Dedicated to alpha_kitty_naks_5 ~Brie~

2:27 am

I woke up to go check on Roman. I yawned and sat up. I opened the door and walked down the dark hallway, barefooted and rubbing the sleep from my eyes. I passed by Aubree's room and I heard loud moans. I rolled my eyes and quickened my steps. They deserved each other.

I kept going and reached Roman's room. I walked in and he was asleep. I didn't feel like going back to sleep so I pulled a chair and sat, watching his little chest slowly rising and falling.

"How could you Mom?" I grumbled through the phone. "You promised."

"Honey, we're sorry. This is important to your sister."

"And my son isn't important to me? You're on the side of the daughter who ruined the other daughter's marriage you know that right?"

Mom sighed.

"Breanna c'mon, we're not picking sides here. I'm a mother, I can't pick a favorite out of my children. I love you three equally but remember that despite everything, Aubree is also our daughter; you're sisters."

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"A burden I'm going to have to live with forever" I murmured venomously.

"Breanna don't say things like that!" Mom reprimanded me. "You don't have to be so cold!"

I stayed quiet.

"Bruce please talk some sense into your daughter. She's being impossible right now."

That does it!

"You know what mom? I'll take care of this myself. My son and I will no longer be a burden, so you can spare me your biased lecture, okay?"

I hung up and breathed out heavily.

Ugh!

I got down from the car, grabbed my bag, and then slammed the door shut.

"Okay sweetie, stay close to mommy okay?" I whispered and planted a kiss on his head.

The car beeped as I locked it and then headed toward the building. I pushed through the doors and the cold air from the AC made Roman gasp.

"Mommy you work in a refrigerator."

I chuckled. We got to the front desk and I smiled at Carol and Ivy.

"Hey, I'm back" I announced.

They gasped at Roman.

"Oh my goodness, that's your son?" Ivy asked.

"Hello," he greeted.

"Aww, he's so adorable!" Carol cooed.

I laughed.

"We're gonna go ahead now," I said and headed to the elevator.

I stepped out and Avery gasped with a huge grin. She ushered me

forward as she stepped out from behind her counter, her heels

clicking on the polished floor.

"I didn't know it was bring your kid to work day" she grinned.

Roman waved at her.

"It's not. I just picked him up from his doctor's appointment and I ran out of babysitters" I explained.

"Oh, I see."

I smiled and headed down the hall and right to my station.

"Mommy, I wanna work at a fancy place like this one when I get

older."

"And you will because you are the smartest nine-year-old I know" I smiled at him.

"Well, this is a surprise" Megan spotted me and walked over. "Hi,

Manny."

He smiled. She crouched down in front of him and hugged him.

"What did the doctor say?"

"Everything's okay with him. I was a bit worried about the pollen season but he said he'd be fine as long as we were cautious enough" I explained.

Avery walked in.

"Cynthia, Mr. Corleone's co ee is here and Breanna, he's asking for you."

"I just got back" I murmured.

Cynthia shrugged tossing away the paper cup.

"Work is work."

I sighed and nodded.

"Don't worry, I'll stay with Roman" Megan assured me.

"I'll be right back sweetie."

"Hey, wait up, I'm in heels" Cynthia called a er me.

I turned.

"Since you're going in, please give his co ee to him."

