

Her Secret 59

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Lana's hands went to the hand that covered her mouth as she tried to forcefully pry it away. She started to squirm, hoping that her frantic movement will give her a chance to escape from the person behind her. She then felt their other hand wrap around her waist to keep her still.

"Oi, calm down," the voice called out from behind her but Lana was anything but calm. In her panic, she moved her head backwards, and from this motion the hand covering her mouth loosened and she took the opportunity to open her mouth wide and chomp down against the assailant's palm. She bit hard against the rough flesh but unfortunately for her, the assailant only let out a soft mutter in response to her attack.

"Are you done throwing your tantrum?" the voice asked. Lana stiffened, now that her panic was slowly fading away to be replaced with rationality, she immediately recognized the voice. "I'm going to let you go now. Stay quiet, understand?"

She opened her mouth to release the hand that she was biting on. She then slowly nodded. Once she was free, Lana twirled around to glare at the person who came out of nowhere.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" she hissed at him, feeling both furious that he scared her by suddenly appearing behind her as well as completely embarrassed that she bit his hand.

"That's my question." River frowned as he examined his hand. A faint bite mark could be seen from where Lana bit him. He then let out a sigh. "Seems like you really enjoy hurting me physically every time I see you. First you stabbed me and now this?" He raised an eyebrow at her.

Lana groaned out loud. "You honestly deserved it both times. Why can't you just greet me like a normal person?"

"In my defence, I did not want you to scream—on both occasions."

"I wouldn't have screamed if you didn't sneak up on me! On both occasions!" she fumed.

River rolled his eyes at her as he brushed off her complaint. He then crossed his arms across his chest and peered down at her. "So? Why are you here? I doubt that it's related to ranger duty."

Now that both her anger and panic died down, she looked at River properly for the first time. The soft hue of the moonlight seeping through the trees over them casted a brilliant glow on River's features. She couldn't help but to stare at him in awe. She always knew he was handsome but seeing him now made him look like someone not from this world.

River frowned at her when she did not reply to his question. "You should leave the forest. It's too dangerous for you to be here."

His voice broke whatever trance she was in. she snapped out of it and backed away from him, feeling rather self-conscious that she was ogling at him like any other girl their age.

"I have my reasons to be here." She finally said.

"You're snooping, aren't you? About the dead animals?"

"I could be here for other reasons too, you know."

River scoffed. "Do I look stupid to you?" Lana opened her mouth to reply but River then moved forward to walk past her. "Don't answer that." He called out.

"Where are you going?" she asked him.

"I'm going to the station to see Ray. If you aren't going to tell me what you are doing here, then I should just ask Ray."

Lana reached out and grabbed his arm. "Don't! He doesn't know I'm here!"

River looked down at where her hands were wrapped around his arm and tensed at the contact. He could feel the warmth from her palms seeping through his skin. He tugged his arm free gently.

"So you admit that you are snooping?"

"Yes! Jeez."

"Okay. Now leave before I drag you out of the forest myself."

"Excuse me?"

"I'm being serious. Something fishy is going on in the forest and it's better if you aren't here if things go south." He warned her.

"I'm aware of the situation, Avery told me everything."

"Avery did?" he questioned. Lana's scent was overpowering his senses to the point where he did not even catch a whiff of Avery's scent around her. Lana's scent was truly starting to be troublesome to him.

"Guilty as charged." Avery's voice called out.

Lana and River turned to the source, spotting as Avery approached them with Maddison and Luis behind her.

“What the hell are you doing here?” Maddison growled at Lana when their gazes met. Lana opened her mouth to answer but Avery stood in front of Maddison, blocking her sight.

“Hey, I brought her here so if you wanna be mad at anyone be mad at me.” Avery said firmly. Lana’s eyes widened, surprised that Avery would even back her up like this. She was certain that Avery was the type to throw her under the bus if they ever got caught but now Lana felt slightly guilty that she even thought that in the first place.

“Okay fine, why the fuck did you bring her here?” Maddison asked again, growing more agitated at the both of them.

“We only came to help.” Lana answered as she went to stand beside Avery, facing Maddison’s fury upfront rather than hiding behind Avery.

