

My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter 31

James pov

A sinister smile appeared on James's face as he looked at the pictures his son sent him last night. He had suspected an affair between the two of them for awhile, had even debated hiring a PI the last few weeks. Honestly the affair wasn't that high on his priority list, but apparently it should have been.

James looked at the picture again and realized this was so much better, though he did hate to know Willow had seen the two snakes together. She had so much stress, he would hate to know this had hurt the baby. He would have to stop by tomorrow to make sure the two of them were okay. She was still technically on bed rest. James hated that Willow's divorce was the catalyst that made

their relationship bloom again, but he couldn't deny he was happy with the result.

James was also worried about his son, his worldview had been rocked the last few weeks. He was so relieved that Rowan finally saw what his mother had been doing to him all of these years, but he wished Rowan didn't have to find out this way. He made a note to visit his son as well, hopefully soon Rowan would be free of that vile Silverton woman. Sadly he would never be free of his mother, neither of them would. James let out a sigh, wondering if he made a bad decision to marry that woman all those years ago.

The Silverton patriarch is holding out longer than he expected, which is quite surprising. The fool helped his wife to blackmail his son to stay with that awful woman. He was going to be run out of town penniless.

James fooled the man into thinking he was on his side by buying out the firm that Hayes worked out of. He offered Silverton way

more than it was worth. James only did it so that when the Silverton goes bankrupt that fool will have a job. Hayes still had to pay child support when this was all over.

Silverton of course jumped at the offer as it was a million more than what it was currently worth. Fool. The company was a solid investment and James had no qualms about buying it. James would probably keep the company when this whole mess was all said and done.

The company had a slight dip in profits, which was normal though Silverton was panicking as several other of his company's were declining. This was all due actions taken by James and so when he made the offer, Silverton accepted gleefully. Imbecile.

James was looking at the pictures when his office phone rang. He picked up the phone knowing who it would be as she had been calling him everyday at least five times. He never picked up, but this time was different.

“James, please I beg of you please don’t divorce me,” the voice of his wife came through the phone and James couldn’t help the feral smile that came over his face. It seems she realized he cut off her credit cards and cut all credit at the stores she shopped at. One other person he had to take care of.

“Oh hello dear wife.” Diane must of realized that something had changed as she stopped talking for a full minute. It was a shame she had to cross him by messing with his children, Diane truly was the only person who could read him.

“James?” Diane trailed off uncertain and that only caused him to laugh.

“You know you are right, I would love to talk to you about our marriage, why don’t we have a dinner tonight? Say seven?” His wife must have been confused about his change of attitude.

“Are you sure James? I wouldn’t want to trouble you,” Diane was hesitant.

“I am positive, I will have the chef make something just for you,” James said planning the evening in his head, he was done with this conversation.

“All right...” Diane trailed off.

“Tonight then,” James hung up without another thought.

“Dustin!” He called his secretary.

“Yes sir?” His new twenty-five year old male secretary came into the office.

“I’m going to send you a couple of pictures and I want them blown up okay?”

“Yes sir, anything else?”

“Yes, invite the Steele’s to dinner tonight,” James laughed out. “Tonight is going to be fun.”

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James sat waiting in his den drinking bourbon as his chef made dinner for four. Tonight was definitely going to be a fun night for him. He never claimed to be a nice guy unless of course one was his family. Diane stopped being his family when he exposed her for what she had done. He didn't care that she had slept with Stan Steele.

Diane had admitted to him that she had slept with Steele before her best friend, but they didn't go anywhere cause he wasn't ambitious like he was. James didn't care as he was sleeping with his own woman. What James cared about was the fact that Diane was still sleeping with the simper while her best friend was yelling at me that I was an abusive piece of garbage. So yes tonight would be fun.

It was six forty-five and just like clockwork he heard the doors moving, then screaming.

“The door won’t open!” It was then that Davis went to go unlock the door and Diane came screaming into the office like the harpy that she was.

“James!! How dare you change the locks?” James simply raised his eyebrows,

“Really? You dare ask me that?” He looked at Diane and wondered what he ever saw in her. Diane could tell by the look in his eye that it was best to back off.

“Wine?” He asked her and she nodded hesitantly. James smiled as his cool actions clearly threw her off guard. James got up and got her a glass of wine.

They sat in silence simply staring at each other until the doorbell rang.

