

Her Secret 42

CHAPTER 42 NO.42

The live band played a slow and melodious piece which caused people to pair up to dance together on the dance floor. Zane thought that this would be the best time to ask Lana for a dance but he did not really think about what they would do with the 12 inch wolf plushie she was carrying around throughout their time together.

One of his hands was wrapped around her waist while the other held her hand firmly. As the two swayed on the dance floor, any ounce of romance was quickly diminished by the fact that Lana was a giggling mess and Zane was getting rather ticklish by the furry plush that was pressed between their chests.

Zane noticed that on-lookers were pointing at their direction and yet he did not blame them. What he thought would be a rather intimate time with Lana turned into a wolf plushie being a third wheel to them.

"I'm so sorry," Lana muttered as she tried to stop herself from laughing at the absurdity of the situation.

"It's fine, really." Zane smiled. "I've never danced with someone like this before," he chuckled.

"I could text the girls and ask them to take care of it for a while." She suggested.

Zane's grip on her hand and waist tightened. "No, I'm rather comfortable like this." He said.

Lana laughed. "We look ridiculous, don't we?"

Seeing Lana smile and laugh freely made him feel rather accomplished. He leaned closer to her, feeling the plush between their chests flatten from the pressure. "How are you feeling now? Are you still thinking about River?" he whispered into her ear.

Lana nodded slowly as Zane pulled away from her. "I think I'll only stop worrying about him once I actually see that he is okay. But I truly want to thank you for spending time with me, Zane. I really had fun tonight!" she beamed.

Zane smiled at her response. His eyes then caught a familiar figure in the crowd and felt his smile fade instantly. It must have been a coincidence that after talking about him, he would appear like a demon being summoned. The fact that he was wearing a baseball cap and a facemask made it hard to recognize him, but Zane could recognize those blue piercing eyes anywhere. River and Zane's gaze met and Zane found it strange that his eyes looked almost sad for a brief moment. River then looked away as the person beside him, a blonde woman caught his attention.

They stood close to each other as the blonde placed her hand gently over River's cast. Zane could not hear what they were talking about but from River's reaction, he could only guess that whatever she said

to him, River did not like it one bit as his body language changed and his eyes darkened. He then watched as the blonde walked away, leaving River all alone.

“Zane?” he heard Lana call out to her.

“Yes?”

“You stopped moving...is everything alright?” she asked, her eyes glistening from the warm hue that surrounded them. He did not even realize that he was so caught up with what was happening with River and the unfamiliar blonde that he quickly stopped dancing. But at that moment, as he was looking down into Lana’s eyes, Zane was tempted to lean forward and kiss her.

Zane sighed as he slowly pulled away from her. Lana quickly grabbed the plushie before it could fall to the ground. She looked at him, waiting for some sort of explanation as she was quick to overthink that she did something wrong for him to act this way.

“Lana—” Zane opened his mouth, not really sure if he wanted to inform her about River’s arrival or if he wanted to take her far away from the other man. The genuine concern on her face only made things more complicated for Zane as he was still on the fence of what to do.

“Are you not feeling well? Should we go grab a seat somewhere?” she asked when Zane did not continue his sentence.

Zane shook his head. “Remember when I told you that River was going to be alright?” he suddenly asked.

Lana nodded dubiously. Zane then smiled and pointed behind her. She turned around as she watched a familiar back walking away from the crowd. She clenched onto the plushie, feeling a sudden need to run after him.

“You should go. You said that you’ll feel better if you saw that he was okay right? So go and talk to him.” He gently said to her.

Lana twirled to look at him. She did not expect Zane to say that to her but deep down she felt somewhat relieved. She wanted to stay and spend more time with him but she knew that her mind would not stop thinking about River unless she confronted him. “...I’ll make it up to you, I promise!” she told him confidently.

Zane laughed, unsure how to take her seriously with that plushie pressed to her chest like a child. “I look forward to it.”

With a final apologetic look to Zane, Lana turned around and ran towards where she last saw River walking. Almost immediately she lost sight of him behind the large crowd of people walking around. She then decided to just follow her instincts to look for him, since her instincts never failed her before. She

walked ahead, further away from the dance floor, further away from the crowd until she spotted him heading towards the parking lot.

Before she could run up to him or even call out his name, River turned to look at her. She silently assumed that he was aware of her presence due to her scent but even so, that would not explain the stunned silence when their gazes met.

“What the hell...?” he muttered under his breath. He was surprised that she even recognized him. “What are you doing here?” he blurted out as his gaze slowly fell to the wolf plushie in her arms.

“I wanted to check up on you...” she frowned, wondering why he was even wearing a cap and mask now when it was already so night time.

