

Willow pov

“Where is he?” Willow demanded as she walked into her husbands old precinct the next day. She had to let her anger simmer the phone call simmer for a whole night.

Willow was unable to sleep as realization settled in and fury taken its place as the night had wore on. Willow dropped of the kids at school and she had to call in a half a days work to deal with this confrontation. Which pissed her off as she was blowing through her PTO like no one’s business this year.

“Mrs. Walker I don’t think now is a good time-” she blew past the officer sitting at the front desk who frantically tried to stop her. She had no time for the bull as she had worked herself into a fine mood. Willow had never been this furious in her life. Not even when she found out that she had taken a

bullet in the arm for that dumb-dumb Chris last year. The only thing that stopped a confrontation such as this was Tate. Well Tate was gone now. She knew that fool had gotten him killed.

Willow walked in to the bullpen as Tate had always called it and started yelling,

“Ryan McIntyre!” She screamed his name over and over again until he finally came out with several other men of brass. It looked like she interrupted a meeting. Good. She had a bone to pick with them too.

“What is the meaning of this?” A balding man with jowls demanded.

“Ryan McIntyre you want to explain to the top brass why you gave out my information illegally?” She demanded furiously.

“That’s a serious allegation that you can’t be thrown around lightly ma’am,” another one stated. He was younger, but by the haughty look on his face just as arrogant.

“Who are you?” A third one asked. “And how dare you come accusing this captain of such accusations that I’m sure are baseless.” The nerve of this man, of them all.

“Who am I Ryan?” Willow asked her fury growing. He had the decency to look ashamed.

“Who am I?” She looked at them and didn’t see recognition in their eyes. “I’m Tate Walker’s widow is who I am. Good to know none of you made it to his funeral,” Willow hissed at them. They looked at each other, well at least they knew his name. “Everyone also seems to forget that I am the daughter and niece of lawyers. What you did was illegal Ryan.” It was time to unleash her rage.

“But-” Mr. Jowls tried interrupting and Willow wasn’t having it. She put her hand up to stop his rebuttal.

“Oh no buts, my lawyer will be reaching out to you soon.”

“Lawyers,” one said causing the rest to laugh. All but Ryan and Willow looked at him in the eye. “Our lawyers will eat your pathetic lawyer for breakfast.” The laughter continued and Willow kept her smug smile, it seemed they truly had no idea who she was.

“Want to tell them who my lawyer and uncle is Ryan?”

Willow smirked as he stayed silent. Ryan had been in their home many times and met her uncle.

“No? Come on Ryan, you were so chatty to the woman who ruined my life,” she continued to taunt him:

“Fine, woman who is this all important lawyer?” Jowls asked clearly tired of the woman in front of him.

“My lawyer and uncle is James Cunningham,” Willow pulled out their last family picture when Tate was alive. The smug smile soon dropped. “If I remember he was a huge benefactor of your police department. I’d imagine it was due to his nephew being a detective. Wouldn’t you say Ryan?” Willow asked with a smirk. The smile disappeared

“Wait are you threatening us?” The one in the back asked.

“I thought I was being obvious about it, or were you never in the police department?” Her smile was triumphant.

“That’s illegal!” The arrogant one burst out with.

So is giving out classified information on detectives families, but Ryan did so against my wishes. I will be filing suit against this department and I’m sure my uncle upon

hearing about my harassment will pull his funding.”

“I highly doubt that, we’ve been friends for years,” Jowls continued

“I don’t,” a voice made of steel sounded and Willow felt relief at hearing her uncle’s voice. She didn’t know how he knew she was here, but Willow would have to find out later.

I will cancel the check I just sent last last week as with the pending lawsuit any donations would be a conflict of interest, isn’t that right police chief?” James asked with steel in his tone.

“Now James-” Jowls started.

“It’s Mr. Cunningham, I let the slight of you not showing up to my nephews funeral go, but not this. You should know my reputation better, come Willow.” Her uncle’s posture didn’t waver, she turned back around eyeing the men who initially looked down upon her

when she first walked into this room. Her eyes honed in on Ryan and she leaned forward.

“I told you to leave me alone in my grief Ryan, now you will never move up to the top brass,” she whispered to Ryan, which is the true reason the man had been so incessant for the press article. “Also uncle I want to look into Tate’s old partner,” Willow indicated to her uncle as she walked to his side.

“I will put in a call to internal affairs, it’s all I can do on that front,” her uncle told her as they walked out on the precinct that once held great memories. Now it was tainted. The two of them walked outside and she looked up to her uncle.

“How did you know where I was?” She asked him as she felt the adrenaline from the confrontation wearing off. She was worried she might have a panic attack, she never handled a confrontation well.

“Aspen called me and told me she was worried about you.

You apparently were angry this morning, but not at the kids.

