

Her Secret 57

CHAPTER 57 NO.57

When Lana arrived at her house, she was still thinking of a way to convince Ray to let her stay out late even when it was a school night. Ray was usually a carefree parental figure but he was still protective of her in his own ways, especially now when a lot of things concerning Lana's health and safety kept occurring. She knew for a fact that if Ray even found out about the incident involving River's father and her, she would never be allowed to leave unsupervised ever again. Having just a simple passing thought of her bite wound caused her hand to slightly ache.

Lana went towards the kitchen to grab a drink when she noticed Ray standing there cooking something. The familiar aromatic scent of Cajun chicken filled her senses. Ray glanced behind him and spotted her standing by the entrance of the kitchen.

"Welcome back, Lana." He said before turning his attention back to his cooking.

"Um, hi. I didn't expect you to be home." She said softly as she went to give him a quick hug from the back. She then peered down at the dish he was making and felt herself salivate.

"Jack basically chased me out of the station just now, he was saying something along the lines of 'you need a break' or whatever." He said, mimicking Jack's deep voice in a comical manner.

"You have been working really hard..." she muttered as she moved to stand further away from him as the slight smoke emitting from the pan was irritating her eyes. She leaned her back against the counter and watched him. "Are there any updates?" she asked him hesitantly.

"...none so far. The pack has been helping us out at night but strangely we can never catch the culprit. There's always a distraction."

"Distraction? How so?"

"Mm, you could even say there are false alarms? There's often reports of suspicious movement but whenever the pack goes to check it out, whoever that's killing the animals strikes again. It's like they know just what to do to divert our attention..." he muttered to himself.

"Why not station two teams? One to check out the suspicious movement and another to stay at the spot where the caresses are usually found." Lana suggested.

"We tried that last night but the same thing kept happening. I'm often at the station as a navigator but at a certain time things often get too hectic. One way or another, the team in charge of staking out the spot keeps getting distracted. And we don't have enough manpower to spare."

"No wonder why you think the culprit is a werewolf. They need to be intelligent enough to pull this off. But, it can't be anymore from Rosecliff right?" she asked.

Ray turned off the fire as he proceeded to plate his meal. "I honestly can't be so sure about that anymore, Lana."

"Do you have someone in mind? Like anyone suspicious who could've done this?"

"Can we not talk about this now? Please?"

"...okay. I'm sorry."

"No, don't apologise. It's just...you don't have to worry about these things when you have midterms coming up, right?"

"I can multitask you know and besides, River and the others have midterms too and yet they are out and about trying to help solve this case."

Ray turned around to look at her with an unreadable expression. "Because that's our duty as werewolves, Lana. We are bound to the forest and we have to protect it no matter what happens. Leaving together with humans and integrating into their society is just something we had to do to survive in this modern era."

"If that's the case then as a forest ranger shouldn't I be involved as well? I just want to help, you know."

"That's totally different and you know that. And you also know that I can't let you help because—"

"Because it's too dangerous? Because I'm not a real werewolf like you or anyone else in the pack?"

"I didn't say that." Ray frowned.

"It sounds like that to me." She sighed. "But it's fine. I don't want to argue with you over this."

"...alright." Ray then picked up his plate and gestured it to Lana. "Do you want some chicken?" he offered with a smile.

Lana smiled back and shook her head. "I had a pretty heavy lunch," she said. "But Ray, can I go out tonight? Some friends are doing a study group and I was thinking of joining."

"Which friends?" he asked as he raised an eyebrow.

"The usual group. Carmen, Suzie, the gang."

"Where will you guys do it?"

"Suzie's place." She answered immediately, hoping that it did not seem suspicious to Ray.

“That’s the other side of town.” He muttered, deep in thought. “Will Carmen be picking you up?”

“Yes.” She lied.

“Okay, I don’t see why not then. What time do you plan on coming home?”

“We have a few subjects we want to cover and I’ll probably have dinner with them so I’ll be back before midnight?”

“Make it before 11. You still have school tomorrow so I don’t want you to overdo it. Got it?” he said as he waved his fork at her.

“Yes sir.” She grumbled before excusing herself to head upstairs. In her room, Lana started to wonder if her lie to Ray was going to come back and bite her in the ass. But at the moment all she wanted to do was get answers and Avery was the only one who was openly offering answers to her. She knew that what she was walking into would be dangerous but the mere fact that she would be one step closer to finding out what was happening in the forest made that fact rather trivial.

Lana then picked up her phone and made a group video call with Suzie and Carmen. After a moment, their faces popped up on her phone screen. She could immediately tell that Carmen was in her room while Suzie was at the mall. A familiar mop of hair could be seen walking next to her.

“Sorry for calling all of a sudden.” Lana said.

“You only do group calls when it’s really important, so what’s up? Is everything okay?” Carmen asked.

“Hold on! Let me go somewhere a bit quieter!” Suzie announced. She then turned to Steven who was beside her. “Steven, could you wait for me over here?”

“Sure! Say hi to the girls!” they could hear him say.

“What happened to studying in the library?” Lana asked the two.

“After an hour I ditched. I felt like I was studying more about the ‘Falling in Love: Heaven and Hell Can’t Stop Me’ series rather than World History.” Carmen sighed.

“Well, excuse me! I didn’t know being passionate about something was such a bad thing!” Suzie huffed.

Carmen rolled her eyes. “It is when we were supposed to be studying!”

“Whatever.” Suzie sulked. “So, what’s up Lana?”

“Right, I need your help. Long story short, I lied to Ray that I’ll be going to Suzie’s place for a study group

tonight but in fact I'll be going to meet Avery."

"What!?" both Suzie and Carmen exclaimed and Lana knew that they were more shocked at the fact that she was going to meet Avery.

"It's really complicated to explain but I'm just telling you now in case Ray calls either one of you to check up or something."

"Fine, I don't mind having your back but you need to tell us everything tomorrow! Got it?" Suzie said.

"When did you two even become friends?" Carmen asked. "Did she ask you out on a date or something?"

"Wait, Avery's gay?" Suzie asked in a hushed tone.

"I'm not sure?" Lana said doubtfully. "But it doesn't matter if she is or isn't. And it's not a date. I'm just meeting up with her for something else."

"Drugs." Suzie said knowingly.

"What? No!" Lana frowned.

"Okay fine, I'll drop it but I expect a detailed explanation tomorrow!" Suzie said. "I gotta go now! Bye girls!" she said and without waiting for any response, she cut the call.

"Well, she's as insane as ever." Carmen muttered.

"Yea, and I'm sorry that I'm being so secretive about this..."

"Hey, don't apologise over something like that. If you like Avery then I don't see why you two shouldn't be together."

"Carmen...that's not it—"

"I support you wholeheartedly, Lana! No matter what genitals you prefer,"

"Carmen!" Lana called out, feeling her face heat up.

Carmen laughed at her reaction. "I'm joking! Well, I have to go too! Be safe, okay. See you tomorrow!"

Lana sighed as the call ended, feeling exhausted just by talking to her two friends. She then laid on her bed and felt that she should rest up before she goes out at night to meet Avery. She silently hoped that Avery would stay true to her words and not betray Lana's trust. As she felt herself drift off to sleep, she

couldn't help but to wonder what River was doing and how he was coping with everything that was happening in the forest. She then felt a sudden urge to see him the longer she thought about him.