

## Her Secret 73

### CHAPTER 73 NO.73

“Lana? Are you okay?” Lana heard the familiar voice of Carmen calling out to her. She blinked and turned her attention to her friend. Through the constant chattering in the cafeteria, Lana managed to block everything out. She would have not realised that Carmen was talking to her if she didn’t grab hold of her wrist.

“Yeah, I’m fine. Why? Do I look weird or something?” She asked, her hands going to her cheeks unconsciously.

“You just seem super preoccupied—like you have a bunch of thoughts in your mind all at once.” Suzie chimed in. Steven, who was seated next to her nodded.

Lana let out a small chuckle, somehow afraid of how Suzie literally just guessed what was going on with Lana at the moment. “I just...didn’t get enough sleep.”

She wasn’t necessarily lying to them. After everything that happened to her, Lana could hardly sleep after her late night shower. She laid in bed until she heard Ray come home. Her curiosity over the change that was happening to her body almost made her go to Ray for answers but she stopped herself, remembering that she would need to tell him that she broke curfew and that was something she wanted to take to the grave.

Carmen then reached out to brush a stray strand of hair away from Lana’s face. “We have self-study next period. If you want, you can have a nap in my car.” She said with a sympathetic smile.

Lana smiled back, appreciating how her friends were still there for her even though she had been disappearing and not texting them back as she normally would. Lana wanted to tell her friends all about her crazy adventures and crazy things that she encountered ever since she was roped into the werewolf society, but she respected the secrecy of everything. She then started to ponder over how Carmen and Suzie would even react if they found out that Lana was not fully human.

“Thank you, Carmen. But I’m okay, guys. Just sleep deprived!” she laughed nervously. She then stood up and pointed over the direction of the restrooms. “I’m just going to wash my face in the restroom real quick.” She whispered as she walked ahead.

Carmen, Suzie and Steven watched as Lana disappeared from their sight behind the sea of people. Carmen then looked down at Lana’s tray where her food was left untouched.

“It’s probably the stress of midterms that’s making her like this right? Lana really wants to move to the big city after graduation so she has to study hard...right?” Carmen muttered.

“Or it could be love problems.” Steven interjected, mouth full from the sandwich he just bit into.

Carmen glared at him. "Not everything has to do with love, Steven." She huffed.

"I'm with Carmen this time babe. Lana isn't the type to lose sleep over some dude."

"Maybe it isn't a dude." Steven said confidently with a bold shrug of his shoulders. He didn't even need to clarify what he meant as Carmen and Suzie turned to look at each other in realisation.

"Avery!" they said in unison.

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"Avery..." Lana uttered aloud when she entered the restroom and found the blonde by the sink reapplying her lip gloss.

"Hey, look what the cat dragged it." Avery said with a cheeky grin the moment she met Lana's gaze through the reflection. She then capped her lip gloss and shoved it back into her small makeup bag. She twirled around to face Lana as she leaned against the sink lightly. "You look troubled. What's wrong?" she asked in her usual cheerful voice.

Lana studied Avery's expression for a long moment as she contemplated whether she should even tell Avery what was happening to her with her sudden ability to heal herself. Even though they have only gotten closer these few days, Lana trusted Avery enough to reveal her secret to her and she is also the only person who was there when Lana got her rut. Avery is also the only person who knows that Lana and River had sex.

It should be a given to Lana to trust Avery by now and yet she still found herself hesitating. Deep down she wanted to avoid ever talking about the fact that she can heal now because that way she can just ignore whatever change that was happening to her body. Werewolf or not, if she just stayed silent no one would know...right? But being the curious soul she is, she knew that this fact would eat her up alive. No matter how hard she tried to run away from this dilemma, a part of her would always want to know the truth.

"Lana? What's wrong?" Avery asked again, this time her voice sounded completely serious. It was as though she could sense that something was wrong from just the heavy silence in the air.

"I need to talk to you..."

"Oh my god...are you pregnant?" Avery gasped.

"Huh? What!? No I'm not!" Lana yelled, feeling her face heating up. She wasn't sure if it was due to embarrassment or anger. It was physically impossible for her to get pregnant that fast was what Lana thought immediately.

