.

The bright morning sun beamed off my faded blue four-door sedan as it sat in the parking lot. The sight of the old car brought a smile to my face, and that was because I had missed it terribly.

Yes, I could have flown back from Georgia, but honestly, walking around everywhere sucked.

So my old car was a quick choice.

My mind drifted back to Ivy, contemplating the need to tell her the truth.

If Ivy wasn't careful she was going to end up in a dangerous predicament, and nothing those guys did would be able to save her from her fate.

"Kate... The sound of my name being called from my passenger door froze me in my place.

I thanked the gods that my doors were locked once I started the engine because when I faced the newcomer, I saw Caleb's eyes staring back at me.

"Yes, sir?" I questioned rolling the window down a hair.

"Where are you going? Don't you have class right now?"

Caleb was an inquisitive man, but there was no way he would be able to know my schedule. "No, sir. But I do have an appointment so I must be going."

"Oh-" he replied thinking, "I could have sworn I saw you in Mrs. Simmon's class the other day."

Now I know he is lying. "I find that hard to believe, Professor. Especially considering the fact I just back in town last night."

The happy smiling instructor's act quickly dissipated. "Perhaps, I was mistaken."

Caleb was a man I never was too fond of. "I must be going. Have a wonderful day."

Putting my car into reverse, he stepped back onto the sidewalk pushing his hands into his pockets. With his brows furrowed, his eyes never left mine. The man was thinking hard about something.

If he was approaching me now it meant one of two things.

One he was starting to take an interest in me like he did Ivy, and there could be trouble.

Or two...

He was catching on to what was going on around him- and I was running out of time.

Chapter 35: Stop beating around the bush

Ivy Pov

Breathing heavily through my nose, I exhaled in annoyance. Damian had brought me to his car in the parking lot and wanted to take me home to explain. All of which I wasn't having.

"You can explain here," I replied, crossing my arms over my chest.

His jaw tightened, and his muscles tensed. For some reason, Damian held himself back from whatever he wanted to do. "Fine." His words, spoken through gritted teeth.

Cocking a brow, I leaned against his car and waited patiently. Never before had he been so willing to comply, and that notion on its own made me curious.

*Look-" he stated with a sigh, "I have known Caleb since high school. He is older than me, and when he got his mate before me he was happy. Surprisingly enough, we used to be friends.'

It wasn't hard to believe that at one point they had been friends. The way they argued made it seem like they had indeed been close at one point in time. I just never realized that Damian would find it this hard to talk about.

"I figured that.' I finally replied. "But what is the deal about this mate."

*The day Caleb turned eighteen and got his wolf, he found his mate. Her name was Sophia."

Sophia. The same swirled across my tongue, and yet something about her name seemed to light a spark in Damian's eye.

"Did you care for her?"

Shaking his head he sighed, "not in the way you think. The three of us had been close friends, but instead of being happy she was mated to Caleb... she rejected him."

"Because she wanted to be with you, right?"

"Yeah," he replied with a sigh, running his hand through his hair, "she was convinced that there had been a mistake and that she and I were supposed to be mates. She was determined she was Luna material, not that of a Gamma's wife."

"Gamma?" The term caught my attention, and I was curious to know what it meant.

There was still a lot about it all that I had not been made aware of.

"Yes, a Gamma is the Alpha's third in command. As I said, it's complicated."

Frowning, I leaned forward off of his car and stared at him. "Perhaps, there would be less complications had you told me everything from day one. Regardless, it doesn't explain why she rejected him. What would make her want to reject him and go to you?"

"I don't know, Ivy!" He groaned in frustration, "because she wanted to be the Luna? I mean, why do women do half of the things they do?"

His sexiest remark made me roll my eyes in displeasure, you must have led her on then."

From what the guys had told me, Damian wasn't the man he is now back then. When he was younger, he was a party guy who loved to have fun and sleep with the ladies.

It only made sense that she thought she would have more with him

*I don't lead people on That's disgusting

Disgusting?!

"Seriously?" I questioned, watching as he shrugged his shoulders. "Did you party back then?"

"I don't see how that's relevant."