“I didn’t know we were expecting guests?” Diane asked and he just smiled. In walked the Steele’s and James stood up. Diane approached her friends and greeted them warmly. James watched Diane hug Stan a

little too affectionately and James simply rolled his eyes. Fools.

“It’s time to eat,” James stated and Julia gave him a dark glare and he just smiled knowing tonight wouldn’t end well.

The first course went well with thinly veiled comments from Julia. James didn’t mind as she had always been that way. He put up with it for Willow, she was with it but he had enough.

“I’m surprised Diane was willing to come back here,” Julia stated and that was the final comment.

“Honestly Julia I’m surprised you showed up, I figured it would be too humiliating for you,” James stated while taking a bite of his steak. Hm delicious, medium well. Just as he preferred it. There was silence around the table as everyone but Julia froze. James continued eating like he didn’t have a care in the world and he didn’t.

“What do you mean by that?” Julia was confused and he loved clearing things up for her.

“Seeing as your husband and best friend were an item and college and started their affair again now that we are getting divorced. I’m surprised you are showing your face here.” James stated and Davis came to give him the pictures.

“That’s a lie!” Tim shouted standing up and he simply took the pictures with a smile.

“These say different,” James threw them in front of Julie, Tim, and handed them Diane.

“Where did you get these?” Diane asked horrified and James smiled with glee.

“Our children. They were having dinner and caught you two in your affair. Honestly I had known for awhile you two had restarted your affair. I couldn’t believe you were this ignorant, it only helps me and damages you. So I appreciate it.” James stated with a

smile, while drinking his bourbon looked at Julia who just sat there crying unable to say a word, she finally looked at him,

“I told you I wasn’t the bad guy your best friend hadn’t been betrayed by me. I was nothing but up front and honest about her. I had known about her and your husband from the start. I didn’t think she would start the affair again, but she’s a viper and I feel no sympathy toward you. You were never a mother toward Willow and your husband wasn’t a father towards her either. This is a product of your own making, you chose that evil woman and man over your daughter.”

James looked at Steele, “I could care less that you are sleeping with Diane, I care that you think you are more powerful than you actually are, stay in your lane or there will be consequences worse than this.” Stan looked afraid and his goal had been accomplished, he looked at Diane who looked afraid and he smiled and gave her a wink.

James looked at all three of them, “get out of my house, I have to check on my children after what you bastards have done to them.” James stated lethally as everyone quickly exited his dining room and he finished his steak.

Julia pov

Stan was on his knees before her repeatedly saying “I’m sorry.” While Diane simply stated, “it just happened,” and then she left. They were in the parking area of James’ house. Her best friend that she had known since they were in kindergarten slept repeatedly with her husband and just left her.

“Tim is what he said true?” She asked him when he looked up at her. “You had a relationship with my best friend and never told me about it?” She cried out.

“I’m sorry.”

“Sorry! You wanted me to get rid of my baby! Why?” She asked horrified.

“Diane..”

“What does Diane have to do with me being pregnant?” Julia asked and then she realized something. “Oh my God you never stopped sleeping with her have you?” His look said it all, he didn’t.

“Why did you even marry me? When you clearly loved her?” Julia was furious.

“I needed a wife! You were my best choice at the time!” Her tears turned to anger,

“You know James wasn’t lying right? And she has been sleeping with some young kid right? He’s barely legal.” Julia saw her husband get angry at hearing that and she started to laugh.

“That’s not true! He just said that to make Diane look bad!” Tim defended Diane.

“It’s totally true, she had never been loyal to James like she wanted Rowan to believe. She showed me all the men she hooked up with over the years. Well all but you I guess,” Julia taunted and was shocked to feel her husband slap her. Julia touched her face where she felt a small amount of blood. Then without warning James came out and threw a punch knocking Tim on the ground.

“I told you to get out of here.” James said in a voice that could freeze hell. Tim stumbled onto his feet and walked away. He got into the car and Julia realized that was her ride.

“You okay?” James asked and she nodded. Julia pulled out her phone and pulled up Uber.

“It’s ok I’ll have Davis take you home, I have to go check on Willow tree.”

“Can I come with you?” She asked tentatively. James turned that look onto her.

“No, I doubt she wants to see you or deal with your problems as she has her own,” James stated and walked off. Julia felt ashamed of herself and realized she had been played by both Tim and Diane.

“Can I take you home miss?” Davis asked and she nodded realizing she didn’t really have a home. It was her own fault.

