

Her Secret 41

CHAPTER 41 NO.41

Zane stood at the foot of the stairs as he leaned against the handrails. Lana did not have to see his face to know how restless he was due to everything that just happened. Lana slowly approached him but her weight on the wooden stairs caused it to creak and Zane turned around with a surprised look.

“Lana...?”

“Hi Zane,” she greeted with a small wave of her hands. The moment Lana stepped off the stairs, she felt her body being pulled into a tight embrace by him. She froze in his arms as her senses were filled with the subtle scent of sandalwood that emitted from him.

“I’m so glad you are okay.” He whispered in a pained voice.

“I’m sorry that I worried you...” she said, her voice muffled as her face was pressed against his chest.

Zane snapped out of it as he quickly placed his hands on her shoulders and pulled himself away from her. “I’m sorry! I wasn’t thinking and I just—”

“No, no, it’s fine really!” she reassured him as she turned her face away to hide her pink cheeks from him.

Zane then slowly dropped his hands back to his sides. “How are you feeling...?” he asked softly.

“I’m fine thanks to River.” She smiled. “But I really want to apologize to you...because of me we couldn’t finish the hunt.”

Zane sighed at her remark. “I couldn’t care less about the hunt, Lana. What I care about is you.” He blurted.

Lana looked at him with widened eyes. She knew that he was only saying that due to his kind and caring personality but Lana could not help but get her hopes up, even just a little bit. The expression he was making was only making her overthink the entire situation.

She was too stunned to even give him a proper response, she just continued smiling and nodded her head. Zane mentally scolded himself as he felt that his words probably made her uncomfortable. He found himself completely inept at situations like this.

“I mean...somehow I feel that if I didn’t ask you to come out today then you and River wouldn’t have fallen off that slope.” He muttered.

“Please don’t say that! You didn’t push me or caused the ground to crumble! So, please don’t even think like that.” She scolded as she pouted at him.

Zane smiled at her adorable reaction. "Okay, I understand. Could I accompany you home? That's the least I could do right now."

Lana pondered about it for a bit before shaking her head. "Would you like to accompany me back to the town square instead? I remember that I owe you a dance." She said sheepishly.

Zane laughed but then went serious again. "Are you sure? Is your body okay...?"

Lana nodded aggressively. "I'm seriously fine! I just...want some form of distraction right now. I feel as though I might go insane if I'm left alone."

Lana thought that the moment she saw Zane she would feel better but whenever there was any ounce of silence, she caught herself as her mind trailed back to River. Even though Ray and River himself reassured her that he would be fine, she couldn't stop thinking about him. A part of her felt the need to even go all the way to the hospital just to see him. Just to talk to him, to hear his voice and she knew that if she did not distract herself from her own thoughts, she would probably drive to the hospital herself impromptu.

"Why do you say that?" he asked.

Lana let out a nervous laughter. "I'm just really worried about him. About River." She answered him with a soft voice.

Zane nodded. "That's very understandable. But Lana, that River...he isn't like any average human being." He stated.

Lana immediately looked at Zane as she tried to comprehend his words. In her mind, Lana questioned if Zane knew about River's secret. Would that make Zane a werewolf? But if Zane was a werewolf, wouldn't someone have mentioned it to her?

"What do you mean by that?" she asked him carefully.

Zane looked away for a moment as he tried to think of the right words to say to her. When he met her gaze once more, he couldn't help himself but smile at the concerned expression she was making. "What I mean is that—River is perfect in all ways, right? So there's no doubt that he will be a-okay. He might even come to the square later to show off his new cast."

Lana let out a sigh of relief but somehow, deep down she felt as though Zane was hiding something from her. Maybe he knew more than what he was implying, maybe Lana was overthinking it but either way all she wanted to do now was not think about River anymore.

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As the sun set for the day, the town square was illuminated with the warm hue of the lamps and lanterns around the area. The square was crowded with many people walking around and enjoying the festivities. Some were interested in the wide selection of food the stalls had to offer, some just wanted to play at the game booths to win fun prizes and some even danced on the dance floor as the live band's music resonated throughout the surrounding area.

After quickly changing out of her mud stained clothes with her spare clothes she had at the station, Lana met up with Zane and her friends back at the square. Although her friends told her that they would tag along to spend some time with her at the festival, they quickly excused themselves so that Lana and Zane were left alone together. Lana could already see that Steven and Suzie were busy letting their imaginations go wild again as they kept glancing back at the two and speaking in hushed voices even when they were walking away.

"Are you hungry?" Zane asked Lana suddenly, causing her to look away from her friends who quickly disappeared in the crowd.

"Not really, but we should go get something if you want." She smiled.

"Let's walk around and see what they have." He said as he gestured towards the food stalls.

