

Chapter Thirty-Eight

Recap

A question scathes the tip of my tongue, searing and attempting to pry through my lips. Just as I'm about to give into the relentless urge, Layla's voice interrupts my thoughts.

"Faye." She calls out, her voice is calm, but I can hear a broiling commotion in it.

I glance up, observing how Wes is standing next to her, completely oblivious to what could possibly going on.

"Hey," I greet them both; however, my gaze instantly flickers back to Layla's.

When I catch her eye, I see sheer panic. The light blue that usually reflects the calm of the ocean, the center of the hurricane, the life of the sky—it's gone. Instead, there is a richer, more dark texture that reminds me of a brewing storm.

She seems to be communicating with me without saying much.

Forcefully, I rip my stare away from hers and glance back at Ashley. She's staring at Layla as if she's expecting her to accompany us.

"Sit with us," She says happily, but still with uncertainty.

Layla flashes her an apologetic smile, "I'm sorry, but I need to talk to Faye."

I raise an eyebrow, silently wondering what is going on. From the corner of my eye, I spot Travis standing outside the glass door, waiting for Layla to pull me out.

I dart my gaze back to Ashley, "I'll catch you later, okay?"

She beams, "Sure."

With that, I gather my belongings and swing my backpack over my shoulder. Layla, however, is already fast walking towards the cafeteria exit. Curiosity and slight precaution enters my system as I silently follow behind her.

This can't be good.

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I hurry after Layla's fast retreating figure while nearly tripping over my own feet. The faster she walks, the more my heart sky rockets. The precaution that vaguely entered my mind in the beginning dominates my burning curiosity.

When at last I scurry past the cafeteria doors and into the hallway, I make the effort to jog up to a tense Travis and an out of breath Layla.

Two frightening questions enter my mind at that specific moment: 1. Why in hell are Travis and Layla cooperating and in on something without breaking into some sort of sarcastic fight? 2. What have I possibly done now?

"What is going on?" I demand, slightly out of breath from the mini hysteria in my chaotic mind.

Layla starts, "The school is going to shut down for a few days."

My mouth drops ajar, and I look to Travis for guidance. His vacant expression only confirms her statement.

"Why would they do that?" I ask, my fingers starting to clam up.

For the slightest time, I was beginning to believe that school could possibly be the safest place for me at the moment. And now that it is being shut down, Travis and I have no safe haven.

A sense of discomfort and cold rushes through my veins, and I shudder in terrifying anticipation.

This time Travis speaks up, "They heard about the break in at your place."

"Okay," I state, shooting a confused glance at Layla, "I'm just finding it hard to connect the dots as to why a burglary at our house would get the sta chaining locks on the school doors."

"That's exactly what I was thinking as well—" Layla nods her head in understanding, "Until they showed me this."

She turns around and Travis grabs his phone from his pocket. We wait in silence for a few moments as he unlocks the screen and connects us to the youtube page.

The screen widens to full display and I watch in utter horror as a video of our house is captured on news cameras. From the daunting caution tapes to the property damage, there is no accidental misinterpretation. The camera continues on to guide the viewers to the scene of three or four cop cars with their lights blinking blindingly. It's déjà vu to me as I witness the same events I had seen the night before. And then, the camera zooms in on a very accurate and live recording of Travis, Layla and I huddled o to the side.

We're all talking, our faces fixated with concern and outrage. Layla has her arms around the back of her neck, as if to support it from falling right o , while I stand there in complete shock. Travis has his arms folded across his chest, and he is staring directly at an unaware me.

His gaze is so intense and filled with an emotion that I can barely detect that I quickly glance up at him. As I do so, I notice his eyes dart back down to the screen. A frown settles across my features, but I ignore it, more preoccupied over the fact that this is on the Miami County News

I reach forward and tap the screen to pause the footage. Layla grabs the phone from Travis's hand while I attempt to gather my thoughts into one coherent and calmly phrased sentence.

"Why is thabon the news!" I exclaim in a hushed tone, completely failing to remain reserved and under control, "Why are we on the news—who gave them permission to film us—When did this come out?"

