

THE MOON AND HER SECRET

CHAPTER 19 NO.19

A looming silence followed right after Ray's declaration. Lana's mind was swirling by all the new information she had obtained in such a short period of time but now she finds out that she was in danger? In danger from what?

She tried to calm herself before she started panicking over all the potential threats. She quietly summarized everything she has learnt so far in her mind. Werewolves exist. Her father was a werewolf, her mother was human. Lana is half werewolf and she has an alpha smell but what does that even mean? She wrecked her brain trying to make sense of everything but the main question that kept popping up in her mind was the mentions of her smell.

"Wait. I'm sorry but can we go back to the smell topic." Lana called out. "What does that even mean?"

"To put it in simple terms, alphas are attracted to other alphas due to their instinctive need to reproduce quote unquote strong children." Ray explained. "Although alphas that have mates like Griffin aren't affected by the scent of other alphas."

"What about betas?" Lana asked.

"We usually recognize an alpha's smell but the cases of attraction between alphas and betas are rather rare." Ray added. Lana noticed how his expression slightly changed, there was a hint of sadness in his eyes. Lana decided not to bring it up since the others were present.

“So, you’re a beta, Ray?” she asked instead.

“Yes.” He confirmed with a firm nod.

“Then, does that mean everyone here except Griffin is a beta?” There was an awkward silence that followed after Lana’s question. She looked around the room and noticed that they were glancing at River’s direction. Lana turned to look at him as well, he was clearly avoiding her gaze. Lana made a face when realization hit her. “You’re an alpha?” she asked, a slight hint of sarcasm tinted her voice.

River noticed it and glared at her direction. “...does it matter?” he mumbled.

Lana wanted to question why he was always avoiding this specific topic. Even before, he bluntly told her he did not want to answer her question when she asked if he was an alpha or beta and this only made Lana wonder why. Was it such a sensitive topic in the werewolf society to not disclose their classification? But Ray and the others did not mind revealing theirs...

Lana frowned and opened her mouth but was interrupted by Maddison’s loud voice.

“Obviously it matters! She was the reason that happened to you in middle school!”

“Seriously, Maddison. Could you just shut the fuck up about that?” he growled, causing Maddison to flinch. He then stood up and turned to the door. “I’m leaving.”

Lana stood up, the sudden urge to grab him and tell him to stay was filling her mind but she was too slow as she watched him walk out of the door. After a moment, Maddison and Luis ran after him. She watched as Luis gave her an apologetic nod before closing the door behind him. Lana was shocked, unsure what to do now that River left like a passing storm.

“I’m sorry about his behaviour, Lana. River is a bit—” Griffin started.

“...it’s my fault, isn’t it?” Lana whispered. “Is it because I have an alpha’s blood that River acts like that?”

“It isn’t really your fault...” Griffin muttered, unsure what else to say to make this situation less tense.

Lana turned around and sat back down. Looking at Griffin with pleading eyes. “What happened during middle school? I can’t really remember, so please Griffin, could you tell me?”

Griffin stiffened at Lana’s sudden persistence. He glanced at Ray’s direction, hoping that he would intertwine but Ray just shrugged as he quietly sipped his tea.

“Well...I’m not sure how much River told you about the biological aspect of us werewolves,”

“He did not mention it at all.”

Griffin frowned as he closed his eyes. His brows were furrowed and it seemed as though he was trying his best to conjure the best way to explain the

situation to her so that she could understand everything properly. He nodded to himself before opening his mouth.

“Just like how humans go through puberty, werewolves have it as well but we call it rut. I’m sure you’ve heard of that before, since animals such as deer experience it as well.” He continued.

Lana nodded. “It’s basically an indication that it’s time to mate, right?” she confidently answered.

He nodded. “Usually, werewolves’ first rut often happens in their late teens when they are surrounded by potential mates. But River...” Griffin sighed.

“River experienced his first rut during middle school, because of you.” Ray interjected. “But that doesn’t mean you should blame yourself over this. It was my fault for not taking countermeasures about your circumstances. I did not think that your scent would be that strong towards an unmated alpha.”

“So...my scent still affects him?” Lana asked.

