



## 54 | Song for You

### Chapter 54: Song for You

The poster of Luke's half naked body was quickly disappearing from the school grounds. Girls were ripping it o the walls to take home. He looked so hot.

And by lunchtime, new photos were up.

This time it was of Jamie in a bra with a \$1 bill tucked inside. She had the number 4 painted on her stomach and the words \$1 Entry on the corner of the poster.

A few hours later, a poster of Austin came up. Number 3 emblazoned across his strong chest and a smirk on his fake-sleeping face.

Chad came next. He flooded the school with photos of himself. Instead of \$1, he put a \$100 bill in his boxers, though the slogan remained \$1 Entry

Last but definitely not least, came the photo of Jake. Shirtless and every inch of his body molded to perfection. His tattoos on full display; the ink carving around his perfect skin.

The fanfare went wild at this one. Girls had stu ed their lockers full of these posters by now. People had begun trading for their favorite, like they were Pokemon cards back in the day.

Everyone was asking what it meant. "\$1 Entry? For what? How do we get in?"

It was the hottest ticket in school, and no one even knew what it was for.

People thought I did. They kept asking me. Everyone believed that my photo was the beginning of a marketing campaign. They thought this was part of the plan all along.

I tried not to get emotional.

I had taken a stand when I posted my picture in the first place. But now, I didn't have to face the humiliation alone. In fact, they'd turned the humiliation into something everyone wanted to take part in.

"Grotto party," Austin said to me, when no one could overhear, "It's \$1 to enter."

Grotto party.

That's what this was? I remembered the last one... and felt a trickle run down my spine.

They had turned the dirty '\$1 entry' joke about me into an actual paid party. They had quite literally changed my image, from suggesting that I was a hooker to making it an ad for a clandestine party.

Geniuses.

Before Austin walked away, I asked, "Will Luke be there?"

He hadn't come back to school yet.

Austin hid his smile, "Don't worry Millie. He's coming back tonight."

\*\*

What a difference a few months can make.

(1) Invited to Austin Taylor's house party; (2) Luke Dawson has fought over me; (3) My half naked photo has gone viral.

I sound kinda bad ass...

But reality is far from it.

I've spent so long being le out, that when I did get included, I didn't want to close the door on others. I opened it... and invited Flora, Julia and Cearra.

They screamed at the invitation. My eardrums literally popped.

Before telling the girls, I had asked Luke for Austin's number. I wanted to be polite. Luke sent me Austin's number without any questions. And I asked Austin's permission for a +3.

It was that simple. The boys were very chill.

Considering how worked up people get over being invited to this party, I was surprised to see how relaxed the host was.

But then again, it's Austin.

He's relaxed about everything.

\*\*

Flora's a shopaholic. She immediately went online and ordered clothes for the party. Extra revealing clothes. I could only imagine what the boys would say.

She burst into my room with the new dresses and spun on my red chair as I tried them on. My sister and I haven't had the best relationship in the past, but it seemed like we were making progress now.

"My weird little sis is scoring me invites to the hottest parties," she joked, "Isn't that the end of the world?"

I was happy to see her happy. She'd been devastated by Matt dumping her and this had li ed her mood infinitely. Yes, she'd insulted me in the process, but we are family. We need to stick together.

"My underwear is going to show in this," I said nervously, wearing the new dress.

"Then wear cute underwear."

\*\*

Cearra did our makeup and Julia hosted the pregame. Julia actually thanked me -- the first kind words we'd exchanged in a while.

We drove to Austin's house in Cearra's car. Her party playlist was a mashup of old skool hits and hip hop. I had a small buzz from the jello shots we took before.

It's fun to roll up to a party in a group of girls. We danced our way to the front steps - and that's when everyone's mood was killed.

Gloria opened the front door in a pair of slippers, "Hello?"

She was an elderly lady, with an Alfred Hitchcock movie playing in the background and an apple pie baking in the oven. There was no sign of any party.

"The party doesn't exist, does it?" Julia echoed everyone's thoughts, "They set you up, Millie."

"Party?" Gloria repeated loudly, pretending like she couldn't hear well, "Jumping Jiminy, there's no party here. Unless you count me and my movie."

"I knew it," Julia rolled her eyes, "I'm leaving."

"But we came in my car," Cearra objected.

"I'll get an uber."