“Willow nodded and reflected on her behavior this morning, she was definitely out of character this morning as her anger had consumed her:

“That girl is smart as a whip.”

“Like her mother,” her uncle commented and she shook her head.

“No, she got all of that from her father.”

“Let’s hope that’s all she got from him, eh?”  
Her uncle said wryly and she couldn’t help but agree. Willow nodded in agreement.

“So can you really file a suit on them?”  
Willow asked.



“You bet your ass I can, it was illegal what he did. You know that.” Willow nodded, she did know that.

“Let me take care of everything.” Her uncle kissed her on the forehead and smiled at her. “Now do you need me to take you home or are you okay to drive?”

“I’m okay to drive.” Willow practiced her breathing treatments and headed into work. She gave no more thought on how her uncle knew where she was. Willow didn’t care, all that mattered was she was taken care of.

Memphis pov

Life the past few months had been good for him and his son. His father visited on the weekends, Jackson was in therapy every week. The report from the therapist said his son was improving by leaps and bounds. The only thing missing was Willow. He saw her often, but only to drop off Jackson on the weekends. She waved to him offhandedly

when he initiated contact. Willow was so deep in her grief that she didn't notice him at all.

Memphis had no idea what to do. He wanted to respect her grieving process, but he didn't want to miss his chance. He had thought the baseball game would have opened a door for him, but it did nothing. Yes the seven of them looked and talked like a family for a few hours, but that was it.

Willow left after laughing and chatting with him and never spoke to him again.

He was currently staring at his phone debating sending a text.

Me: hey Willow, I know Aiden wanted to tour the field and this weekend would be a good time.

Memphis had stared at his phone for the past fifteen minutes. Send it? delete it? Nothing ever came from waiting, he hit the send button and held his breath.

## Aspen pov

Everything was different now. Since that day. She remembered that day well as her mother fell to the floor in agony as her uncle Ryan showed up to the door instead of her father. Her and her siblings watched on from the kitchen, She was doing her homework waiting for her father to come home and help her with her math homework. Mom knew nothing about math.

Then the funeral happened and it was awful. Everyone was crying and she just kept her face in her dad's chest, that kept people away from her. Aspen saw her real father for the first time in a long time. She couldn't believe he was there.

Aspen didn't tell her mother that things at her fathers house had been awful for a long time. She had always loved going over to her dad's house. It didn't matter if he took her to

museums, out for ice cream, or just sat watching movies; the two of them had a great time together. It was nice to get the attention solely on her. Her mom always made sure to spend time with her, but as the oldest she had to set the example. When she went to her dad's house it was just the two of them: it was nice and quiet. She loved her dad so much.

Then she came into the picture. Roxanne. Aspen knew her dad had dated, but he never introduced her to anyone.

Roxanne was the first and Aspen knew the woman was here to stay. While first the three of them did things together, subtly that changed. The movie nights happened less often, Aspen spent more time alone in her room. Her father spent more time with Roxanne and less time with her. Her weekends with her father happened less often in exchange for date nights with

Roxanne. Then Roxanne announced the marriage and soon after the pregnancy.

That changed everything, her new sibling and she hated how she felt toward Lola. Lola took all her father's attention from her. Her mom and bonus dad told her to be patient, that this was a transition period for her father. It wasn't. He left and never came back after introducing Aspen to Lola in the hospital. She became so angry.

She started lashing out at her father, the man Aspen knew was her real father now that he was gone. Aspen looked at the photo that was canvassed over the fireplace on the den.

She had a 5×7 in her room that she stared at often thinking of the awful words she hurled at her dad the last year.

Hate you

You are not my real father

I wish my mom never met you.

Aspen cried thinking of the way she acted toward her father and the fact that she can't take those actions back. Regret was all she felt. She wished she could tell her father she was wrong and that she loved him.

Therapy isn't everything people make it out to be. There isn't a cure all like adults tell you. It's just sitting down on a bit uncomfortable couch where an adult tells you all the feelings you have are totally normal. How does that help her now? How does that stop the tears at night? Hers, her brothers or sisters? Her mothers?

She didn't know what what worse, the fact that her father died or her mother. Her eyes that were filled with so much love and happiness were just dead now. While most days her mother wore the mask that everything was perfectly fine without their dad, that mask slipped often. Aspen would often see her mother wipe tears from her

eyes or have a faraway look in them. She knew the her mom was missing dad. Aspen could hear her mom cry in her room often. She didn't know what to do. All the adults in her life say time will help, but Aspen doesn't understand how that can be true. Her dad will always be gone.

“Aspen you have a visitor!” Her mothers voice called and she quickly rushed down the stairs as she expected to see Zoe waiting for her. The two of them planned to go to the park today. Zoe was a few years older than her, but they remained good friends after Aspen was moved to the gifted school several miles away. Aspen when she was seven at the urging of her first grade teacher urged her parents to take an IQ test and it was off the charts. The school wanted her to skip two grades and her mother refused, saying that it was best for her to stay with her peers. Her parents eventually found a school for gifted children that accepted her after she tested in.