Lana went over to walk beside him. "They have a fried cheesecake stall if you're feeling adventurous." Lana joked.

Zane chuckled. "That honestly sounds...disgusting."

"Suzie really enjoyed it." She said as she looked around the area. Her eyes caught on one of the game booths. It was a simple shooting game where participants had to shoot rubber bullets at moving targets. But what caught Lana's attention wasn't the game itself, it was a pillow-sized wolf plushie.

"Do you see something you like?" she heard Zane's voice dangerously close to her ear. She jolted forward and let out a nervous laugh.

"I was just thinking of trying a game to win a plushie," she told him as she pointed towards the direction of the booth.

"Oh? Let's go then!" Zane said excitedly as he grabbed Lana's hand and pulled her along.

Lana felt faint the moment he touched her hand but she pulled herself together when the two approached the booth. From up close, the wolf plushie really did resemble River in his wolf form. She smiled at the thought alone.

"Welcome! It only cost 2 bucks for ten bullets!" the vendor told the two when they walked up to the booth. "All you need to do to win a random prize is hit a target! But if you hit this small target then you get to pick whatever prize you want!" he added as he pointed at the small target.

Lana frowned, the small target must've been the size of a bottle cap and the fact that the targets would be moving won't make this an easy challenge. She then reached into her pocket and pulled out some dollar bills. Some part of her really wanted the wolf plushie but the other part of her just wanted to challenge herself to this silly game.

"Did you see something you really want, Lana?" Zane asked her as he slowly let go of her hand.

"Yes, that wolf..." she whispered to him as subtly pointed in the plushie's direction.

"Then, let's try to win this together." He said as he waved his 2 dollars at her before passing it to the vendor. Lana followed suit and soon the two of them were holding two guns filled with rubber bullets.

"Good luck!" the vendor exclaimed as he pulled down a lever. There was a loud squeaking sound followed by a sudden crack and soon the targets started to move erratically. Some targets moved slower than others but the smallest target looked as though it was malfunctioning. It moved around the frame at a ridiculous speed and it often even moved behind other targets.

"Well, this doesn't look very fair." Zane said with a smile. Though deep down, he was absolutely ready to make himself look good in front of Lana by all means.

Lana shrugged since she knew all these game booths had its fair share of being rigged. She then positioned herself with the gun. She was slowly thinking that it was impossible to even hit the small manic target but at this point she just wanted to have fun with Zane.

"So are we working together or against each other?" Lana teasingly asked him.

Zane raised an eyebrow at her question. "Oh do I hear a challenge? You're so on, Danley." He said as he got fired up. "First one to win the wolf, right?"

Lana laughed at his sudden seriousness. "Right!"

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The fur of the plushie felt soft and nice against Lana's touch but what baffled her the most was the fact that it had blue eyes. She wondered what were the chances of her finding an exact replica of River's wolf form as a toy.

"Congrats on your win." Zane said with a huff as he pretended to be upset that Lana won.

"I honestly don't feel like I won." Lana sighed as she remembered she spent almost 14 bucks on the game. Halfway through it, she was determined to win the plushie no matter what. She even forgot that Zane and her were supposedly going against each other to win the plush but Zane stopped after the second round as he got so immersed in watching Lana's shooting skills.

“The bigger question here is what do we do with all of those?” Zane asked as he pointed behind him. On the counter of the booth was a mountain of prizes the two of them won by just simply hitting the other targets.

Lana let out an awkward laugh as she hugged her wolf closer to her chest. “I honestly don’t need that many plushies and toys...”

“Well, I don’t either...”

“Don’t worry about that, you two! If you’d like you could let me give them to the orphanage.” The vendor interjected.

Lana and Zane agreed but before they could leave the vendor wanted a picture of the two of them beside their prizes. He told the two that he has never seen anyone hit that many targets before. After they posed with the prizes, the vendor thanked them and they left.

As the two made their way back towards the food stalls, Zane couldn’t stop himself from casting quick glances down at Lana and how tightly she was embracing the plushie.

“You must really like wolves,” he commented.

“What makes you say that?” she asked him, clearly oblivious as to how she was acting at that moment.

Zane smiled before letting out a small laugh. “It was just really cute to see how determined you were to win it.”

“Ahh! Please stop mentioning it! I can’t believe I spent 14 bucks on that dumb game!” she bellowed at her poor financial choices but in actuality she did not really regret her decision now that the wolf was in her hands.

“Then, let’s grab a light snack. My treat, of course.” Zane said as he winked at her. Lana internally screamed at the charming sight, squeezing the wolf harder as she tried her best to remain calm and composed. But Zane really knew what to say and do to make her heart beat wildly for him.