

## Her Secret 74

### CHAPTER 74 NO.74

There was a simultaneous wave of relief that washed over the high school seniors of Rosecliff when the final bell rang. Just on cue, some were already rushing out of classrooms, having important places to be compared to lingering around the school compounds. Some complained and whined to their friends about how difficult the last paper was, hushed voices comparing answers followed by a chorus of defeated groans could be heard nearby.

As for Lana, she stared out of the window at her classroom—noting how the sky was darkening and a gloomy atmosphere was slowly creeping up over Rosecliff. She was always fond of the rain, the cosy atmosphere paired with the chilly air—it was the perfect combination to get some well-deserved sleep. Lana let out a sigh when she remembered that word, sleep, something she has been deprived of for a long time now. The stress of the exams as well as the hassles of dealing with her newly found abilities was really weighing on her shoulders.

“We are finally free!” someone exclaimed behind Lana, causing her turn to the source.

It was Suzie and Carmen as they made their way towards Lana. When their eyes met, they smiled and waved at her.

“How was it?” Carmen asked Lana curiously.

“It was...fine?”

Carmen nodded proudly and looked at Suzie. “See? I told you that you’d be the only one thinking it was difficult. If only you and Steven spent more time studying than reading those atrocious romance novels,” Carmen nagged on like a disappointed parent.

Suzie made a face. “Okay mom! What are you going to do about it? Ground me?” Suzie sarcastically fought back.

Carmen clicked her tongue and ruffled Suzie’s neatly fashioned hair. Suzie screamed and the two then proceeded to mess with each other’s hair. Lana watched them for a moment, having a sense of déjà vu as this exact thing happened when they were in middle school before.

“Kids, please behave in public.” Lana said lazily as she packed up her belongings. The two of them then broke apart almost immediately and started to brush down their hair with their fingers.

“What’s your plan today, Lana?” Suzie asked.

Lana glanced over at her wristwatch. “I have somewhere I need to go in a bit but I have some time to spare.” She told them.

“Let’s go grab milkshakes!” Carmen and Suzie said in unison.

Lana was shocked by their sudden excitement for the dairy beverage but she shrugged and quickly agreed since it has been a while since the three of them spent time together. The trio then headed out of the classroom when one of their classmates, Isabel, stopped them by the door. She cheerfully waved three waxed sealed letters in front of them before presenting the letters to each of them.

“I’m having a birthday party tomorrow night at my place! I hope the three of you will be able to make it since I’m inviting literally everyone from our grade!” she beamed, followed by a sweet and innocent smile.

“Oh my gosh! These letters are super cute!” Suzie squealed as she admired the aesthetic of the birthday invitation.

“I know right! So vintage!” Isabel laughed. She then excused herself as she went to deliver more letters to the others.

“Guess we know what we are doing tomorrow night.” Carmen said as she examined the letter. Her eyes then widened in realisation as she turned to Lana with a frown. “Wait...aren’t you still grounded?”

“Yeah,” Lana said with an awkward laughter. “I have 4 more days to go,” she shrugged.

“B-But! It’s a senior party! It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity!” Suzie complained. “We’ll just sneak you out!” she suddenly suggested. Carmen, who is always the type to stick to the rules, seemed to even consider Suzie’s idea.

“Calm down! I’ll talk to Ray when I get home later.” Lana said, trying to reassure them that there’s still a chance. The two then let out sighs of relief.

“Oh, good thing we are heading to the mall. We should grab a gift for her on the way!” Suzie said excitedly. Suzie has always been the type of love buying presents for others and surprisingly, she always knows just what gift someone would love and because of that, she would call this ability her ‘superpower’.

“Will you have time to go hunt for a gift?” Carmen asked Lana.

Lana glanced over at her watch again and nodded. “Yea, I have an hour before I have to go meet Avery.” She said.

“Avery?” Carmen raised an eyebrow.

“Avery~” Suzie called out teasingly.

“Yes...we have plans together.” Lana said casually, wondering if she was overthinking their weird

tonalities.

“Plans together? Like a date?” Carmen asked, sounding as though she was interrogating Lana.

“Ohh~ A date!” Suzie chimed in.

“No it’s not a date!” Lana fumed, causing her two friends to laugh at her reaction. They then decided to drop the topic as Carmen and Suzie started to argue about the exam questions yet again.

As the trio headed towards Carmen’s car, a familiar voice called out to Lana. She glanced to the side only to find Zane waving at her. He excused himself from his group and jogged towards Lana. Carmen and Suzie quickly ran off to the car, giggling along the way like children playing a prank on an adult. Lana glared at them before turning back to Zane with a wide smile.

“Hey Zane,” she called out bashfully.

“Hi! How was the last paper?” he asked, making conversation as usual.

Lana was surprised that Zane even called out to her and approached her since they haven’t really spoken to each other ever since that night when Zane confessed to her. They still texted occasionally but it was always about schoolwork and what they were focusing on when they studied. Lana wondered if Zane was purposefully avoiding mentioning his confession to her to avoid making her uncomfortable but she was still uncomfortable around him nonetheless.

She knew that any normal person would at least give him an answer by now but Lana’s mind has been occupied with other things that she never had the chance to even think about Zane’s confession.

“It was fine...” she said softly.

“Are you guys going to celebrate?” he asked, glancing back to where Carmen and Suzie were watching the two attentively from the car.

