

## Her Secret 66

### CHAPTER 66 NO.66

Lana watched Ray let out an exasperated sigh as he pinched the bridge of his nose. She stood there awkwardly by the door, not really sure what to do or say as she did not think he would be home this early.

After Zane's sudden trip down memory lane, she quickly lost track of time and completely forgot that she was grounded. Ray made it pretty clear last night that she has a curfew now that he expected her to follow. Be home by 7pm, that's all he asked for. He didn't even confiscate her device or even banned her from using them, all he wanted was for her to be home at a certain time and Lana already broke that curfew on the first day.

"What am I going to do with you...?" he asked in a low voice, clearly disappointed with her behaviour.

"I'm sorry..." she mumbled, not knowing what else to say to the man in front of her who looked as though he was reconsidering everything.

"Where were you?" he asked, finally looking up at her.

Lana fiddled with the strap of her wrist watch nervously. "Zane offered to send me home and we were— talking about our years in middle school and lost track of time." She answered him nervously.

She wasn't necessarily lying to him since that was exactly what the both of them did. But she knew she had to leave out the parts where Zane particularly confessed his feelings for her. In any other time, Lana would've been delighted. The person she had a crush on ever since middle school abruptly revealed to her that he has mutual feelings for her and yet she could not be further away from the sense of happiness.

Everything felt strange to Lana especially since Zane looked hurt and sad when he confessed to her. After that, he did not give her time to even respond and in the car, Lana did not even attempt to clear things up with him. She thought that she should tell him that she likes him too, and that she has been for years now but as the silence in the car grew heavier, the more Lana started to doubt everything.

The mere fact that her past actions hurt Zane was getting to her and she started to wonder since when was she such a selfish person? She thought that the only reason she drifted apart from Zane was because she didn't want him to start getting teased by their peers like how she was but the more she thought about it, the more she realised that she just wanted a way out from the constant teasing even if it meant that she would be cutting ties with him.

"I'm sorry...I really am selfish." she uttered aloud.

Ray noticed how her face dropped into a gloomy expression as she stared blankly at the ground. He knew for certain that whatever she was apologising for wasn't related to the fact that she broke her

curfew—her promise to him.

“...as long as you learnt your lesson then that’s good enough for me.” He said, not wanting to pry on what was making her so dejected because Ray had a feeling it was related to that Zane boy. He thought about asking her if they had a fight or if they were even dating in the first place but he held his tongue. He knew that Lana would rather go to her room and rest instead of being interrogated by him over her love life.

“I won’t break curfew again, Ray.” She boldly stated.

Ray nodded as he crossed his arms around his chest. “You better don’t because if you do, I’ll ground you until you graduate. Do you understand?”

Lana gave him a nervous smile, knowing fully that he was most definitely going to do that and that would totally ruin her senior year of high school. “I understand.” She said with a heavy heart.

Ray nodded again before heading off to the kitchen. “Dinner will be ready in 10 minutes. Go get freshened up.” He called out to her.

“Okay...” she mumbled as she dragged her feet up the stairs.

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The clicking of silverware against the plates echoed through the dining area. Ray watched Lana quietly as she swirled the mashed potatoes in her plate slowly. It was clear to him that her thoughts were preoccupied and Ray was fighting the urge to ask her if everything was alright.

“How was school?” he asked instead, not wanting her to think that he was trying to pry into her personal life but that did not stop him from being curious about it.

Growing up, he noticed how Lana was not secretive by any means but that still did not mean that she would openly tell him about things. He recalled the time when Lana got into a massive argument with Suzie when they were in middle school and she did not tell Ray about it until he found her sobbing one day. When he went to comfort her, that was when she told him everything. To him, Lana was the type of person who would keep everything to herself until it started to get overwhelming for her to handle on her own.

The only way Ray can help her is for her to come to him on her own accord because even if he asked if something was bothering her, she would put on that fake smile of hers and lie through her teeth.

“It was okay...there was a pop quiz in History.” She replied absent-mindedly.

“Oh? How did that go?” he asked cautiously as he studied her unchanging expression.

"It went okay..." she said as she slowly ate her food.

"Midterms are coming up right?" Ray asked.

There was a slight change in her expression, although it was subtle it told Ray enough. It seemed to him that she completely forgot about midterms until Ray mentioned it.

"Yea. It's next week," she nodded to herself as though she had to confirm that fact with herself.

"Are you ready for it?" he asked hesitantly.

"Ready as I'll ever be." She said with a smile followed by a small nervous laugh.

Ray hated seeing her like this. He thought for a moment if it was due to him implementing the curfew but she was willing to accept any punishment last night so what changed. The only change that he could think of was probably related to the boy she was with, Zane Railey.

Ray then let out a sigh. "Did something happen?" he asked even though he knew what her reply was going to be.

