

# THE MOON AND HER SECRET

## CHAPTER 3 NO.3

Lana stared at her reflection in the mirror, trying to make sure the outfit she was wearing was not in any way odd. She couldn't decide whether to tuck in her blouse or not. In the end, she opted to tucking in her beige blouse into her high waisted dark jeans. She finished the look with a pair of black converse.

"Lana! Carmen and Suzie are here!" Ray called out from downstairs.

"Coming!" Lana called back. She swiftly retrieved her schoolbag from the floor and as she passed by the mirror she adjusted her high ponytail before flicking her dark hair playfully. She leaned closer to the mirror, doing a quick check of her makeup. Her hazel eyes seemed slightly bloodshot from the lack of sleep but she decided to brush that fact off. She ran downstairs where Ray was standing by the stairs with an apple in his hand.

"Breakfast," he said sleepily as he tossed the apple towards Lana.

Lana caught it easily. "Thanks!" she said as she leaned to give Ray a quick peek on the cheek.

"Tell Carmen to drive safely okay?" Ray reminded her.

Lana gave him a thumbs up before running out the door. She approached the familiar blue Toyota car and as she opened the backdoor, she was greeted loudly by her friends.

"Good Morning!!" Carmen and Suzie yelled in unison.

Lana laughed as she got into the car and shut the door. She scrunched her nose, trying to get used to the heavy scent of perfume lingering in the car. "You guys are so annoying," Lana jokingly said to her noisy friends.

Suzie O'Brien and Carmen Tanaka has been friends with Lana since they were in kindergarten, noted that in this small community everyone literally grew up with each other but Lana was especially fond over the two girls.

Suzie was the most assertive one in the group, never afraid to speak her mind and often got into irrelevant arguments with others just to prove her point. Carmen on the other hand, has a no nonsense attitude, often the one who would speak some sense into Suzie whenever she crosses the line.

As for Lana, often times she feels like she had to babysit the two of them as they do not shy away from doing the most absurd things to get rid of boredom. As tedious as it sounds, that never stopped her from enjoying her time spent with her two crazy friends.

Suzie turned her body to look back at Lana. "Okay but listen here Danley, there's big news!" Suzie exclaimed while Carmen started to drive them to school.

"Did something happen with Steven?" Lana asked as she started to eat her apple.

"How did you know?!" Suzie gasped.

"Because all you ever talk about is Steven!" Carmen exclaimed, not hiding the

fact that she was clearly annoyed.

The comment Carmen made caused the two to start bickering, with Suzie claiming that she turned down Steven's offer to driver her to school only because she wanted to spend time with her best friends. Carmen rebuttal that statement by saying that Steven's car was at the workshop. The conversation continued with neither of them willing to back down.

Lana smiled at her friends' antics but stayed quiet instead of joining the hectic conversation. It was too early for that after all. Soon, they were driving into the school parking lot. Since the population of Rosecliff was small, the school was a mix of middle schoolers and high schoolers. The school was split into the West wing and East wing because of that.

Lana and her friends were seniors in high school this year and that thought alone made Lana excited for her future. Ever since she was in middle school, Lana had planned to move to the big city once she graduated from high school. The thought of remaining in Rosecliff felt suffocating to her. Every day, the same routine, the same faces, it was starting to weigh on Lana in a negative way. All she wanted now was to desperately escape that mundane routine and venture on her own path.

She knew that eventually she would need to talk to Ray about it but she would often find herself at a standstill when Ray would excitedly talk about how Lana would work with him as a forest ranger full time after she graduates.

"We're here!" Carmen's voice brought Lana back from her reverie.

Lana looked out the window where students were loitering around the

compound with their friends.

“Oh shit, we should get going, the bell is about to ring any minute now!” Suzie alerted as the three got out of the car.

“What’s your plan later tonight, girls?” Carmen asked. She then nudged Suzie. “Don’t answer, I know you’re going out with Steven again.” Carmen gave her a mischievous smile.

“Sounds like someone’s jealous.” Suzie smirked.

Carmen rolled her eyes, deciding to completely ignore Suzie. “You have work tonight, Lana?” she asked.

“Yup, I have a night shift. But since it's a school day I get to go back before 8pm.” The bell then rang in an alarmingly loud sound, indicating that the students had to go to class now. The hallway was packed with students trying to navigate their way to their respective classes. It was the definition of chaos, but everyone was used to it.

“It must be nice working with Ray huh?” Carmen called out.

“I guess? Although he is still strict-” someone bumped into Lana painfully, causing her to separate from her friends who were a few feet ahead. She could hear a panicked ‘sorry’ before the culprit ran past her to get to his class. Lana tried to manoeuvre her way through the crowd but ended up slamming her face into the person in front of her. She moved away, her hands unconsciously touching the pers

on's toned and muscular chest.