“Well...only if you consider grabbing milkshakes as a celebration.”

“Naturally, it is.” He beamed.

“Oh and we are going to go look for a gift for Isabel. Will you be going to the party tomorrow night?” she asked, even though there was no certainty that she could even go.

Zane shook his head. “I’ll be out of town. I’m going to go meet some relatives of mine.” He told her.

“Oh...I see.” Lana said, wondering why she felt rather disheartened over this fact.

“You sound disappointed.” Zane called out, a hint of amusement in his voice.

“W-Well...I just thought we could hang out together since it has been a while since we last spoke...face to face.” Lana mumbled nervously, not sure herself what she was even saying at this point. “But then again, I’m still grounded so I have to ask Ray if I can even go in the first place...”

Zane let out a chuckle at Lana’s nervous babbling. “Hm, if I get back early I’ll stop by. So don’t look so sad, I’m going to feel guilty.”

“N-No! You do what you have to do, Zane. Don’t change your plans because of whatever I just said.” She babbled, trying her best to ignore her flushed face.

“But when you say things like that so earnestly, it makes it feel like maybe I still have a chance to be with you.”

Lana’s eyes widened as she gawked at him. After so long, he finally brought it up again and yet he made it sound like Lana had already regretted him. Lana opened her mouth to say that she just needs time to sort things out but she was interrupted by Zane’s friends calling him over. Zane turned around and gave them a wave.

“Hey, I have to go now but I’ll text you when I’m back in town, okay? Hopefully Ray lets you go to the party tomorrow.” Zane told her as he slowly started to back away from her.

“...Yeah...right. Take care on your trip.” She said with a small wave of her hands. Zane gave her a final smile before turning around completely and jogging back to his friends. Lana stood there for a moment, staring at his back as she silently pondered over what she was going to say when Zane finally asked for an answer from her. She likes him—that much she knows but would she even be able to maintain a relationship and deal with whatever changes that were happening to her body now that her alpha traits were becoming more active?

“Earth to Lana! Let’s go, baby!!” Suzie called out to her from the car, pulling Lana out of her bad habit of overthinking. She sighed and walked over to the car and as she passed by Suzie whose head was sticking out of the car window, Lana playfully bopped her forehead with her knuckles. Suzie let out a dramatic groan which only made Lana giggle.

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“So Lana,” Suzie said, pulling both Lana’s and Carmen’s attention to her. She then paused to slurp her milkshake. “Are you and Avery dating?”

Lana smiled. “We are not.”

“Are you and Zane dating?” Carmen added, giving Lana a sideways glance.

“We...are not.” She said.

Suzie pointed at Lana with her index finger suddenly. "You hesitated!" she declared.

Carmen nodded in agreement. "You did, indeed."

"Can you two stop this?" Lana sighed.

"Okay, okay we will drop this but can I ask one more question?" Suzie pressed.

"No—"

"Are you and River dating?" She asked, causing Lana to almost drop the milkshake in her hands.

"W-Why would you even think that?" she panicked, wondering if her friends ended up finding out that she slept with River.

"Just covering all bases." she said with a shrug. "So?"

"No..." she mumbled as her lips went to the straw. She silently drank her beverage as she blankly stared at the table.

Suzie and Carmen exchanged nervous glances before turning back to Lana. "We didn't mean to upset you..." Carmen said sympathetically.

Lana snapped out of it and shook her head. "N-No! I'm not upset! I just...I'm not dating anyone at the moment," she told them with a smile.

"Okay but who would you want to date out of those three though?" Suzie questioned excitedly.

"Suzie!" Carmen scolded, which led Suzie to not bring up the topic anymore as the three of them walked around the mall to look for gifts for Isabel's birthday.

Soon, the time for Lana to meet up with Avery came and she quickly excused herself from her friends, not wanting to keep Avery waiting too long since she was nice enough to offer to pick Lana up to the mall and then drive them to Griffin's.

Lana almost immediately spotted Avery's car and hopped into the passenger seat. The familiar scent of her car filled Lana with the sense of comfort even though she strongly associated this scent with the night everything went to hell—her sudden experience with her rut, her night spent with River, it's weird how a simple thing like smell could bring back certain memories and make it seem rather vivid.

"Hello my love." Avery greeted as she peeked at Lana from the top of her sunglasses.

Lana held out a neat package to show Avery before placing it at the backseat. "I got you some desserts."

She told her.

“Aw, aren’t you sweet?” Avery purred. As Lana readjusted her position, she froze when she felt Avery’s hand caressing her cheek. She then leaned closer to Lana’s face, her soft lips brushing against Lana’s cheeks. “Can’t I have you for dessert instead?” she whispered against her skin.

Lana giggled from the ticklish sensation and simply pushed Avery away. After spending a lot of time with Avery, Lana has gotten used to her constant teasing. She could boldly claim that she was immune to Avery’s advances, much to the blonde’s dismay. “Maybe later, we have things to do now.” she told her.

Avery pouted but then proceeded to start the car. “I already told Rene and Griffin that we are coming over.”

“Mhm. Do you think Griffin will tell Ray about our visit?” she asked as she fastened her seatbelt. She was wondering if she should’ve just been honest to Ray in the first place.

“Who knows. Why? Are you scared that you’ll get busted?” she asked with a signature sly smirk. In response, Lana sighed, the thought of being grounded throughout her senior year was not something she wanted to become reality.