Avery then chuckled as she went to wrap her arm around Lana's shoulders. "There's the Lana I know. So

adorable when she's flustered." She said as her hand went to Lana's cheek where she pinched the shorter girl's flesh painfully.

Lana squirmed and wiggled herself free from Avery's hold. "Can you just be serious for once!" Lana scolded.

"Aw, she's cute even when she's mad." Avery beamed.

"I can heal now!" Lana said aloud suddenly. Hoping that her sudden announcement will finally make Avery pay attention to her without messing around. Lana got what she wanted as Avery gawked at her, eyes widened, mouth ajar.

"What...?" she huffed out.

Lana glanced behind her, double checking if the stalls were empty. Once she was certain that no one else was in the restroom with them, she walked towards Avery. She started to unbutton her shirt in front of the girl who could only continue to stare.

"Last night when I was showering, I noticed that the bite mark River gave me completely vanished." She told her as she shrugged the shirt down to reveal her shoulder to Avery. Avery's hand unconsciously went to touch Lana's skin at the same spot where she remembered seeing the band aid.

"Even the hickeys are gone..." she muttered to herself.

Lana felt flushed at how close Avery was standing to her. "Um...not only that..." she muttered as she backed away from Avery slightly. She quickly re-buttoned her shirt in case someone else entered the restroom. "Even the cuts and scratches I had on the sole of my feet...all gone."

"It's almost as though you are turning into a werewolf gradually." Avery muttered as she nodded to herself.

"But...why now? I just don't understand why everything is happening all at once."

"Did you tell Ray about this?"

"Are you insane? He will murder me if he ever found out I broke curfew." She sulked.

"Oh right, I totally forgot that I aided you in your criminal activities." Avery smiled sweetly when she noticed Lana's glare. "I'm joking." She said as her eyes went to Lana's arm. She then reached out and grabbed Lana's arm, rolling back the sleeve to expose the freshly scared wound that resembled a bite mark on her arm.

"This is...well this didn't heal."

Avery smiled. "Seems like you are prone to getting bitten," Avery joked as her thumb brushed over the bumps of the scar. "But it makes sense why this scar didn't heal." Avery said suddenly.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, when you think about it, we werewolves don't immediately get our traits like enhanced strength and speed and even regeneration the moment we are born. Everything happens after we reach a certain age or in other words, after we get our first rut. So thinking back, you had your first rut yesterday and that would make sense why the wounds you got yesterday healed while the wounds you got prior to yesterday didn't." Avery explained.

"So in other words...I am slowly becoming a werewolf?"

"It looks like that to me." Avery shrugged as she let Lana's hand drop to her side. "We should go to Griffin and tell him about this."

"But—"

"That's our best shot of figuring out why this is happening to you only now. But of course I won't force you to do anything you are not comfortable with." Avery said.

"No, it's not that."

"Then?"

"Well...midterms start in literally 2 days so..."

Avery stared at Lana for a moment before bursting out in laughter. "Oh my sweet little Lana is so diligent!" she called out playfully as she rushed out of the restroom.

Lana chased after her. "Stop laughing at me!" she whined.

Avery pulled Lana into a sideways hug and leaned close to her ear. "Very well, Miss Diligent. We'll go meet Griffin after midterms are over."

"Thanks...Avery. I feel like I would've gone insane if I kept this all to myself." She muttered.

"Hey. We're friends aren't we? And besides, if you turn out to be a fully-fledged werewolf then that only means I have other options besides just River." She smirked.

"Seriously...?" Lana made a face.

"Haha! I'm just kidding!" Avery laughed, tightening her grip on the smaller girl. "But then again, I'm also open to the idea." she winked at Lana whose face turned red in an instant.

River stopped in his tracks the moment he heard two familiar voices. He turned around to the source only to find Avery and Lana close together, with Avery's arm around Lana's shoulders. He wondered when the two even became friends in the first place since Lana did not seem uncomfortable in that position at all. There was a strange stinging sensation in River's chest as he looked at their smiling and happy faces as the broken expression of Lana's from last night appeared in his thoughts.

The urge to approach Lana and talk to her about what happened last night was dawning over him. But remembering that she strictly said to him they should avoid each other at school kept him frozen in place. After a beat, he forced himself to turn around and walk away even when his body and heart was telling him otherwise.