

## Winter Harbor

Evie wandered through the house, idly tidying up here and there. Aaron had been gone for three days. The whole first day, she had stayed in bed until she decided to give him a month. After that, she would leave if there were no changes in his behavior. No more chances either. He had one shot at fixing them, or she was done.

She was almost finished writing the next book in her Storms and Shadows series. Her agent Marise had been very accommodating about the delay on the finished project, giving her a month's extension as long as she sent the completed parts to the editor so she could get started. But she had hit writer's block, and all the things she usually did to move past it weren't working. She knew the fight with Aaron the night before he left was the reason. Frustrated, hurt, upset, and seriously considering forgetting her plan to let him fix it, she grabbed her laptop and went to her usual coffee shop to see if a change in scenery would help. She got her favorite iced tea and sat at a table in the corner.

She stared blankly at her screen for thirty minutes when she became aware of a presence and looked up to see Beau standing beside her. "Beau! What are you doing here? Aren't you supposed to be on a job with Aaron?" Evie felt her stomach sink as Beau slowly shook his head.

"Can I sit?" Evie nodded, moving her laptop bag to the floor beside her, watching as he slid his tall, slender frame into the chair across from her. "I just came from Sloane, where I ran into Nissa, who was supposed to be on a job with Susan. I then spoke to Tommy, who told me that Susan wasn't scheduled for a job."

"Oh." She said so lightly. "Did you happen to ask if Aaron was?"

"No, he told me the two of you were going away for the weekend. That's why I came over to say hi, to find out if you had canceled your plans." Beau was clenching and unclenching his fist.

"This explains the lack of sex, distance, irritability, and all those last-minute jobs."

"Yeah, it's been the same in my house too." Beau stood up to leave. "I'm sorry Evie."

"Hold on, don't go. I know you don't like me much..." Evie needed him to stay. She didn't want to be alone after hearing that bombshell.

"Who said I didn't like you?" Beau was perplexed. He adored her, but she didn't like him.

"Aaron. He said that you complained to him that I was too needy and annoying, and I had to stop trying so hard to be your friend, so I pulled back and tried not to engage with you." Evie looked at him in surprise.

"I mean, you are incredibly needy, but I've always thought it was kinda cute, and I never thought you were annoying. I appreciated that you were trying to get to know me and be my friend. I used to look forward to seeing you and hanging out. Aaron told me you thought I was too pessimistic and an asshole and that it was draining to be around me when I asked him why you weren't talking to me as much, I thought I did something wrong."

"You are, but it was fun to tease you about the pessimism, and I thought the asshole was funny, not draining to be around. I used to come to find you to talk to you. You never did anything wrong... Why would he tell us we hated each other?"

"To keep us from talking to one another." Beau sighed and sat down again. "In high school, he was always afraid any girl he was with would prefer me. I guess being an adult hasn't changed that."

"I'm his wife, and you're his best friend. I would never..." Her voice trailed off.

"I would never either Evie, but if what is going on is he has no issue going after my wife, so he may have thought the same about me."

Evie swallowed. "We need proof."

"Do you mind being underhanded?"

"Fuck no, what do we do?"

"Can I use your laptop?" She passed it over to him, and he pulled out his phone. "Latest book?" He read the last paragraph as he pulled up Tommy's contact curiously. He loved her novels and was looking forward to the next one.

"Yeah, I have a severe case of writer's block at the moment." Beau smiled sympathetically while he waited for Tommy to answer.

"Hey, Tommy. I'm gonna give you an IP address. Can you patch me into the system? I need to access some files." He listed the IP address, watched Tommy connect him, and pulled up the system. "Thanks." Hanging up, he set to work.

"You're much better with technology than Aaron." She was watching him work almost desperately. "What are you doing?"

"Activating their trackers." He paused for a moment. "Got them." He looked up at her frowning. "They're in Maine."

Evie felt like he had knocked the wind from her. "Winter Harbor?" She whispered. Beau nodded. "I need to... I can't breathe." She stood up and ran. Beau quickly grabbed her things and followed her out.

"Evie! Wait!" He caught her by her car, fumbling to unlock the doors. He put her things on the roof and pulled her into a hug. "I'm so sorry honey."

"I'm going to fucking kill him!" She exploded. "My house, Beau! My goddamn house! He's fucking her in the house my parents left me!" She struggled to get out of his grasp. "Let me go!" But he held her tighter and rubbed her back until she couldn't hold it in anymore and began to cry. "How could he?" She whispered. "How many times? Can you see that?"

Beau nodded and tucked her under his arm to let her cry into his shoulder while he opened the laptop on the car's hood and pulled up the history. "They've been there eight times. But they've been doing jobs together for almost a year." He studied the map with the locations on it and then took several screenshots. "How long has Aaron been acting weird?"

"He's been distant and irritable for at least two months, but things have been slowly worsening for the last eight or nine months."

"Yeah, same. Did he ever tell you he was doing jobs with Susan?"

"No, always you, Sean, or Thorn."

"Yeah, Susan is always with Nissa. What do you want to do?"

"I want a divorce. There's no coming back from this."

"Me too." He leaned back and studied her face. "I also want to get them back."

"I'm sorry Beau... I think you're gorgeous, and it would probably be lots of fun, but I don't think a revenge fuck will make me feel better in the long run." Evie glared at all the location markers on the computer screen.

Beau barked out a short laugh. "Not what I was thinking, but I like that your mind went there first."

"Oh." Evie's cheeks flushed. "What did you have in mind?"

"How long can you act like you don't know anything?"

"To be perfectly honest? I have no idea." She sighed. "I served him with divorce papers Friday night, and he refused to sign them and asked for a chance to fix things. I decided to give him a month with no more chances, any slip-ups, and I was going ahead with the divorce."

"I was getting to that point myself. The problem I have is Susan and I have a prenup because I have quite a bit of money from investing, and right now, if I leave her or there's infidelity on my part, she gets half. If she cheats or leaves me, she gets the brownstone, a car, and a one-time payment based on how many years we're married. It was only when I saw Nissa that I realized something was going on, then you confirmed it when you said Aaron was supposed to be with me. I need lots of irrefutable proof."

"What do you need me to do?"

"Come on, let's go in and sit down, I'll buy you another iced tea, and we'll talk."