

Her Secret 24

CHAPTER 24

There was restless chatter among the students as group after group of them left the assembly hall to be briefed on their designated tasks. Lana was starting to get anxious when Carmen, Suzie and Zane were called out to be a part of a large group in charge of the haunted house. Her two friends gave her a sad look at the fact that the three of them weren't going to be together for their final founder's day. Lana shared the same sad expression as she waved at them when they left the hall with their group.

"Too bad we won't be working together," Zane said as he stood up from his seat. Lana watched silently as he pushed back his golden locks and wore his cap. He glanced down at her.

"Sorry..." she replied, unsure if she was apologizing for not being in the same team as him or apologizing for staring at him.

Zane laughed. "Why are you apologizing? It's not your fault." He said as he lightly tapped Lana on her head, she tensed from the contact. "Well, I'll see you around, Lana." He said with an affectionate smile.

Lana could feel her cheeks burning. "S-See you..." she muttered softly.

Zane then leaned forward, their face inches away. "I hope you won't forget your promise to me." He smiled. Internally, Lana was a mess as she tried to stop herself from shouting in delight from Zane's sudden action. Externally she gave him a crude nod and she watched Zane jump over his seat to the back row where everyone was called and the row was empty. He waved at Lana goodbye before jogging over to catch up with his group.

"Looks like it's just you and me, Lana." Steven announced as he slid over to sit beside Lana.

Lana forced herself to push her unnecessary emotions away and focused on what was happening. "What tasks are left anyway?" she asked, looking around the hall to see who else was left.

"Hmm, technical, catering and the ticket booth teams," he said as he counted on his fingers.

Lana nodded as she continued to glance around the hall to see the faces of the remaining students. She frowned when her eyes fell on River who was seated at the back with his arms crossed. Most of his friends were gone as well but Maddison was beside him as she happily talked about something to him. River glanced away from her and looked up, catching Lana's gaze. Lana looked away almost immediately, feeling as though her heart almost stopped.

Steven noticed Lana's strange behaviour. "Hey, what's up? You good?" he asked as he looked around to see who Lana was clearly hiding from.

Lana was certain that if he saw River, he would tell Suzie about this and the two of them will continue

with their made-up story about how Lana likes River. If anything, Lana wanted to prevent that from happening.

“Ah—” Lana wanted to call out to him and distract him but Mrs. Hathaway’s voice caught the two’s attention as they turned to the stage.

“Now, I’ll be announcing the team that will be handling the ticket booth for the three days during the festival. There will be four students working in this team.” Mrs. Hathaway’s voice called out.

“Damn, you know, I always thought the ticket booth duties were super boring. Like all you do is sit there and sell tickets to the people.” Steven whispered to Lana. “And it would totally suck if you were paired with someone you don’t like or someone weird, right Lana?”

Lana felt as though Steven was about to jinx their situation. Before she could open her mouth to reply to him, Mrs. Hathaway’s voice boomed through the speakers.

“River Attwood.” She called out.

“Oh damn. Wanna bet everyone wants to get ticket booth duty now?” Steven laughed at his own statement as he turned to where River was seated. River wore his typical poker face to hide any reaction from the announcement.

“Shit...” Lana mumbled to herself, as she could feel her gut was screaming at her. She was silently praying to all the almighty deities she could think of that her name wouldn’t be called out. She watched nervously as Mrs. Hathaway pulled out the next raffle ticket.

“Steven Choi.”

Steven dramatically groaned as his body slumped back against the chair. “I really jinxed myself huh?” he sighed. After a moment, he shrugged. “Well, at least I’m with River.”

“You guys are friends?” Lana asked absent-mindedly as her attention was plastered on Mrs. Hathaway on stage.

“We talk once in a while but I mostly spend my time with Suzie, you guys and the football team.” He explained.

Lana nodded, clearly distracted. Mrs. Hathaway pulled out another ticket. “Maddison Attwood.”

“Wow. Of course, I’m in a team with two of the most popular students in school, great.” Steven sighed. “But honestly, Maddison scares the shit out of me. Her glare is enough to send chills down my spine.”

Lana offered him a sympathetic smile but silently agreed with him. “At least you know they won’t just dump all the work on you...” she reassured, knowing how the Attwood’s were known for their diligence.

That's one of the reasons why everyone speaks so highly of them.

"That's true." Steven said, nodding happily.

Lana felt her heart slowly beat in a steady pace as her nerves calmed down. There were still many students left in the hall and the chances of Lana being picked as the fourth student was surely slim. She went to the phone to let the girls know that Steven was in a team with the Attwoods.

"And the final student is..." Mrs. Hathaway started. "Lana Danley."

Through her shock, Lana dropped her phone to the ground. The loud thud was muffled by Steven who cheered happily as he hugged her. The sudden commotion caused the remaining students and even the teachers to turn their attention to the two of them. "At least I'm with someone I know!" he rejoiced, slowly suffocating Lana with his intensely tight grip around her. Lana felt as though her life was spiralling down into an endless abyss of bad luck.

"Fuck..." was all Lana could mutter before allowing Steven to drag her out of the hall.

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Lana frowned at her phone screen as Suzie and Carmen continued to spam the group chat with exclamations and disbelief when Lana told them that she was in a group with Steven, River and Maddison for ticket booth duty. In a blink of an eye, everything started to annoy Lana when Suzie brought up the fact that it was destiny that made Lana and River be in the same group.

Carmen: As if, it was purely coincidence

Suzie: Nope!

Suzie: it's like it was meant to be ~

Carmen: Omg you need to stop with that shit, Lana likes something else

Suzie: I know that!

Suzie: I'm just calling it as I see it!

Lana: Suzie O'Brien

Lana: I hate you

Suzie: Nooo!! I'm sorry! I'll stop teasing you!!

Lana rolled her eyes after reading Suzie's text as she proceeded to shove her phone into her pocket. She

was already annoyed at her situation and her friends were only agitating her even more. Her attention went back to the empty classroom that she was in together with the other three.

They had to wait for Mrs. Hathaway to brief them about their duties since she was the teacher in charge of the ticket booth. They sat in complete silence, with River and Maddison sitting at one corner of the classroom and Steven and Lana at the opposite side.

Lana tried her best to avoid making eye contact with River, fully aware that she would either blush from the memory of her stupid dream about him or straight up start an argument with him. There was no in between. But Lana quickly found out that River wasn't the biggest problem in that room, it was Maddison who was glaring at Lana. Lana's eyes were fixed on the wall clock, silently praying that Mrs. Hathaway would come before Maddison murders Lana in cold blood for no apparent reason.

Steven was clearly aware of the intense atmosphere that was emitting from the three, especially the Attwoods and their killer glares directed towards Lana. He wanted to text Suzie about it and brainstorm with her about the potential reasons this was happening. But he could see how much Lana was dreading every second that she had to be stuck in the room with them.

Steven then nodded to himself and stood up. He proceeded to drag Lana's chair with Lana still seated on it towards where River and Maddison were. Lana let out a startled yelp but before she could do anything or do anything, she was facing River who was clearly surprised by Steven's actions. Steven then plopped down on the chair opposite of Maddison. They were now seated in a square.

"Well then," he declared, causing the three of them to turn to him. "Let's bond!"