

Her Secret 44

CHAPTER 44 NO.44

“You don’t have to go, you know. Any normal person would be at home recovering after fracturing their hand.” Maddison nagged on as she got into the driver’s seat. Luis was in the passenger seat, fastening his seatbelt as he exchanged nervous glances between Maddison and River who was seated behind. He really did not want them to start the day with another argument.

“Yea, but I’m not ‘any normal person’ now am I?” River called back sarcastically.

“Aren’t we supposed to pretend that we are? Besides, Lana can handle the ticket booth by herself. It’s the last day and it won’t be that crowded. I’m sure Mrs. Hathaway would understand this too.” She insisted.

The mere mention of Lana’s name made River recall his action of last night. He let out a soft groan as he pressed his head against the window. Maybe Maddison was right, if River did not show up to his duties today, no one would hold it against him. To them, he fractured his arm when he fell. And yet, he felt a strong sense of responsibility since he knew that he wasn’t actually injured and she...Lana knew as well.

“Well?” Maddison asked as she started the car. “Do you still want to go?”

River glanced down at his cast and tapped on its hard surface a couple of times. He then sighed aloud. “Yeah. Let’s go.”

Maddison openly looked disappointed at his decision. She decided against talking him out of it since River was one stubborn alpha. She then started to drive towards the town square. She remembered finding out from Steven about what happened to River yesterday. She remembered the panic she felt as she ran to look for Luis. The two of them knew that he wasn’t in any real danger since he could heal himself better and faster than they could but they were more afraid of the people there finding out his secret. The chaos that would ensue if they found out he could heal himself was unfathomable.

When they got the full story about him protecting Lana, Maddison wanted to confront River about it. Even if Lana fell off the slope, her life wouldn’t have been in danger. She might’ve just broken a bone or two depending on how she fell and how hard the impact was. But to think that he would risk revealing his identity in front of all those people only made it clear to Maddison that Lana really did have an effect on River and she knew for a fact that River would never admit that to anyone, not even to himself.

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Lana blankly stared at the stack of tickets in front of her as she continued to rearrange the position of it. Mrs. Hathaway quietly watched her before clearing her throat.

“Lana, dear. Will you be okay on your own?” she asked.

Lana looked up, her eyes widening as though she completely forgot that Mrs. Hathaway was standing there in the first place. "Um, yes ma'am. It's the last day and usually that's when the crowd is less."

Mrs. Hathaway nodded in agreement and yet she still felt that Lana was completely out of it. She was not acting like her usual self. She tried to deduce whether it was due to the lack of sleep or the nerves of being alone at the ticket booth. She could just ask Steven or Maddison to help take extra shifts but they were busy helping out different teams today.

"If things get too overwhelming, don't hesitate to call me. I'll come help you, okay?" Mrs. Hathaway reassured her.

"You don't have to worry about me, Mrs. Hathaway." Lana said with a toothy grin as the tower of tickets that she stacked up high tumbled down. She yelped in shock as she scrambled to rearrange the tickets once again. Mrs. Hathaway sighed as she tried to think of anyone else who could help her out at such a last minute.

It's not that she did not trust Lana to do it by herself, but the fact that something was bothering the girl to the point where she seems aloof was troubling.

"Remember what I said, okay? I'll go check on the catering now."

Lana smiled and waved at her teacher as she walked away. She couldn't help but notice the amount of time Mrs. Hathaway glanced back to check on Lana like a worried parent. Lana let out a heavy sigh once Mrs. Hathaway was far enough. She plopped back against her chair, appreciating the cold morning breeze that passed by.

After her meeting with River last night, she somewhat regretted giving him the wolf plushie. When she met back with Zane, he asked her about it and she had to lie to him and say that she passed it to Carmen to keep it in her car for safe keeping. She was just glad that throughout the night, they did not bump into her friends. But the night was cut short when Zane had to leave. After that, all she could think about was the fact that she ruined a perfectly good night with Zane by choosing to go talk to River.

"What are you doing, Danley...?" she muttered to herself, clearly annoyed that she did not know how to set her priorities straight.

River adjusted the face mask he was wearing as he made his way to the ticket booth. Even though he was still a far distance from it, he could already smell the mild scent of Lana. If he wasn't wearing the mask, he was certain that he would lose himself by it all over again.

As he got closer, it was apparent that Lana was in her own world as she did not even notice River approaching. He was not in the mood to tease her as he always did so instead of calling out to her, River simply went to his seat. He sat down and eyed the pile of tickets that were laid out messily in front of Lana.

Lana glanced at River and quickly looked away before he could catch her gaze. "You're 5 minutes late." She said to him as she slowly straightened her posture.

She did not want him to think she was slacking off just because he was not here earlier but the mess in front of her was enough evidence and Lana silently braced herself from River's onslaught of snarky remarks.

"Yea...sorry about that." River replied as he reached out his free hand to the pile of tickets and pulled some to his side of the table. He then silently started to arrange them neatly with just his left hand. His right hand which had the cast on rested on his lap.

Lana gawked at him, surprised that he did not take the chance to tease her. She continued to stare at him in that familiar black face mask that covered below his eyes. She then wondered if he was only wearing that because of her scent. She sheepishly tugged on her shirt and pressed her nose against the fabric.

Ever since she found out that she had a distinctive smell to the werewolves she often wondered what exactly she smelled like to them. Because to her, all she could smell was the floral fragrance of her detergent and the mild body mist she would occasionally spray over herself before leaving the house.

"What are you doing...?" River asked as he caught sight of her sniffing herself.

Lana swiftly dropped her shirt and pulled her chair closer to the table. She started to sort out the tickets to seem busy in front of him.

"N-Nothing." She hastily answered. "Mrs. Hathaway was pretty sure that you'd stay hand due to your 'injury'. I'm pretty surprised that you are actually here..." she said, trying to make the atmosphere around them less awkward.

"It's the last day after all..." he meekly replied.

"Right..."

Even though Lana wanted to continue pestering him to make conversation, she quickly noticed how different River was acting. The typical annoying self of his was replaced by a quiet and rather timid side of him. He did not tease her, he did not give her any snarky replies and he just seemed out of it. Lana thought that maybe he was only acting like this because of lack of sleep, just like her but she was quickly starting to get bothered by this new side of River. It was causing her to be paranoid at the fact that something was terribly wrong.

"Are you alright...?" she dared to ask him.

"Yeah. Why?"

“Well...you are acting pretty strange and...” she pointed to his mask. “Is my scent really strong today or something?” she asked as she scooted her chair slightly further from him.

“No. It’s not your fault.” He said.

Lana stared at him in disbelief as she made a mental note about this entire situation. She was certain that she would rather deal with the annoying River over this submissive version of him. Even though she did not have to deal with her blood pressure rising and her veins popping from rage, at least she could in a sense understand that version of River since she had to deal with him numerous times. She grew accustomed to what he would say and she knew why he would say those things in the first place.

But this River was a complete mystery to her and that fact alone was causing her to feel only dread. She pondered over the different reasons he was acting this way but ultimately she had a feeling it was her fault and the whole alpha blood running through her veins.