

## And Then There Were Four by Lilith Carrie

### Chapter 4: Chapter 4: Warm Welcome

I wasn't sure what I was expecting when I came to dinner, but part of me realized that I was widely under-dressed for the most part. It wasn't something super fancy, but it wasn't a jeans and t-shirt thing either.

I could see the disgust in Allison's eyes as I stepped into the dining room wearing black leggings, and an oversized band t-shirt. Her lip turned up into a look of disgust before rolling her eyes, and turning away headed for her seat.

"You can sit in the last chair there." Allison stated, clearly pointing to a chair at the end of the table. One that happens to be right next to a tall brooding man with rippling muscles and a perfectly styled beard.

I couldn't help but feel hesitant as his eyes looked up to mind, and a smirk crossed his lips. "You must be the famous, Ivy."

Famous... I wouldn't say that, well at least not yet. "Uh- yeah. That's me."

Moving to my seat, I quickly sat down and watched as servants brought out serving dish after serving dish of food. My eyes widening at the amounts before I was distracted by three other massive bodies entering the dining room.

Damian, James, and another man I had not met entered in all their godliness and took a seat at the table. How was it that one woman had all four of these sexy sinful men.

God, stop gawking at them! I scolded myself inwardly as I shook my head and focused on the glass of water in front of me as if it was the most interesting thing in the world.

"Hale, you already met Ivy, I see." Looking towards Damian, I saw the glare on his face. He still wasn't happy with me being here, and I wasn't sure why.

The man who spoke to me before turned to Damian and smiled, "yeah I did. Not much of a talker though."

"Consider that a good thing." Damian retorted, taking his seat.

As another body sat next to mine across from Hale, I noticed that he and Hale looked almost alike. Doing a double take, I made the mental realization that I was sitting next to two absolutely delicious looking twins.

I slowly let my hand slid under the table, pinching myself to see if I was going to wake up from another one of my erotic dreams. The pain shooting through me made me realize that I, in fact, was actually awake.

“You okay?” The newcomer asked, giving me a perplexed stare.

My eyes widened as a smile crossed my face, “yep...yep. I’m good. Nothing wrong here.”

Hale began to laugh as he shook his head with a smile looking to the man across from him, “Talon, I think she is shocked we look alike.”

“Well, unfortunately we are twins.” The annoyed man stated openly, causing Hale to chuckle. “And I am the normal one.”

“Don’t let him intimidate you. That’s Talon. He is a giant teddy bear really.” Hale said, clearly rolling his eyes at Talon who shrugged his shoulders and scoffed.

“For some reason, I find that hard to believe.” I mumbled taking a sip of my drink again as I watched my father finally enter the room, and take a seat at the head of the table.

The conversation quickly fell into work, and other political aspects as we dug into the food. With having little interest in those kinds of things, I fell into my own thoughts, and tuned out everything they were talking about. I had no interest in getting to honestly know any of them personally, and therefore had no reason to hold a conversation.

“What do you think, Ivy?”

The question pulled me out of my internal thoughts, and my eyes looked at them in shock, knowing I was caught not paying attention. “Huh?”

“She isn’t even paying attention. I don’t know why you’re asking her opinion.” Damian snapped quickly at James, causing my father to give Damian a disapproving look.

“She is part of the family, Damian.”

“Right.” Damian said with a sigh of disapproval while glaring at me.

“I asked what it was you thought about adding a gaming center on the property for the kids that lived here.” My father asked again, and I found it odd that he would want to do something like that.

“How many kids live here?” I questioned, my lack of understanding not making me able to give a proper response.

“Well on the land we own, about 42 of various ages.”

I was shocked that many people would possibly be living on my father's property. I didn't see how that was possible. How much land did they actually own?

"See, she knows nothing about the property. There is no point in asking her." Damian grumbled, causing even Hale to look at him as if asking him to shut up.

"Actually, I do have an opinion." I snapped.

"Do enlighten us then, Ivy." Allison's voice was laced with sarcasm, and I was getting irritated with the way she kept addressing me. She didn't even know me, and yet was acting like a spoiled bitch.

Smirking, I took a sip of my water, washing down the bite of food I had taken and straightened myself into my seat. "I have a few questions first. How much land do you own and what is the total number of people total on the land?"

My father smiled, "We own about 400 acres of land, and upon that land we have about 150 people total on the property."

"Where is all of the education, and other resources located on the property?"

A look crossed my father's face, and his smile widened. "They attend in the city, forty minutes away."

"Well, there you go. Money shouldn't be spent on something like games, and other mindless things. Try investing in things that will help to educate and change the future. Try getting these children, and their family, into more agricultural activities. Having a library will help to create a better atmosphere for kids, as well as, allowing space for tutoring and other things."

Everyone stared at me silently, but my father was the one smiling.

"So you want us to put in a library, and waste space with things kids don't use nowadays." Talon stated, catching me off guard, considering he barely spoke over the entire dinner.

"No, I want you to focus on things that will further the future of the people who live here. Get the youth into things that will make this area prosper. Taking care of our land is how we survive. Building bright minds and futures make us self sustainable, and not relying on the cities around us to make sure we survive."

My words held a lot of weight with my father, and even Allison seemed genuinely impressed. Damian, however, didn't seem happy about what I said. Instead, he stared at me before sliding his chair out and walking away.

I stared at the empty doorway before looking back at the others, “did I say something wrong?”

“No,” James replied with a smile, “he has a lot on his mind. It isn’t you.”

For some reason I had a hard time believing that. The look on Allison’s face spoke volumes, and as she stood up to follow him, I watched my father look at her and shake his head. I had obviously caused issues, and it wasn’t what I was looking to do.

“If you will excuse me. I am going to call it a night.”

“Of course, Ivy. Thank you for coming to dinner.” My father replied as I stood and moved away from the table heading towards the back door.

“I told you not to let her come.” Damian’s voice said softly.

“You know I didn’t have a say in the matter, Damian.” Allison replied with a groan. I had come too close to a private conversation, but the fact they were talking about me had me stopping in my tracks to listen.

“He is your mate, Allison. You have a lot to say, but you won’t.” Damian snapped.

Mate? The hell does he mean mate?

“Damian, that’s enough. Stop this right now. You will not speak to me how you are.”

Damian sighed, “I’m sorry. It’s just so hard to focus with her around.”

“Well, perhaps make her want to leave. I don’t agree with the situation with her anyways.” Allison was getting on my last nerve. I had never done anything wrong to her, and she always seemed to have it out for me.

Pushing off the wall, I headed towards the back door and stopped once I grabbed the handle, looking towards Damian and Allison, both stood there wide-eyed looking at me.

“Such a warm welcome.” The sarcasm dripped off my tongue as I opened the door, and disappeared into the night back towards the comfort of the cottage at the back of the property.

With the chaos of the day, I was ready to make a hot cup of tea and watch a movie.

I wasn’t going to allow them to force me out easily. I had too much riding on my stay here, and if they wanted to try and play hardball with me then so be it.

They better know how to play the game.

