

THE MOON AND HER SECRET

CHAPTER 11 NO.11

The next few days passed by fairly quickly with Lana and River meeting in the library after school to settle their report. Most of the time they were shrouded by complete silence, each of them focusing on their own work without much hassle. But on rare occasions, they would have full on arguments regarding the task at hand.

“Have you ever written a history report in your life?” River asked sarcastically as he read through Lana’s notes.

Lana clicked her tongue as she snatched her notebook from him. “I don’t even know why I bothered to ask for your opinion.” She said as she smoothen out the crumpled pages. “A 5th grader would have a better outlook on things.” She sighed.

“Oh? So it’s safe to assume that your mental age is of a 5th grader?” River sneered.

The corner of Lana’s mouth twitched. “It would appear that River Attwood is incapable of comprehending a simple sentence,”

“Hah, I understood it perfectly.” He brushed her off. “I’m just saying that if you value a 5th grader’s opinion over mine, that just means you think like one.”

“What’s with this holier-than-thou attitude? If anyone here has the mental age of a child, it’s you.”

“Funny coming from—”

“Ahem!” someone cleared their throat. The two fell silent as they turned to the source. The library assistant, Ms. Phillips stood before them with an annoyed expression. “Please lower your voices in the library,”

“Sorry, Ms. Phillips...” Lana muttered with her head lowered in shame.

The library assistant glanced at the two of them, shook her head and left.

“That was embarrassing...for you,” River stated once Ms. Phillips was out of earshot.

“You—! She warned both of us! Not just me!” Lana whispered harshly.

River propped his elbows on the table and leaned forward. “Is that so? Then why was she only looking at you?” he asked in a low voice.

“Because she was standing closer to me, obviously.” Lana blurted.

“Sure, just keep lying to yourself.”

“You fuck—”

“AHM!” Lana jolted from shock when the Ms. Phillips reappeared at their table. Her once annoyed expression was replaced with a charming smile, but her eyes told a different story. “I kindly ask the both of you to leave, now.”

“S-Sorry...” Lana apologized again, her cheeks were flushed as she started

packing her belongings.

“You two can come back once you stop bickering all the time,” Ms. Phillips huffed before turning her attention to a student wanting help to find a book.

Lana wanted to crawl into a hole and die from the shame she was feeling. She glanced up at River, who did not seem to be troubled by this incident as he quietly stood up with his bag. Lana bit her tongue to avoid cussing at him as the two left the library.

“It’s getting late, we can continue this tomorrow,” River suggested as they headed to the parking lot.

“I would rather not,” Lana sighed.

“What happened to not slacking, huh?”

“Tsk! I’ll finish it tonight and pass you the USB tomorrow.” She said as she pulled out her phone to check if Carmen was still on school grounds or not.

“Why? We still have more than a week left till the deadline. No need to rush since we have the math test before that.”

“I’m not rushing, I just want to get it over and done with so I don’t have to deal with you every day after school.” Lana admitted.

River stayed silent, watching her fingers quickly type out a message on her phone. He shared the same sentiment as her, the faster they finish the report, the sooner they would be free from each other’s company but even so her

words made him a little bit upset.

“Okay.” River muttered.

Carmen texted back almost instantly, informing Lana that she’ll be waiting by her car to drive her back home. Lana turned to River who was absent-mindedly staring ahead.

“I’ll go ahead then.” She announced, feeling that it was rude for her to just walk off without at least saying goodbye.

“You don’t have to tell me that, just go already.” River said.

Lana smiled at him but her fists were clenched so tightly that her nails pierced painfully into her palms. Every moment spent with him made her feel like she was going to end up with anger issues. She walked ahead, not wanting to spare him even a second of her precious time.

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It’s typical for the cafeteria to be packed during lunchtime, especially with both middle school and high school students crowding around the area. Luckily for Lana, she did not have to spend an eternity looking for an empty table when she is acquaintances with everyone in her grade. That’s the good thing about growing up in a small community. She sat at the table with a large group, the constant chattering between the group made it hard for Lana to keep track of the conversations.

She quietly stared down at her lunch, a simple peanut butter and jelly

sandwich with some mixed fruits for the side. Lana could feel the fatigue of staying up last night to finish her part of the history report caught up to her. She stifled a yawn.

She felt a nudge of her arm and turned to Steven who gave her a toothy grin. "You good?" he asked.

"Yea, what's up?"

"You haven't touched your food and you even ignored me when I called out to you!" Suzie who sat opposite of Steven pouted at Lana.

"S-Sorry! I was just thinking of something." Lana said as she picked up her sandwich took a bite of it.

"Did you not get enough rest last night?" Carmen who sat opposite Lana asked.

"Well, I stayed up all night finishing that history report,"

"Wait huh? Isn't that due like next week?" Steven panicked.

"Yea, chill, I just wanted to get it out of the way." She sighed as she sipped some soft drink to wash down her sandwich.

Suzie and Carmen exchanged glances. "River?" they asked in unison.

Lana almost choked on her drink.

“What about him?” Steven asked, curious to figure out if there was drama between the two.

“N-Nothing—oh,” Lana muttered, remembering that she told River yesterday that she would pass the USB containing her part of the work to him today. She glanced around the cafeteria, trying to spot him.

“What is it? What do you mean ‘oh’? Are you looking for River?” Steven bombarded her with questions as he too looked around the cafeteria.

Lana was not registering any of his questions as she was focused on looking for River. She was certain that she saw him earlier when all of them entered the cafeteria. She spotted him after a moment, sitting in the middle of a large group, laughing. Lana frowned. She has never seen such an expression on River’s face before.

She found it extremely weird watching him joke around with his friends, laughing and smiling when the River she knew only had two faces around her. He was either bearable to be around but a sarcastic piece of ass or a raging maniac who acted like a cranky toddler. There was no in between when it came to him. Lana silently wondered if she would be able to see River’s genuine smile when he was around her one day. She brushed away that thought, feeling ridiculous that she even thought of it.

When she was about to look away, thinking of another time to pass the USB to him, she noticed the group standing up to leave. River, Maddison and Luis stayed seated as they waved goodbye to their friends. An opportunity presented itself right in front of her eyes.

Suzie reached out to grab Steven's hand. "Stop thinking about weird thing, dear." She smiled.

"How is that weird? I'm just curious! Do you know something I don't?"

Carmen sighed. "You really don't like being left out, huh?"

"Duh? So tell me, what's going on with River and Lana?" he pressed Carmen and Suzie when he noticed Lana was not paying attention to the conversation at all.

"Please, nothing's going on. They hate each other, right, Lana?" Carmen asked.

The three of them waited for Lana's confirmation but she suddenly stood up. "Yea, sure. I'll be right back." She said as she walked away.

"Where's she going?" Suzie asked, trying to pinpoint Lana's destination.

"Err...I think she's walking towards River's table," Steven said. He then turned to Carmen and Suzie. "Is she about to pick a fight with him or something? Should we stop her?"

Suzie let out a nervous laugh. "I don't think that's the case." She looked at Carmen. "Right?"

In reply, Carmen just shrugged.

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