

THE MOON AND HER SECRET

CHAPTER 7 NO.7

River dragged Lana by the strap of her schoolbag towards the lockers as he wanted to find a quiet place to talk to her. He knew for a fact that everyone was in class right now, except for his own class which had a free period. Most of his classmates were at the library prepping for their upcoming history report.

That was River's plan after all, he would endure everything just to finish the report with Lana and then he can continue avoiding her like the plague. His plan was simple and fool proof yet here he was trying to reconcile with her over a stupid misunderstanding. He knew he had to swallow his pride in return for Lana's cooperation, he was not going to sit by idly and watch his grades fall because Lana was being absolutely intolerable at the moment.

He let out a soft groan when he realize just how strong Lana's smell was. He pushed her slightly away from him as he leaned against the lockers. Lana wore an openly confused expression. She opened her mouth to question why he dragged her all the way here but before she could River looked up at her. His icy blue eyes made her tongue-tied. Those eyes of his were vaguely reminiscent of her recurring dream.

"I'll do anything." He suddenly declared.

"What?"

The side of his lips twitched and he clenched his hands into fists. "I'll do anything for you to forgive me." He forced himself to say. In his mind he kept

reminding himself that he was only doing this for his grades. If his grades were to drop, he would not hear the end of it from his family.

The edge of Lana's lips twitched into a mischievous smile. "Anything?" she repeated. River flinched from her sudden change but slowly nodded in confirmation. "Then, last night...that grey wolf--"

Lana words were interrupted almost immediately by River's large hand covering her mouth. The impact of his sudden action and uncontrollable strength caused him to slam Lana against the lockers. The loud sound of her body making contact with the metallic wall echoed throughout the silent hallways of the school.

He leaned closer towards Lana's ear, her scent engulfed him to the point where his mind was in shambles. "I told you never to mention that to anyone!" he growled against her ear, ignoring the ache forming in his core.

Lana stiffened, unsure how to react as she has never seen River's aggressive side before. He was always glaring and frowning at her, she was used to his blunt and disrespectful behaviour towards her but he was never outwardly hostile towards her. This was a complete change in his character.

Her shaky hand went to River's that was firmly covering her mouth. She attempted to pry his hand away but his grip was showing no signs of loosening. She opt for the next best thing, she forcefully dug her nails into the back of his hand, hoping that the sudden sharp pain would cause him to at least let her go.

River straightened his posture and looked down at Lana. The anger he felt

from earlier was immediately replaced by guilt coursing through his being when he noticed her teary eyes. She was at the verge of crying, River could sense that and yet her gaze was unfaltering. She stared back into River's eyes dauntlessly and in response River felt a shiver run down his spine. There was something unnatural about her gaze but River could not pinpoint what.

He let out a soft sigh before loosening his grip around her mouth. He felt Lana's nails dragging downwards, marking the back of his hand with thin crimson lines. He felt as though he deserved that.

He removed his hand completely from her mouth, the feel of her soft lips lingered on his palm. He clenched his hand into a tight fist, wanting to get rid of the feeling completely by replacing it with pain. "Sorry..." he muttered as he took a few steps away from her.

Lana wondered if she should apologize too, after all, the topic of the grey wolf seemed to be something River was trying to avoid but Lana's curiosity got the better of her.

After a beat, Lana spoke. "...just so you know, I never told anyone about last night. I just wanted to understand—"

"I know," River cut her off. "I get that you're curious and confused about the entire situation."

Lana let out a sarcastic chuckle. "You think?"

River could not shake off the guilt that was haunting him, he never thought he would react so harshly against her. Be it the frustration he was feeling earlier

or Lana's infuriating behaviour, he knew he had no right to treat her like that. But the image of her unwavering gaze remained in the back of his mind.

They were in this situation due to River's mistakes, that much he could admit. All these years, there was only one secret he had to carry on his shoulders—it was for the protection of everyone he cared for after all. What was the worst thing that could happen if he told Lana the truth? After a long pause, he decided that the next best thing he could do to was to

tell her what she wanted to know.

