

Chapter Forty- Seven

Recap

Laura and Dad stand by Travis’s impala with strange expressions on their faces.

I raise an eyebrow, “What?”

“Are you two in a relationship?” Laura wonders aloud, her gaze shifting towards the vacant area where we were just standing.

I open my mouth to blatantly deny it, or try to, but the sound of Travis shutting the door tightly and jogging up to our waiting figures has us all in silence when he approaches.

Both Dad and Laura settle down in the back seats as soon as Travis unlocks the car doors. While passing by my back and making his way to the driver portion, Travis absent-mindedly slips a flat, rectangular shaped plastic bottle in my pocket.

I know the feeling well enough to understand that the bottle is a portable supply of pepper spray. Despite the serious reasons behind the spray, I feel a small smirk li the corners of my lips.

As Travis starts the engine and I round the impala for the passenger seat, I think of an answer to Laura’s earlier inquiry:

Something like that.

Chapter Forty Seven

“We are her parents!” Laura snaps, her tone laced with agitation, “All I am asking for is an estimate as to how much longer my daughter will be in that room.”

One of the officers that approached all three of us at the door beforehand—the more built and intimidating one—stands with his arms folded across his chest and with a vacant expression on his face.

Unlike the clearly visible frustration on both Dad and Laura’s features, the cop stands his guard with utmost superiority which Travis and I would most gladly be willing to eliminate.

“Listen ma’am,” He begins for what would be the fourth attempt, “Your daughter is helping us track down an individual who has made this area an unsafe region to live in—we take these matters seriously, and we ask that you and your family cooperate with our uncertain time frames.”

Halfway through this officer’s speech, Laura starts to shake her head in defiance, “No.”

At the childlike quip-ness and stubbornness in her voice, I suppress the urge to grin in approval.

“Laura, please.” Dad steps forward immediately and gives her tense shoulders a squeeze. They exchange glances before she exhales sharply and abruptly turns away. Dad glances up at the officer and boldly shoots him a dry look before motioning for all of us to sit down, once again, on the chairs beside the door.

It has been around 2 hours since we arrived here, and all of us were on the brink of losing our tempers.

A moment of silence embraces the four of us as we internally churn on ideas. Then, Dad turns to Travis with a look of determination on his face.

“Do you mind if I borrow your keys?” He asks.

I sit up in my seat, curious to know where this is headed, as Travis raises an eyebrow and gives him a sideways glance. He clenches his hands tightly around his keys as he does so.

“What for?”

Dad replies calmly, “I believe we’re going to be here a while—so I want to just grab a few blankets.”

“Oh,” Travis glances at me briefly but his eyes are clouded as he musters a general response to his request, “I’ll come with you.”

“Great,” Dad smiles genuinely before turning his gaze towards me, “We’ll be right back.” Then to Laura, he says, “Call me if anything changes.”

I wave to them as they leave and watch Travis duck to get into the driver’s seat of the impala. The engine comes to life, and they pull out of the parking lot moments later.

I glance to the right of my slumped shoulder and smile sympathetically at Laura when we cross glances. A mixture of confusion and irritation is plastered on her features—all of which I understand, considering none of this must have ever happened to her or Dad before.

“How are you holding up?” I ask so lightly—though her expression tells me everything I need to know. I simply wanted to ease the tension and give her an outlet.

Laura lets out a laugh, one that I know well enough to make out that it’s devoid of humor. She swipes a strand of hair out of her face and looks down at her shoes. “Honestly? I—I don’t know.”

I nod in understanding and wait for her to continue.

“When I saw everything unfold on the news—miles away from where I was at that time—I was petrified. The fear that paralyzed me nearly scared me more than the situation itself. I just felt so helpless—far away from home and all.”

“You can’t think like that,” I reassure her gently, “There’s nothing anyone could have done.”

Laura shakes her head immediately, “What if something had happened to both of you?”

I purse my lip and shrug slowly, “Nothing did though.”

