

Briar POV

I'm startled awake by the sound of my phone ringing. I reach for it and will my eyes to focus. The minute Calob's name ashes on the screen, I decline the call. I set the phone back down next to me on the bed. As soon as the ringing stops, it starts again. After the fifth call, I block his number. I know I need to talk to him at some point, but I'm not ready yet. I throw the blanket off my legs and make my way into the bathroom. After I do my business, I head back out to check the time on my phone. I can't believe it's already ve in the evening. I guess I needed the sleep after the events of yesterday. My stomach rumbles, but I honestly still feel a little sick from my ice cream party earlier. The phone rings again, and I know it can't be Calob. Lola's name ashes on the screen. I smile and place the phone to my ear. "Hey Lola, what's up" I ask trying to sound more chipper than I feel.

"Get dressed, I'm coming to pick you up" she says. "What are you talking about, Lola?" "I'm not letting you sit there thinking about what that pr*ck did to you. We are going to go out and have some fun," she says. "Lola, I'm not feeling well, and honestly I'm not in the mood to go out and have fun. I just want to stay in and watch movies." "Fine, then I'm coming over to have a sleepover with my best friend. I'll even bring the wine." I smile because I love this woman. I would never get through this without her. "Let me know when you get here, so I can come down to the lobby to get you." "It will be a little later, because I have to go to my apartment and grab pajamas. I'll see you soon" she says before she hangs up. I'm just about to climb on the bed when another wave of nausea ripples through me. I rush to the bathroom but this time I only dry heave. I decide to grab my pajamas and soak in the tub hoping it will make me feel better. I'm never eating chocolate ice cream again. I laugh because I know that's a lie.

There are three bottles of scented oils sitting on the sink. I grab the lavender bottle and pour a generous amount into the water as it lls. Once the tub is full, I step in and lower myself down. The water feels amazing. I really hope my new house has a huge tub, so I can do this anytime I want. The condo had a tub, but it wasn't comfortable, and I hardly ever used it. I try to push thoughts of the condo and my life with Calob out of my mind. I'm not sure how long I relax in the tub, but when the water starts to turn cold, I step out and dry with a uffy white towel. Even the towels in this place are luxurious. I grab a bottle of lotion off the sink and moisturize every inch of my skin before I slip into my favorite pajamas. It's a pink tank top and a pair of purple bottoms with stethoscopes all over them. They were a gift from Lola. I rush out of the bathroom when my phone rings. I place it to my ear expecting it to be Lola, but instead, I hear my mother's voice.

"Briar, I know you're there. I can hear you breathing." "What do you want mom?" "Briar, we need to talk. I understand that you are upset with me, but what you said earlier was very hurtful. You owe me an apology." I take a deep breath and look up to the ceiling praying for strength. "I'm sorry what I said earlier hurt your feelings, mom." "Thank you, Briar. I'm sorry that you felt I wasn't on your side. I am always on your side. You are my baby girl. I spoke with your father, and we want you to come to lunch at the house tomorrow. I have invited your brother to join us." "Mom, I'm not sure if I'm ready to sit down and talk about this with all of you." "We are your family, Briar. We should have been the rst people you came to when this happened. I expect you at the house at noon tomorrow." I sigh, at least Morris will be there with me. "Fine, mom, I will be there at noon." "I love you, Briar." "I love you too, mom."

Twenty minutes later, Lola lets me know she is waiting in the lobby. I throw a shirt over my tank top and grab my key card before I head downstairs. I smile when I see Lola standing in the lobby with her overnight bag and two bottles of wine. "This place is amazing" she says as she follows me to the elevator. "If you think the lobby is amazing, wait till you see the room that Derek put me in." The elevator door closes, and I put the code in. "That's because there is something else, he wants to put in you" she says. "God, Lola you can be so crude." "I may be crude but it's the truth" she says. I roll my eyes. We step off the elevator and I open the door to my room. "Holy sh*t" she says from behind me and I laugh. "I told you so. The bathroom is even more amazing." She drops her bags and the wine on a chair before she takes off for the bathroom. "This is bigger than my apartment. I could live in this bathroom" she yells.