"Come on, I'll tell you everything you want to know but not here." River said as he started to walk towards the door.

"Um, where are you going?"

River clicked his tongue. "If you want to know what's going on, just keep your mouth shut and follow me." He called back, not turning around to see if she was following him or not.

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Curiosity killed the cat, that much Lana knows. But when an opportunity presented itself for Lana to make sense of the events last night, she decided to take it. Granted that after seeing River's aggressive side, she should be sceptical of him but that did not stop her from following him to the school parking lot. She watched as River approached his black Honda car which shone brightly under the sun from the wax polish. Lana had to avert her gaze from how his shiny car was particularly blinding her. River opened the door to

the driver's seat as Lana froze a few steps away.

"What are you doing? Let's go." River said when he noticed her standing there.

She longed for that satisfaction of listening to River explain everything to her but she knew she was not insane to the point of driving off with him to god knows where. "Free period is going to end soon," she tried to stall.

River took out his smart phone to check the time. "Yeah and it's recess next, I'll get us back before that ends." He reassured her as he got into the driver's seat.

Lana remained unmoving. For a second she pondered that maybe she did not need to know if River Attwood is actually a wolf in disguise. She could just continue to live her life without knowing that fact. He seems to be dreading at the whole idea of telling her the truth so Lana could easily save both their precious time and walk away. She nodded to herself, thinking that her plan was a solid one to avoid any more interactions with River after they finished their history report. Yet, her recurring dream flashed in her mind like a perpetual migraine that would not leave her be.

She knew for a fact that the wolf she sees in her dreams resembled a lot like River in his wolf form, given that she never saw it with its eyes open but River's sapphire eyes, the sheer intensity of his glacial stare kept haunting her. It felt somewhat familiar.

River popped out his head out the window. "Oi, are you planning to stand there forever?" River asked in an irritated tone.

Lana made a face as she walked towards the passenger seat. She got in with a huff and tossed her bag pack at the backseat where River's bag was.

"Where are we going?" Lana asked as she pulled down the seatbelt.

River started the car and adjusted the rear-view mirror. "Somewhere quiet. The forest maybe."

"You don't sound certain,"

River sighed as he drove out of the parking lot. "Yes, Miss Danley we are departing now to our next destination, the forest," he said with a forced polite tone that made Lana cringe. She rolled her eyes and turned her attention to the passing scenery.

"You know, we could just talk in the car." Lana pointed out.

"And risk being seen by someone?" River scoffed.

Lana remained silent as she knew River was right. Rumours might start if people saw the two of them alone together. Especially since they were playing hooky. High school students were incredibly brutal when it came to spreading and receiving gossip.

Rosecliff is surrounded by the forest after all, so it did not take them long to reach an opening to the forest. River parked the car and walked ahead. Lana watched him in disbelief as he could not even wait for Lana to get out of the car. Once she caught up with him, he was leaning against a tall tree and fiddling with a twig between his fingers.

“Before I tell you anything, let me ask you a question.” River said, his attention fully on the twig twirling between his fingers instead of at Lana.

“Sure...” she muttered, her attention slowly being drawn by the spinning twig.

River stopped fiddling with the twig suddenly, causing Lana to look up at him.

“What do you think happened last night?” he asked.

Lana frowned. “That’s a weird question to ask.”

“Just humour me,”

“You were probably loitering around the forest late at night and was cursed by an evil witch to turn into a wolf every night when there’s a full moon because you were rude to her or something, am I right?” Lana smirked.

River gave her a puzzled look. “I can see that you aren’t taking this seriously.”

“I am taking this seriously, but what were you expecting me to say? I bring home an injured wolf and poof suddenly it transformed into a naked River Attwood, who is casually flashing me all his...” Lana gestured at River’s body, “Man bits...”

River cleared his throat. “Right...sorry about that.” He looked away, not wanting to show Lana his flushed cheeks. “But yeah I’m the grey wolf you found in the forest, to put it simply, I’m a...werewolf.”

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