

Her Secret 65

CHAPTER 65 NO.65

“Zane!” Lana called out in surprise to see him walking up to them. “What are you doing here?”

“I was looking for you since we didn’t have any classes together today and you weren’t responding to my texts. Carmen told me you might be with Avery and I saw her walking away from this direction so I...” his voice trailed off as he turned to River, almost as though he only noticed him standing there. “I’m sorry...am I interrupting something?” he asked nervously. The fact that the two of them were together in such a secluded area made Zane wonder what exactly they were doing.

“N-No...we were just talking.” Lana said.

“Yea. Just talking.” River repeated indifferently. “See you around.” he said, not looking at anymore in particular as he turned to walk away.

“Ah.” Lana opened her mouth to call out to him but stopped herself as she did not know what to even say to him. She watched River walk away before turning her full attention to Zane. “Sorry I didn’t text you back! I was preoccupied talking to Avery earlier and then River came over and—”

“You don’t have to explain yourself, Lana.” He smiled. “But I was wondering if you wanted to go home with me today? I mean as in...can I drive you home?” he fumbled with his words and Lana could see a slight shade of pink across his cheeks.

Lana let out a soft chuckle at this cute side of his. “Sure!” she beamed, feeling her body warm up at just the thought of being alone with Zane.

In the car, Zane was being his normal chatty self which was great since Lana often felt overwhelmed when she had to do the talking. The fact that she has been harbouring this silly little crush for him ever since they were in middle school has truly affected her in the most miniscule ways.

She would feel that fluttering sensation in his stomach, she would feel her heart beating ridiculously fast and most of the time when she was around Zane, all she could think about was to act natural so he wouldn’t notice. Now that the two of them were becoming close again, the last thing she wanted to do was ruin their friendship because of her feelings for him.

Lana noticed that Zane drove past her street and got an immediate flashback to when River did the same on the last day of founder’s day.

She sheepishly cleared her throat as she turned to Zane. “Zane, you missed the turning...” she mumbled.

“Oh right! I didn’t tell you earlier because I wanted it to be a surprise,” he said with a cheeky grin.

Lana laughed. “So, you’re basically kidnapping me?” she asked jokingly.

“Well, when you say it that way...I’m sorry I didn’t ask for your permission or even ask if you had plans.” He said, giving her an apologetic look.

Lana smiled. “It’s fine. Spontaneous trips like this are always fun and besides, if it’s you—I don’t mind being kidnapped.” She said, immediately realising and regretting what she just uttered aloud. “I’m joking...of course!” she quickly said, trying to not make things awkward between them.

Zane laughed. “Then, Lana Danley, consider yourself kidnapped.”

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Lana stared into the horizon as the brilliant sun dipped down below it, fading away slowly from view. The sky bled with hues of oranges, purples and blues—all swirled together to form a mesmerising view. The dazzling stars were peeking behind the blanket of fluffy and welcoming clouds. They moved slowly, calmly as they parted a pathway for the moon to finally make her appearance.

“It’s a beautiful sunset, right?” Zane suddenly asked, causing Lana to pry her eyes away from the wondrous sight.

“You really are a romantic, Zane Railey.” Lana said with a smile.

Zane shrugged. “What can I say? I really love watching the sunset.”

Lana nodded. She then looked around, recalling this spot as somewhere she and River drove past when they went up further up to the viewing area to watch the fireworks. Lana wondered if everyone except her was aware of this high back road that led to a beautiful overview of the town below them.

“What are you looking at?” Zane called out.

“Oh, I just remembered that there’s a viewing area further up, right?” she asked, feigning ignorance.

“Yeah, but I feel like we would’ve missed the sunset if we drove up there.” He explained as he leaned back on the hood of his car. “Why? Are you disappointed I didn’t bring you there instead?”

Lana shook her head. “I don’t really know where. As long as we get to see a view like this then I’m happy,”

“I’m glad you’re happy then.” He beamed. “But I have to admit that I didn’t bring you here just to watch the sunset.” He confessed in a rather serious tone.