She walked down the stairs and Aspen was brought up short by the sight of her father holding whom she could only guess was Lola in his arms. She hadn't seen her sister since she was a newborn baby, Roxanne didn't let her around Lola.

"Hey Pen!" Her father smiled while rocking the baby. "I tried calling you!"

"Yeah I haven't been answering," she responded flatly and her fathers face fell.

"Well, your dad wanted to take the two of his favorite girls out," her mom tried to diffuse the situation,

"Where?" She asked flatly.

"The zoo! Lola's never been before, I thought it would be good if you tagged along," her father added her as an afterthought. She was also angry as going to the zoo was her dads thing. She did not want to go to the zoo with a crying baby!



“No thanks,” she responded bitterly and walked out of the room.

“Pen! Wait!” Her father called but she was not going to be manipulated into going by her father or her mother. She left the living room and stomped up the stairs but stopped halfway up the stairs. Aspen wanted to eavesdrop on her parents conversation.

“Jesus Knox are you serious?” Her mother yelled at her father.

“What did I do now?” Her father yelled back. Lola apparently didn’t like it and started to cry. When she settled down her mother spoke again,

“After all of these years you are still so damn clueless. You invited our daughter as an afterthought. Knox you wonder why you are on your second divorce.” Her mother stated and Aspen was surprised, she didn’t know Roxanne was gone.

“She cheated on me!”

“Yeah and you cheated on me!” Cheat? What is that?

Aspen was going to have to look it up.

“You know what, I’m done with this. It’s time to go back to court.” Aspen didn’t listen to anymore, she couldn’t hear her parents argue anymore and fled her room to cry. It seems that’s all this household does anymore is cry.

Knox pov

s\*\*t! He really was an imbecile. Knox drove back to his house foregoing the zoo as he just couldn’t make the trip without his daughter. He looked through the rear view mirror at Lola’s car seat and hated that she was being let down, but the good news is that Lola wouldn’t remember.

Aspen would. She would remember what he said today.

He didn't know why he said that. Knox planned the trip for both of his girls. Knox had finally gotten the papers that Lola was his and his alone. Roxanne forgone all custody of their daughter. Knox was beyond thrilled. He wanted to celebrate and now he finally had the chance to. He tried to call Aspen over the past few weeks but his phone calls has been ignored. Knox assumed that Willow had taken her phone away as this had been a punishment for his daughter in the past. He had argued with Willow over this as he bought Aspen the cellphone as a way she could always call him and vice versa.

Knox was taken aback by the anger and apathy in his daughters eyes when she walked through the door. Aspen had always been happy to see him in the past. His daughter had gotten him through a lot of tough times in his life. Knowing that Aspen was watching him helped him to be a better

man, though it seemed that he had failed this past year.

Then Aspen told him point blank she didn't want to see him or be around him. That hurt like hell.

Willow was right as always, he hadn't seen his daughter but once this year. She probably hated him. He would hate his father too if the situation was reversed.

Walking into his house Knox couldn't help but feel defeated. Lola had fallen asleep in the car and he wanted to cry. Now she was going to be up all night. Knox finally understood why when he would bring Aspen back to Willow's asleep and full of sugar that she was upset.

Willow had to deal with him wanting to be a fun dad. He just wanted to be a fun dad so his daughter wouldn't forget him. It seemed that he did a fine job of that all on his own.

Knox walked up the stairs to Lola's room as she was still out like a light. His baby was getting big, he thought with a smile. Just like a different baby was almost a young lady

God he hoped Willow wasn't serious about going back to court. Knox didn't think he could afford it. He just signed a check for twenty thousand for his divorce lawyer, and going up against James Cunningham was a death sentence. He wasn't a total moron he knew the odds were stacked against him. The original custody agreement was set that Willow had full custody and rights over Aspen.

Knox never challenged it due to the fact that despite the agreement Willow let him see their daughter pretty much whenever he wanted. Which ended up being most weekends. He paid his child support and everything was good, until he met Roxanne. While Knox tried to date before Roxanne most didn't stick around when they found

out he cheated on his pregnant wife. The next thing he knew Lola was a baby and Roxanne didn't want anything to do with taking care of her. Knox was always on weekend duty with Lola. He wanted to spend time with Aspen, but it always next weekend.

Knox couldn't believe he was so dumb, he knew he was a fuckup. The one thing he always got right was his daughter. He had to figure out a way to fix this before his daughter hated him forever.

He placed Lola in her crib and walked away.

[My Husband Cheated with My Bully \(Book 2\) Chapter 13](#)

Willow pov

God she didn't want to do this, but she had to protect her daughter. Willow finally sat alone after getting the kids tucked in to bed and went to the balcony in her bedroom room. Tate could always find her here after a long day reading a romance novel. She had

been a helpless romantic, he made her believe in love again.