“That’s besides the point.” She raises her hand and motions downward as if to push the truth behind her overpowering thoughts. “What if you got hurt? What if I lost one of you—“

“Whoa,” I place a firm hand on Laura’s shoulder, “Look, we can think of numerous scenarios. But the truth will still be that none of them happened. We’re okay.” Her eyes begin to water as I speak, and I falter at the sight of her broken state.

She remains silent, however, so I continue to reason with her—it’s the least I can do.

“And if something had happened to one of us—it wouldn’t have been your fault—“

“But—that’s not the point. It’s not about blame. This is the closest we’ve ever been to danger, and it kills me that Layla had to go through it, not me.” She bites her lip to prevent from trembling any more than it currently is, “You girls should never have to go through something like this because your father and I should be able to protect you from it.”

She turns away just as a single tear escapes the brim of her lashes. Bringing a hand up to cover her mouth, she rests it on the armrest and stares off in the opposite direction.

My stomach drops at the sight, and the hand that had been resting on her shoulder gradually drops to the side. Despair courses through my veins as her figure continues to shake at a constant rate.

I had not idea what I could do to make this better because, the truth is, things are only going to get a million times worse.

My eyes begin to burn both in sorrow and in frustration, and I tentatively reach out to do something—anything.

She lets out an audible sob, burying her head in her hands while shaking it from left to right. Inches from her back, I hesitate and withdraw my outstretched arm back onto my lap. Instead, I attempt to comfort her and myself with words, “I’m sorry.”

Much to my surprise and relief, her shaking shoulders eventually cease as the normal rise and fall initiated by slow breathing takes over. I let out an audible breath as she turns around and wipes her tear-stained face, her eyes burning with curiosity.

“Faye,” She begins calmly, not once removing her gaze from my features, “How come the officers haven’t asked you to identify faces?”

I frown in dismay when I remember how they blatantly refused to let me try and identify the faces—especially when I knew I’d be able to identify the suspect.

“When they came down, I said I would have a better idea.” I explain with a grimace, “Clearly, they didn’t care.”

She sits forward and begins to listen quite intently, “And why would you have a better idea than Layla?”

The instant she mentions that point, I realize my mistake too late.

“Well,” I start uncomfortably, clearing my throat, “I didn’t want Layla to go in there alone. I figured we both knew about the same—nothing—so at least we’d feel more comfortable if we had each other throughout.”

She stares back down at the ground, completely lost in her own thoughts and utterly unwilling to fill me in on them. So, instead of pressing her anymore, I decide to give her some space.

With that in mind, I brace my palms on the armrest and push myself up to my feet. “I’m going to get some coffee from that café down the street.” She looks up then, a distracted look in her red-rimmed puffy eyes. “Do you want anything?”

“The truth.” She answers fluidly.

I stare at her, warmth spreading from my ears, “What?”

“I want the truth.” She sits up and nods, “Why did you really leave Boston?”

“You know why,” I look around in confusion, “I left Boston because of my mother.”

“You left things unresolved.”

“To be honest Laura, I doubt our problems could have ever been resolved.” I point out, feeling the need to defend myself.

“I welcomed you into our household because I thought you’d be a wonderful addition to the family!” She argues, her voice begins to grow in volume, “But ever since you’ve been here, all that I’ve invited in is trouble.”

An exuberantly sharp pain travels through my veins as she stares at me with no remorse over her words. Yet, at the same time, I know she’s right. Though her reasoning—my mother—is incorrect, she has the gist of it.

“I can’t help but feel that all of this is because of you.” As she says that, the waterworks she had been trying so hard to hold back begin to roll down her face.

I look down in haste, trying to shield the evident hurt I know is written all over my features. Meanwhile, she angrily wipes away her tears with the sleeve of her cardigan.

I begin to backtrack, and even as I do so, she doesn’t look up—she’s too angry to. I take one longing glance at the door where the officer is still standing shamelessly, before turning on my heel.

“I’ll get you a coffee.” I say quietly, my voice almost breaking.

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I am so glad it’s spring break.

Thank you all for being so patient and loving my story. I have been extremely busy with projects and exams following up to this moment, that I barely had time to myself.

Anywho, thank you as always.

Can I get 50 comments?

VOMMENT.

xxSummerxx