"You're his assistant. Do it yourself." "Pretty please, Breanna? I'll go help Meg keep an eye on your son." "Shouldn't you be behind your desk?" "Oh c'mon, Breanna." I sighed. "Fine" I agreed and she passed me the hot co ee. I knocked and waited for his response. I didn't hear anything so I opened the door and peeped through and saw him on the phone. He turned and strangely his eyes lit up. He gestured me in. I walked fully into his o ice and closed the door. I felt a sharp pain shoot through my arm and I groaned quietly. Just then the co ee slipped from my good hand and spilled on my injured arm. I screamed. Aiden turned, his expression full of shock. "I'll call you back, Detective" he hurriedly said. Before he fully hung up the call, he was by my side. "Are you okay?" No... I sucked in the pain. "Yeah, it's nothing. I'm good." I whimpered as I tried to move my arm but couldn't. It felt like a log. I held back my fear and tears as he looked at me. "You're a terrible liar" he stated. He pushed the hair that had fallen over my eye behind my ear and helped me to the couch. He crouched in front of me and took my arm. I fought the pain as he touched it. "It didn't get burnt but, why does it look like you can't even feel it?" Oh no. "It happens sometimes" I lied. "So let's go to the hospital." "No!" I blurted out. He looked at me, surprised at my outburst. I cleared my throat. "I mean, I hate hospitals and I just picked up my son from there so going back isn't an option," I said, and forced a smile. "I'm not buying that." I bit my lip and there was a knock. Cynthia walked in. "Sorry for interrupting sir but, Breanna, your son's asking for you." "You weren't kidding, were you?" Aiden asked. "Sorry, I forgot to mention, I brought him to work a er picking him up from the hospital. I ran out of babysitters." I watched his expression turn a bit cold and his lips pressed into a hard line. He was about to say something when laughter approached us. a "Roman please stop running." I whimpered quietly [I think] as the throbbing pain increased. Aiden frowned at me. "Mommy, your arm's swollen" Roman pointed out, attempting to poke it. Cynthia held him back. "Co ee spilled on me honey, I'm okay." "But that's not from co ee, Breanna. I know a co ee injury when I see one" Cynthia observed. a Aiden nodded. "You're right." I looked at him. His eyes weren't on Roman anymore. "No seriously, sir. I'm okay." "Cynthia, clear all my appointments for the a ernoon, Megan if you could please get her bag. We're going to the hospital" he instructed. "Right away," they both said and scurried o . "I said I'm fine," I said getting up and sounding very pissed. "Well, I don't believe you." "You're my employer, not my...". "And as your employer, it is my job to make sure all my employees are perfectly fitfor work." He turned back to grab his keys and coat. "You're telling me, you'll do this for every single employee?" "Only the ones I choose Ms. Nolan." He smirked widely and gestured his hand towards the door. "A er you." I took Roman's hand in my good hand and we moved out to the parking lot. "You know I can drive myself right? I brought my car today. You don't need to worry." "With a child and an injured arm; I think you need all the help you can get. So do me a favor and talk less and for once do as you're told." "But my car..." "Just get in Ms. Nolan. Please." I reluctantly get in. He strapped Roman in the backseat and told him to not worry before he drove us to the hospital. "Why does your arm look worse and why is the cast-o?" a nurse from when Zach and I were here asked upon seeing me. "Oh, so you took o the cast?" Aiden spoke up. I'd somehow forgotten about him. I turned and his tall handsome panty panty-dropping gorgeous figure was still behind me. "And you are?" the nurse enquired. Exactly. Who the hell does he think he is meddling in my a airs?! "Aiden Corleone. Her boss." They shook hands. Was the boss part necessary? "Do all bosses drive their employees to the hospital?" the nurse

chuckled.

Aiden stared at her, unamused.

"I'll go get the doctor. Please have a seat."

She scurried o.

"You know you could have at least pretended to laugh right?" He li ed Roman into a seat.

"But I chose not to Ms. Nolan. I do hate mixing business with

pleasure."

I shook my head. The nurse came back a little while later announcing

that Doctor Seagate was ready to see me. "This way sir" she gestured to Aiden.

"But what about Roman?" I asked.

"I'll take him to the playroom. Roman sweetie, how would you like to

go see the dinosaurs while mommy gets her arm checked?"

"Are there astronauts?"

"Even better. The dinos arethe astronauts."

Roman grinned slowly and the nurse looked at me.

"Don't worry, he's in safe hands."

I sighed and watched her take him away.

"Okay then, a er you."

I looked up and he was talking to me. I hesitated for a while.

"You're not scared of losing a couple of limbs, are you? I thought you were fierce" he teased.

"You're not funny" I stated and walked through the door.

Aiden stayed with me the entire time Dr. Seagate examined my arm. Luckily she said nothing about me losing my limbs.

Until Aiden brought it up and Dr. Seagate threatened me with it if I weren't more responsible. I wasn't detained for Roman's sake but I

was told to be on complete bed rest for two weeks.

"You're working from home for those two weeks" Aiden announced as he pulled up in front of my parent's house.

"But I'm supposed to rest."

"That's not my problem."

He stepped out and held the door out for me.

"But I'm le -handed anyways. Thanks for asking" I sarcastically let out as I climbed out of his car.

He ignored me and reached out to the backseat for Roman who was fast asleep. Aiden slung my bag across his shoulder and with Roman in his arms, he took my good hand and led me inside. His touch was soothing and I found myself smiling. Although I didn't agree with the

a

working-from-home thing. Snap out of it Breanna.

We got into the house and he began to climb up the stairs.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

He paused and turned.

"Well, you don't expect me to drop the child on the floor do you?"

"Well, you can't just barge into my house."

"Are you going to point me to his room or you're just going to stand there?"

I cursed under my breath and led him to Roman's room. He le me to tuck him in because I insisted. I came back downstairs and he was still there, his coat hanging across the arms of the couch.

"Look, sir, I'm really—"

"We're not at the o ice right now, so you can cut the formalities. Call me Aiden."

I hu ed gently.

"Alright, then Aiden. Thank you for your help today. I don't think you had to... hey where are you going?!" called a er him.

"Kitchen" he replied curtly. "You need to eat. Doctor's orders."

"I can eat later you don't have to—"

"Do you want your lips chopped o Ms. Nolan?" he suddenly turned back and asked.

I jumped back in surprise.

"Good."

He found the kitchen and rolled up his sleeves, grabbing a clean saucepan from the washer. I watched him quietly as he moved up and down across the kitchen aisle, chopping, sautéing, and mixing stu into the pot. Soon, something delicious filled the air. He scooped some of the dishes into a bowl and set it in front of me.