Willow grabbed Tate's field jacket and went outside to sit on her favorite wicker chair. She had left the door open just in case one of the kids woke up in the middle of the night.

Arianna had been having nightmares the past few weeks.

"Am I doing the right thing Tate?" Willow asked out loud.

She wrapped her husband's jacket tighter around her and breathed in deeply. His smell was fading from the jacket and that made her tear up a little.

"I'm just full of so much anger, I don't think you would recognize me anymore Tate." She sat and thought over everything that happened the last few days. Honestly Willow just wanted to make it all go away. Life didn't work that way, though did it? If it did then Tate would be alive.

She thought about the conversation she had with her uncle right after her fight with Knox. She was fired up and ready to take that man for all he was worth. While Uncle James had been angry as well, he of course had been the voice of reason. Uncle James has been wanting to take Knox to court at least once a month these past three years.

Her uncle asked her if this was about vengeance and Willow thought about her uncle's question for days. No this wasn't about vengeance, it was about her not being a pushover any longer. Willow thought back to the confrontation in her living room and it was also ultimately the best decision for Aspen.

While she had sole custody and decision making power for Aspen Willow had been flexible as she thought it would be in her daughters best interest to have a decent relationship with Knox. That just wasn't the case anymore, Knox was not interested in



being a father when things got tough. That was always his problem, any time there was a problem Knox would flinch. He would pull away, Knox couldn't handle the tough complications in life.

Knox was used to every one of Aspen's problems being solved by a trip to the ice cream shop. Hell he didn't even know that she got her period last month. Knox didn't have to deal with that, let alone the fact that after their fight Aspen came up to her wanting to know what cheating was.

Willow froze, she had no idea that Aspen had heard the fight let alone how to respond to why their marriage broke down.

She was saved when Aiden came up and said 'cheating is when some one else does your homework!'

Aspen knew that wasn't that answer but didn't press it further.

Aiden continued to pester her for the tour of the ball field where Memphis worked.

Memphis and Jackson messaged her with various dates that worked for them.

Everyone was excited except for her as life was so chaotic at the moment.

Willow didn't really want to go, but as Tate's mini-me looked up at her with pleading eyes she couldn't deny him. Aiden also was a very good kid and was her no muss no fuss child. Willow always had to make sure to carve out extra time for him otherwise he would be content to be content in his room with his video games alone. The girls won't let Willow ignore them, the two of them are always in her lap.

She has to make sure and give Aiden that one on one time.

This weekend will be that time for her son.

Arianna is still struggling to understand with death means and is in therapy, along with

everyone else in hopes of explaining what death means to a five year old.

A car door slamming jolted her out of her thoughts. She turned to see Isiah get out of his work truck. He saw her on the balcony and gave her a small wave, one she returned.

Isiah was going to be starting on the house remodel next week. She really didn't need two lawsuits on top of that.

One quick look at the estimate and Willow knew Isiah gave her a hell of a deal.

It was a huge project as all the kids told her that they wanted new bedrooms too. Willow didn't have the heart to tell her babies 'no.' She knew that with Tate's insurance policy payout there should be enough money left over to cover the kids new rooms.

When she asked Isiah about the quotes low price, he told her it was a thank you. Willow was confused as to what he meant. Isiah credited her to saving the remodel job for

him on her uncles mansion almost ten years ago. Willow didn't view it that way, but he did and that job gained him many more. Tate also would work for him when Isiah's crew was low and sometimes due to his job was able to refer men to Isiah's company.

Willow sat on the balcony for another hour before deciding that she had to do what was best for her children. The road wasn't going to be easy, but it was the one she needed to walk. She also had to take Aspen's phone and replace it with one of her own. Knox calling her for the foreseeable future was not going to be happening. The same with fighting where the kids could hear.

She stood up to go call her uncle when she remembered the date. Today was the only personal day that her uncle ever took. James Cunningham vacationed all over the world, but on this date in particular he was unavailable to the world. Willow had her suspicions on what her uncle did, but she

never pried into her uncle's day. September eighteenth.

James pov

September eighteenth was always a day that was filled with pain. This day James spent alone and had for the past twenty-nine years. The anniversary of his brothers death and he spent it at his graveside. The important people in his life knew that he spent this sole day of the year alone and that he was not to be disturbed. Today was private to him and him alone.

While his children knew that he went off grid and was totally unreachable today, no one in his life knew why. The pain, resentment, and responsibility he felt still roiled within him. James knew the survivors guilt would always be his constant companion throughout this life. He had come to accept these emotions during his lifetime.

On this day James would fly out to Arlington Cemetery and visit his brother. Alone. James didn't bring flowers, he brought Jake's favorite beer. Nattie Light. Horse Piss. That's what he called it, but Jake loved it. He cracked a smile as he put it on his headstone. James stood watching the sun rise upon the hill as the memories and familiar feelings run through him like a wave beating down on him.