"I'm starving, are you hungry" Lola asks. I haven't felt nauseated since I took the bath earlier, and I am hungry. "I'll order us some food while you go get freshened up and changed." Lola squeals and jumps off the bed. I call down to room service and order two cheeseburgers and fries. I debate about ordering dessert, but the apple pie sounds amazing. I order two pieces and cut the call. I grab the remote and start to look through the movies. I don't want any chick icks tonight. "Lola, what are you in the mood to watch," I yell to her. "Anything with Ryan Reynolds in it" she yells back. "Deadpool it is," I say and nd the movie in the directory. There's a knock on the door which makes me freeze in place. It can't be the food I just ordered. Calob can't get up here, I say to myself. I walk over and pull open the door. Standing in a suit is none other than Derek Coleman. I wondered if I would see him today after everything he said to me last night.

I notice his eyes drop to look at my clothes. I realize I'm not wearing a bra under my thin tank top and I cross my arms over my chest. "Nice pajamas" he says and I roll my eyes. "You're wearing a suit, and you're complimenting my pajamas." "I have a feeling there isn't anything that you don't look good in Briar." "Is that our food" Lola starts to ask before she notices Derek at the door. Oh, God please let the oor open up and swallow me whole. "Briar, aren't you going to introduce me to Mr. Hottie." "Lola" I say her name like a warning. Derek chuckles, and I'm sure my cheeks are pink. "Derek Coleman, this is my best friend, Lola Jones. Lola, this is my boss, Derek." "Boss and friend, Derek," he says, and extends his hand to her. "It's a pleasure to meet you, Lola. I'm glad you are here to keep our friend company. I didn't mean to interrupt your girls' night, Briar. I just wanted to stop by and make sure that you didn't need anything."

"I appreciate you checking on me. I'm good, Lola and I are going to watch a movie and have a burger." "Well, I will leave the two of you to enjoy your night. Briar, I was hoping that tomorrow I could take you for a proper dinner after I get done at the hospital." Before I can answer, Lola does. "She would love to. It was nice to meet you Derek" she says and closes the door. "Lola, what the hell was that?" "That was me making sure that you don't sabotage what could be a mutually benecial relationship" she says, wiggling her eyebrows at me. "I am not f**king him Lola. He is my boss and way too young for me. Besides, I'm technically still married." She takes my hand and leads me over to the bed. We sit facing each other. "Don't make excuses, Briar. If you are not attracted to the man, just say that." "Lola, Mother Theresa would be attracted to the man. He is built like a Greek God." She smirks, and I know I walked right into her trap. "Then put your big girl panties on and use that man for all the orgasms you can have. I didn't say to marry him Briar, just use him for your pleasure. By the look of him, he will be better than any battery-operated toy you can buy," she says. We both burst out laughing and I realize this is exactly what I needed.

The Next Day

As I pull my jeep in front of my parent's mansion, I take a deep breath, trying to prepare myself for the inquisition. I knock and Maurie, my parent's maid, lets me in. "They are waiting for you in the dining room, miss" she says before she disappears. God, how I wish I could be her right now. I reach the dining room and Morris is on his feet before anyone else can speak. He pulls me into a hug and whispers in my ear. "You say the word sis and I will beat the sh*t out of him." I chuckle and squeeze him tighter. "Briar, come give me a hug," my mother says and Morris releases me to take his seat. I walk around, and she wraps me in a tight hug. She lets me go, and I take the seat next to Morris. "Briar" my father says. "Hello father" I say. "So, your mother has informed me what has been happening. I have to say I'm very disappointed. What are you thinking, Briar?" I nearly choke on the water I'm drinking. "Excuse me," I say hoping I misheard him.

"Your mother said that Calob has apologized for what he has done wrong. If that is the case, then why are you not home with your husband," my father asks. I grip my thigh under the table. "Maybe because he f**ked someone else and I don't forgive him." "You will not use that language at my table. Furthermore, I expect you to return home and make things work with Calob. Indelity isn't the end of the world, Briar, so stop acting like a child." I start to look around the room. "What the hell are you looking for" my father asks. His voice laced with irritation. "The cameras because this must be a joke. If you think that I will ever put up with a man that f**ks other women like your wife has put up with from you, then you are out of your mind. I am no man's doormat. Until the two of you can start acting like supportive parents, don't call me. I am no longer your daughter." I turn to my brother, and he stands pulling me into a hug. "You call me if you need anything sis. I love you Briar and I hope you never go back to that cheating ba**ard." My father screams at Morris and I walk toward the door. I'm numb as I make my way through the house toward the front door. A hand on my arm stops me. "Briar, please don't leave" my mother pleads. Before I can answer, the door opens and the man I've been trying to avoid steps inside. I turn to my mother and rip my arm away from her. "How could you?"