

## Her Secret 47

### CHAPTER 47 NO.47

The drive to Winfield City was a smooth one with little to no traffic on the main roads which was surprising since it was a weekend after all. River managed to get some peace and quiet as Lana fell asleep halfway through the drive but that did not stop him from pondering over her behaviour earlier. He truly wondered if it was just car sickness but he thought it would be better for her to sleep it off rather than interrogate her, knowing full well that she would lie to his face. Soon, River was approaching his parents' street and almost as in cue, Lana stirred awake from her sleep.

"Did we reach?" she asked, her voice deep with sleep. She felt better after taking a nap, the anxiety she felt earlier subdued but her stomach was still in knots as though she was filled with anticipation. She then looked out the window and almost felt as though she was still asleep and dreaming since she was surrounded by big mansion-like houses. It was a complete shock to her because she was used to the modest urban streets of Rosecliff.

"Almost." River replied as he tapped his fingers against the steering wheel, feeling sudden nerves building in his at the thought of seeing his parents again after nearly a year.

"Your parents live here?" she questioned him, completely baffled at the sight of her surroundings.

"Yeah."

"Are they celebrities?"

"No. They're entrepreneurs of some sort. I think."

"You don't know exactly what they do?"

"Given that I haven't lived with them for 10 years and the only times I come here are for short visits." He replied with a sigh.

Lana nodded slowly even though she really wanted to ask more questions about his parents but she took his exasperated sigh as a sign that he did not want to talk about this topic anymore. River then slowed down as they reached a house with a large black gate. A massive 'A' decorated the middle of the gate and Lana could've sworn that she has only seen these types of front gates in TV shows and movies to showcase a character's wealth. But here she was, staring at it with all its glory.

The front gate was just the start because once Lana looked past it and saw the house, she was in awe. Luxurious bushes of red roses paired with evergreen shrubs formed a straight pathway towards the front door. The mansion itself was the definition of grandeur and Lana could have never imagined that the boorish River would ever fit in here.

"Close your mouth and stop gawking like a child." River commented when he noticed Lana's reaction to

the place.

Her mouth immediately snapped shut. "So like...this is your parents' place?" she asked even though he was already parked in front of it. River just raised an eyebrow at her question as though he was asking if she really just asked him such an obvious question.

The gates then parted open and Lana could properly see the magnificent garden that was hidden behind the large gate. She squeaked in delight at how this place was simply stunning. Even though she never thought of herself to be a materialistic person, that wouldn't stop her from appreciating that this place was truly beautiful and looked like something out of a movie.

"Stay in the car and don't talk to anyone. I'll be back as soon as I can." River told her.

"Okay." Lana said as she got comfortable in her seat.

River's attention then went to a van that was parked a few houses up from where he was. The van was positioned in such a way that the front was facing them. It was a simple white van with no logos or anything which only made him grow suspicious. River narrowed his eyes and noticed that someone was in the driver's seat, wearing a cap and dark sunglasses. River sighed when he noticed the camera in the man's hands.

This is not something new to River, ever since his parents made it big in the city and quickly became one of the top wealthiest families, the press would often linger around to get their next big scoop about the family dynamic and even make up lies for the sake of click bait and nonsensical drama.

River reached at the back of his seat and pulled out a cap as placed it on Lana's head. She flinched from his sudden action and looked at him questioningly. He then reached for his jacket that was laying on the backseat and passed it to Lana. when she was reluctant to take it, he shoved it against her chest.

"Wear it." he ordered her.

"Um no thank you. It's like 90 degrees out here. Are you insane?"

"It's not. Don't be dramatic and just put it on." He said as he started the car.

"Where are we going?" she asked hesitantly.

"Inside." He said as he drove past the large gate and was approaching the front of the house.

"Wait, why?" she asked as she nervously looked around. "Did something happen?" She turned back to River as she put on his jacket. The scent of the forest emitted from it and somehow it only made her feel like she was at home.

"Let's just say that my parents have...admirers." He muttered as he parked the car. He watched as the

front door was opened as the butler and maid came out to greet him. "Just stay in the car, okay? Keep your mouth shut and don't get in trouble." He said.

Lana scoffed at the fact that he thought of her as a troublemaker. "Okay but why did you make me wear your cap and jacket?" she frowned.