Flora and Cearra looked at me, questioning whether they should go with her. Julia was already walking down the front lawn with her phone out.

Good luck with that surge charge.

"Millie, is that you?" Gloria asked, peering to have a closer look at me.

"Hi Gloria," I hugged her, "These are my friends."

"Come on in, dearie. Don't mind me, I'm watching Psycho. What a classic," she said, and the girls looked terrified, "You know where to go."

She opened the door for us to enter. We took our shoes o and as she was closing the door, she shot me a secretive wink.

I smiled back and led the girls to the cupboard.

\*\*

I remembered how Luke had shown me the way... and the Harry Potter spells I cast on him when I refused to believe him. I remembered holding onto his shoulders as he walked down the stairs and the kiss that almost happened.

And then I remembered the kiss that did.

"Why are you stopping, Millie?" Cearra asked nervously, "We shouldn't stay in this house. There isn't anything here and the old lady is watching Psycho. If that isn't a sign..."

They were really losing faith in me.

"Welcome to the party," I said and, with my love for all things dramatic, I yanked open the door in a grand gesture.

"Oh--"

"My--"

"God."

The girls gasped.

Some guy from the basketball team yelled up to us, "\$1 ENTRY!"

We had our \$1 bills and descended the staircase, with the girls speechless behind me. The grotto was just as I remembered it. Humidity instantly hit us. The smell of alcohol and the sound of music sunk into our pores. Our bare feet touched the cool water as we waded through the party.

"Millie! You made it!" Austin found me, wrapping a strong arm around my shoulder, "These your friends?"

I nodded, "My sister Flora and my friend Cearra."

"Hey! Thanks for having us. What are you doing with all the dollar bills?" Cearra asked bluntly.

Austin waved his finger in the air, "Live entertainment baby! It's in the back."

"Yo!" Chad yelled, wading through the crowd towards us. He was flirtless and staring at us. They were stunned at how Austin and Chad were acting like they knew me...

I guess the boys weren't acting. They actually knew me.

"Listen Millie," Chad swung his arm around my shoulder.

Austin's arm was still around me and he leaned in to listen.

"I'm getting really drunk right now so I want to tell you this before I forget," Chad said, his words already slurred, "What you did yesterday was hard core. I thought you were a mouse the first time I saw you, but I'm impressed now. And I want you to come to my father's charity event on Saturday. The whole gang's gonna be there and you're a part of that."

A girl came up to us and pulled Chad's arm. Before I could say anything, he was willingly dragged o and the girl.

"Let's find you drinks," Austin said and then added quietly, "And ya man."

"What?" I asked, not sure I heard that last part properly.

"Nothing," Austin answered innocently, before he clicked his fingers, "I forgot! He's about to play! One sec, Millie, I need to introduce him."

Austin ran o. I watched him dart between people with surprising agility and disappear into the smoky crowd.

Who's about to play what?

The grotto was set up di erently than last time. There was still a large space for dance and the bar was in the same location. By a corner, there was an elevated dry part, resembling a stage.

A girl was singing on it now, sashaying around in front of an entertained crowd. She was phenomenal. And dressed like a sexy mermaid.

Very in-theme for the grotto.

"Look!" Cearra gasped, "That's Luke Dawson! He's here. He's actually here."

I don't think Cearra has ever seen Luke outside of school.

I followed her gaze to the bar. Luke had just turned around and was making his way through the crowd. He walked with confidence, knowing as usual that most people had an eye on him.

And that's when his eyes landed on me.

His pink lips curled into a sexy smirk at me and he raised a finger, pointing outside. "Let's go, he mouthed.

Austin popped up on the stage with a mic in his hand and yelled, "Thank you to our beautiful mermaid! And now, ladies and horny gentlemen, I want to introduce you to my best friend's brother. Jake Dawson on the guitar!"

My eyes tore away from Luke by the bar and towards Jake, who stepped up on the stage with a guitar in his hand.

"Millie! Flora hissed, "What are you doing? Luke is giving you the sexy eyes. You can't look away!"

I couldn't help it. Was Jake about to sing?

He cleared his throat and pulled the mic closer to himself, "I wrote this song about a girl I met in class this semester."

Then he put his guitar strap over his shoulder and tested a few chords.

A girl he met in class...we met in English Lit. Was this what he was writing in his notepad?