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Five days, that’s all it took for her mother to come crying at her doorstep. Five days. Uncle James has came to her the next evening after the disastrous dinner and told her what had happened with her parents. He told Willow he saw her father slap her mother which was shocking, and then Uncle James punched him. Willow’s only concern was any possible legal actions over what happened. Uncle James waved it off, he was completely unconcerned.

Willow had four days of peaceful working with Tate before her mother showed up on her doorstep. The deadline was moving ever closer to with everyday. The absolute last day the publishers would accept the book was the second week of October. It was the first week of October, they had seven days left and there was still so much work to do. Willow had just emailed a few chapters to Ethan to double check for grammar errors when her doorbell rang. She waddled over to the door having waved off Tate's offer to open it for her. She knew who it was the second it rang and didn't want Tate to have to deal with her mother. Sure enough, there stood her mother in tears.

"Willow!" Her mother threw her entire weight on her and started wailing and talking incessantly about what had happened.

"Your father. Cheat. Diane." Those were the only words that she could make out through

the wails and sobbing. Willow stood there a minute until the weight started to make her feel uncomfortable on her belly. She pushed her mother back and asked her,

“Mom what are you doing here?” Her mom seemed upset at the question and even fidgeted a little.

“Willow, your my daughter.” Her mother said the statement like it was supposed to mean something. Willow just shrugged her shoulders and walked back to her couch then sat down. She couldn’t stand anymore after her mother put all that weight on her. She had her next check up with her doctor in a few days and wanted to make sure she was doing well. The baby too she thought rubbing her belly. Willow looked at her mother who sat beside her and started to cry once again.

“Mom, look I’m very busy right now can you come back later?” Willow asked feeling wore down just from this short conversation.

“You have a mom?” Tate asked as he got up and went to the kitchen. Willow could tell by now that he wanted to antagonize her mother with the question.

“Of course she had a mom, what are you stupid?” Her mother asked still crying.

“Mother! What’s wrong with you?” She was angry that she talked to Tate like that, but he was unfazed.

“No, I just assumed you were dead as Willow doesn’t talk about you,” Tate stated and one could tell that was a harsh reality to her mother. Leave it to Tate to flip the script on someone. He reminded her so much of her uncle James sometimes.

“That doesn’t-“

“There are also no family pictures around the house, keepsakes, or anything even hinting that Willow even had parents. Hell she has pictures with her In-laws, so it was a reasonable conclusion that her actual

parents were dead.” That caused her mother to look around her house. Her home had been decorated in mainly pictures of her and Knox throughout the years, but with the divorce she had slowly removed them and placed them in the garage. The only pictures that remained were family pictures as she hadn’t been able to remove them yet. They weren’t of the Steele family, they were of the Hays’ family. One being of last years Fourth of July celebration. They had just gotten married and she was so happy.

“Well-that-that,” her mother stuttered out breaking Willow out of her trip down memory lane.

“That’s enough Tate, what are you wanting from me mother? As you can see I’m dealing with my own problems.” Willow let out a sigh, “problems that you were always too busy to help me with. I went through my own husbands affair, divorce, and pregnancy issues without you mom. You didn’t even

bother to stop by to see me in the hospital, So I know you aren't here for me." Willow stated bluntly, she didn't have time for this. "What do you want from me?"

"Well I have a meeting with your father tomorrow, I was hoping you would come with me," her mother asked looking away. Willow let out a deep sigh,

"Why? It's not like dad likes me. He's only done anything for me due to his reputation," Willow continued on ignoring the old stab of hurt anytime she talked about her father.

"Your father loves you!" Her mother defended.

"He tried getting rid of me!" Willow shouted and everyone in the room froze.

"You knew about that?" Her mother asked in horror.

"What you think I didn't hear you arguing at night? Of course I heard." Willow let out a

sigh, “fine I’ll go with you, please just leave.” She was done arguing, it was better to just agreed so her mother would leave.

“Willow-“

“No mother, I’ve gotten by just fine without you all these years. You will have to learn to do the same. I’m sorry the man you loved isn’t who you thought he was. Please leave.” Her mother stood up and looked at her,

“The meeting is at his office at one.” Willow nodded,

“I’ll meet you there Mother.” Willow watched her mother leave and finally let out a sigh of relief.

Tate sat down next to her and put an arm over her shoulder. She refused to cry over that woman, it was a vow she made to herself five years ago in college. Her parents had missed parents weekend for the fourth time in a row. She watched all the other

parents do fun things with their parents and she cried for her parents one last time.