"To mask your scent. Everyone working here is a werewolf and I just want to avoid any questioning from them or my parents about you. Got it?"

Lana made a face. "Got it." she grumbled.

River then pushed open the door and Lana watched as the butler and maid approached him. They offered him a small bow and greeted him in unison. "Welcome back, Master River." They said, almost robotically.

Lana's attention quickly went to the door as a figure walked out. Her pitch black hair was pulled into a tight bun on the top of her head. A sparkling jewelled hair ornament decorated the top of her head. She donned a maroon midi dress that stopped above her knee and her neck, wrists and fingers were filled with golden jewellery. There was no doubt about it, the moment Lana laid eyes on the woman and saw her piercing blue eyes, she was certain that she was looking at River's mother.

"Welcome home, my dear." She said adoringly yet her face remained firm and stern.

"Mother." River greeted her with a small kiss on the cheek.

River's mother then turned to Lana who remained in the car. Their eyes met for a split second and Lana quickly averted her gaze and looked straight ahead. She gulped and hoped that River's mother would just ignore her presence and yet somehow she had a feeling that would not be the case.

"Your father is in his room waiting for you," she said. River nodded and was about to enter the house. "Wait. Isn't it rude to make your...friend wait in the car?"

Both Lana and River tensed immediately.

"I'm just going to see father and leave. It won't take too long." He told her.

"Nonsense." His mother replied as she approached the car. Since the car windows were still down, Lana could only silently curse at River for forgetting to close them before he got out. She watched in silence as River's mother's hand came to view before she peered down slightly to look at Lana. "You, River's...friend. Why don't you come join me for tea?" she said with a gentle smile.

Through Lana's panic she quickly glanced over at River who shook his head at her, clearly signaling her to refuse the offer.

"T-Thank you but it's okay Mrs. Attwood, I don't want to intrude..." she replied, trying her best to maintain composure in front of the older woman with such intimidating eyes.

"Oh, but I want you to intrude." She said. She straightened her posture and motioned her hand. The butler then suddenly appeared by Lana's door and pulled it open.

Lana let out a gasp from the sudden action but she knew that she can't refuse now. "O-Okay then..." Lana muttered as she got out of the car. River's mother looked almost pleased with herself as she turned back to the door.

"Come along now." she said to Lana who forced herself to follow his mother into the house.

"I'm sorry..." she whispered to River when she reached him.

"Nah, I didn't think she would come out to greet me." He sighed. "Just don't say or do anything stupid while I'm seeing my father, okay?"

Before Lana could reply, Mrs. Attwood turned to look at the two. There was a long moment of silence as her gaze studied the both of them. "I must say, I'm rather surprised that my River brought home a girl." She smiled at them.

River let out a frustrated sigh. "She's just a friend."

Lana looked up at him in shock. She never thought she would live to hear those words come out from River's mouth. She knew for a fact that simply calling Lana a friend of his was the easiest method compared to him explaining to her mother how they both despise each other and yet, they were always put into situations where they had to spend time together. Now that Lana was thinking about it, it truly sounds as though they were somewhat cursed to always be near each other when neither of them want anything to do with each other.

"A friend? You two must be really close for you to let her wear your clothes." She said, clearly trying to nit-pick the smallest details to suit her narrative of what relationship the two had.

"She was cold." River replied nonchalantly.

"Oh dear, then let us warm you up with a warm cup of tea. River, why don't you go meet your father while I get to know your friend better,"

River exchanged glances between his mother and Lana. Deep down, Lana was silently praying that he wouldn't leave her alone with his mother but that would be selfish of her to ask of him since he only came here to see his father. After a beat, he nodded and walked away. Lana watched as he walked up the grand stairs. He glanced behind and their gazes met. He gave her an apologetic look before disappearing from Lana's view.

The sudden absence of River by her side was starting to make Lana overthink. His mother carried herself with poise and elegance and yet Lana could sense something alarming from her. There was this subtle hint of danger, almost as though Lana had to walk on eggshells around her.

“Now that we are alone, let’s get to know each other. What’s your name dear?” Mrs. Attwood said with a rather charming smile and Lana could not help but feel uneasy over this entire situation that she was suddenly placed in.