“Help? What can you do to help, huh?”

“Maddison, calm down. We shouldn’t be fighting like this.” Luis said as he reached out to touch her arm. Maddison sighed out loud but stayed silent.

“Well then, now that the whole gang is here let’s talk.” Avery beamed.

“About what? The fact that you ditched patrolling duty today just to drag her into this mess?” River said with an annoyed expression.

“Correction, I did not drag her into this.”

“I followed Avery because I wanted to figure out what was happening.” Lana clarified.

“You know, that curiosity of yours will get you killed one day.” River snapped. Lana was taken aback by his sudden hostility.

“Relax! Nothing bad will happen to her, she’s with four werewolves right now anyway. We’ll protect her if anything bad happens.” Avery said, trying to lighten up the suffocating atmosphere.

Maddison snorted. “Speak for yourself.”

Avery rolled her eyes at Maddison. “Fine, I’ll protect you.” She smiled at Lana as she reached out to wrap her hand around Lana’s shoulder. But before she could even make contact, River caught her arm mid-way and stared down at her with an intense gaze.

“You can protect her by leaving. Both of you.” He said to her firmly.

Avery smirked as she tugged her arm free. “Were you always this bossy, River?”

“Were you always this stupid?” he countered.

They then started to bicker among each other as Lana backed away from the group slightly. She then felt a familiar feeling crept over her, the same suffocatingly painful sensation she had in the car with River when they left Rosecliff. It felt like her gut instincts were warning her about something but she did not know what. She opened her mouth slightly to allow herself to breathe through her mouth as she prayed for this feeling to pass quickly before anyone noticed her discomfort.

She tried to turn her attention to the others, trying her best to make sense of the words they were saying but all she could hear were muffled voices whereas her surroundings started to fade from her peripheral vision. She felt like she was getting an anxiety attack but she couldn’t comprehend why it was happening now when she was surrounded by people she knew.

Avery and River stopped arguing as they turned to look at Lana. She had one hand clenching against her t-shirt near her heart as she tried her best to steady her breathing.

“Lana?” Avery called out.

“What’s wrong?” River asked.

She forced herself to look up at them, wanting to tell them what she was feeling but as always, she could never find the right words to explain herself.

“I—” she croaked but her attention immediately went to something else. Almost instantly, the other four turned their attention to that spot as well.

The forest was still and quiet, no animals nor critters could even be heard around them. The low howling of wind was all they could hear until there was a distant snap.

“Do you guys smell it too?” Maddison asked them in a low voice.

“That’s an unfamiliar scent...is that a werewolf?” Luis muttered as he tried his best to focus on his surroundings.

River then took a step forward. “It’s not just one. There’s unfamiliar werewolves around.” He growled.

Just with that sentence alone, urgency overwhelmed four of them as they took their stance, ready for whatever that was heading their way. Lana finally snapped out from her strange anxiety attack as she tried to understand what was going on.

“What do you mean unfamiliar werewolves?” she asked no one in particular, feeling absolutely breathless.

“Luis, get her out of the forest. Now.” River ordered and almost instantly Luis appeared next to Lana.

“Let’s go, Lana.” Luis said as he gently held onto her elbow and pulled her away from where the other three were.

Lana frowned at River, wanting to make sense of the situation right now but the mere fact that everyone had their guard up only meant that whatever danger they kept talking about earlier had finally found them. Lana decided not to fight or argue as she turned to follow Luis out of the forest.

“Wait!” They two heard Avery call out, causing them to freeze in their tracks. Avery approached the two and proceeded to shrug off the jacket she was wearing and held it out to Lana. Her bare shoulders were now exposed and Lana could see how toned her muscles were. “I really like this jacket and I don’t want to ruin it when I transform. So be a dear and hold on to this for me.” She winked.

Maddison groaned aloud and River just looked at Avery in complete disbelief. Lana took hold of the jacket and held it close to her chest. She wanted to say something to them, anything but she found herself tongue-tied.

“Come on, Lana. We need to go, now.” Luis beckoned at her, prompting her to catch up to him. As the two ran hurriedly away to get to out of the forest, Lana felt her heart leap when she heard a loud howl coming from the direction where River and the others were.