

### Calling Backup

Presley considered never in a million years did she ever consider her vacation was going to be ruined by Cruz Hawley. She'd made her escape free and clear, and her father sold her out.

She was sitting in small swinging chair in the garden area of the resort licking her wounds and preparing to call her father. After throwing the coffee mug which was the closest thing to her fingers at Cruz's face, he'd barely ducked away from it, and it bounced off his chest to shatter at his feet. A large shard impaled the top of his foot and gave her the escape she needed.

She felt a miniscule amount of regret for making him bleed but she remembered the time he broke her arm as a kid and pushed it away. Now she was kicking her toe off the rocks of the quiet area and trying to get her thoughts in order.

She called her father's cell phone and waited for him to pick it up. After the third ring he answered, and his voice told her he was dreading whatever it was she was going to say.

"Hi P."

"How could you?"

"Sweetheart, you went too far."

"I went too far. Compared to what, Dad? Compared to when he broke my arm? Compared to when they humiliated me in front of the entire middle school when they put a spotlight on my first kiss? Was it too far compared to my high school graduation when they showed up in red wigs? I know, it's too far in comparison to the time the three of them



broke into my dorm in college and humiliated me during one of my first sexual experiences and caused me and my partner to be injured."

"You're both adults now. It was one thing to pull the stuff you did at dinner, but come on sweetheart, you put his likeness on the cover of a smutty book about a man with two penises."

"He agreed to it. I have his signature on a release, Dad."

"He didn't know what he was agreeing to, and he agreed to a cover. He didn't agree to all the promo material. There are life sized cutouts, Presley."

"I can't believe you're taking his side." She was furious.

"I'm not taking sides. I'm simply saying this game of pranks needs to come to an end. You're affecting his business and his father's business. You agreed to help him mitigate the costs and then you left."

"He abused me, Dad!"

"And this makes it okay for you to also be a horrible human being?"

"You did not just call me a horrible human being." She gasped at her father's words.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean. I didn't mean you were a horrible human being, Presley but you have to understand your actions are not any better than his."

"I can't believe you sold me out. I'm your daughter and you are calling me a horrible human being and you're supporting my mortal enemy instead of me. I'd say thanks for all the loving familial support but maybe this is why Odin is the way he is. He knows no matter how bad he and his



buddies treat me, you'll always have their backs and I'm the one who gets left to fend for myself and when I do defend myself, I get told I'm the bad person."

"Presley."

"I'm done talking to you Dad. If you have anything else to say to me, you can say it to me through Mom."

"Pres." He sighed loudly.

"You made your choice Dad, and you chose to ruin the first vacation I've had in years to allow him to come here. He had the resort hacked Dad. He's in my room. He removed the door from the bathroom. He destroyed my personal belongings. He managed to get all of my reservations changed behind the scenes to make it so he's my roommate for the next four weeks. Do you think he's going to play any fairer than me? You did this Dad. You can consider me not your daughter anymore."

She knew she was being extreme, but she was hurting.

"Presley, you don't mean this."

"You love Cruz Hawley so much, you can adopt him and make him your daughter. By the time I send him home he'll no longer have a penis or balls so it might work for you." She hung up on him then and curled into herself on the swinging basket chair. She felt tears on her cheeks but when the phone started ringing in her hand, her father trying to call her back, she declined the call and then blocked him.

She needed to find a way to make Cruz as uncomfortable as he intended to make her. She dialled out to Sloane.

"Hey. How is France? Any hot men?"



"Cruz Hawley is here. Does he count?"

Sloane gasped, "no."

"He got your brother to hack all the resorts I'm staying and insert himself into my reservations and into my room."

"How did he get your itinerary? Your agent booked everything under a pseudonym."

"My father."

"What the fuck?"

"Apparently the cover of the book is making waves and it's affecting Cruz's stock prices and his father's stocks too. Dad called me a horrible human being for going after his business."

"Your father said that?" Sloane was quiet. "I'm so sorry. I can't believe he is putting his friendship with the Hawley family over his own daughter."

