

Love Me in the Dark - Chapter 29. Just Sing it Out

RIVER

After the disaster dinner, I felt like I was losing my mind. I didn't know what to do with my life. What

Briar

did to me was unforgivable, but so did Krew.

I couldn't believe he used me. He made me think that what we had was real. It turned out it was only

a

part of the plot he was orchestrating. Yeah, it was to save my ass, but he could have just told me

about his

grand plan, and I was willing to do my part to end that terrible chapter of my life.

Now, I didn't have a job. I lost two people I started to care for. My bills kept coming, my rent was

due, and

here I was, slurping instant noodles from a cup.

Great, my life just turned upside down because I was addicted to his extraordinaire cock. Although I

wo

starting to build back my life from the ground—who am I kidding? For the past three days, I did

nothing

other than slept and be a total loser.

I checked jobs online, though, but there was no luck. I still did not get my phone back since they

needed it

for evidence. I used my laptop to watch some shows and chat with Krys and Journey to keep my

sanity in
check.

My fork hung in the air when my doorbell went off. I was a hundred percent sure it wasn't what I
thought it
was. Fine, it's not Krew. He apologized through text, though, but that was it. I hadn't heard anything
from
him since then.

I peeped before I opened the door.

"What can I do for you, almighty Kai? The last person I expect to show up at my front door. Well, not
for
too long."

"Why? Are you going somewhere?"

'Possibly, since my rent is overdue.'

'Didn't Krys give you the keycard to his penthouse? You have all the access you can get. Why don't
you
go ruin his penthouse to get rid of that anguish and pain in your chest.'

I stared at him in disbelief. Was this the same man I met at dinner? "No freaking way. Would it help?

No.

I'd rather do my own way of getting rid of this anguish." I quoted in the air. "But since I don't have

luck

finding a job, and I'm alone paying the entire apartment, I'm gonna see myself on the street soon.

That's

all to sum it up. Good thing there's a place for the homeless—God! I'm babbling." I groaned louder,

causing him to laugh. And he found it funny to see someone who was struggling in life. It was so
unfair.

I watched him help himself inside without an invitation. He was carrying plastic bags, and it smelled
amazing. My stomach grumbled despite I just ate instant noodles. He went straight to the kitchen,
placed
down the plastic bags on the counter, opened some cupboards, took everything that he was looking
for.

“Why are you here? Did he send you? I can’t see his lackeys anymore, watching me from across the
street.”

He prepared the food on the plate, and I literally drooled. “I owed you a dinner. Even if I don’t, I was
still
planning on checking up on you. Krys said that you’re still alive, chatting with her.” That was all. He
didn’t
mention his brother.

I sat on the stool and dug the most delicious dinner I’d ever tasted. Well, I was poor and hungry. Of
course, I could tell this was delicious. “Thanks.”

‘Let me offer you a job.’ He also started eating.

“No, thank you. The last time I asked for help from Selik, I screwed up. So, no thank you.”

‘At least let me recommend you before the landlord would throw you out of your apartment, River.

Even

though I know my brother would not let it happen. The least I could do after what terrible things I did

to you
is to help. Please?"

I shook my head stubbornly. "Don't make me throw this food into your thousand-dollar suit."

What I didn't expect from him was to smile. "No wonder he's fond of you."

I rolled my eyes, trying to ignore the pain in my chest. "Because he's stupid."

'I didn't hear anything from him since that night, and I'm started to get worried.' I could feel the worry
and
frustration in his voice.

I rose my gaze from the plate to Kai and thought for a while. He must be kidding, right? "You have
every
man in your payroll if he's gone missing. Unless he intends not to be found. You know where to find
him.

The last place you should search is here."

"That's not what I am here, to look for my brother. You two had a few misunderstandings that need
to sort

out. You're hurt, he's hurt. Think about the outcome. And I'm not here to defend my brother even
though I

love that pain in the ass so much. But I saw what I saw and what you two have wouldn't just
disappear

with one mistake. He'd been watching you for years, River, and that's something you should value. I
didn't

tell him that I went to see you and warn you because I could lose him, but I did that because I'd like
to

clear things up with you since I saw how happy he was when you came to his life."

'I was surprised as he was.'

'I'm not telling you to forgive him. You would do it at the right time.'

"What happened to him?" I searched for something in his eyes, and I saw a deep sadness
resurfaced.

He put down the fork and dabbed his lips with the napkin. "I'm not asking for sympathy, and I don't
just tell
it to anyone, but you managed to get through his walls. I hope it won't change anything to the way
you
look at him."