Now I know I call Luke Dawson a demon, but his brother has the voice of an angel. When Jake sang, it was smooth and sexy. Deep and dramatic. And the lyrics shook me to my core:

She don't realize,  
How those eyes hypnotize  
And those lips never tell me lies.

Hey girl, you got me twisted  
I'm hung up to dry,  
And you resisted.

She says comedy is tragedy,  
That makes me the joker,  
In my own twisted fantasy.

Hold me on my motorbike,  
As I take you out of this galaxy,  
Squeeze the air out of my lungs,  
Don't worry babe, I'll fall to gravity.

She don't realize,  
I was the new kid and she was invisible,  
But I see my future in her eyes.

This was about me.

It was all about me. The time the teacher called on us to analyze comedy and tragedy. The time I rode his motorbike on the way to the Surfside Shack.

The humidity was getting to my head. Thankfully, I had my sister next to me. She didn't know much about the song, but she knew enough to hold onto me.

She hissed, "You better decide between Luke and Jake in this moment, because that boy is about to walk out."

I looked at where she was pointing. Luke looked... unreadable. He had seen my reaction to Jake's music and his expression had changed. He put his drink down and walked away.

My sister was right.

Since when did she get so sharp?

"My advice," she continued, "Is go."

And she let me go. I ran through the grotto, with the sound of Jake's guitar echoing in the air around us. I couldn't deal with it now. Luke was the boy I started this journey with. I couldn't lose that now.

He was obviously an athletic guy, and he moved quickly. People moved out of the way for him, but not for me. I struggled to wade through the drunk crowd. I reached the staircase by the time he was already at the top.

"Luke!" I called his name.

He either did not hear me or chose not to. I sprinted up the stairs, holding the banisters for support. I took a break midway because, let's face it, I'm not athletic. And then I continued.

I ran through the house, where Gloria was cutting into her apple pie. She waved me goodbye as I threw open the front door, forgetting all about my shoes.

That's when I saw him, walking through the grass towards his car. I ran barefoot in the wet grass, feeling the chill of the night air hit me.

"Stop! Luke, stop!"

Tears leaked from my eyes. He turned towards me questioningly and saw the pain in my eyes.

"Stop," I repeated, though he already had. Stop. I was exhausted and drained of all emotion and all I wanted was...

I didn't think I realized how much I missed until I saw him walk away.

"I don't want to stop anymore," he said, "I stop everything when you call my name. I want you to know how I feel... and that I've never done this with a girl before."

I frowned at the intensity of his words. At the overwhelming intensity of this instant.

He said, "If you like my brother, go to him."

I shook my head and the tears continued to roll down my cheeks. The emotion was pouring out of me.

I was scared to lose Luke.

He saw that words were no longer capable of expressing my emotion.

He spoke again, "You don't know what you want, do you?"

His voice so ened as he saw my pain. My confusion. Doesn't he know how hard it is for me to believe he likes me? Doesn't he know how hard it is to be another girl in a crowd of devoted obsessed ones? Doesn't he know that I'm scared to have my heart broken?

I've had it broken once before. But this time it would be di erent. If Luke broke my heart - I knew that was something that could never be fixed.

"I know what I want," I said. "I want you to stop walking away."

He stood close to me and his body was a protection against the cold wind. He held my head in his hands and gently pulled my face towards him. His lips stopped an inch before touching mine.

"I've been here the whole time," he said.

Sometimes it's about waiting for the right moment.

"And I've wanted to do this for a long time," he whispered.

His lips came crashing down on mine, stronger and deeper than last time. Passion that came from within. I opened my mouth and my tongue explored his, getting more and more demanding. He smiled through our kiss, as my arms wrapped around his body, feeling the muscles across his back. I wanted more, so much more.

He pulled me towards him, pressed my body against his and kissed me so deeply, it took my breath away. He kissed the tears on my cheeks and my forehead. Then he held me, and let my head bury itself against his strong shoulder.

I felt safe.

**A/N: How are you feeling? I feel like this is a good moment to get a pulse check ;)**

**Did you like the chapter?**

**Are you OK with her decision? Do you think she can trust Luke?**

**So I read your comments from last section and... let's just say that I listened. Xx**

**Please vote, comment, share and join on**

**Instagram @NatalieInACorner where the terrible lyrics will keep on coming ;)**

**Thank you Xx**