“Willow-“

“You want to hear something?” She interrupted and Tate went with it.

“Of course.” Tate nodded and looked interested.

“I may be moving!” Willow tried to put some false happiness into her voice.

“Oh yeah?” Tate’s voice was neutral , which surprised her.

“I didn’t want to say anything, but if the book does well the publisher has a sister branch and they would give me a promotion there.”

“You’d be a full editor?” Tate asked his voice solemn and Willow was confused.

“Yeah, I’ve thought long and hard about it, so I’ve decided to put my name in for it.”

“There are other people up for the job?” He asked and Willow nodded leaning her head on his chest.

“Yeah I believe there is five or six.”

“Where is it located?” He asked.

“Savannah Georgia, I’ve looked it up and it’s seems beautiful, nice weather, beaches-“ Willow trailed off as she looked at the smile that over took Tate’s face.

“What is it?” Willow was confused, but Tate started to laugh,

“You know that’s a military town right? I spent four years on that base right?” Willow just shrugged her shoulders.

“I just need a change, the stress is literally killing my baby.” Willow rubbed her baby and Tate did the same.

“What about your uncle James?” Tate asked and she laughed,

“You know it wouldn’t surprise me if he moved down there with me.”

“What about your ex?” Tate asked and Willow just shrugged her shoulders,

“What about him, he has shown no interest in our daughter since I told him I was pregnant.” Willow let out another sigh and laid her head onto Tate’s shoulder.

“I think the move may be good for us.”

“You are probably right,” Tate said as he rubbed her belly.

The meeting

“Mom does dad know we are coming?” Willow asked as she met her mother on the steps of the DA’s office.

“Yeah, he’s in his office,” her mother responded. She started walking inside and her mother asked, “what’s the plan?”

“Just follow my lead,” Willow responded. She called uncle James last night and got pointers and tips for the meeting today. She also got the ok to allow to use his name. Willow knew there was some bad blood between her mom and James, but he was willing to shove it down for the time being.

Willow walked to her fathers office waving at the people she knew. Willow opened the door to her fathers office barging in despite her mother’s insistence that she had to knock. Her father was on the phone and gave her a scowl and quickly wrapped up the phone call. She sat down in the chair in front of his desk like a boss and her mother sat down awkwardly.

“It’s proper etiquette for one to knock on the door instead of barging in Willow,” her father reprimanded her.

“Yeah and a good husband doesn’t commit adultery with his wife’s best friend either,” Willow retorted wryly.

“That’s not of your business!” Her father ground out angrily.

“I agree, but mother asked me to be here, so Father!” Willow bit out and her father winced at that; “here’s how’s it’s going to go, you are going to draft a divorce decree in it Mom is going to get the house free and clear and you are going to give her alimony for half of time you have been married based off your new salary.”

“We have been married for twenty-five years,” he burst out angry.

“Ya and how long have you been fucking aunt Diane, dad? Years? Is that why you’ve been such a crappy father my whole life?” Willow unfortunately let some anger and resentment get ahold of her.

“I never wanted kids! Your mother refused to get an abortion!” Her father screamed and she winced at that. Her mother just started to cry as she sat there silent.

“I’m not done, give mom seventy-five percent of your savings and then sign it.”

“You must be out of your mind,” he returned and she just smiled.

“Okay then plan B, mom hires Uncle James as her attorney while she gets all your money anyway and your name gets drug through the mud and you lose your job as well.” Her father laughs at her and looks at his wife,

“James can’t stand you Julia, now I know you are bluffing.”

“Oh, but he will for me, and do this with a smile on his face just to humiliate you.”

Willow smiled as the smirk was wiped away from her fathers face. She reached into her purse, “he also told me to give you this.”

Willow handed her father an envelope and handed it to him. The two women watched him quickly read it and Willow smiled as the color drained from his face.

“So I take it we have a deal then?” Willow smirked at her father.

“Yes, give me a few days to draft the agreement,” her father choked out.

“You have a week,” Willow stated and stood up. They started to leave his office when her father spoke again.

“Julia, I’m really sorry. I did love you, in my own way.” Her father said with what could be considered regret.

“No you didn’t, otherwise you would have loved our daughter.” Her mother walked out of the office and Willow finally said something to her father she always wanted to say.

“Stan Steele you are no better than the scum you represent. Never contact me again, you are not my father. James Cunningham is and remember James Cunningham takes care of his own.” Willow could tell Stan was shocked by her words as she had always been a

people pleaser she was done with that nonsense.

