

The Fire

Emma and Olive are in the common room discussing the events of a fire at the school the day prior.

Emma: Apparently it started in the science room..

Olive: How far did it spread?

Emma: Everywhere.

Olive: Is the library okay?

Emma: Gone.

Olive: Those poor books.

Emma: Forget the books, the door jammed and the librarian and a couple others got trapped in there.

River enters and sits down with Emma and Olive, looking uncomfortable.

She gives River a hug, noticing something on her arm.

Olive: What's that on your arm?

River: It's just bad sunburn.

Olive: In winter?

River: Um yeah, there's still sun in winter.

Olive: it was like super cloudy yesterday.

River: I have pale skin.

Olive: Oh, alright. *Returning to Emma* So are they okay?

Emma: A couple year eights sadly couldn't get out and some made it out the window with pretty bad burns.

River looks really uncomfortable and guilty.

Olive: They jumped from that high?

Emma: *Nodding* The others are lucky they made it, the whole block went up in seconds. It was like an explosion.

River: Chemical fires spread really fast.

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Emma: How'd you know it was a chemical fire?

River: Um, well. The paper says it started in the science room, so I assume an experiment went wrong or something.

Olive: Oh my gosh, I wonder who started it. I'd feel so much guilt for the rest of my life.

River becomes increasingly uncomfortable. Emma notices something is up.

Olive: Crazy, I miss one day of school and the whole thing is just gone. Where were you guys when it happened?

Emma: I was in the auditorium in rehearsals for the school play, so pretty far away luckily. It's a shame it'll never get performed.

They both look at River.

River: Um, I was in the library.

Olive and Emma give each other a concerned look.

Emma: Oh my god, did you jump?

River: What?

Emma: Out the window?

River: No

Olive: How did you get out then?

River: The door.

Olive: Did you, like, die?

River. Seriously?

Olive. Are you a ghost?

Emma: Olive, not the time. *(To River)* But I thought the door jammed and people got trapped. That's what the paper said.

River: Umm...

Emma: Hang on, why weren't you in chemistry? Wasn't it during the 3rd period?

River: I was getting a book.

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Emma: What for?

River: Um, an experiment.

River realises she messed up. Emma and Olive both look at each other in realisation.

Olive: Were you in class?

River: No, I just told you-

Emma: It's okay, you can tell us...

River: Yes. I was.

Olive: So who started it?

River: What?

Olive: The fire...

Emma: It wasn't you was it?

Silence.

River: Am I gonna go to jail?

Olive: Was it on purpose?

River: No, I was just doing an experiment with all these chemicals and a match and a candle and I dropped the thing and glass and smoke and it was just everywhere.

Emma and Olive step to the side and whisper.

River: Guys please help me out here, I can't keep it in. And sooner or later they're going to find out it was me.

Emma: You were with me.

River: I wasn't though.

Emma: If anyone asks, you were with me all day.

Pause.

River: Why are you helping me?

Emma: Mistakes happen.

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