While the cemetery doesn't legally open until ten, he's James Cunningham. He paid a fortune to be allowed in whenever he wanted. The only day he used that privilege was today.

James heard the stirring of people and knew the cemetery was open. Suddenly he clicks his heels together, standing at attention before raising his hand to his forehead in a sharp military salute. His goodbye to his brother.

James spends his entire day at Arlington Cemetery and spends it walking the grounds. The years he spent walking these hills after twenty plus years James felt he knew the graves and people in the ground better than most

While the tomb of the unknown soldier which first held a soldier from WW1 was a favorite site or JFK's eternal flame that isn't where James would find himself. James would often find himself at headstones such as Matt Urban.

Lieutenant Colonel Urban was one of his favorites, other than his brother of course. The man was a legend, which is why he is still thought of as one of the most decorated soldiers in WW2. The man had a Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart, and the Congressional Medal of Honor. That man was tough as nails. James often found himself in front of Urban's grave and several others just like him. This is how he spent his

day, remembering the lives of men who gave their life for our freedom.

James walked back to his brothers grave and spent another hour there before the clawing of hunger became too much for him to ignore. It was then when he finally started to talk to his brother.

“I am still keeping my promise brother, I am watching over your little girl. This year-” he broke off thinking of all the pain Willow is going through. “This year is hard for her and her child. She married a man like us as I’ve mentioned. He was taken from her brutally and I honestly don’t know if she will ever be the sweet little gin that reminds me of you so much Jake.” He paused for moment before starting again, “Arianna is.”

Battle Instinct never went away and he knew the second some one walked within one hundred feet of him. James’s head whipped around and the women he hadn’t seen face to face in ten years stood before him.



“What are you doing here? Today of all places?” James asked Julie Steele. He was furious, how dare this women sully Jake’s grave.

“I came to mourn my daughter’s father, the same as you,” she said meekly and his anger simply built at that response.

“How dare you! You never publicly acknowledged my brother as Willow’s father. Now you have the nerve to tell me this? What do you have to gain?” James wanted to know.

“I never meant for any of this to happen”” Julie pleaded in a small voice and for the first time since she appeared in front of him James truly looks at Julie. Julie looked haggard. There was no other word for it, she had aged horribly. He was happy for it.

“Well it did,” he continued ruthlessly as James didn’t care how Julie was faring as his brother was dead due to her careless actions.

I 'm sorry-"

\*You promised him you would divorce that prick Steele and raise Willow together!" He shouted revealing to Julie what he had known all along

"You knew?" She seemed shocked as her face indicated by her mouth hanging open.

"Of course I knew, how else do you think I knew Willow was my niece." How clueless was this woman? Why else would he despise her.

"W-w-hat do you know?"

"I have all of his letters. I know you wrote him telling him of your pregnancy and your lies of a happily ever after. Then you had the damn nerve to write him that damn Dear John letter." Julie started to cry, but he continued. "I read every word. I thought Diane was heartless, that was some real ice Queen material. I particularly enjoyed the part where he didn't have to worry about

Willow having a father figure as you found her one. Oh I would have fought and got my brother his rights, but then he died didn't he?" Julie was full on sobbing now.

"My brother died, according to his platoon leader right after receiving a letter from home, he was angry and erratic on patrol. So yes I know everything. I also have always blamed you." James walked to the sobbing woman and leaned in, "I have also played the long game and I am finally able to admit I find it extremely satisfying to see you now. Here. Updated by [Jobnib.com](http://Jobnib.com).

Alone. While I am happy with my family. This end is no more than you deserve for your callous behavior." James walked away, upset that he couldn't finish his talk with his brother. Though he was unwilling to continue being in that woman's presence any longer. He had a family to get back to.

## Willow pov

Laughter. It was nice to hear her sons laughter after such a long time. The house had been deprived of such laughter that Willow was hearing now. Peals of laughter poured out of her son as he stomped around the baseball field with Jackson. She watched on with a smile on her face. The sight lifted her heart in a way nothing had in the past eight months. Her children's laughter was everything.

This past week has been nothing but chaos. Especially since Isiah started remodeling the house. While it was a big project she only allowed Isiah, Darius, and his family that worked with him in her home. Willow was always fiercely protective of her children, only allowing a selective few to watch her children. In the aftermath of Tate's death she was even more protective of them. She couldn't help her instincts especially without

the man she had always relied on for protection.

Thankfully Isiah understood her feelings and was willing to put up with her crazy demands. Willow had asked for her room as well as the living room to be remodeled first. The living room primarily due to the fact that it still had some holes from her tantrum on Tates funeral. Isiah seemed to understand the desire to have her room redone and immediately set to work. Willow didn't have many requirements for the remodel, other than she wanted a new interior and new furniture.