"It really hurts." She admitted as she sighed dramatically. "I wish I could find a way to make him miserable while he's here."

"He's really staying in your room?"

"He is. He removed the bathroom door and told me if I need to poop to use the bathroom in the lobby."

"Asshole."

"He got rid of my vibrators."

"Motherfucking asshole," Sloane was raging now.



"I booked queen sized beds because I don't need much room. He said he's sleeping in my bed, Sloane. What am I going to do? I should pack up and come home."

"Don't you dare. Don't you give in." Sloane growled angrily. "We're going to beat him at his own game."

"How Sloane? How do I beat him? He's literally the size of four of me. He can lift me with one hand and no effort. It's not like I can physically remove him. He got your brother to make it look like we're here together. I foolishly put it out in the universe we were a couple so even if I went to the police and complained he was forcing himself into my room, the video evidence supports we're a couple in a consensual relationship."

"There has to be a way." Sloane grumbled. "Let me get into Anderson's messages and see if he's communicating with Cruz at all and what they're saying."

Presley listened while Sloane typed away and then suddenly Sloane started giggling.

"What is so funny?" Presley sat up.

"Did you know Cruz has an ex even crazier than you? He sent Anderson a screenshot of a message from her to Cruz. It is a long rant about how he never experimented with her and questioning why he hid his sexual preferences from her. She's begging him to come back to her and she will let him beat her with paddles." Sloane was giggling loudly.

"No way." Presley snorted. "I hope she is still texting him constantly."

"Meh," Sloane complained, "he blocked her numbers. Apparently, she changes them a lot."





"Too bad. It'd be a lot of fun if Cruz invited her to reconnect and paid for her ticket." Presley leaned in the chair and stared up at the blue sky. "I'm in paradise and I can't even enjoy it. I feel like I need something to distract him from me. He's telling people we're engaged, Sloane. He's in my room. He's going to be everywhere. He wants to make it look like we're on a honeymoon of some kind."

Sloane was uncharacteristically quiet while she vented, and she sighed loudly.

"Sloane, you're not listening to me."

"I am listening to you. You're in paradise and your childhood torturer is telling people you're on a honeymoon. Question, how far are you willing to go?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean I took the screenshot and pulled the phone number of the woman who texted Cruz. It was a friend of his ex. I found the ex's actual phone number and I'm going through some of her text messages to Cruz."

"Right. So?"

"She's insane," Sloane giggled. "She said she'll never let him go. Two weeks ago, she sent him a text saying she was applying to her office to relocate to Vancouver to be with him."

"Damn. I wonder what it is about him which makes her so crazy."

"It's the dick. He might not have two of them but the one he does have is decent."



"What?" Presley was confused until a photo popped up in their ongoing text messaging. "Oh, Jesus. What the hell Sloane?"

"She took a picture of him naked and sleeping. That's soft, Presley. You should hate fuck him and tell us the story when you get back."

"I will not."

"Look at it!" Sloane giggled. "You can't tell me it's not impressive."

"Fine, it's impressive."

"No wonder the ex is after him still, especially since one of her messages asks him to remember the time they fucked for six hours straight."

"Holy shit. Was her coochie permanently damaged?"

"I don't know but take one for the team as research." Sloane was fixated.

"Can you think of something more helpful?"

"I'm working on it, actually, while we're chatting."

"What exactly are you working on?"

"I accidentally, on purpose, using a number which mimics Cruz's, sent a text message with his itinerary, meaning your itinerary, for the next four weeks to her. I made it look like it was a message being sent to your brother with the words going to bang your sister in Europe, hope we stay friends."

"It will set her off."

"I bet she suddenly gets time off tomorrow and flies to Europe. I bet she's there before you even leave France."



"You're a genius."

"I know," Sloane snickered.

Presley sighed as another incoming call caught her ear, "my mom is calling now."

"Good luck. I'll keep digging into Cruz. Keep your phone close. I'll be in touch."

Presley ended the call and then steadied herself to deal with her mother.

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