

Little Swimmers

Evie came out over an hour later, having done a quick rinse to get the sand o her, followed by a long soak in the bathtub with the jets going and a delicious-smelling blueberry lemon bath bomb. She took another shower to wash her long dark brown hair and rinse her body. When she finished, she pulled on a pair of silk navy shorts and an oversized button-up silk navy shirt for pajamas. She towel-dried her hair and cleaned up the sand she had tracked in. She walked over with a smile and handed Beau his LaRue bag. "Here ya go. Enjoy."

"I'll have to remember to thank Aaron." He returned her smile and headed to his bedroom. "I ordered some stu ; just let them in when they buzz. It's all paid for."

He came out just as she shut the door behind the delivery driver.

"That was quick."

"I don't need to soak until I become a prune." He teased. "However, I may be completely hooked on that sugar scrub."

"It's pretty amazing." She grinned and helped him carry the order to the counter.

"What do you want to start with?" Beau pulled out everything she had asked for, plus a few things he had decided he wanted.

"Ice cream. But first, face masks." They collected everything and brought it over to the co ee table. Beau put on a movie, and they spent the rest of the evening doing spa activities and eating snacks. Beau let her give him a manicure but refused to let her touch his feet. He did the face mask with her and let her clean his facial hair a little.

"I can't believe we thought we hated each other for three years." Beau said in amazement. He had never considered doing spa nights but enjoyed hanging out with Evie as they talked and laughed. It was like the last three years had never happened, as they easily fell back into their old banter.

"Add another tally to the list of things we never thought Aaron would do, but here we are." She shrugged. "Why'd you marry Susan?"

"Growing up in my family, the whole point of life was to get married and have your own family. Aaron married you, and it looked like he was finally getting the family he wanted so badly, and I wanted it to. When Sean and I met Susan on an assignment in Singapore, she was distraught to hear Aaron had married you. She moved to New York City a er, and she pursued me. Shockingly, it's been hard to find someone who wants to date and be together a er they find out what I do for a living, plus my whole veteran PTSD and injuries. So I figured I had better take my chance. I liked her, was attracted to her, and figured the love would eventually come."

"We both wanted kids, and we started trying almost immediately, but a er a few months with no luck, we went and got tested. It turns out I'm sterile, probably due to exposure to some chemicals in the military and overseas. That's why I thought Susan was pulling away. I mean, it probably is since Aaron's little swimmers are working, and you can't..." He trailed o awkwardly. "Sorry."

"It's fine." She smiled. "That was the first time I o ered him a divorce, but he insisted he would be fine with a surrogate. We had started the process, but it lost traction pretty quickly." She froze. "You don't think this is their plan? Aaron knocks up Susan, and we all just accept that they cheated because there's a baby?"

"I won't be fucking sticking around." Beau shook his head violently.

"Honestly, I don't even want them now."

"Me either. I was pleased that he dropped the search for a surrogate."

She hesitated. "Do you think anyone else knows and has been covering for them?"

"Sean and Thorn, definitely not. Sean would tell me, and Thorn would destroy Aaron. He loves you, same with Cole. Willa might know because of her behavioral profiling abilities, but I don't see her covering for Susan. She doesn't like her. Nissa is up in the air, she and Aaron are close, and she would keep it a secret if he asked. The question would be if she would keep it from Tommy, and if Tommy knows, would he keep it from us? He doesn't like me, and I know you're not his favorite person either."

"No, I'm not." She sighed sadly.

"I don't think I ever got the full story. You're his full younger sister, right? And his parents put you up for adoption?"

Evie nodded. "My adoptive parents were struggling to conceive, had a few miscarriages, and were in their mid-forties, so time was running out for them. My adoptive dad, Oscar, was the Chief Operating O icer of Sloane and was very close to Tommy's dad, Henry. And my adoptive mom, Della, was best friends with Mary, Tommy's mom."

"Mary was fi y when she got pregnant with me, and Henry was sixty-seven. They didn't want to raise another child at their age. Henry and Mary o ered to let Oscar and Della adopt me. They jumped at the chance. They agreed that Henry and Mary would be allowed to act as Godparents and be a part of my life, but they didn't want Tommy to know he had a full sister for some reason, so they hid the pregnancy from him. He was in boarding school and thought everything was normal at home."

"Tommy and I still became very close for two people with a fourteen-year age gap who only saw each other on holidays. I'd figured for a while that I was adopted, but Della confirmed it in 2013 a er I graduated from university and told me Mary and Henry were my parents, not just incredibly nice and generous godparents. I never told Tommy when I found out, just that I was adopted."

"Why not?" Beau frowned. "How did he find out?"

"I was afraid. I didn't want him to think I was a er his money or a piece of Sloane." She shrugged. "I didn't want anything from him. I just wanted him in my life. When I got sick, and nobody knew what was wrong, he took some of my blood from the lab and ran it to see if he could find my birth parents and get a medical history to figure out what was happening. It came up a match to him. When he asked me if I knew, I said yes, and he lost it. He was livid that I hid it from him and said I had destroyed his trust. I apologized and tried to explain I was scared I would lose him, and he fired me and told me to get out."

"Maybe we shouldn't do this at Sloane."

"You guys are going to breakfast. We can meet you there."

"I'll text you with the restaurant info when I get it."

"Okay. I'm gonna head to bed." She stood up and began to clean up their mess.

"I got this Doll. Go to bed."

"It's my mess too!"

"I know, and I appreciate that you want to clean up, but I got it, okay?"

Her shoulders slumped a little. "Okay Beau. Night."

"Night." Beau watched her leave and shook his head, chuckling to himself. She was funny and disappointed he wouldn't let her clean. She was a funny one.