

THE MOON AND HER SECRET

CHAPTER 15 NO.15

There was a painstakingly long pause after Lana called out to the wolf. It just stared at her and she was starting to feel self-conscious and a little bit silly that she was talking to a wolf. Maybe the wolf that's staring directly at her wasn't River after all? But there was doubt about it. Its grey fur resembled starlight under the moon and those eyes—mesmerizingly blue. Lana would recognize them anywhere.

“You are River...right?” Lana called out again, hoping that this time River would give her a sign, any sign to let her know that it is him and not some random wolf that would possibly be a threat to her and Autumn.

The wolf stood up suddenly, causing Lana to hold out her flashlight as a weapon in case the wolf decided to lunge at her or worst, at Autumn. But the wolf was seated by the child's side, as though it was protecting her. Lana was 100% certain that the wolf was River but she couldn't understand why he wouldn't respond to her. Given that wolves can't necessarily speak but he could easily transform back into his human form...

Lana shook her head frantically, trying to stop herself from remember River's naked body. She slowly started to approach the girl when she realize that the wolf was taking small steps away from both of them. When Lana was close enough to Autumn, she kneeled down to check if the child was injured. She watched as Autumn's chest rose up and down in a steady pace. Lana placed her hand at the side of Autumn's neck to feel her pulse. She let out a relieved sigh when she figured that Autumn was just sleeping.

“Were you protecting her from other wild animals?” Lana asked the wolf. It sat a few feet away from the two of them. The tall trees casted a dark shadow over the wolf and yet due to the silver hue of the moon shining down on them, its blue eyes were glowing under its natural hue. Yet again, instead of giving Lana any signs that it understood her, the wolf remained unmoving and silently continued to watch Lana.

Lana sighed as she switched off her flashlight and hooked it on her belt. If River did not want to talk to her then why would she continue to waste her time talking to him? She bent over to pick up the sleeping Autumn but once Autumn was comfortably snuggled in Lana’s arms, she thought the smart thing to do was to inform the station that she has found the missing girl. Lana silently cursed at her incompetence.

She decided to just head back as soon as possible, or better yet, she hoped that on her way back to station she would bump in Jack or Taylor who were driving the trucks. She glanced back to the wolf and awkwardly gave it a nod.

“T-Thanks for taking care of the girl,” she muttered. She turned around, ready to head back to the station when she heard rustling. She glanced back at the wolf whose attention was immediately towards the direction of the sound. Lana steadied herself for the worst, if a bear were to suddenly appear she knew she was fucked.

But to her surprise, she watched as three wolves popped out from behind the bushes. The three of them froze in place when they noticed her watching them. One had a light coat, under the moonlight it resembled snow but the more Lana stared at it, the more she was certain that its fur was a lighter shade of grey. The one beside that, its fur was a mixture of brown, black and

white, it was the smallest out of all the other wolves. The last wolf was a fierce looking one, rough black fur and a white underbelly marked the wolf. She watched as the grey wolf she believed to be River approach the three wolves.

Lana wondered if she should just turn around and go back with the kid rather than standing around when there were 4 wolves before her. Noted that she was rather confident that they were all werewolves judging by how they putting some distance between Lana and themselves. She tried to position Autumn safely against her chest and placing one hand below her to balance her as Lana attempted to pull out her walkie-talkie from her belt.

What the fuck is she doing here? A familiar voice spoke.

Lana froze when she heard the voice. She turned back towards the wolves, wondering if she was starting to go crazy and was hearing things.

Don't look at me like that. She just appeared suddenly, I thought you said she went east? Another voice asked. Lana was certain that the voice she heard was River's.

That's what we saw when we passed by, I didn't think she would end up here. A new voice spoke.

Lana felt like she was going crazy as she was hearing voices in her head. There was no one around her except for the four wolves in front of her but the most ridiculous part of this situation was that Lana was familiar with these voices she was hearing. She knew exactly who there were.

"...Um excuse me," Lana called out meekly. She gulped when the wolves

turned to her.

Why the hell is she talking to us? Is she insane? The first voice asked in an irritated tone.

