

And Then There Were Four by Lilith Carrie

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Welcome Home

Pulling my suitcase into the cottage, I looked around at the set up my step-mother had ready for me. It wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be. In fact, the rustic cozy feel of the home had me feeling like I walked into something out of a fairytale book.

Small fairy lights and greenery swept the walls, accenting the white drapery that lined the windows and cascaded down upon the floor. The cottage had a small living room with a kitchenette, and a bedroom with a bathroom off to the side. With everything here, I wouldn't need to go up to the main house for much.

"Hmm... not bad." I mumbled to myself as I drug the bags into my bedroom, and laid it on the bed. Growing up and moving around quite a bit, my mother always told me to unpack in the bedroom first. That way at the end of the day, the bedroom was done and I was able to relax.

As I slowly began to unpack, my phone began to chime with notifications causing me to groan. I had only just arrived at this place, and already I was being blown up. Pulling my phone from my pocket, I saw my fathers text messages and sighed.

'Come inside. I would like to talk to you.'

Of course he wants to see me now. Yet, he couldn't come to the airport to pick me up.

Sliding back on my flats, I made my trek back up to the main house, and entered through the back door. I had no idea where I was supposed to meet him in the big house, but Allison made sure to greet me in the kitchen to ensure I got to where I needed to be.

"There you are. Took you long enough." She sighed, rolling her eyes. "Hurry up."

I could already tell with the way she was acting that she wasn't going to make staying here easy. Thankfully, I wasn't the same girl I was when I was younger. I didn't let people push me around anymore, and if she thought she could act however she wanted towards me, she would find herself mistaken.

Following behind her, she moved through the house with haste until she came to a large white wooden door. "Remember, always knock before you enter." She remarked clearly, staring at me with a raised brow as if I was a child who didn't have manners.

“Yeah, got it.” Rolling my eyes, I knocked on the door, and waited for a response. My father quickly replied to come in, and I made sure to give Allison a smirk of approval before I opened the door.

If she kept it up, I was going to make it my personal objective to do everything I could to piss her off. I may have been an introvert who loved books and nature, but I could be the devil if I needed to be.

My mom can vouch for that as well— I used to have a wicked streak.

Stepping inside his office, he stood from the dark brown desk in its center that he had been sitting behind, a smile lighting up his face as he saw me. “Ivy, goodness you have grown.”

“It’s been two years since I saw you last.” I replied with a smile as he came towards me with his arms open for a hug. The moment being more awkward than I would have liked it, but I hugged him regardless to show I was trying.

“Yes, it has.” He sighed, “I hope that you have found the accommodations to be more than adequate. Allison and I felt that you would like your own space now that you’re older. That way you won’t be disturbed by the chaos that seems to float around the main house.”

A chuckle left my lips as I nodded, “yeah, I love the cottage it’s very—”

“You.” He replied finishing my sentence.

“Yes, it’s very me.” I smiled and watched as he gestured for me to take a seat in the chair across from his desk. “You didn’t come meet me at the airport?”

My father sighed and nodded his head, “yes, and I am sorry about that. I am working a deal with a foreign dignitary right now, and I wasn’t able to break away. It was important for the deal to go right.”

“It’s okay. The guys were—” I thought a moment about how to describe them, and watched how my father’s face turned concerned with my hesitation, “they were welcoming.”

A smile crossed his face as soon as I said what I did, “Well, that’s good. Three of them attend the university as well.”

Surprise filled me thinking that they were actually attending college, “really?”

“Yes,” my father laughed, “James, Talon, and Hale all attend the college.”

It confused me for a moment that only three of them would attend the college, but the oldest one, Damian, didn't. Perhaps his bad boy persona gave him a reason to think he was too good to go to college and get a degree.

"Damian doesn't though?" I was curious for the clarification. If I was going to survive here, I had to know my enemies, and it was clear the guys weren't going to get along with me very well.

"No, Damian actually already finished last year. He works with me in the company, and is helping me to run it. He is a lot smarter than he chooses to admit."

I wasn't sure how he was running a business considering it didn't have the most pleasant of attitudes, but then again, looks can be deceiving. Perhaps, it was just me that he didn't want to get along with.

"Well, I am glad you have the help." Trying to stay positive with an already awkward conversation was growing harder than I would have liked it to. A moment of silence fell between us as my father watched my every move.

"I have something for you." He finally replied, his smile growing wide. "Come with me."

My father stood to his feet, and moved from behind the desk. My eyes following him until I realized he was waiting for me. "Oh—"

Quickly, standing to my feet, he opened the office door, and led me down a hallway through the kitchen towards another door. As he opened it, I noticed that the door led towards the garage, and I was slightly curious to know why we were going in there.

"Now, the drive is a decent one to the University. So I got you something to make sure you were able to have reliable transportation."

My eyes widened as he stopped in front of a sleek black sedan. Dark tinted windows and chrome accenting decorated the beautiful vehicle, and made me feel breathless.

"You got me a car?" I mumbled trying to wrap my head around what he was saying. I had been upset about not being able to bring my car from Georgia, but my mom refused to allow me to drive across country alone. She had assured me I wouldn't need it when I got here, and I had considered it was because I would have a driver.

But man was I wrong! A brand new fuckin car— mind blown.

"Yes, Ivy." He chuckled, pulling the key from his pocket, "I got you a car. You are going to change the world, sweetie. I have more faith in you than you know, and I realize I was never there for you before but now that you are here, that's going to change."

My emotions threatened to expose me for being soft as the tears threatened to rim my eyes. I looked at him, and smiled before stepping in and giving him a hug. "Thank you."

I wasn't going to automatically believe that my father had changed from the ways he was, but the least I could do was try to give him a chance to show me that he is different.

"Your welcome, Ivy."

Pulling back, I wiped a stray tear from my eye, and looked at him smiling. "I am looking forward to the next four years here. I hope we will be able to make memories."

"I am sure we will. Now, I know you have a lot of settling in to do before Monday's classes so I will let you get to it. We are going to have a family dinner this evening at seven. I would like for you to join."

Family dinner... mentally I wanted to slap myself for suggesting making memories because family dinners with the stepford wife and her arrogant godson's weren't my idea of pleasurable memories. "Of course, that sounds wonderful."

As much as I wasn't pleased with the idea, I suppose I can't just expect them to be the only ones who put in effort. I have to be willing to do the same as well.