

Her Secret 46

CHAPTER 46 NO.46

“What did you say?” Ray asked Lana through the phone with a composed voice but Lana knew this tone, he was completely baffled by what Lana just told him.

Lana let out a tired sigh as she glanced back to the car where River was waiting in the passenger seat. “I said, is it okay if I drove River to Winfield City? He has a family emergency and I’m only driving him there so no one gets suspicious about his injury.”

“What about Maddison? Luis? Can’t they drive him instead?” Ray asked, his tone getting increasingly anxious.

River and Lana made eye contact and he pointed at his wrist watch. Lana mouthed a sorry and rushed to the driver’s seat. She got into the car and replied to Ray.

“Well...long story short, River did not think his father was in serious condition since his mother often overexaggerates about that...his words not mine.” She muttered as she caught a glance of River’s frown. “But then he found out that his father is in serious condition and now he really has to go see him but since he told Maddison and Luis not to worry about it earlier, he now doesn’t want to bother them when they are busy.”

“But still...” Ray muttered on the other line.

“I know you’re worried but everything will be fine. It’s just what...a 2 hour drive to the city?” she said followed with a forced chuckle as she fastened her seatbelt.

Lana could hear Ray sighing in the background. “Could you pass the phone to River?” he asked. Lana nodded, she then realized that Ray couldn’t even see her nod and felt slightly ashamed.

“Sure.” She mumbled. She held out her phone to River who gave her a confused look. “He wants to talk to you.”

River took the phone and held it to his ear. “Yes, Ray?”

“I don’t know how much Griffin has told you about your father but he was not the biggest fan of Aldric...of Lana’s father. Make sure she doesn’t go anywhere near him, okay? He might still recognize the scent.” Ray said, with genuine concern in his voice.

“...okay.” River replied. Questions flooded his mind about the relationship his father and Lana’s father had but since Ray personally told him that means he wanted to avoid talking about it to Lana. He made a mental note to ask Ray about this on a later day.

“Tell Lana to drive safely. She hasn’t driven to the city by herself before so make sure you give her

proper directions.” He added.

“I’ll be switching with her when we are out of Rosecliff.” River informed him.

“Okay good. And what about...you know...her scent? Will you be alright?”

“Yes.” River said, catching how easily he could lie to others when he knew that he could never lie to himself. Her scent was stronger now that he was not wearing his mask anymore and that they were in the car together but somehow due to the urgency of the situation, her scent was the last thing that he could think about at that moment.

“Then I trust you, River. Take care.” Ray said firmly as he emphasized on the word ‘trust’. Before River could say anything back, Ray hung up. River then passed the phone back to Lana.

“Everything okay?” Lana asked as she shoved her phone into her pant pocket.

“Yeah. Let’s go.”

Lana studied his expression for a short moment before driving off. She wondered what Ray had told River over the phone because River looked rather troubled. The two did not say anything as Lana drove towards the exit of Rosecliff. The radio was on but the volume was so low that Lana could only hear murmurs.

She gave a quick glance at River’s direction and she noticed how uncomfortable he was sitting. He was particularly pressing himself against the door to be as far away from Lana as possible. His head was turned as he looked out the window and Lana could not help but to feel slightly burdened by his situation. She silently opened the windows of the car, causing River to turn to her with his eyebrow raised.

“You look like you were suffocating.” She muttered.

River let out a small sigh as he shifted in his seat. “Thanks.” He muttered, feeling a lot better now that the harsh wind was blowing her scent away.

“So your parents live in the city, huh?” Lana stated the obvious as she tried to strike up a conversation, as she always did.

“Yeah.”

“How come you didn’t move with them? Honestly, my goal is to get out of Rosecliff the moment I graduate.” She said. River stayed silent for a moment and Lana wondered if he could not hear her due to the wind. “River—?”

“Some people aren’t privileged enough to run away from their responsibilities.” He suddenly said with

his fists clenched on his thighs.

Lana pondered for a moment to comprehend what he meant because to her, it sounded like he was insinuating that she was running away from her responsibilities. But what responsibilities does she even have at that town? Was it the fact that Ray wanted her to be a full time ranger with him? Was it somehow related to the fact that she was half werewolf but did not share the some burdens as River and the other werewolves did? Lana felt that if she tried to press him over this topic any further, he would only get mad at her and since his mood was all over the place today, Lana did not want to risk it.

After a few more minutes of driving, from a distance Lana could see the signboard that indicated they were now leaving Rosecliff. As they passed by the sign, from the corner of her eye Lana noticed that River was removing his cast.

“You can pull over. I’ll drive from here.” He said.

Lana did not question him as she did as he said. Even though she knew that all she had to do from now on was to stay in the car and let River deal with his own thing, she felt an uncomfortable feeling overcoming her. Her stomach was in knots and she was not sure if it was nerves or her gut instincts warning her over a potential threat. She frowned as she stopped the car by the side of the road and unfastened her seatbelt. She could hear River doing the same before he pushed his door open. Lana hesitated to get out as realization kicked it.

Ever since she was a freshman in high school her one goal was to eventually move away from this town, but now even as she was leaving it for a short period of time she was starting to feel anxious. Her gaze went to the forest that surrounded the roadsides and felt a painful urge to run towards it. She wanted to escape this dread that was creeping up over her. Her lips parted slightly as she found it harder to breathe. What was happening to her, she wondered as she tried to calm herself from this anxiety ridden fear of hers.

A tap of her window made her jolt as she turned to it. She watched as River pulled her door open and looked down at her.

“What’s wrong?” he asked as he noticed that her hands were trembling and her face was pale.

Lana swallowed hard as she was unsure how to explain to River what was even happening to her. She wondered if it was too late for her to tell him that she wanted to go back to town. She then shook her head and took in a deep breath.

“Just a bit car sick.” She lied with a small smile on her lips. River moved back slightly to let her get out of the car. He watched her carefully as she wobbled to the passenger seat.

“Are you really alright?” River called out before she went into the car.

She gave him a thumbs up but to River she looked as though she was about to break down crying. He did

not say anything as the two re-entered the car. River adjusted the seat and the mirrors as Lana's gaze was fixed on the forest.

"Hey, are you sure you're just car sick?" River asked, wanting to hear her confirm it again.

"Yes. Why would I lie to you?" she replied as her gaze did not flatter.

"...just don't puke in the car."

Lana laughed as she forced herself to pry her eyes away from the forest view to look at River. "I'll just puke on you then." She gave him a cheeky smile.

River frowned. "You wouldn't dare."

Lana laughed at his serious reaction but the feeling of anxiety and dread lingered over her and no amount of laughter would get rid of it. Lana was starting to wonder if she was truly going insane.