Willow as a result was now sleeping with Arianna in her room and parts of the house was covered in plastic. She didn't mind all that much, it isn't like Willow had a full night sleep in the past eight months. Ari kicked in her sleep and rolled around something awful. It was just another thing that kept her up at night.

“Hey mom! Watch me!” Her son Aiden yelled pulling her out of her thoughts. Her son screamed as he started running around the bases. Aiden had a blast at the tour of the ballpark. Memphis took him in the training room, weight room, the bullpen, and all other rooms that Willow didn’t know the names of. She just followed along as Aiden asked Memphis a million questions.

Memphis answered them all with a patient smile. Tate was the same with their kids. Aiden always had an endless supply of questions when it came to sports and his job. Aiden was definitely his fathers son, he loved going down to the precinct and play detective with his dad. Arianna would often tag along and have a blast playing the bad guy. Her heart hurt just thinking about it.

“Hey mom can we go eat with Jackson and uncle

Memphis?” Aiden asked with innocence. She pulled out her phone and realized it was almost four in the afternoon.

Willow wasn't sure what to say as she had plans to eat, but alone with her son after the tour was over. Uncle James had the girls and was going to do a spa day with the girls.

It was Mom and Aiden day today. “Come on mom I really want to go with them! It sounds fun!” Aiden asked again cutting off her plans to tactfully answer negative. Willow fought off a groan at the upcoming awkward dinner with a man she hadn't talked to in ten years and plastered a smile on her face

“All right,” she responded with a smile as three pairs of eyes stare expectedly at her.

“Yes!!! Let's go! I'm starving!” Aiden yells out and then runs in her direction. Aiden plows into her and causes her to stumble back.

“Careful,” Memphis voice comes from behind her while steadying her. Where did he come from? Memphis was standing fifty feet away from her a minute ago. Willow quickly pulled away, his touch feeling wrong. Willow tried to shrug off the encounter and focus on her son.

“Let’s go get something to eat!” She yelled out trying to divert attention.

Memphis pov

Today was a good day! He got to spend time with both his son and Aiden. Aiden was a great kid and Willow was raising her son amazingly. Memphis sat across from Willow and couldn’t lie about the fact that spending time with her was the best part of today.

“What can I get you to eat today?” The waitress asked.

When the Hayes moved here eight months ago Memphis planned to try every restaurant in town. That changed when he found this



diner. The food was amazing, great price, and good service. The two of them found this place six months ago and come here at least once a week.

He ordered the rodeo burger with a chocolate milkshake.

Jackson ordered the volcano burger, strawberry shake, and extra fries.

“I swear son you are going to bankrupt me,” he whispered as Willow ordered her food. Jackson laughed and leaned back in his seat. The past few months Jackson had been happy, especially after enrolling in an art and writing class.

In short his son was flourishing

Jackson came to him screaming in joy that Artie was willing to write him. Memphis put in a few rules in place, mainly that he had the write to monitor his correspondence at any time due to what Jackson had done in the past. His son agreed and Memphis called

Artie's mom to inform her of what was occurring between the boys. She knew and seemed okay with it.

"So tell me more about this writing class" Willow asked after the waitress took their order. Jackson smiled and started to tell in detail about what he was learning in class.

"I love it so much aunt Willow." Willow smiled at his son while throwing an arm around hers. She was such an amazing mother.

"I'm so happy to hear that. You will have to give me some of your works to look over. You never know; you might be the next Mark Twain." His son blushed, and Memphis nudged his shoulder. Jackson knew Willow's offering to read his works was a huge advantage. Willow also had moved up in her company and read manuscripts only on rare occasions. Memphis turned to Aiden, who was sitting quietly for the first time that day.

“Did you enjoy your tour little man?” He asked and Aiden’s face broke out into a huge grin. Memphis saw Willow smiling down at her son.

“It was awesome!” The table erupted into laughter at his response.

“What was your favorite part?” Willow asked her son.

“Running the bases,” his answer was immediate. “I can’t wait to tell my friends!” Everyone laughed at that comment.

The food came and it looked amazing! Memphis thanked the waitress and began to dig into to his food. The rest of the meal went in general silence as everyone was focused on eating their food. When the meal was concluded Memphis paid the full bill, despite Willow arguing to pay for her own. The waitress was clearing away the plates when an idea came to him.

“Hey why don’t we go bowling or something,” he offered not wanting the day to end.

“Yeah!” The boys agreed right away.

“I’m sorry Aiden, but we have to get back to your sisters,” Willow responded and everyone’s spirit dropped a little.

“Hey it’s okay guys, we can go bowling another time.” Memphis promised the boys and Willow nodded,

“Yeah another time with the girls.” Jackson offered

“No! Ari is awful at bowling, do we have to take her with us?” Aiden asked and while he wanted to smile Willow’s glower froze him on the spot.

