

Chapter 9 - Lake

The next four days were dull. I feel guilty for snapping at Luke the other day, even though he did ditch me. What is worse is that Jessica has latched onto him like a leech and is spreading that they are an item, if a girl so much as breathes in his direction; she goes all psycho bitch on them. Well she was already one but now it's worse. Marco seems to still like me though. He follows me EVERYWHERE. Actually I think he has completely abandoned Luke, and that must surely be difficult for him seeing as he raised him from an egg.

I'm still the bird whore, even more so with Marco at my heels. My flight with Sam has already been forgotten and Raphael still hasn't arrived. I guess he's busy, and my excitement has completely diminished. My life is a boring hell hole; even Fleur is gravitating towards Jessica's group of friends. A group of four boys and a girl joined school yesterday stating they are relatives of Luke's. The guys are extremely hot, but don't hold a candle to Luke. So with Jessica hanging out with the abnormally beautiful group, Fleur wants in on that. It hurts, being ditched for them, but I'm so used to being alone I just get on with it.

Ok so I might cry myself to sleep but that is it.

Friday ends with sunshine and hot temperatures. Everyone is apparently going to the lake for a party, and when I say everyone I mean everyone. Of course I'm not invited, so when everyone is driving out of the school car park in nice cars, I begin my walk home. I was not even 3 minutes in when a red mini pulls up.

"Emma!" Fleur yells over her loud music. I stop and look at her, raising my eyebrows in a 'what' gesture. I'm not in the mood to talk to my supposed "best" friend. "Come on hop in so we can get your swim suit!"

"I don't want to go to the lake Fleur." I begin walking again, but she doesn't get the hint.

"Please!" She pouts. "Come on! Maybe you can make up with Luke!" She wiggles her eyebrows. I know she has a crush on Luke, so she is coming up with desperate excuses to make me go. That angers me.

"No." I carry on walking as she drives slowly next to me. Come on Em; keep walking, only around the corner now.

"He's been asking about you." She says. I still don't know what she means. As if she could read my mind she continues, "He clearly cares about you, so I think now is the best time to be friends again." I heard the emphasis on friends. Now I never usually make plans, but Fleur ditched me for my biggest bully. He almost kissed YOU, not Fleur. A small smile appears on my lips. Oh yeah, pay back is a bitch.

"Ok let me get my stuff."

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The lake was packed full of bodies and the area surrounding was the same. Girls were sunbathing and guys were drinking what I would presume was alcohol. Music was blaring and someone even brought a barbeque.

I was wearing denim shorts and a tank top over my bikini with purple flip flops. I was dressed casually, so I hoped with everything I had that no one would notice me. I got a few weird looks but no one seemed to care. A real smile grew on my face. Maybe I could have some fun!

"Want a drink?" Fleur asks whilst scanning the crowd.

"Sure"

She runs off, dropping her towel at my feet. I move a few feet where I know the sun will be the longest and lay them out. Once I settled down I patiently waited for Fleur, and waited, and waited. Checking my phone I realised she has been gone for 40 minutes. Sighing, I lay back down, might as well enjoy the sun.

"Hey," A deep voice next to me makes me jump. Sitting up, I take in the boy, no man, next to me. He has honey golden hair with grey eyes. His tan makes him look like a surfer boy and his muscles are lean, not bulky. I think he is one of the new students that are related to Luke.

"Hi" I whisper. Someone is talking to me? Hope blooms in my chest at the idea of more friends.

"You're the bird whore right?" And there goes the hope.

"No. It's Emma!" I snap. I lie back down and ignore him. I don't need more bullies on my back.

"Alright easy, I just wanted to say you might as well leave. No one wants you here." He says bluntly. It hurts when you hear your insecurities out loud. But I want to stay strong, so I do not move or reply. "Fine, don't say I didn't warn you." He whispers darkly in my ear. I flinch from the coldness.