She met her mother in front, who gave her a big hug.

“Thank you Willow!” Willow pulled away and started to leave. “Wait! How about we go to lunch or something?” Her mother had hope in her eyes and she shit that down.

“No, I have to go back to work.” Willow tried leaving again but her moms voiced stopped her again.

“Well what about-?”

“No mom!” She was frustrated. “I helped you cause you needed me and had no one else, but I’m not interested in anything else. Please leave me alone.” Willow left her mother in front of Stan’s office alone crying. She refused to feel sorry for her mother, she made her choices. Her mother never chose her and she never would.

My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter 33

The next week Willow tuned out everything else and only focused on getting the book finished. There were several emails from both of her parents that went unanswered. Her former in-laws reached out to stop by for Sunday dinner and she declined. She responded with an invite for lunch when the book was over and done with. Which would be next week sometime, and they responded they would come over just the two of them.

The only person she had spoken to was her Uncle James, other than Tate of course. Her uncle James had stopped by to make sure she was eating right and taking care of herself. She was happy that he continued to check in on her. Their relationship was so strong now and Willow wouldn't have it any other way.

The book came in down to the wire, she was waiting on the grammar editing back from

Ethan, who Willow could now say was a friend after all of this. He gave her the last edits of the last few chapters and then correcting the simple mistakes. Ethan who was a junior editor same as Willow had made several comments for improvement and the two of them went over the comments. They were all good comments and went over them diligently. It took the entire day and Tate was rereading everything Willow corrected. It was exhausting and time consuming. Her printer had printed a million pages and she had sent Tate to the store twice now for more printer paper and ink.

“Okay, this is it,” Willow told Tate at eleven thirty that night as her finger hovered over the send button. She hesitated for just a minute and Tate took over pressing the send button. Willow gave him a wry glance and made sure the information went through. They sat there in silence for a full minute before moving.

“What now?” Willow asked.

“Now we eat!” Tate said and went to the kitchen to get some food. Willow shrugged him off and grabbed her phone. Willow called Mary who was always awake no matter when you called her.

“Did you get it?” Willow asked nervous as all get out and decided to forgo any niceties with her boss. Mary just laughed completely unbothered,

“Yeah it just came through and I passed it on.” Willow and Tate both let out a sigh of relief. “I’ll read it myself starting tomorrow.

“What do we do now?” She asked her boss at a loss of what to do now. Mary laughed,

“Now you just wait, Mr. Walker you will now be assigned to one of our publicists who will handle your book launching.” Marry continued talking but Willow tuned it out.

The reality was finally hitting her, she would probably never see Tate again after this. He had been such a rock to her and a great friend. Tate walked back to the phone as it was on speaker and took over the conversation Mary for a few minutes while Willow just sat there stunned about what would happen next. Her life for the past month or so had been this book, now she didn't know what she was going to do.

Willow realized how much this book had been keeping her sane and grounded. What would she do now?

“Take a day off Willow and we will find you a new book,” Mary told her and Tate nudged her.

“Okay Mary, I'll see you on Tuesday.” Today was Friday and Mary was the best boss in the world.

“Bye!” Mary said and ended the call. The two of them sat there rather awkwardly for a moment before Tate spoke up.

“How about tomorrow we celebrate?” He must of realized how despondent she was feeling. Willow quickly agreed,

“Of course! There’s a new exhibit at the state museum,” Willow suggested and Tate’s eyes lit up.

“That sounds great! I can’t wait.” Tate quickly gave her a hug,

“I don’t know what I would have done without you on this project.” Willow laughed,

“You would have been just fine I’m sure.” Tate pulled back,

“No, you were amazing. So dedicated to making my book the best. I definitely didn’t deserve it.” Willow looked into Tate’s eyes and she swore she saw, interest? Desire? No

that isn't possible. A man like Tate couldn't possibly be interested in a woman like her.

Tate left shortly afterwards and Willow changed into some pajamas before slipping into bed. Willow got the two of them had left things in a great place, but she received a text before she could fall asleep.

Tate: I'm sorry I won't be able to make it tomorrow/today. Something came up for work.

Willow wanted to believe him, but with the way things were left off she couldn't help but feel it had more to do with it was just over between them. Only time will tell. She hated that she missed him already. Tate was only in her life for such a short time, but Willow knew she would never forget him.

