

The Billionaire's Twins Play Matchmaker Book One: Chapter 8



Macey set the kettle on the stove to boil. The villa was filled with Bach's Minuet in G. She glanced into the living room to see Aria quietly coloring while her brother played. This was a common activity for both. The scene was so relaxing she was able to forget the tension of the night before.

Macey knew returning was not going to be easy and she still wasn't certain how she was going to face Julius. She didn't know if she should count herself lucky she didn't see him at the party or not. On one hand it gave her more time but on the other sometimes it was better to get unpleasant tasks over with and be done.

Not surprisingly Augustus monopolized their time as soon as he saw them. His evident delight spending time with his grandchildren warmed her heart and eased her worries. Even if Julius didn't want anything to do with them at least Aria and Caden would know the love of their grandfather.

The kettle whistled and Macey removed it from the heat. She poured water into a mug and steeped her tea before adding a dollop of honey. Despite years of living in France she still preferred tea. Macey recalled Julius could never begin his day without a cup of coffee. Coffee was also the drink of choice at every French café. A few people she met since starting school scoffed when she ordered tea instead. It was her best friend Vicki who encouraged her saying: Drink what you want, eat what you want. It isn't anyone's business but yours.

Macey smiled. She could really use Vicki's confidence right now. Vicki was forever unapologetic. A fierce woman, she was not just her best friend but godmother and aunt to her children. Vicki was one of two people Macey met shortly after moving to Paris and enrolled at the Paris College of Art. But while Paul offered a shoulder to cry on, Vicki taught her how to stand on her own. If she hadn't met Vicki when she did Macey wasn't sure she would have been able to turn her life around.

A knock on the door interrupted her thoughts. Macey set down her tea and walked to the front door. Opening it she found herself enveloped in a bear hug. Macey stiffened then relaxed as the scent of roses enveloped her.

"Hi Rose."

"Six years and all you can say is hi Rose?" the older woman stepped back to study her. "I've missed you so much! I've been so worried! You just disappeared without a word! I wish you would have called me!"

Rose was a petite woman. She kept her brown hair short in a bob-cut. Her frame was thin and lacked obvious curves. Her complexion was always pale. Rose always had a weak constitution which made her marriage to such a prominent figure as March difficult. Yet March doted on her and when it was obvious they would only have one child he doted on her more.

In many ways Macey was jealous of her. She couldn't help but think how different her life might have been if Julius was more like his brother. But that wasn't fair, after all it had been Julius she fell in love with not March. She couldn't expect two very different people to act like the other.

"Rose...how did you..."

"March told me he saw you last night," Rose said, "why didn't you call me?"

"I'm sorry...I've only been in town for a day," Macey explained. So March had seen her last night which meant Julius had to know she was back but she didn't dare ask about him.

"...So is it true?" Rose was hesitant to ask but she had to know. March mentioned twins.

"Would you like to come in and meet them?" Macey held open the door instantly knowing what her sister-in-law referred to.

Hesitantly Rose followed her inside.

"Kids! We have a guest."

The constant sound of Bach ceased as Rose stepped inside. Making her way to the living room she saw Aria kneeling at the coffee table while Caden sat on the piano bench swinging his legs. Rose blinked. She was certain she heard piano playing but there was no way a five-year-old could be responsible for it. Perhaps it was a recording.

"Come here and say hello you two," Macey encouraged.

Aria stood and skipped forward to stand in front of the stranger. Caden was slower to comply. He studied their guest carefully one could almost see the wheels turning. In contrast to their party clothes their casual clothes were simple. Aria wore a black, long-sleeved shirt with rainbow sleeves matching her skirt. Caden wore a black t-shirt featuring the Batman symbol and jeans.

"This is your Aunt Rose," Macey introduced. "Rose...this is Aria and Caden."

Rose smiled not sure how to greet the niece and nephew she had never known. The kids resemblance to their parents was uncanny and no one could deny their parentage. She couldn't believe they were really standing in front of her. Would they let her hug them?

"Auntie?" Aria repeated. "Like Auntie Vicki?"

"No. Auntie Vicki is an auntie because she's my best friend," Macey explained. "Rose is your auntie because she's actually related to you."

"Oh. Auntie Rose can we give you a hug?"

"I would love a hug!" Rose knelt down.