“Aiden Walker! That is a horrible thing to say about your sister. She’s also only five years old and we go bowling once a year. Of course she’s not going to be good at bowling,

it takes practice.” Willow scolded her son and Aiden looked down in shame. Memphis rightfully kept out of it.

“Sorry mom,” Aiden mumbled and then Willow leaned down to murmur something in his ear before kissing her son on the head. Aiden smiled seemingly happy and the issue settled.

The drive home was a bit awkward after that, but Memphis didn’t let it bother him. When he arrived at Willow’s house she spoke up.

“Hey Jackson I think you left some of your swim shorts here, they are in Aiden’s room.” Willow told him and he responded

“I’ll go get them.” The kids left his SUV, but Willow stayed and he was confused. Then she started talking.

“Look Memphis I know what you are doing and have for awhile now, Willow started. He tried to interrupt but she put up her hand. “I

tried to be tactful about the situation, but it seems that it will take a more direct approach. Memphis, I'm not sure I will ever be interested in some one else. Tate was my everything and even if I was..I'm not sure I would want to try and start anything with you." Willow told him bluntly and he could only respond with one word

"Why?" He asked as he was hurt.

"Are you serious?" She puffed out. "You slept with me promising me that we could still be friends when I desperately needed a friend and then changed your mind.

Then you ghosted me, hell Memphis I haven't seen or spoken to you in ten years. Now you act like nothing has ever changed." Willow told him hotly and he realized that he once again screwed up.

"You are right, I'm an ass. I was wrong for what I did and by the time I realized my mistake you had fallen in love with Tate. My

feelings for you never went away Willow, never.” He finally had the balls to admit to her and her eyes went wide. “I will respect that you are still grieving your late husband and back off. He was a great man, I owe him that.

But I will be here waiting.” Memphis stared into Willows eyes and saw confusion, fear, and an emotion that he couldn’t decipher. The two of them sat there for what felt like hours, but it was only minutes before Jackson came tearing out of the house. Willow moved like she was hit by lightning and then quickly exited his vehicle. Jackson quickly replaced her in the SUV.

“Got them!” He declared holding up his swimtrunks. “Was aunt Willow okay?” He asked as Memphis pulled out of the driveway.

“I don’t know son, I don’t know.” Memphis would soon find out if he made a fatal

mistake admitting his feelings for the woman he loved for years.

[My Husband Cheated with My Bully \(Book 2\) Chapter 15](#)

Willow pov

She had walked out of Memphis's SUV and she honestly wasn't sure how to feel. Anger was the first emotion she felt as the shock of his admission faded away.

How dare he?

How dare he act like the damn martyr in this story we call life? That bastard!

The man ghosted her. Now he's going to confess his feelings and act like he bowed out to let her and Tate be together? That is not what happened at all. Men. They just like to twist the facts when it's convenient for them. Did he really live the past ten years like she was the one who got away? That man threw her away! Willow was starting to get angrier and angrier.



She tried to calm down, but she couldn't help but feel her temper growing as she stewed over Memphis's words. She had to pace her porch as she muttered Memphis's words.

"I always loved you."

"What a crock."

"Willow." A voice called and Willow whipped around to see Darius staring at her like she lost her mind and maybe she had.

"Hey Darius, how's Cora and the girls?" Willow asked as a courtesy. Darius still giving her a funny look responded,

"They are fine, how are you?"

"I'm okay, I'm just going to go inside now." And die from embarrassment.

"Take care of yourself now," Darius called and Willow waved to him making sure her eyes were averted.

Willow walked into her house and saw her son talking on his phone while he grabbed some cookies. That was the only excuse she could come up for Aspen, that I was time for everyone to get new phones. So all of her children received new phones and her cell phone bill doubled.

Lovely, damn Knox. Willow wasn't happy with any of the Hayes' right now.

Arianna didn't get a new phone line given the fact that she was five. Her youngest received Tate's sim and an old phone. It turned out that Aiden was one of the last kids in his class to get a phone.

Willow had no idea. Good thing was that her son was such a well liked little kid that no one teased him for it and Aiden didn't care if he had a phone or not. That is what he told her when she asked him. That boy was definitely his father's mini-me. Everyone loved Tate the instant they met him and fell

under his spell, she was one of them. Willow still had no idea how he fell for her.

Willow had Aspen's old phone that Knox had given her in her office at work, she was just waiting for the right time to give it back to him. She wasn't sure if it would be best to give it to the lawyers instead as Willow decided it was best to go no contact with Knox all together. She didn't know if she was making the right decision, but it was the one that felt right at the time.

"Mom! I had such a great time today, when can we go again?" Her son asked and she groaned.

"I'm not sure, let's go pick up your sisters. Your uncle said he got a surprise for you since you didn't come today!" Willow said diverting his attention.