"Eat" he instructed.

Did he think this was some Fi y Shades reality TV show?

"Go on" he urged, handing me a spoon.

I eyed him as I took the spoon from him. I pushed my hair out of my face and took a spoonful of the food.

Oh my goodness!

I swallowed two more spoonfuls and I noticed a smile on his face.

"I didn't know you could cook."

"You're welcome" he replied.

"No honestly, you don't look like you know anything about cooking."

He chortled and neatly folded a napkin.

"I picked up a couple of things from my late wife."

Oh... oh?

He was married before? Woah. Explains how grumpy he is at times. He must miss her.

"I'm sorry" I whispered almost inaudibly.

"Don't be. It's been years... too long."

I bit my lower lip and twirled the spoon in the food.

"Don't play with the food. It was her recipe for a speedy recovery."

"Well it's really good" I admitted. "Could you maybe write down the

recipe for me?" I stu ed my face.

"We've not gotten there yet" he replied in a low tone, making me

shiver and pause for a moment.

His eyes burned into mine as he leaned forward. My heart leaped to the back of my throat as he touched the side of my lips with something so .

God, his touch was intoxicating!

His eyes went down to my lips...

He was thinking about it!

Then to my eyes, then back on my lips. I felt his hot breath on my face and I realized our faces were a few inches apart. Adrenaline shot through me as he closed his eyes and leaned even closer. I bit my bottom lip and closed my eyes.

Here we go...

Then we heard the door bang shut and we pulled away. Dang it!

"Hello?" a voice called. "Anybody home?!"

I cleared my throat as Aiden fiddled with his tie.

"In here!" I called out, taking a spoonful of the food before getting up.

"Where are—"

I turned to the owner of the voice.

"Breanna!"

"Maude!" I hugged her.

"Oh your arm!" she cried in surprise.

I smiled.

"Look at you. It's been for ... "

Her eyes le mine and moved on to Aiden.

"Forgive me for not acknowledging this sexy hunk of a man here."

Aiden chuckled, and it was the first time I noticed his dimples. I felt my cheeks flush as the moment we shared came to mind.

"I'm Aiden" he politely said. "I just brought her from the hospital."

"Ouu he's British" Maude nudged me. "And you cooked for her?"

She dramatically turned to me and whispered.

"He's a keeper."

Aiden's gaze was fixed on me the entire time and I couldn't help but feel embarrassed.

"See how y'all are looking at each other. I'm so jelly right now" she

teased. "Maudlin where are you?" another voice sounded from somewhere in the house.

She rolled her eyes.

"In the kitchen and my name's Maude not Maudlin!" she scolded, then mouthed to Aiden, "Sorry, annoying little brother."

Gregor walked in and dived straight my way to hug me. I smiled, then nudged him a little to get o when I saw Aiden's jaw flex.

No way.

My inner goddess did a cartwheel.

"Ooh, sorry did I interrupt something?" he asked when he noticed Aiden.

"Yes, we were having a nice conversation until you decided to show up and ruin it" Maude muttered loud enough for him to hear.

"No don't worry, I was just leaving," Aiden said. "I've got a lot more work to do at the o ice."

"But can't you stay for a little longer?" Maude pouted.

"No, he can't. I'll walk you to the door" I quickly interrupted before she succeeded in talking him into stay for tea or something.

He followed me out and I felt their eyes on us.

"I'm really sorry about my cousins, sir... Aiden" I corrected as he gave me a look. "This is going to take some getting used to."

I handed him his coat.

"Go finish your food. I'll send you some stu to work on. And I'll see

you when you get back."

"Are you free next Saturday?" I blurted out.

I cursed under my breath again.

"Next Saturday?" he asked, turning back.

"Um, well my sister's getting married. I just thought it'd be a good idea to thank you by inviting you."

What is wrong with you Breanna?!

"Well, this is by far your worst idea."

I suddenly felt cold.

"I know she's marrying your ex-husband. And you're inviting me? Why would youeven want to go? Why would anyone in their right

sense want to-"

He stopped. I nodded and backed out of the doorway.

"Sorry. Forget I asked. I'll make sure to finish whatever you send me before I get back. Thank you, sir."

I waited for him to move so I could close the door. He just stared at

me for a moment then nodded before walking to his car. I closed the door and turned.

"Well your friend's a big British jerk" Gregor hissed.

Maude nudged him.

"I'm sure he didn't mean that" she defended.

I shook my head.

"He's not my friend. He's my boss and yes, he is a big British jerk."

There's silence for about three minutes.

"But you've gotta admit, he's got a cute butt" Maude chuckled.

I playfully slapped her hand away from my breast as she attempted to poke it.

"He's still a jerk."

A big thank you for the wonderful birthday wishes!

Seventeen doesn't come easy to some people so I'm very grateful.

God bless you all!

Thanks so much for reading!