"Just this morning," Layla replies to my final question.

That explains why no one at school seemed to act different around me—because they don't know yet.

"Okay." I nod my head jerkily and bite my lip, "So it sucks that we're going to be notorious celebrities—but that still doesn't explain why the school cares."

Travis steps in again, walking forward a little more. "That isn't all there is on the news."

He holds my gaze for a minute longer while Layla mutters a muted agreement in the background. Suddenly, she sticks her hand out between us, showing the phone back in our faces. My gaze darts back down to the blue screen, frantically guessing what it's going to see next.

While the anchor talks, Layla rambles over him.

"The school board is getting worried now because there have been two other incidents in the past two weeks now." I shoot a panicked stare at Travis who, in turn, offers me a distant yet knowing look. Layla gathers a huge intake of breath before continuing her informative speech. "First there was a break in at this school and then there were some shootings o the highway leading to the school—you know, somewhat near the gym—"

Whatever she carries on to say then is completely blocked out of my ears. Instead, I hear a sharp, high pitched ring. My clammy hands begin to clench with sweat, my head begins to pound as blood rushes from one corner to the other.

Break in. Gym. Shootings. Burglary.

This all has to do with Travis and I.

The school and the students attending it feel in danger because of the situation we are being forced into—the situation we were dragged into. The little puddle has suddenly turned into a ginormous whirl pool of poison.

Layla presses play on the video again and there is a new setting. A familiarly unpleasant one. It's completely different from how we left it. The night is dark, and the stars are invisible under the reign of the vibrant flashing lights of red, white, and blue. The daunting, yellow caution tape surrounds the gym door entrance along with two or three fire trucks. The noise and clatter is almost ear shattering, and I wince at the scene.

Police officers are scouting the scene, inspecting and taking notes, while others are talking to the fire department members—most probably exchanging facts about the scene before them. From the corner of the screen, I catch a glimpse of an empty stretcher, just waiting to be occupied. I shiver once again, feeling goosebumps crawl up my skin like spiders on hair.

"—The school is just getting really uneasy—" I zone in on Layla's prolonged speech towards the end, still in a breathtaking panic. "They're just not willing to take any risks—especially because this is the first time anything like this has ever happened."

"So they think that the school break in has to do with our home break in as well as the gym shooting?" I manage to spit out those words without getting lost in the depths and despair of it all.

She nods her head, "Exactly."

"They think closing down the school is going to help this whole situation." Travis adds in sarcastically, clearly disagreeing with the decisions of the board.

His attitude matches my bitter emotions towards the outcome of this situation. I realize that he must have come to the same conclusion—perhaps school is the best haven—the only safe haven.

If they shut it down, there is no safe place for us.

For anyone.

Layla makes an irritated sound in the back of her throat, "So you'd rather have students in danger twenty-four-seven?"

"At least we're all under protected supervision." Travis argues, raising an eyebrow at her challenge.

She throws her hands up, "We're all better o at home—we're safer."

I bring a hand to rub my temple and finally speak through gritted teeth.

"Layla," I say slowly, "At this very moment, we don't have a home—we are far from safe."

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Hiya!

I had so much fun writing this chapter--i don't know. Maybe it's because I'm in a really good mood even though it's a little past my bed time. Or maybe it's because it's storming outside and I feel so great under my cozy little blankets.

Anywho, I hope y'all enjoyed this chapter as much as I enjoyed writing it. I swear I almost gave myself some anxiety by writing this. My poor cousin--who was trying to proof read--had to stop because her brain was screaming to sop hahaha.

Thanks for the comments as usual. I'm sorry I haven't replied to them yet. I haven't gotten around to that at the moment. They will be replied to soon! I will not leave y'all hanging (comment wise)--no worries.

Okay, I'm going sleep to the lovely sound of the wind now, so peace lovelies haha.

Can I get 60 comments? We are almost at 60 in the other chapter! I know y'all can do it!

Vomment!

xxSummerxx