Aria immediately threw her arms around her. Caden hesitated a moment before following his sister's example. Tears blurred Rose's vision. She could hardly believe she was holding her niece and nephew. Everything would be all right now that they were here. Now that Macey was back it would all be set right.

"Why don't you come in for a bit?" Macey offered. "I'll make you a cup of tea."

"Yeah, come on auntie," Aria exclaimed clutching Rose's hand and pulling her into the living room.

Rose willingly followed. She sat on the couch as the twins knelt around the coffee table to color. Surprisingly the books were not the usual children's coloring books. Instead they were meant for adults so the pictures were far more complicated and detailed. Even so the twins seemed quite content as they focused on coloring.

"Here you go," Macey set down a plate of cookies and handed Rose a mug before sitting down with her own.

They lapsed into uncomfortable silence. Macey wasn't sure where she should begin. She had gone to great lengths to avoid any news involving DaLair's or New York to focus on herself and the twins. Macey was the first to admit she was far removed from the gossip columns but she would be lying if the thought of reconnecting with Rose hadn't occurred to her.

As difficult as her marriage had been Rose was always a sweet and gentle confidant. Having gone through much of the same rumors when she first married March, Rose often gave her encouragement and advice when others ignored her. In the end Macey chose to run away and couldn't bring herself to face her sister-in-law who possessed the courage to stay.

Rose sat with hundreds of questions in her head. How had Macey been? Was the pregnancy difficult? Macey mentioned a friend so she hadn't been completely alone. Who was she? Were they close? March also mentioned Augustus had known so at least Macey had support. Why hadn't she called? Was she afraid Rose would tell Julius?

"So...how have you been?" Rose hesitantly asked.

"Good. I went back to school," Macey answered. "I finally got my degree."

"You did? That's fantastic!" Rose exclaimed. She remembered Macey often lamented never completing her education. "I'm so proud of you!"

Macey blushed. She missed her sister-in-law's unfettered encouragement. The conversation stalled as neither knew how much to ask or tell about the past. Rose looked again to her niece and nephew.

"Jude is not going to believe it when I tell him."

"Who's Jude?" Aria asked despite seemingly focused on her coloring she listened carefully to the adults.

"He's my son. That makes him your cousin."

"We have a cousin! Yeah! What does he look like?"

"Would you like to see a picture?"

"Yes!"

Rose chuckled as her enthusiasm as she brought out her phone. She flipped through the pictures finding one of Jude and March before showing the screen to Aria saying, "This is Jude and this is my husband, your uncle, March."

Aria held the phone fascinated by the images of their family. Then she handed the phone to her brother. Caden studied it carefully. One could almost see his wheels turning. The family resemblance was uncanny. It was good to know he would recognize his family immediately despite being so far removed from them for so long.

"By the way, how is Jude?" Macey asked.

"He's growing up. He's nineteen now, you know, and in college."

"Oh my god, that old now?" Macey chuckled. She still remembered him as a rather saucy thirteen-year-old always pushing his parents' buttons.

"Spring break was a couple weeks ago but when I tell him he has cousins he might just skip out to come back and see them."

"Auntie, why don't you take our picture?" Aria said giving her back her phone, "that way he can see us right away."

"Would that be okay?" Rose looked to Macey who smiled and nodded. Aria scooted closer to her brother as Rose raised her phone. While Aria smiled brightly Caden managed a grin but his green eyes betrayed his joy. Rose snapped the picture quickly before glancing at the time.

"Oh my! Is it that late?" Rose stood. "I should get going."

Macey showed her to the door disappointed they couldn't spend more time together but Rose was a successful real estate agent and socialite so she was bound to have a busy schedule. At the door Rose hesitated. She wanted to offer support should Macey need help with the twins but she wasn't sure Macey would accept it.

"Auntie! Auntie! Don't forget your pictures!" Aria suddenly came running with two colored pictures.

One depicted doves and flowers while the other was of a branch of roses in various stages of growth from bud to bloom. Each was signed in bold crayon: To Auntie Rose, Love Aria and Love Caden. Tears threatened to fall as she accepted the pictures. To her surprise the pictures were neatly colored and kept within the lines but Rose was too emotional to truly register it.

"Macey...if you ever need help or...a babysitter, anything...please call me," Rose finally said what she really wanted to say. "Here's my phone number."

They traded phone numbers before Rose hurried off. Macey watched her go with a mixture of emotions. There was much about her old life she missed but there were also things she didn't. She wasn't sure how to balance the difference.