

## Love Me in the Dark - Chapter 19. Welcome Back, River

RIVER

“What do you mean I’m leaving? Did they catch him? Is he in police custody right now?” I was torn between celebrating and feeling down at the same time. It would only mean one thing that I wouldn’t

get a

chance to see Krew again, but he seemed okay with it, though.

I was drenched with sweat while he looked all mighty in his dark blue suit with a crisp white shirt, his hands in his pockets like he was born to bark around. Of course, it was. Who am I kidding? He was

the

big bad wolf.

“You’re leaving, and not yet.”

“Then how could you just throw me out if he’s still at large?” My anger brewed in my blood quicker

thar. .

thought. I was throwing him an incinerating stare, fuming with anger while he didn’t seem to give a

damn

at my outburst. “Is this because you failed to convince me to accept your offer? And that I didn’t fall

for

your devious plans?”

“No. It has nothing to do with that. You’re not interested then I was only respecting your decision. I arranged something else for you back in the city. You’d be safe there, and you’d have a chance to

see  
your friend. You're gonna like—”

“What do you know what I like? You don't even know me to know what I like, but then this is all but

an  
arrangement. I should be grateful, right? Well, you got it. Thank you very much for your help.” I

stomped  
away from him out of the mini gym. I was an ungrateful bitch, but my fury had gotten over me.

After I took the quickest shower, I changed into a crop top, jeans, and sneakers. Whatever his plan

was, I  
made sure I had my own. Just in case I needed it.

I took the phone he gave me, and that was it. I was leaving this house for good. Before I walked out

of the  
room, I looked at the guitar one more time and let all those good things that happened in here go.

The driver was indeed waiting for me. He followed me outside the house, opened the door of the

black  
SUV, and I entered silently. When I thought Krew was still willing to have a word with me before I

left, I  
was wrong. The vehicle started, drove to the driveway of his home out of the gate. I regretted right

away  
that I didn't talk to him, thanked him for keeping me safe for the past few days.

My eyes watered, and my stomach knotted. It felt like there was an enormous hollow inside my chest

that  
I left like that with unsettled arguments. I stared outside the window and let those lush greenery

passed by  
like a blur with those chances.

I paid no attention to the man at the airport who introduced himself as Conner. He said he would be  
the  
one to send me to the place Krew had arranged for me.

‘Do you have luggage, Ms. Rouge?’ He was not older than his early thirties, but I was not in a mood  
to  
have a delightful conversation right now. It was ridiculous—what I felt. The moment I was happy,  
then it  
turned me to the dark place—! was suddenly sad. I felt terrible, unsafe again in spite that this man  
was  
hired to protect me.

‘I take that as a no.’

Once I found out about our flight, I texted Journey.

I hadn’t said a word other than no thank you throughout the flight. Conner was sitting next to me had  
shut  
his mouth for good when I only answered was a glare.

I sighed in relief as soon as the pilot announced that we were about to land. I still felt sorry. I had this  
unsettling feeling in the pit of my belly that I left angry. I took note to myself to send him a text that I  
arrived  
safe and thank him for your hospitality. But that would be too much, plus, he didn’t give me much of  
a  
choice other than barking at me that I would be leaving his house today.

Fuck him. I didn't want someone like him to scratch my itch. There were a lot of men who could  
respect

me and give me what I wanted, and certainly not someone like Krew Selik.

As soon as the seat belt sign was off, I unbuckled mine. Conner did the same thing. The passengers  
rushed to the aisle, grabbed their belongings from the overhead bins while I forced myself to find a  
way

out. I knew without a doubt that Conner would follow me.

'I need to use the restroom. I hated doing it on the plane. The space is too small,' I told Conner once  
we

were on the jet bridge.

"Sure. Anyway, I have to inform the boss that we just landed." Of course. I forced myself not to roll  
my

eyes. Instead, I smiled tightly.

"Great. Thanks." Saved by the ring. My phone vibrated in my pocket, and I knew it was from  
Journey. After

how Krew threw me out of his castle, there was no way in hell I would receive a message from him.

Conner was still with me as I followed the sign towards the nearest ladies' room.

'It would be quick,' I assured him.

'Take your time, Miss Rouge.'

I quickly saw Journey in the bathroom. Her bluish-green eyes widened in shock to see me walking  
closer

to her.

“Oh, my god. Oh, my god. I thought I just lost my maid of honor. Where the hell have you been?”

She

inspected me from head to toe and shrugged as if disappointed “You look just fine.”

“Why wouldn’t I be?”

“Well, I got a visit from a man in a blue suit telling me that you were somewhere. That’s all he said,

and

nothing else even how many times I grilled him with questions, he didn’t budge as if I was taking

years of

his life he answered me. All he said was it’s for our own safety. What did he mean by that?” She

looked

angry and shoved to me the stroller she carried with her. “What’s going on, Ri? I’m your best friend

for

God’s sake, yet I knew nothing about your life for these past months.”