"Yes! Uncle James gives the best gifts." Her son ran back out of the house clearly headed for the car. Willow was happy that the topic

of meeting with Memphis was resolved for the moment.

The week started off with a bang and Monday afternoon as she was in her office her uncle had unknowingly made an appointment with her. Her uncle had walked in when her PA had announced that her two o'clock was there. Then in walked her uncle and she was beyond surprised.

“Uncle James you know you are welcome to come by,” she said as she stood up to give him a hug. “You don’t have to make an appointment. You can come whenever you want.”

“Well I will probably be here for awhile, so I didn’t want to interrupt any of your meetings,” her uncle told her as he hugged her tightly.

She pulled away from her uncle took a good look at him.

She knew something was bothering him. He always returned back from his yearly trip sad for weeks after the fact, this year seemed different though. She debated asking him about it but didn't get a chance as he delved into his briefcase. Willow decided to let it go as her uncle was clearly in lawyer mode right now. He pulled out a huge stack of documents that was almost as thick as the briefcase they came from.

"Wow that's a lot of paper." Her uncle nodded his head and started organizing the papers on her desk.

"All right, this is for the custody battle," James told her pointing out one stack of papers. "Do you want me to file a restraining order?" Her uncle asked as he set forth the full custody papers in front of her. Willow thought for a moment,

"No. Not right now, but hold onto them as Knox can be unpredictable." Willow announced as she picked up the other papers

and started looking over them. Her uncle put the restraining order away and Willow continued to read.

“So how is this any different than what we have in place?”

Willow asked after a minute and her uncle sighed.

“It’s not, which is why you are going to have to go through all of your phone records, your texts, Knox’s and Aspen’s visitation schedule. You will have to be meticulous and methodical Willow. We will have to build the case that despite the original ruling you in the best interest of your child let Knox have a relationship with Aspen then suddenly Knox took the foundation away from and thus we are wanting to impose a stricter no visitation custody.”

“What is the likelihood the judge will go for this?” Willow asked her uncle. “Give it to me straight.”

“I’m not sure Willow, most judges want what is best for the child.” Her uncle looked at her as she rummaged around in her office for Aspen’s old phone.

“Here,” her uncle pocketed the phone. “Well what about the original custody order.” Her uncle rummaged through papers and found the original.

“Original was set up for you to have primary custody and sole decision making for your daughter. Willow, you opened the door and allowed Knox into her life. It’s going to be hard to close it.” Willow groaned,

“I thought I was doing the right thing, how was I to know Knox would be like this ten years later?”

“I could have told you. I knew that man was a weasel from day one,” her uncle grumbled.

“Can we not get into that please, I just want what’s best for Aspen, even the therapist is concerned about her.”

“That’s how we will do it, I will have her testify at court as well.” Her uncle had wrote something down on legal pad.

“Anything else?” She asked looking over the paper work and not wanting to think of the massive amount of work she had to deal with.

“No, but I have bad news. If Knox calls and wants to see Aspen my suggestion as long as Aspen is agreeable then you let her go.”

“I have never kept her away from him.” She said heatedly and her uncle raised his hands in a calming manner.

“I know Willow tree, I’d your lawyer right now and I’m advising you, your best decision from here on out.” Willow nodded,

“Sorry.”

“It’s all right.” Her uncle put down the paper work for the child custody and picked up the other,



“Well this is pretty straight forward, but I’m sure we will be in it for the long haul. Unless you want to settle?” Her uncle asked her with a raised eyebrow.

“Nope, I want the whole world to know.”

“I’m sure they will, Tate’s book was on the New Yorks bestseller list before and after his death. This lawsuit will definitely make waves,” her uncle commented as he went through the paperwork. “All right so, I met with my friend at IA and they agreed to start the investigation within the week on Tate’s old partner.” Her uncle declared and Willow was relieved to hear that good news.

“The lawsuit is for data breech for giving out information against your will as well as a ten million dollar lawsuit for pain and suffering.” Her uncle declared and she nodded, Willow didn’t need the money, she had plenty of it. She just wanted them to feel the pain she felt. Was that wrong?

Probably.

“Am I doing the right thing uncle?” She asked her uncle who looked up from the paperwork

“You know how I feel about this Willow. You should have filed this case several months ago.” Her uncle announced and Willow put aside any doubts she may have had. Her doubts came from the fact that Tate loved working for the police department. He loved what he did everyday. Willow couldn’t stand how the department he served for eight,- almost nine years was doing this to his family. It went against grain and hard.

Willow and her uncle James spent the next hour going over the paperwork for the case until she had a meeting. Her uncle left promising he would be filing the cases by the end of the week.

It was dinner time by the time she had made it home and the sight that greeted her

brought her up short. Her kids were eating dinner with Jackson and Memphis. What in the hell was going on? She had given him his warning, now she was getting pissed.