

Their Warrior Luna

Chapter 87

My stomach was knotted on the way to school this morning. I would have to see Grant and I wasn't sure if we would talk about our kiss, his kiss with Caitlyn, or prom. But my head had been on the verge of exploding all weekend. I tried to keep myself busy with work and school and taking care of mom when she wasn't fighting against me and nothing dulled my nerves.

Just as he had every day, he came into the library with a big smile on his face.

"What's up, Lenny?" He sat beside me dragging his textbooks out.

"I saw you kissing Caitlyn at the mall."

I didn't want it to be the first thing that came from my mouth, but here we are. My face flushed red and his face... unbothered.

"She kissed me. I didn't kiss her. Then I told her I was talking to someone." He bumped his shoulder against mine, flashing me his boyish smile.

"Are we good?" he asked me softly.

"Yeah. We're good." I was taken aback when his lips touched mine quickly.

"I meant what I said, Lennon. I like you." His brown eyes were searching mine for something, but I wasn't sure what. I couldn't admit my feelings yet. I knew better than to jinx myself. He feels like the only good thing in my life right now and I'm not ready to let go of it.

“Would you wanna catch a movie with me sometime? There is this cool little drive-in that plays these really cool old horror movies and they—” he cut me off by holding his finger up extinguishing my excitement entirely.

Did I come on too strong?

“It isn’t that I don’t want to do that, but I am super busy with practice and stuff.” He kept his eyes trained on the paper in front of him and I almost felt like I had crossed some line. I wasn’t supposed to get a crush on Grant, I was supposed to teach him and prepare him for his tests.

We worked in silence until four o’clock and then I had to leave for work.

“Hey. Could you come to my parent’s lake house with me and a few friends tomorrow? We are all skipping school, and I would understand if you aren’t into that kind of thing, but we are all getting together and trying on our prom clothes. You know? All that matching crap girls like to do.” I was very surprised he invited me to do anything with him and his friends. I smiled, probably a bit too eager.

“Sure, yeah. I would really like that!” He bent down quickly kissing my forehead, making my stomach flutter before he left me in the library a hot mess of nerves.

My stomach turned and twisted painfully my whole shift and when it was over, I walked home with those same twisting feelings nauseating me terribly. He was right about one thing. I do not like skipping school but, he asked to be with me and if we can’t do normal date things because of his football stuff, then I will take what I can get. It isn’t like one day is going to matter. I have straight A’s, and a perfect GPA. One day wouldn’t matter.

I lay down staring at those same off-white popcorn ceilings until out of nowhere a strange feeling came over me. It spread through my soul, warming my skin. Hell, I even felt it in my fingers and toes. I tossed the covers back, tiptoeing over to my door. I locked it and pulled on the handle to make sure it wouldn’t open. Then, when I got back into my bed, I realized that

feeling that had come over me was hope. For the first time in years, I could envision a new life. One out from underneath those off-white popcorn ceilings.

When I woke up at four this morning, I couldn't lie there any longer. I crossed the hallway, thankful when I heard her snores coming from the living room downstairs. My green eyes didn't seem so dull this morning and I wasn't sure if it was that small spark of hope gleaming in my eyes or the will to live that his presence seemed to be feeding me. I wadded my long curls into a bun on top of my head and after brushing my teeth, I cracked the door feeling relieved that the creaking pipes roaring to life hadn't disturbed her. I crossed the hall in long strides, closing my door behind me. After dressing, I grabbed my garment bag and put my pumps into my backpack before slinging both over my shoulder.

Fearful that she might hear my window from downstairs, I only opened it an inch or so at a time, and when it was open just enough I slid out of it. I ran until my window was out of my sight and then I slowed down. I know exactly where the Conley's Lakehouse is, everyone in this town does.

In the spirit of making new friends today, I stopped at the coffee shop and got my usual drink and a dozen donuts in different flavors. The walk to the lake house would take me about forty-five minutes and as I made my way in that direction and the sun started kissing the sky in hues of orange and pink, my stomach flipped. I couldn't tell if it was the coffee or the nerves, but suddenly I had the urge to go back. Just turn around and pretend I forgot about his invitation. I shook my nerves and continued my walk. If I turned back now, I would miss the time he has offered me, and that time with him is better than the time with my mother or the people lining the hallways who went from pretending I was a virus to pretending I didn't exist at all anymore.

I could smell the lake the moment I stepped onto the paved driveway. I inhaled deeply thinking about my childhood summers that I spent here playing by myself. Mom was more stable back then, almost normal, and if I closed my eyes I could smell the barbeque cooking and hear my voice yelling

for her to watch me do a trick on my bicycle. Those memories don't hurt as badly as they used to. Some days I can even smile at them.

The roar of tires on the pavement caught my attention and I turned to see Grant's blue truck coming up the driveway. Looks like I wasn't the only one who came early.

"Hey, Lenny. You are early. I was gonna clean the place up a bit before everyone got there. Wanna ride?" His boyish smile made my heart jump wildly. I nodded, tossed my bags in, and climbed into the truck next to the boy who was showing me that time is a bit more precious than I realized.

"I could help." I muttered.

"What was that?" he asked over the roar of the engine. I cleared my throat, willing my voice to be louder.

"I could help clean things up. Or whatever you need to do. I could help." My voice was clearer this time, but hearing myself sounding so desperate made my cheeks flush.

"You are too good to me, Lenny." He reached out, tucking a loose curl behind my ear and the way he was looking at me made my stomach flop again. But, this time it was different. It wasn't a good flop. This one dropped painfully at the sight of his hungry eyes and made my body break out in a cold sweat.

Maybe I should have turned back after all.