

Her Secret 52

CHAPTER 52 NO.52

River pulled away from the embrace reluctantly with his hands hesitating to part away from the comfort he felt when he was holding her. In the end, he forced himself to pull away as he quickly turned his back to her to wipe his eyes with the back of his hand. Lana sat unmoving on the bed, watching River's back in complete silence. She never expected to share such an intimate moment with River but now that it happened, she couldn't help but feel a bit shy around him.

River grabbed the medication from Brandon's desk and took in a deep breath before turning to face Lana again.

"We should head back before it gets too late." His voice was hoarse and it was making it rather obvious that he was avoiding meeting Lana's gaze.

"...okay," she said as she hopped off the bed.

"How do you feel?" he asked, staring straight at her bandaged hand.

"It actually really hurts but I'll survive." She reassured him with a small smile.

"Do you want to take some painkillers?" he offered while holding out the pills in front of her.

Lana shook her head. "Maybe later."

"Alright." He said with a firm nod.

River then walked ahead as Lana followed him from behind, her eyes never once leaving his figure. For some strange reason she thought that if she looked away, he would simply vanish from her sight. Lana had this serious urge of wanting to ask him if he felt better now that he got everything out of his system but she had a feeling that he would rather ignore whatever that happened between them earlier.

She silently pondered over what exactly happened to his older sister, Meadow because all Lana knew right now was that she passed away and that River blames himself for her death but the why was still missing from the equation.

The loud cry of the metal door being pushed open echoed throughout the area and Lana told herself to stop thinking about it because it might end with her asking River again and surely it's one topic he does not want to talk openly about. Today has been a rather hectic day overall with Lana learning a lot about River and his family, he even showed his vulnerable side to her and they shared a hug but somehow watching River walk ahead in a rather fast and steady pace in front of her only made her feel like their relationship was only growing more distant.

Lana reached out her hand to grab onto River but stopped halfway when he suddenly turned around to

look at her. He looked at her hand that was awkwardly reaching forward and then finally met her gaze.

“What’s wrong?” he asked her.

Lana retracted her hand quickly, pressing it against her chest as she shook her head. “I...well I was wondering if you were okay?” she asked quietly.

River had a small smile on his lips before it disappeared when he let out a sigh. “Last I remember, I wasn’t the one injured.”

Lana pouted. “Is it so wrong to just check up on you once in a while?”

“I didn’t know you were my therapist.”

“That’s not what I meant!” she fumed.

River let out a low laugh under his breath. “I was joking. Come on, you should get some shut eye in the car.”

“I see that you are changing the subject, as usual.” She muttered as she walked past him and headed to the passenger seat.

“I’m fine.” He called out before Lana could get into the car. She looked up at him as he turned around, looking at her straight in her eyes. “I’m fine.” He repeated.

She stared at him for what felt like an eternity until she finally nodded at his statement and entered the car swiftly. Her mind then started to wonder if he was trying to convince Lana that he was fine or was he trying to convince himself. Because either way, Lana did not believe him at all and the worst part of this situation was that she had no idea what to do about it.

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The car ride back to Rosecliff was as smooth as when they left. There was hardly any traffic on the main roads and Lana caught herself going in and out of sleep throughout the ride. When she finally forced herself to stay awake, the sun was already setting. She took out her phone to text Ray that she was on her way home before allowing herself to watch the sun lay to rest under the sky of oranges, reds, and purples. The wind blew through her hair wildly as she found herself slowly drifting back to sleep.

Her attention then went to a familiar sign that welcomed the two back to Rosecliff.

“Should I take over?” Lana asked River.

“Nah, don’t worry about it.”

“But if someone in town saw you without your cast...”

“It’ll be dark once we get to town and besides it’s the last day of the festival and everyone will be there for the fireworks. If we avoid the roads leading to the town square, we won’t need to worry about being seen.”

“Still...shouldn’t we take precaution?” she tried to convince him.

“You’re such a worry-wart, you know that?”

Lana rolled her eyes. “It seems like I care more about keeping your secret werewolf identity a secret compared to you.” She grumbled.

“Yea, yea, and you really think I would let you drive with that wound of yours?”