"N-No, nothing at all." She said almost instantly.

He examined her expression. "Is it because of what happened last night?" he tested the waters, even though he was pretty sure Lana had boy problems he still wanted to make sure she was doing okay about all the information she got last night. Any normal person would be confused and anxious after all.

"Last night...? Oh...no, everything is fine. A-ok." She said with a thumbs up. It was evident to Ray that she was reassuring herself that everything was fine instead of reassuring him.

"Lana...you know that you can talk to me—" his words were cut off when his phone suddenly started to ring. The both of them turned to where the device was. Ray stood up and went to answer it. He did not say anything, he only listened and after a few seconds he hung up.

Lana noticed his troubled expression. "What's wrong?"

"I have to go back to the station, there seems to be an issue." He told her as he quickly cleared his plate and went to grab his things.

"Issue? It is the Highcaster pack again?"

"No, no. It isn't anything serious but I'll probably be back later so after you eat get enough rest, okay? It's a school day tomorrow after all."

"Okay."

“Oh and also don’t forget you are grounded so don’t even think of leaving this house.” He called out.

“Yes, sir.” She replied meekly.

Ray then approached Lana and stared directly into her eyes. She tensed up. “Promise me, Lana.”

“I promise.” She said almost robotically.

“Good. I’ll see you in the morning. Call me if you need anything, I’ll keep my phone with me.” He reached out to ruffle her hair. Lana laughed and playfully pushed his hand away. She then watched as Ray rushed out of the house and as the silence loomed over her, she started to feel sick to her stomach.

After forcing herself to finish her meal, Lana headed up to her room to study in order to distract herself from her hectic mind. But soon enough she found herself unable to focus on anything that she was doing. With a frustrated sigh, she went to her bed and decided that sleeping would probably make her feel better. She laid completely still, staring at the ceiling for a long moment before deciding to close her eyes but the restlessness that was creeping up over her was starting to infuriate her.

She tried to think about what was causing her to feel this way, pondering if it was because of Zane but she quickly realised that it wasn’t Zane at all. It was her. She wanted something desperately, like a craving that she had to satisfy before she could even rest for the day. The more she tried to ignore this feeling the more it was starting to affect her body. Her throat felt dry, her heart was beating at an unsteady rate and before her mind could catch up with her body, she found herself reaching for her phone.

She searched for Ray’s contact number and called him. As she listened to the tone dial beeping against her ear, she started to feel increasingly frantic. She has never felt like this before—the urge to go to the forest was overwhelming her.

“Hello?” She heard Ray’s voice on the other side of the line.

“Ray...” she called out, her voice hoarse as though she had been deprived of water.

“Lana? Hey, what’s wrong? Did you need something?” he asked, clearly confused as to why she was calling.

“I know this might sound weird...but I really need to go to the forest right now.” she admitted immediately, not even attempting to lie to him at this point.

“What? Why? Did you leave something in the station? I can bring it back with me when I leave later.”

“N-No...I’m not sure what’s happening but I just really need to go...I just want to be there.”

“Lana, you aren’t making any sense.” He said firmly, and she could feel that he was frowning at her strange request. An hour hasn’t even passed since Ray left and even Lana couldn’t make sense of what was happening to her.

“I just...need to be there right now.” she huffed, feeling her body burning up suddenly.

“If this is some strange new tactic you are trying to pull to break your curfew then you must know that it’s not going to work on me. Why can’t you just stay at home for once and act like you are grounded?” he lectured.

“No that’s not what I’m doing! Please listen to me—something isn’t right...” she uttered, knowing the fact that Ray would not believe her unless she explained to him properly. But even Lana did not understand what was going on with her body.

Ray sighed. “Listen to me Lana. Don’t do anything rash. If you leave the house just know that you will be grounded until you graduate. I give you my trust, Lana, and I hope you do not break it in any shape or form.” He said. Before Lana could even reply, he hung up.

For a long moment Lana listened to the endless beeping on the other end until a sharp pain went through her body. She groaned aloud, tears forming in her eyes as it blurred her vision. Her attempt to ignore and subdue the pain she felt across her body failed as she found herself in a foetal position. She allowed herself to cry out, hoping that once this passed, it would just seem like a strange and sudden surge of pain. She tried to think of all the possibilities that could lead to this pain and thought that maybe it was just period cramps. But the longer she laid in bed, the worse she was starting to feel.

“The...forest.” She mumbled to herself and as though her own body was telling her how to make her feel better. She pushed herself into a seated position as she glanced out of her room window. Her eyes widened the moment she saw the brilliant moon hanging high above her.

Lana slowly walked towards the window, her gaze never once leaving the celestial orb in front of her. She pushed open the window and almost as though she was in a trance, she hopped over the ledge and jumped down.