

Chapter Three

As he reached the bed she reclined back placing her foot on his chest to hold him back. She smiled at his confusion, "Now, now. You don't think all of that was for free do you? I expect reciprocity. Shall we get started with lesson one?"

Her newly acquired student was eager to please following her instructions as if there was nothing else in the world but them. She could still feel his feather-light touch, the tickle of his scruff as he went down on her. God, she loved every minute of it. Even his occasional premature ejaculations during their lessons only made her love his attempts to please her more.

They eventually fell asleep thoroughly exhausted. Aubrey woke late the next morning lying on his chest. Glancing at the clock and seeing it was already ten she cursed. Her night was at noon and she still had to pack, check out of her hotel room and retrieve her paintings. Dressing quickly she dashed for the door desperately calling Ruth for a ride to her hotel and the airport and for Sarah to pick up her paintings.

She made it with five minutes to spare. Throwing hugs around Ruth and Sarah she darted for her plane and sunk gratefully into her seat. As the plane taxied out she suddenly realized she didn't even know his name.

Aubrey returned home and everything went back to normal until about a month later when she started feeling nauseous. It was hard to keep anything down and even the smell of food she used to love made her sick. She begged Ya-Ya for something for the u but her aunt refused.

"It's not the u."

"How do you know? I was in New York. I might have caught a bug."

"Oh, you caught something all right," Ya-Ya smiled stepping close and placing a hand over her stomach. "He's going to be a strong one."

Aubrey dropped the coffee cup in her hand staring at her aunt. Neither paid attention to the shattered cup as she placed her own hand over her stomach.

"That's not funny, Ya-Ya. You know it's impossible."

"Says who? That discount doctor with a messiah complex?" Ya-Ya scoffed. "Maybe it's time to get a second opinion."

Aubrey was careful not to get her hopes up as she scheduled an appointment with a doctor her aunt suggested. She was a nervous wreck as she waited for the results. Her doctor was careful to keep a neutral expression as she delivered the final verdict.

Pregnant.

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Aubrey cooed as she put on the fresh diaper before picking up her precious miracle. She had given up all hope of having one but here he was in her arms. Her precious boy. Settling in the rocking chair she pulled up her shirt and marveled as he latched on and contentedly nursed. She would never get tired of this, this perfect moment.

After he finished nursing Aubrey carried him downstairs where she could already smell Ya-Ya's Eggs Pontchartrain: English muns topped with bacon and oysters alongside poached eggs. Reaching the kitchen she heard her aunt humming away quite content. It seemed their little home was nally complete with the addition of her precious baby.

"Morning, mon kè," Ya-Ya greeted without turning.

Somehow Ya-Ya always knew when she was there no matter how quiet Aubrey was. Yet for some reason she always tried to be sneaky. It was a game they had played since she was little.

"Morning," Aubrey smiled. "It sure smells good in here."

"Oh, let me see my precious baby," Ya-Ya gushed plating their breakfast and setting it on the table. Aubrey handed over the one-month-old and sat down to eat. Ya-Ya cooed to the baby like a mother hen. Their quiet family breakfast was interrupted by the phone.

Aubrey stood and retrieved the phone from its cradle. Ya-Ya refused to get a cell phone and still relied on a landline. She glanced at the caller ID before answering, "Hello, Sarebear, what's up? Sarah? What's wrong?"

Ya-Ya glanced up from her precious grand-nephew as Aubrey frowned listening to the voice at the other end.

"Don't be ridiculous! Of course you can come!" Aubrey suddenly said. "Our door is always open and your room ready. Get your butt down here on the next flight, got it? See you soon."

Aubrey shook her head as she set the phone down and returned to her seat.

"Something wrong?" Ya-Ya asked.

"Sarah's getting a divorce. I guess her dead-beat husband nally pushed her too far."

Ya-Ya pressed her lips together in a thin line.

"She said she had to get out of New York for a while and wanted to know if she could stay here."

"That's a silly question. Of course she can."

"That's what I told her."

"When is she coming?"

"Tonight if she can nalyze everything with her lawyer," Aubrey said. "Tomorrow at the latest."

"Good," Ya-Ya smiled at her precious nephew. "We'll show your auntie the meaning of the term Southern Comfort. And you do your part too. She'll need you most of all."

* * *

Sarah sank into a very uncomfortable airport bench. She had come with nothing; no baggage, nothing but her attaché with her laptop, phone and wallet. Leaning forward she struggled not to cry at the reality of what she had done.

"Sarah!"

She looked up to see Aubrey rushing toward her. Standing Sarah was immediately enveloped in a hug. That was it. The tears she struggled to contain fell like rain as she clung to the familiar presence.

"That's right, let it out," Aubrey intoned. "Let it all out."

It was several minutes before Sarah was able to compose herself. Aubrey offered a handkerchief Ya-Ya insisted she bring and waited for Sarah to calm herself.

"Thank you," Sarah nally said. "For taking me in at such short notice."

"You call this short notice?" Aubrey scoffed.

Sarah chuckled.

"Should we hit baggage claim?"

"No, this is all I brought," Sarah shook her head indicating the bag hanging from her shoulder.

"Okay. Tomorrow we shop. Tonight we drown our sorrows in gumbo. Ya-Ya made a big pot. Come on," Aubrey wrapped an arm around her shoulder and escorted her outside to the waiting station wagon old enough to have fake wood paneling on the doors. It wasn't much to look at but it got her from A to B with enough cargo space to haul her art supplies and canvases.

Sarah gratefully settled in the passenger seat as Aubrey started up the vehicle and pulled away. When she left New York it was still rather chilly and wet but in New Orleans the temperature was comfortable. Aubrey tried to get a conversation going but Sarah barely managed yes or no to most questions. Finally she dropped her attempts to let Sarah nap the rest of the drive.

Pulling into the driveway Aubrey gently shook her awake and ushered her into the house. When they stepped inside they were assailed with the delish smells of roux, sausage, shrimp, okra and peppers as well as fresh rolls. When she first arrived Sarah was ready to head upstairs and bury herself in blankets but her stomach suddenly complained about its empty state.

Aubrey chuckled and directed her to the kitchen. There they found Ya-Ya putting the finishing touches on their meal with a tossed salad and bread rolls while the main course simmered.

"Jeez, Ya-Ya. I said Sarah was coming...not an army," Aubrey scoffed.

"Oh hush," Ya-Ya waved off her concern before engulfing Sarah in a welcoming hug. "Oh sweetie, you've gotten so thin! We'll fix that right enough. Come on. Sit. Eat."

Ya-Ya sat her down in a chair and hurried to the stove to ladle out the thick stew adding a scoop of rice before setting the bowl in front of her. On the table in a baby seat the one-month-old began to fuss. Aubrey picked him up cuddling her baby. Turning she saw Sarah watching her with a longing expression.

"You haven't met properly, have you?" Aubrey said bringing the baby to her and offering Sarah the precious bundle.

Sarah cradled the baby close marveling at his small hands.

"Sarah, say hello to your nephew Jameson Legare. Jamie this is your Auntie Sarah," Aubrey introduced as the first genuine smile since her arrival graced Sarah's face.

"Hello Jamie. Aren't you a handsome little man?"