Lana could feel her heart pounding faster than usual. She did not know what Zane wanted to talk about but that did not stop her from feeling anxious about it. “What is it?” she asked him hesitantly.

"I wanted to talk about the past with you—more like middle school. We were so close back then, we used to sit together in class and pair up during P.E," Zane said, his expression was soft and tender as he recalled those fond memories. "Do you remember Mr. Flapjack?"

Lana let out a chuckle. "Wasn't that the name you gave to that bee that flew in our class?"

"You remember! Yeah, everyone was so scared of getting stung by it but the both of us worked together to get it back outside."

Lana nodded as she recalled that time. "That was an insane day," she smiled.

"Yeah, it was." He said, nostalgia tainting his expression. He then let out a soft sigh. "But what I don't get is—why did we drift apart once we entered high school?"

"That's...well..." she fumbled over her words.

"We hardly talked anymore, only when it came to school stuff or the casual greetings. I mean yeah we only had like one class together in our first year and then nothing but...correct me if I'm wrong but I really felt like you were doing everything in your power to avoid me."

"Zane..."

"I'm sorry for suddenly bringing this up when it's been so long but I keep thinking—wondering if I did something to upset you and that led to you start avoiding me or something. You can be honest with me, you know. I won't be mad...I guess I just need some form of closure."

Lana thought about it for a moment, thinking about how satisfying it would feel if she could finally tell him the truth, to finally confess to him about these feelings she has been hiding from him. But in her mind, she would be ruining this friendship that was being mended only recently.

Did she really want to take the chance to admit to him that she likes him only to be rejected and turn their relationship into something awkward and unbearable? She wondered what kind of face Zane would make if she told him the truth, would he be surprised, confused, disgusted?

Lana opened her mouth to give him a reply even though her heart was aching and screaming at her to stay silent. But she closed her mouth immediately when she noticed Zane strengthening his posture. He stretched his upper body as his gaze was fixed on the horizon where the once orange sky was now painted dark. The stars and moon glistened brightly above them.

"I'm sorry...maybe I should've just kept that to myself. I really put you in a tough spot huh?" he said as he turned to look at Lana.

"N-No, I just..."

“It’s okay, Lana. You don’t have to say anything. I should probably just move on from the past right? Since we’re friends again, right?” he smiled at her but it was rather clear that he was forcing himself to do so.

“If anyone should be apologising it should be me. You were right to think that I was avoiding you because I was and I did it for my own selfish reasons.” She said, hating how sad Zane looked even though he was smiling at her.

Zane came closer to her, there were mere feet apart between their bodies. “What do you mean about that?” he questioned softly.

Lana gulped as she averted her eyes away from him. She stared down at her feet, cursing at herself for digging her own grave like this. She always knew she was the type to speak before thinking but this was starting to be a nuisance to her social life.

“It’s...complicated.” She muttered, hoping that Zane would accept that answer and drop the topic. She knew she wasn’t ready to tell him the truth, she wasn’t ready to ruin everything. Not again.

Zane was silent for a moment and Lana wondered if he was mad. She dared to take a peak of his expression and when their eyes met, he smiled tenderly.

“I really like you, Lana. More than friends, of course.” He suddenly confessed, causing Lana’s eyes to widen. “I’ve been fond of you and the friendship you provided even since I met you and I really hope to get to know this version of you better since we were barely acquaintances in our first two years of high school. But if you think that’s bothersome or if you aren’t interested in me that way then you should let me know because I don’t want to get hurt by you again.” He confessed with a sad smile.

“Zane...I don’t under—”

Zane then immediately reached for his phone to check the time, interrupting her mid-sentence once more. “It’s getting late. I should get you home before we both get in trouble.” He told her playfully as he went towards the car door.

Lana was stunned as she stared out into the horizon. She had so many questions to ask him but no matter how she wanted to twist Zane’s words in her mind, she couldn’t change the fact that he just outwardly and honestly confessed to her. Her attention was then drawn to the moon that was hanging above her, it was full, brilliantly blinding and perfectly imperfect. It was a full moon tonight and for some strange reason, the longer Lana stared at the celestial orb above her, the more her worries seemed to fade away.