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Tate pov

He left Willow's that night feeling accomplished, but empty somehow. Their time together was over. Yeah there was the book launch and all that jazz, but Willow wasn't going to be with him for any of that. Her job was done and he was left feeling hollow.

Tate talked to the publishing house and made sure that Willow's name would be on the front cover, just under his name: Edited by Willow Steele. It just felt right, Willow had put so much work into the book she deserved some recognition as well.

Tate was beyond upset to find out that Willow could be moving, until he heard it was Savannah. He spent some of the best years of his life there. Tate also has a lot of connections at the base still and could get transferred in a heartbeat. If he wanted. He was returning to his apartment on base when he got a phone call.

“Hey sorry it took me so long to get back to you on Smitty’s finical’s,” his buddy John rambled when he picked up the phone.

“It’s not good is it?” Tate responded when he John finally finished talking and Tate turned his vehicle off. Tate stayed in the car as he waited for the news.

“No I’m sorry, it took awhile to find it, but nothing stays hidden. He’s got a hidden account and he’s funneling money in there. I sent you all the information to your secure account,” John responded. Tate let out a sigh,

“Thanks John I appreciate it.”

“I’m sorry man.” John responded and Tate simply ended the call and immediately called his CO.

“What is it Walker? It’s the middle of the night?” His CO screamed at him.

“Sir, I need to see you immediately,” Tate responded seriously. His CO could tell it was something serious and changed his tune.

“All right Walker you can come over,” his CO Blackburn told him and Tate turned his car back on. Tate knew this was going to be bad so he went ahead and texted Willow canceling plans for the weekend. He hated doing it, but this was just the beginning of a nightmare for him.

When he got to his CO’s place on base Blackburn was waiting for him.

“What is it Tate?”

“It’s Smitty, I found proof.”

“Come on and show me what you have,” his CO told him and Tate walked into Blackburns private quarters.

**My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter
34**

Willow was facing another dilemma, what to do for Thanksgiving.

It had been almost two months since the book deadline and life pretty much returned to normal. Willow texted Tate off and on, but she hadn't seen him since that night in early October.

Willow was beyond shocked when she received the first advanced copy of the book. Mary had it sent to her directly from the printers. Willow was shocked to see her name on the cover "edited by Willow Steele." Willow looked at the cover of Tate's book and smiled, running her fingers over the cover. The two of them went back and forth over what picture to use for his cover and she wasn't surprised to see him standing there shooting some massive machine gun. Willow personally liked the one on the day he graduated from boot camp. He looked so handsome.

Mary was over the moon for her as this would put her in the lead for the job in Georgia. Mary told her the owners themselves were going to make a decision at the beginning of the year. Willow knew at that point she couldn't put it off anymore and she had to tell her uncle James.

James took it about as she thought he would.

Flashback

"Why didn't you tell me?" Uncle James asked her with hurt in his eyes. Willow shrugged,

"Our relationship was finally back on track and I didn't want you to get upset with me." James face changed to one of understanding,

"Oh Willow I could never be upset with you! I'm just hurt you didn't tell me." Her uncle responded and Willow nodded.

"Honestly I didn't think I would get the job as there are several others in for it as well," Willow told him.

“You know...” her uncle tried to tell her he could get her the job if she wanted it.

“No uncle James, I want to get the job on my own merits, not cause you got it for me.”

Willow was vehement in this and he nodded his head in understanding.

“Understood.” They sat there for a moment before uncle James spoke again. “Do you really want to move?” Willow nodded,

“The more I think about it the more I think it will be best for me and my daughter. The one thing I regret is leaving behind you and my former in laws. You were the only people that were there for me.” Willow teared up a little,

“Don’t worry Willow tree, I can afford to buy me a house wherever I want, even in Georgia. I hear it’s beautiful down there.”

Willow laughed recalling telling Tate her uncle he would probably end up moving to Georgia if she moved as well.

“What?” Her uncle asked and Willow just laughed.

Flashback over

Back to Thanksgiving dinner and the predicament she was currently in. Willow received several invites for Thanksgiving dinner, one from the Hayes, Steele’s, and the Cunningham’s. Honestly she didn’t want to to any of them. She knew it was just going to be filled with drama on all ends. She had no idea how her father managed to convince her mother to have Thanksgiving at their home, but she didn’t care. It wasn’t her problem any longer. She had the meeting with her father and had no idea how it ended up. Uncle James handled the divorce papers like he agreed to do and that is all she knew about it.