“Yes, since he hasn’t mated with anyone yet, River still gets a tad bit overwhelmed when he is around other alphas. But in our pack, most of the alpha are mated and the rest are youngins. So in other words Lana, you are the only—”

Lana sighed out aloud as she buried her face in her hands. She knew how primal instincts worked due to her hours studying and researching animal behaviour before she started working as a forest ranger. All this while Lana thought River hated her but in actuality he was just distancing himself away

from her due to the instinctive reaction he gets when he is close to her.

Scenes of River moving away from her suddenly, wearing a mask when he had to meet up with her, everything made sense now and with that realization Lana started to feel horrible. She treated him rudely since she thought he was just being a jerk to her for the sake of it.

“So you're telling me he had to endure his natural instincts for 10 years? No wonder he is such a jerk all the fucking time,” Lana complained. “Ah...sorry.” She apologized to both the adults for swearing.

Griffin gave her a sympathetic look and he slightly shook his head. “He is a problematic boy, that River, but he is trying his best to cope with everything. Please be patient with him.”

“...why did you not tell them? Maddison said that both of you lied to them constantly about what I was, but wouldn't it be easier to just explain?” Lana asked.

“We wanted to, but as Ray mentioned earlier...your safety came first. After seeing how River reacted to your scent, we were worried that other alphas would come after you if word spread out of Rosecliff about a hybrid werewolf's existence.”

“So that's the danger you were talking about...” Lana sighed as she squeezed the bridge of her nose. She stayed silent for a long time, trying to comprehend everything that she just learnt. Ray and Griffin could sense that she was overwhelmed and decided that they should stop for the day.

Griffin got up and went towards Lana. He placed his hand on her shoulder. "This must be really difficult for you to get used to but please don't hesitate to come to me if you have any questions." He smiled as he gave her a reassuring squeeze.

Lana smiled back. "Thanks, Griffin. I'll keep that in mind."

She watched as Ray walked Griffin out. Instead of moping around, Lana decided to clean up the mugs from the table. She thought that if she distracted herself from her own thoughts, she would get rid of the weird heaviness that burdened her chest, but she was completely wrong.

She could hear the front door shut and the locks turn. Soon the sound of Ray's familiar footsteps approached her. She pretended not to notice him behind her as her attention went to the mugs she was quietly washing under the icy cold water.

"Lana, are you alright?" he asked hesitantly.

"Define alright,"

"...you should go and rest, I'll clean up." He said as he reached for the mug that was in Lana's hands. Lana quickly turned off the water and moved away from him.

"Why did you keep this from me, Ray? Werewolves exist? You're one and I'm half werewolf? Do you know how crazy all of that sounds right now?" she broke. Lana knew that she had to stay calm and composed earlier, especially since Griffin and the others were around but now it was just Ray and her and

it was finally time to get rid of the burden that was suffocating her chest.

“I’m sorry Lana, I only did what I thought was best for you. The only reason why I never told you any of this was because I wanted you to grow up like a normal girl. I didn’t want you to be tied into the werewolf society because you don’t deserve that...”

“I don’t deserve that? So you’re saying I deserved to be lied to? And what about River, Luis and Maddison? Did they deserve to be lied to as well? For 10 whole years!?” she snapped, her voice wavering.

“Lana...”

Ray’s dejected expression only made Lana’s chest hurt even more. She knew that he did everything for her sake and yet that still made her more upset. In reality, she was more upset at the fact that all her life she wanted to escape the monotonous life she was living here in Rosecliff. Never in a million years did she think that Ray would be the main reason she was stuck in mundanity with all his secrets and lies. Though, it was not fair for her to be mad at him over this when she herself never fully expressed her true feelings to him.

“I—I just need some time to process this, Ray.” She muttered, putting the mug down before she walked past him to head upstairs to her room.

“Lana please—” he pleaded. Not wanting her to leave now when she was clearly upset at him. He wanted to settle this properly and not have any hostility between them.

Lana suddenly stopped in her tracks. “Thank you for being honest with me

about everything. Goodnight.” She said as she rushed to the stairs, leaving Ray to be disheartened all alone in the kitchen.

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