I still refuse to move. He sighs and I listen as his footsteps get quieter. A few seconds later a freezing cold, sticky liquid is poured all over me. Gasping I jump up and wipe my eyes in desperation to stop the stinging. It got up my nose and in my mouth, making me cough and choke. When I finally open my eyes, I notice everyone laughing. Turning around I look for who poured it on me. Fleur stands in her swim suit holding a bucket, laughing with everyone whilst high fiving Jessica.

My best friend is now my bully. Choking on a sob, I run. As I run I hear the beach. I keep running until I am deep in the woods again, hoping something will put me out of my misery. I have no one! Everyone hates me! I come to a stop by a particularly thick tree and slide down its trunk until I am sitting on the uncomfortable ground. I hardly notice the sticky substance that is drying on my skin whilst I sob my heart out.

I don't know how long I was sat there, but the sun has begun setting. I want the darkness to come, I can hide in darkness.

Caw!

Marco's cry is loud in the quiet forest; I look up to see him circling above the tree line. Being such a big bird he probably cannot fit through the canopy. Ignoring him I close my eyes, hoping to see peace in my sleep.

When a twig snaps in front of me, I jump up expecting it to be Razi. I grab the nearest and biggest stick, not like it could injure an angel but it makes me feel safer. I wince when the stick is thrown on my pulls at my skin, I really should wash this off.

"It's me!" Luke's familiar voice washes over me, instantly calming me. "Easy, I was looking everywhere for you, if it wasn't for Marco I would never have found you! I was so worried!" His expression looks pained; somehow I know he is not lying. He really does care. Don't get your hopes up! You will only get hurt again.

"I wanted to be alone." My voice sounds pathetic, but I have every right to be pathetic. Luke is now in front of me. His comforting heat radiating off him in waves, and I shiver, realising I'm in the woods, at night, in shorts and a t-shirt.

He must notice my shiver. "You must be freezing." He pulls me into him, circling me with his strong arms. The safety I feel in his arms frightens me, I have never relied on anyone. But I can see myself relying on Luke. "I hate what they did to you." He whispers into my hair.

"I'm used to the bullying; it was the fact that Fleur did it." I feel tears sting my eyes again and one escapes. Luke puts both his hands to the side of my face forcing me to look at him. His thumb carefully swipes away the tear, and the inner turmoil I see in his eyes make my chest clench.

"You should not be bullied!" Although he is being careful with me, anger laces every word. "I will protect you Em. I'm sorry I let you that night, but I won't leave you again. I promise." Before I can blink, he swoops down and crushes his lips with mine. It wasn't a sweet, gentle kiss. It was a kiss of desperation. I feel all his guilt as he shows me how much he cares.

His arms circled my waist whilst my hands travel up his chest and neck every muscle shivers under my touch, I keep going up until I finally have my fingers entwined with his hair, and it's as soft as it looks. I give a gentle tug, pulling a groan from him that vibrates his chest. His pulls me even closer, and it's an arousing show of strength. Every part of my body is touching his, but the poor guy has to bend a bit to actually reach my lips. His tongue darts out to lick the seam of my mouth, with some hesitation I let him in. I can't hold back the moan that bursts out of me when his tongue caresses mine, His hands are traveling all over my back, comforting me in his heady assault. I concentrate on moving my lips in sync with his in an intimate dance. My first kiss couldn't have been better. Everything around me is just a blur as my whole being centres on Luke.

Knowing we have to stop, I slow the kiss down then pull away. We both stand there breathless and he rests his forehead on mine.

"Wow." I whisper.

He chuckles and pulls me closer again. Resting his chin on my head he whispers back, "Yeah, wow. You got me sticky baby" He squeezes me then takes a step back. I fall out laughing at how ridiculous he looks with parts of his clothing covered in the sticky stuff. "Can I escort you home milady?" He holds out his arm, which I embarrassingly grab with a lot of enthusiasm, causing him to chuckle again.

Yep, Luke makes me happy.

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