Last year she had gone to three different dinners and she was miserable at all of them but one. The Hayes last year was so much

fun and it filled her heart with pain knowing it wouldn't be the same ever again.

Willow finally decided to just have Thanksgiving at her home. She had been talking to Tate when he told her that him and one of his friends were just going to Denny's for Thanksgiving like always. That bit of news bothered her even though it didn't seem out of the ordinary for Tate and a few of his friends. He asked her if she was sure and she said she was positive, she just asked for help cooking the ham.

That's how she found herself at the store with Tate doing Thanksgiving shopping. They were in the meat aisle arguing over getting a turkey or a ham. Willow couldn't stop laughing cause she hadn't seen him for almost two months. She really missed him, Tate always made her smile.

"Do we really need both? I mean who is going to eat all of that food?" Willow asked

as Tate was looking for the biggest turkey they had.

“Me and my buddies,” Tate responded as he finally found one that he liked. “There definitely won’t be any leftovers.” Willow looked at Tate and remembered how he ate every day.

“Well whose going to cook it? I’ve never cooked a turkey before?” She asked.

“I will, I’ve got it all figured it out,” Tate responded as he picked up a giant bird and put it in the cart and went back to the ham section.

“Willow?” She heard a voice she hasn’t heard for several months. She turned to see both Hayes brothers looking at her and Willow just stood there in shock. She hasn’t seen Knox since the day in court and Memphis since her gender reveal party. They both looked really good and here she was looking like a whale.

“How are you Willow? You look good,” Memphis told her and her hand came over her belly protectively. She was still rendered silent and felt Tate come up next to her.

“Whose this?” Knox asked and her voice finally started working again.

“This is my friend Tate, we are doing some Thanksgiving shopping,” Willow stated and then it really got uncomfortable as the men seemed to size each other up. Tate won hands down, he was also still in his military uniform. He definitely looked good in his uniform.

“You having your own Thanksgiving dinner this year? We will definitely miss you,” Memphis stated trying to ease the tension.

“Yeah it was definitely exhausting going to all those dinners,” Willow replied and looking for a way out.

“Yeah doing two different places was rough last year,” Knox chimed in.

“I thought you went to three?” Tate stated.

“We better get going before the Turkey thaws out,” Willow said as she saw Knox get agitated.

“It takes days-“ Tate was saying before she cut them off.

“Bye guys,” Willow stated and waddled off as fast as she could while muttering, “in all of the stores in Boston.” Tate just laughed until she gave him a dark look.

“So how many people did you invite?” Tate asked as he started grabbing rolls when they hit the bread aisle.

“The uncle James and his son Rowan.”

“Isn’t he dating that slag?” Tate asked grabbing some pre-packaged donuts.

“Isn’t that British slang?” She asked as she turned down the aisle.

“Yes, it’s what happens when you work with troops from all over the world. Question is still the same.” Willow picked up lots of butter, milk, heavy whipping cream.

“Yeah, but her family is doing another high society dinner at seven, ours is at noon. So them, my former in laws, and probably my mother.”

“Your mother? Really?” Tate asked in shock. Willow let out a sigh,

“I know okay.” Willow already regretted sending out the email to her mother with the condition her father couldn’t attend.

“Some habits just won’t die okay? So how many of your friends are coming?” Willow asked as they made it down the pie aisle.

“Ohh! Strawberry-rhubarb, that sounds good!”

“Barf!” Tate picked out two peach pies, two pecan pies, and two apple pies.

“How many are coming? Eight? Ten?”
Willow asked shocked.

“No, just four of us, the rest will be at home with their families.” Tate reached back in the freezer for three pumpkin pies.

“I swear if you get any more pies, I quit!”
Tate laughed,

“Don’t worry I’ll be over the day of to help you out.”

“No I need to make all these pies the day before.”

“Okay I’ll come by then.”

Knox pov

He stood there dumbly in the meat section watching his ex-wife waddle away. He thought it was the cutest thing in the world. Knox was also right, she was adorable pregnant. He just wished he was there for every stage of her pregnancy.

Knox spiraled for months doing nothing but drinking, hooking up, and going to work every day. He was a functioning alcoholic he thought with an ironic smile.

It was his nephew that pulled him out of the spiral. He woke up completely hung over and saw his nephew standing over him.

“Uncle Knox sick?” Knox’s stomach was rolling and he had no recollection of how he ended up in bed.