Lana looked up at the person only to be greeted by an icy blue glare. She quickly dropped her hands and opened her mouth to apologize but the man in front of her grimaced as though being near Lana was enough to make him annoyed. She knew this stare all too well, only one person ever treated her like her existence was a nuisance.

"Move." His voice was deep and harsh. It made Lana tense. She quickly sidestepped away to allow him to pass. She felt herself getting annoyed by how rude he was being but then again, he was always like this towards her. Always.

River Attwood, everyone in school both teachers and students alike fawn over him like a prince. He is smart and athletic but Lana never understood why he would always glare at her as though she did something terribly wrong to him. She watched as River and his friends made their way down the hallway.

"Are you okay?" Suzie asked, her eyes following Lana's.

"Yeah, just fine." She muttered, trying to suppress the sudden anger she felt building up in her.

"Did you break his heart or something? I've never seen River being mean to anyone before." Carmen commented.

Lana shrugged. "Who knows? I've never even talked to the guy." she said as she continued to walk towards her class.

“But wow, he is beautiful.” Suzie whispered to Carmen.

Lana can't disagree with that fact. River Attwood is very handsome, to the point where Lana would wonder what he ate growing up to look as he does. He is tall, towering over Lana by a lot. He is slightly tanned over the years he spent playing a variety of sports and his pure black hair is always perfectly combed back.

But to Lana, what defines River's beauty was his eyes, those sapphire eyes could easily send chills down Lana's spine. But, people don't naturally flock over him just because of his looks and athleticism. From the gossip Lana gets from Suzie and Carmen, it is evident that he is a really nice and capable guy. Sadly, Lana can't say the same about him. She's been schoolmates with him since middle school and to this day she could never figure out why he is always such a jerk towards her. Always.

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Lana had World History for her last period. Their teacher, Mrs. Hathaway was finishing up class by announcing that there would be a report due in two weeks and they had to work in pairs. Carmen glanced towards Lana knowingly and before Lana could respond, Mrs. Hathaway called for their attention.

“Unfortunately, you are not going to pick your own team member. I've assigned the pairs already so, please check the notice on the board for who your partner will be, okay?” she said.

There was a chorus of groans and protest from the classroom just as the final

bell rang. Everyone started to pack their belongings and swarmed the board in front to see who their partners were.

Carmen groaned dramatically. "And here I thought we could finally work on an assignment together."

Lana shrugged as she packed her bag. "Seems like you're not the only one who is upset about this," she said while gesturing towards Suzie who was clearly upset that she could not be a pair with her boyfriend, Steven.

Carmen giggled at the whining Suzie who was clinging onto Steven's arm. "She's such a baby sometimes." She said as she walked up towards the board.

Lana lagged behind, trying to make sure all her belongings were with her. As she went to the front she noticed River talking to Mrs. Hathaway in a hush yet urgent tone. She could feel their gaze on her as she passed by them to check the board.

"I'm sorry River but I can't change your partner. If I did that then the other students would expect the same treatment." Lana heard Mrs. Hathaway tell River in an apologetic tone.

"I understand that, Mrs. Hathaway but please reconsider." River pressed.

Lana stopped herself from glancing back at the two but she was curious as to what expression River wore. But more than that, she really wanted to know who his partner was as it was clear that he desperately wanted that to change. For the well-loved and highly-praised River Attwood to be particularly

begging their teacher for something like this, he must really hate his assigned partner. When Lana finally found her name on the list, her heart sunk as she noticed the name beside hers.

She turned to Mrs. Hathaway and River who were both looking at her, as though they were anticipating her reaction.

Mrs. Hathaway sighed, knowing by the look on Lana's face that she too shared the same sentiment as River. "Please don't tell me you want to change your partner as well,"

"I'm not very keen on working with someone who clearly despises me." Lana gestured towards River, a sweet smile playing on her lips. River scoffed.

"I'm sorry you two, but no means no. Whatever problems you two have with each other, sort it out." Mrs. Hathaway said as she grabbed her stuff and walked towards the door. "Remember, the report is due in two weeks!" she called out cheerfully as she left the classroom.

Immediately Lana felt uncomfortable by being all alone with the intimidating River in the classroom. She was at least expecting him to say something but he just stayed silent.

"Hey-" Lana started, trying to break the awkward silence looming between the two. Instead of hearing her out, River clicked his tongue and rushed out of the classroom. Lana gawked at the spot where he was just standing in complete disbelief. "What a fucking jerk." She muttered to herself before turning to leave in a huff.



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