"T-that bad?" I stuttered in shock.

"Yeah. There was a high school trip. Forest conservation program. Krew is too skinny when we were
growing up. He's like a late bloomer who wears glasses, so his classmates made fun of him, but I
didn't
know it went too far until it was too late. During their trip to the forest for the whole afternoon, one of
the
jocks had a girlfriend, and this dude saw his girl talking to Krew. The four jocks lured Krew deeper
into the
woods while everyone was busy with the project, planting trees and all that." I watched Kai struggled
to
continue.

I found myself holding his hand that was so cold. I squeezed it. My eyes were filled with unshed
tears.

"You don't have to continue. I don't think I'm ready to hear it."

'They hit him in the head, gagged his mouth, tied him, and hid him behind the rock.'

I gasped. My tears fell. This explained everything why he was so terrified in the dark. "Then it rained."

"Yeah. We were not like this at that time. I mean, we didn't have connections. We found him the next morning, full of mud, chilling, barely alive. That's why I'm too overprotective of him."

"What happened to them?"

'They got arrested, went to juvie. Krew saw a therapist for a while. He did immersion therapy. Before they could finish the process, he stopped going when he went to college. He's still having an attack, is he?"

I gulped. "Yeah. It happened when I was there. How did he survive that, scared alone? Oh, my god. He must be so terrified." I sniffled, wiping my tears away. I realized it wasn't the betrayal that hurt me the most. It was Krew. I cared a lot about him. So much it hurt. "Why? Why does he have to stay there alone?"

Kai chuckled. "Should I pay for him a companion? A mistress or a fake wife?"

I gave him an annoyed look.

'He loves that place. He finds it peaceful there and considers that his sanctuary. My brother is weird sometimes."

I met Krys and Journey in the bar when they threatened me to come over to my apartment and dragged me out if I wouldn't show up. So here I was, trying to enjoy the conversation while I still finding it hard

to
wrap the last chat with Kai around my head.

'Earth to River.'" Krys nudged me. The boos from the audience caught our attention. I started to have
a
headache since we sat at the bar an hour ago.

"Yeah."

"You don't wanna reply to Krew, then just suck it up." Journey glared at me. "Leave your heartbreak
at
home. We are supposed to have fun tonight. Get drunk, honey."

One of the audience went upstage. The band started playing a song by Kurt Cobain, and the guy
started
singing. I listened for a while, trying to lose in the song, but it did not work.

When the song ended, I said it out loud, "He's done helping me. I said thank you. He apologized, so
the
story ended there. It's over."

'Pfft. You could have fooled me if I didn't see those fires in your eyes."

"What fire?" I pretended I didn't know what Krys was talking about.

'I still want to see my brother happy. If you're done with him, then I should start setting him up a
date."

My face fell. I downed my martini. Instead of dwelling on what went wrong, I slid from the stool and
left my
friends in the bar.

I heard Krys asked Journey where I was going, but I didn't look back. I went straight backstage and
asked
one of the staff if who would be next on the stage.

When he asked if I wanted to perform, he gave me a go. When the last performer finished his song, I
walked to the center of the stage. The effect of Martini started to make my cheeks burn. The
audience
went silent, making me more nervous.

What I needed was to move on, but not to forget. I just wished he could see this.

I grabbed the acoustic guitar from the stand and swung the strap around my shoulder. I was
shaking. The
last time I performed with more than one audience was in high school. I could see the shock in Krys
and
Journey's faces, but then they cheered up for me.

I blew a deep breath, and my heart was beating a million a mile. "Good evening. I hope everyone is
doing
fine. I'd like to dedicate this song to my friends over there." I pointed to the bar.

I shut my eyes close for a moment before I started strumming chords of These Hard Times. I started
singing, and one of the band members joined me with his Cajon. It turned out to be a perfect rhythm.

I hit the last note and opened my eyes. "Thank you."

Before I could take off, the Cajon player asked me if I could play one more song.

"Are you sure? I didn't practice," I say nervously.

“You didn’t practice with that performance?” He beamed at me.

A group of the audience yelled for another song. When I looked back at the man, he only shrugged.

“Okay.” I went back to the mic. “This song is very special to me. It’s called Wonderwall by Oasis.” I strummed and sang my own rendition, a little slower, gentler than Noel Gallagher’s acoustic version.

‘I said maybe, you’re gonna be the one that saves me... And after all, you’re my Wonderwall.’