Let's just leave. Now. River's voice said. Lana frowned.

"I'm not sure what's happening here but I can hear what you're saying." Lana declared.

There was a silence that followed and soon after three of the wolves turned to the black wolf, as though they were waiting for some sort of explanation. Lana's gaze fell on it as well, as it stared into Lana's eyes. Since they appeared, this wolf was the only one who remained silent.

What is she talking about? The light grey wolf growled. She then turned to Lana and bared her teeth at her. Lana flinched back. She's lying!

"I'm not lying." Lana replied as she stood her ground. This reply caused the wolves to exchange glances among each other but the black wolf's gaze did not fall from Lana's. "You...you're Maddison right?" Lana asked as she pointed to the light grey wolf with her free hand.

The light grey wolf just stared at her instead of replying.

"And you're Luis," Lana pointed at the mixed coloured wolf. She ignored River, somehow irritated that he wanted to just walk away and ignore her earlier. She glanced back to the black wolf with the white underbelly, trying to figure out who might that be.

Someone sighed and she watched as River approached Lana, closing the distance between them. He stood a few feet away from her as he glanced down to the girl in Lana's arm.

Leave. Take the child and go back to the station. He told her.

"Of course, that was my intention in the first place."

Then why are you trying to figure out who we are? He asked, clearly annoyed.

"I'm not. I'm just stating facts since I recognize your voices. Besides, I'm just questioning why I can hear you guys speaking when your mouths aren't moving. Is it telepathy or something?"

Tsk. Stop asking useless questions and go already. River huffed.

What's going on River? Why isn't she even a bit surprised by you? Luis asked.

Wait! No! Why the heck are we even talking to her?! How can she even hear us right now? Maddison whined.

Enough. Let's go. The black wolf finally spoke as it turned around, ready to disappear behind the bushes.

You don't get to tell us what to do, we're only in this mess because of you. Maddison growled at the black wolf.

The sooner we leave the better. River said. Oi, you know the way back?

“Yea,”

Then go.

Lana ignored River and let out a soft laugh, laughing at herself from what she was about to say. It was preposterous to even think about it but if this observation turns out to be true then everything would make sense to Lana. Everything.

“The black wolf...you’re Ray, right?” she called out.

There was a silence that followed, even River seemed to be speechless as he just started at Lana whose gaze was fixed on the black wolf who had its back to her. Lana sighed when no one dared to say anything. With her free hand, she reached out for her walkie-talkie and brought it to her lips.

What are you doing? River asked.

Lana smiled as she made sure she was on Ray’s channel. She then pressed the button and the static sound emitting from the walkie-talkie echoed throughout the quiet forest. “Ray, where are you? Over.” She called out, fully aware that Ray was not going to answer her.

There was rustling from the other side until she heard someone clear their throat. Lana was slowly starting to feel like an idiot until the voice spoke.

“Lana? What’s your status? Over.”

“...Jack? Is that you? Over.”

“Err...yea—”

Lana sighed as she interrupted Jack. “Where’s Ray? Over.”

“He came back to take the truck and he left his walkie behind. Over.”

“Don’t lie to me, Jack. Why would he do that without informing me? Over.”

“...I-I’m not—”

Enough. The black wolf approached Lana. End the call.

Lana did not bother to say anything to Jack as she switched off her walkie-talkie and shoved it onto her belt. Her attention was now fully on the black wolf.

I was so confident that I would find the girl before you did, since the three of them were here to help me. Lana heard the wolf explain. And yet, you never cease to amaze me, Lana.

“Hah.” Lana replied, somehow it was getting harder to hide her frustration.

Go back to the station with the kid, I’ll explain everything to you after.

In response, Lana smiled. She turned around and walked away without sparing any of them another glance.

She smiles a lot when she's angry, huh? River thought.

Ray sighed. I guess I owe you three an explanation too.

You guess?? Maddison hissed.

I think River owes us an explanation as well. Luis frowned.

Gather at my place after this, we can't avoid talking about this situation any longer. Ray confirmed as he lunged towards the bushes, disappearing instantly.

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