“Ugh fine! If someone sees you driving and this turns into a big deal, don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

“Oh the horror,” he replied sarcastically. Lana made a face at him in response before moving her attention back to the sky.

Soon, they were in town and River was driving towards Lana’s street so he could drop her off at home. As River predicated, since everyone was at the town square there were hardly anybody around. From a distance, she could see the town square lit up brightly by the numerous lights and lanterns. River noticed Lana staring out at that direction wistfully.

“You look like you really wanna go to the town square.”

“Not really. I was just wondering if they already did the fireworks show.” She replied truthfully.

River glanced at his wristwatch. “Should be starting soon.”

“Aw, well there’s always next year.” She said, fully knowing that if everything works out for her then this was her last year celebrating founder’s day and it was her last chance to watch the fireworks show with her friends.

“Hmm, yeah.” River muttered absent-mindedly.

Lana then noticed that he missed the turn to get to her street. She frowned, wondering if he actually forgot how to get to her house or if he was just messing with her.

“Um, you missed the turn.” She said aloud.

“I know.”

“Okay...? You can make a U-turn here—” she gaped at him as he zoomed past the direction she was pointing at. “River?”

“Relax. I wanna drop by somewhere real quick and then I’ll take you home.”

“Normally, people would mention that fact beforehand.” She huffed and he responded with a slight shrug.

The further River drove the more convinced Lana was getting that wherever he wanted to drop by was in the middle of nowhere. They passed by rows of houses and even the shops. Wherever River was going, it was clearly near the forest but it was not at a spot that Lana was familiar with.

“So...the time has finally arrived.” Lana mumbled to herself.

“What are you talking about?”

“You really are about to murder me in the middle of nowhere.” She sighed.

River glanced at the girl, wondering if she was mentally stable or not. “If I wanted to murder you, I wouldn’t do it in this town.”

“That’s very reassuring.” She said sarcastically.

River ignored her remark as he looked down at his watch once more. He then stopped and turned off the car at a deserted spot that lacked any form of light source. He proceeded to get out of the car, leaving Lana to gawk at him from inside. She watched as he went near the edge where the safety railings were and peered down.

Lana felt the panic rushing into her as she pushed her door open and approached River.

“What are we doing here?” she asked in a hushed tone. She looked around the area nervously and the fact that she could not see anything around but the vast darkness was unnerving to her.

“Shh. It’s starting.” River replied.

“What do you—”

Her words were muffled out from a sudden deafening bang. From the corner of her eyes, she could see the sparkles of light and once she finally turned to the source she gasped. She went to stand next to River as her eyes were glued to the array of colourful lights that illuminated the night sky. The booming fireworks were as beautiful as always and Lana started to feel somewhat sentimental. Every year she would watch these fireworks with her friends and Ray and after being so sure that she was going to miss them this year, here she was.

“It’s beautiful.” She muttered to herself, eyes glistening as she allowed herself to bask in her private trip through nostalgia.

River watched her silently, proud of himself that he even decided to bring her up here. This spot was a place he found one day during his time patrolling, a spot that looked down at the town of Rosecliff. They could see everything from this height and to River it was the perfect spot to watch the fireworks.

He was never a fan of the fireworks show to begin with, deeming it to be annoying and loud but this moment right here made everything worthwhile. Watching Lana’s carefree smile at the sight of these fireworks made his heart feel a certain way.

“Yeah. Beautiful.” He said, staring at her, knowing full well that she couldn’t hear him at all due to the booming fireworks that surrounded them. Her eyes glistened and he could see the colourful fireworks reflected in them. His hand twitched forward to reach for hers as he had a sudden desperate yearning to hold her, to feel her warmth once again. But before his hand could touch hers, he pulled away abruptly.

River knew that nothing good would ever come from having these feelings for her. It didn’t matter anymore if it was due to his attraction to her scent or if it was solely due to his own painful feelings for her. None of that mattered because he knew she—Lana was clearly in love with someone else.

No matter what River did, no matter what he said, he was certain that she would never fall in love with him when her heart already belonged to someone else. He forced himself to look away from Lana as he blankly watched the flickering sparkles in the sky. The thunderous bangs covered up the beating of his chest. Yet, he strongly hoped that if he gave all his attention to something else rather than thinking of the girl beside him then at least he could properly ignore the aching of his chest.