"Just answer the damn question, Damian. Did you party back then?" I asked, getting frustrated with his stubbornness.

"Yes, I did."

"Okay, well did you hang out with her back then?" I asked, making sure my questions were leading to a particular direction.

"Again, how is that relevant, Ivy." He replied, shaking his head.

"Please stop making me repeat my questions, and just fucking answer them." I snapped, trying to show him that I was done playing his games.

"Yes, we all hung out. What's your next question?" The sarcasm in his words dripping from his lips.

"Did you ever do anything with her before she found out they were mates? Kissing... sex?"

"I'm not answering that question," Damian replied before walking towards the passenger seat of his car and opening the door for me to get in.

"No, answer the damn question. I don't see what's so hard about this."

"It isn't hard, but it isn't any of yours or anyone else's business. Now get in the damn car, Ivy." The growl that left his lips at his words made it clear that he was done playing

my game. However, his lack of response to the question made it clear what the answer was.

He had done something with her, and in turn, she thought they could be more.

Poor Caleb.

To think the man had a chance of a mate and lost it because Damian was the center of her attention. In a way, it wasn't entirely his fault. He couldn't have expected them to be mates, or at least, I hoped he didn't continue after he found out

"Your silence is all the admission I need," I replied after a moment. "I think I will go for a walk, and make my own way home."

Damian slammed the car door as I turned around, "will you stop being so fucking immature and get in the damn car. I don't have time for this shit."

"Just go home, Damian." I countered over my shoulder as I kept my feet moving. No matter what I did, he constantly wanted to argue with me. I may not have known much about mates, but I was sure this wasn't how it was supposed to be.

"Ivy..." with calm collection, Damian grasped my arm once more and turned me to face him. A longing within his eyes gave way to his attempt at trying. "Please, don't do this."

The notion that he was asking for understanding made my heart swell, "no. You can't keep acting like this. I'm tired of arguing with you. Since I got here all you have done is been cruel to me, and I won't tolerate it anymore."

Pulling away from him, I continued walking across campus. His footsteps never followed me. My chest tightened in the realization that my life was a cruel fluctuation of twists and turns. Constant secrets preventing me from seeing clearly

Clouded skies gave way to the approaching rain that would soon settle down upon the earth, and with it, winter would begin its approach in just a short time. Never did I realize that love could bring such anguish.

In my own way. I did love each of them- or at least I thought I did.

Staring down at the ground, I thought over what Damian had told me.

My heart broke for them both. I couldn't understand why fate had been cruel to them, but again, there was still so much I didn't know. I was the outsider in the situation.

The foreign entity that came in, and changed the game for everyone.

Was Caleb lying to me? Did he have an ulterior motive that he was hiding?

A scream of frustration tore through my throat bringing the attention of people passing by. I didn't care what they thought. I didn't care what any of them thought.

The only thing I wanted was to have peace in my life.

Peace seemed so far away though.

"Ivy?" Caleb's voice traveled through the air.

Looking towards the road, I spotted his car with ease. The passenger window rolled down and his face peered through with concern.

"Oh-" I replied, "Hey, Caleb."

"What are you doing standing outside? It's about to start storming." He replied.

A laugh escaped me as I shook my head slightly, "I am trying to figure out why my life is the way it is. I have you acting a certain way, and Caleb telling me something completely different. Through it all... I don't even know what my purpose is."

"Come. Let's get out somewhere warm before it starts storming. I will help you figure this all out." Like always, Caleb's words seemed sincere. But now with the lingering doubt in my mind placed there by Damian, I didn't know what to believe.

"How do I know you aren't pretending? That this isn't just an act."

My question was appropriate considering what I had seen between them earlier. I didn't even know that Caleb and Damian had known each other till the situation in the courtyard.

Neither man explained that their relationship had been more than acquaintances.

"Have I ever given you a reason to not trust me?" He asked, causing me to hesitate.

He had a point. Never before had he given me a reason not to trust him.

Nodding my head, I climbed into his car and shut the door. "Okay, then."

There was no telling if I was making a mistake, but there was only one way to find out.