“How many times do I have to remind you that I can heal?” River snapped.

“Even if you can, that won’t stop me from being worried!” she argued back, her firm tone caused River to flinch away ever so slightly.

“You were that worried for me that you would even leave your crush on the dance floor? What can I say? I’m honoured.” He said with heavy and blunt sarcasm.

“What’s your problem...?” she asked hesitantly, unsure if he was mad or just being the typical annoying River. The fact that half of his face was covered up wasn’t making it easy for her to understand him.

“My problem is you. Why can’t you just leave me alone?”

“So, I’m guessing it’s illegal to worry about the almighty River Attwood now? I’m so sorry to have bothered you, I’ll just take my leave now, oh great one.” Lana said in a mocking voice as she turned around to leave.

Even though she rehearsed her meeting with him over and over in her mind, even though she told herself to be nice and thank him for saving her, she completely forgot that River had a troubling ability to constantly get on her nerves.

“Wait.” He called out, causing her to stop walking. “I was joking so stop sulking.”

Lana glanced over her shoulder to catch a glimpse of River’s eyes. She was about to give him the benefit of the doubt and continue their conversation, hoping that she could finally thank him but they were interrupted when they heard footsteps and voices approaching their direction.

Without having any time to process what was happening, Lana felt herself being dragged backwards as her back was suddenly pressed against a nearby tree. She looked up only to find River in front of her. The wolf plushie was pressed between their chests and River frowned at it.

“What the hell is that?” River asked, almost glaring at the plushie for some strange reason.

“What are you doing?” Lana asked at the same time. She did not think that her talking to River would be deemed suspicious by anyone. The entire town already knew what happened in the forest after all. But the fact that River himself dragged her and hid behind a tree with her for no apparent reason was completely baffling to her.

River backed away slowly from her and averted his gaze. “What do you mean?” he asked her casually.

“Why are we hiding behind a tree?” she asked monotonously.

“I’m not hiding behind a tree, you are.” He shrugged.

“River I swear to God—”

“Shh. I don’t want anyone to notice that I’m here. My phone has been buzzing non-stop ever since the incident and I don’t want to be bombarded with questions if they realize I’m here.” He sighed.

Lana glanced down at his right hand where the cast was on. She now understood the reasoning behind the cap and mask but she did not understand why he would even put himself in this position in the first place.

“Then why did you even come to the town square...you should’ve just gone home.” She stated truthfully, even though deep down she was honestly glad that he was here in front of her.

River stared at her for a long moment, debating with himself if he should tell her truth. The truth is that even since he got to the hospital, he couldn’t stop thinking about her. He started to overthink about what Lana was doing or if she was worrying about him or blaming herself over the incident. This overthinking led him to ignore Maddison and Luis’ advice to go home and properly recover but he felt as though he was going insane the longer he was apart from Lana.

“I wanted...to see you.” He finally blurted out. “But then I saw that you were with that lover boy and decided to leave.”

“Why?” she asked.

“Why what? Would you rather I interrupted your little date?” he scoffed.

In Lana’s mind, if anyone ruined their date it was her but she quickly pushed those thoughts aside. “I mean why did you want to see me?”

“...I thought you’d be coming to the hospital since you fell as well. I was wondering if you got hurt in any way. But you seem perfectly fine since you went on a date.” He answered, knowing for a fact that he was completely lying to her face. He tried to think of a better way to explain it to her but no matter what

he said, it wouldn't make any sense. He did not even understand it himself.

He could always blame his werewolf side and how he was attracted to her scent. But he never felt this way before. The longing and yearning to just see her and be close to her, it was a different sensation altogether compared to the desire he had to simply mate with her due to his primal instincts.

"Ah...well thanks to you I was unscathed. So um...thank you for saving me." She finally said, feeling a huge burden lift off her chest the moment she told him that.

"Yeah. No problem..." he mumbled softly. He was unsure if Lana even heard him as she stayed silent for a long moment. They made eye contact when Lana suddenly looked up at him.

"Does it hurt?" she asked as she gestured to the cast.

River shook his head. "It's particularly healed. I just need to wear it for a few weeks since the story is that it got fractured instead of broken."

"Well...not according to the rumours."

"Rumours are just blatant lies anyway." He shrugged lazily.

At this point, he was starting to feel a familiar feeling creeping up over his body. The mask helped block Lana's scent for a long while but now that he was actually standing close to her, all he could smell was her scent. He had to leave before he succumbed to his desire for her. He cleared his throat, wanting to excuse himself but Lana slowly took a few steps towards him.

"Can I ask you a question, River?" she blurted. River had a bad feeling about this but ultimately gave her a crude nod. "Why did you save me?"