‘I’m so sorry. I will tell you everything, I promise.’”

“Sure you will, or I will replace you with someone else. You’re my best friend, River, but I feel like

you’re

turning into a stranger.”

“Not here, Journey. Please?”

“Okay then. Go ahead and change. Don’t worry, I’ll be right here waiting for your long explanation.

And

you’ll have to pay for the ticket if I can’t refund it.”

'L will." Before I entered the toilet, I asked, "Have you heard from Briar lately?"

'I thought you two broke up." She looked at me with a confused look.

"We did."

'Is it true that he crashed my engagement party?"

"Yeah. I'll explain it later, too."

I quickly changed into a cheap skirt, blouse, and coat to disguise myself as a flight attendant. It was

a

good thing Journey had access to the wardrobe where she worked as a production assistant in one

of the

film studios in the city.

My heart kept on thumping violently as I walked out of the ladies room, dragging the stroller with me.

I

asked Journey to take a few steps ahead of me the moment I saw Conner. He has pretty occupied

with

his phone. Thank God he did not notice me as I passed by in front of him.

I let out the breath that I held for too long as soon as I reached Journey's car. Glaring, she grabbed

the

stroller from me before I climbed into her passenger seat. Once she pulled out of the parking area

toward

the busy street, I turned off my phone and pulled out my wig.

"Now that we're here, you better start talking, River."

I took a deep breath before I started. I told her everything from the very beginning on how I met Briar  
to  
our breakup. She knew the detail about my issue with the Selik. I met Krew because of saving her  
job in  
the first place.

“Why the hell did you not tell me that that psycho has been harassing you, Ri?” She shook her head  
in  
disappointment. I would feel the same if the situation reversed.

“You’re happy with August, and the last thing I want before my best friend gets married is to drag  
you into  
my mess. I want you to be happy and free from any trouble before you enter the marriage life,  
Journey.  
Just keep it that way.”

‘I can’t just watch you get harassed, Ri. You know me better than that. And why did you escape from  
that  
Conner guy if Krew is doing something to catch Briar?’

‘I told you—’

‘There’s more to it that you’re not telling me, Ri. But I want you to know that you can trust me with  
everything.’

‘I know, but I was hurt. I mean my ego.’ My cheeks burned. “Maybe there’s a way to end this without  
Krew’s involvement. Since you’re at August’s, I want you to stay there with him and never comes to  
visit  
me. Just until this matter is over.”

She laughed. "Wow! So that you can have the best time of your life with Krew alone? Go ahead, Ri. I won't come to see you unannounced. Bang him hard and make him feel what he missed in the world."

I rolled my eyes. "I won't see Krew again. I've got enough humiliation that could last light-years."

"Oh, you would bang him. Trust me. The Selik has a good specimen. You would miss the best sex of your life if you won't bang one of them."

'I'm serious, Journey. I'm afraid that Briar might pay a visit once he knows that I'm back. I'll dial 911 as soon as he appears. I can't live like this, always looking over my shoulders. My paranoia is getting worse every day, and I'm sick and tired of running away. He has to be locked up if he won't want to follow the restraining order if I got him issued."

'I'm always here for you, Ri.'" She squeezed my hand before she parked the car in front of the apartment building. "If you need anything, all you have to do is call, okay?"

"Thank you." I breathed before I pulled her into a hug.

"Are you sure you'll be okay here alone? Should I inform Krew Selik, or do you need a gun and shoot that piece of crap on his junk?"



“No.” I widened my eyes at her. “He can’t know that I’m here. And as if he even cares. No gun either.

I

don’t wanna be locked up in jail for murder.”

“Fine.” She rolled her eyes and tucked her blonde hair behind her ear. “Call me if you need anything.”

I climbed out of her car and waved goodbye.

As paranoid as I was, I looked around to make sure that no one was watching me. I did the same

before I

unlocked the door of my apartment and before I shut the door behind me. It seemed everything was

in the

right places before I left. Journey was a neat freak, and the apartment was spotless even if she was already with her fiance. I went directly to my room, locked the door, doubled check the windows and

bathroom to make sure no one was hiding there.

I settled for instant noodles and a can of soda. Once I finished, I got back to my room and changed

into

something comfy. I tucked myself into my blanket, and I instantly went into a deep slumber.

I woke to the light assaulting my pupils. I jolted up. My heart leaped up to my throat when I

remembered

that I turned it off before I slept. Goose flesh erupted on my skin, and I instantly felt that someone

was

watching me. A surge of fear flooded through me. For the first time, I felt the real horror. It only

proved one

thing—I was hostage by my own fear.

With my hand on my chest, I gasped while I felt the color had drained on my face. In one quick shift,

I felt

my back hit the headboard. Unblinking, I froze in place as if I turned to stone while I stared in horror

at the

man in front of me.