“Yeah buddy, I’m sick, go find your dad,” he told his Jackson and buried his face back into the pillow. Then his mother came into his room, which was a surprise as he thought he was at Memphis’s house and told him to get his life together for the millionth time.

Jackson told his mother that he was sick again and that scene stayed with him for the next several days.

It was a slow burning fire, but it eventually lit itself as he realized that the baby was

going to be born sooner than later. Knox saw himself five years in the future and saw just once instance of that scene, but with his daughter waking him up hungover. Willow wouldn't let it happen again. Imagining that finally kickstarted him to get his life back in order. Knox stopped drinking, put himself into therapy, and finally found himself an apartment.

Then he slowly started to build his daughter her own nursery, he only prayed Willow would let her see it.

“Come on man,” his brother said throwing an arm around his shoulders. Knox looked at his brother and pushed him off him. His relationship was getting better with his brother. It was still damaged, but they were two divorced brothers who only had each other. They had spent a lot of time together recently and it felt nice.

Day before Thanksgiving

Tate and Willow spent the whole afternoon baking over ten pies for the next day.

“Where am I going to put all of these pies?” Willow asked.

“Don’t worry, I got a serving table,” Tate told her and went out to go get it. Willow took the time to check her phone. Everyone she invited RSVP and would be here tomorrow. She sighed, still unsure if this was the right thing to do. Willow rubbed her belly and walked to the nursery. She sat in the rocking chair. She smiled as she heard Tate moving around.

“Hey babe, what you doing in here?”

“Nothing, just thinking.”

“About what?”

“Your book drops tomorrow are you excited?” Willow asked and Tate shrugged.

“No not really.”

“Why not?” Willow asked surprised.

“Then I had to do the tour and all that, I’m not looking forward to it.”

“That’s the best part,” Willow responded. Tate just shook his head and Willow sighed, “it’s only for three and a half weeks. You will be home in time for Christmas.”

“Yeah, Christmas,” Tate said morosely. Willow knew holidays were a sensitive subject for him.

“You know I plan on getting you something, and I better get a good gift too!” Willow said as she stood up.

“Oh yeah?” Tate asked following her back into the kitchen.

“Yeah, I can’t wait to open my gift on Christmas morning,” Willow told him and he smiled. Willow didn’t care about gifts, she never had she just wanted to let Tate know he was always welcomed here.

It started to get late and Willow was tired and not looking forward to cooking tomorrow.

“I have to get back if I need to sleep and get her tomorrow morning. I wish I could just stay here but-“

“You can,” Willow offered. Tate looked surprised and Willow started to stammer,

“Well I-I-I mean the couch if you want it.” Willow swore she saw disappointment in his eyes, but she must of been mistaken. There is no way a man like Tate would be interested in her.

“Right of course.”

“Here I’ll get you some blankets,” Willow said and headed down the hall away from the awkward situation she found herself in.

**My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter
35**

The day turned out better than she expected. Uncle James showed up after Tate and Willow ate breakfast and the three of them talked while getting everything ready. Waking up and having some one else in her home again was nice, sharing breakfast with some one again was nice, but she didn't have time to dwell on it. Tate's book was launching tonight and he was leaving in the morning.

Willow watched the only two consistent men in her life currently and couldn't help but shake her head. She was surprised how well the two of them got along. Uncle James and Tate discussed how to cook the turkey and ham. They both acted like old friends, Willow had never seen her uncle react that way to anyone. It was around ten that both his friends and Rowan showed up. Tate introduced everyone, but she was horrible with names.

Willow was surprised as she was mainly pushed to the wayside throughout the cooking process. The men didn't want her on her feet cooking. She just sat there rolling her eyes and made the homemade noodles like she always did for thanksgiving.

Tate pov

"So this is her huh?" Johnson came outside with him while he was checking on the turkey. He was freezing his nuts off in this New England fall weather. It hadn't started to snow yet but it was due to in the next week. He was from the south, he didn't do well with snow or cold weather.

"Don't even start, it's freezing out here," he responded trying to divert their attention.

"Oh come on Walker, you are totally in love with this woman. Everyone but you can see it," Black stated with a look not buying it for a minute.

“And maybe her,” Benson added in while moving back and forth trying to keep warm.

“Do you want me to kick your asses out?” He asked frustrated.

“Hell no! She looks like an amazing cook, this is way better than Denny’s,” Johnson responded not bothered by the weather as he was from Michigan. Lucky bastard.

“Then keep your mouths shut and pitch in,” he responded getting pissed at their razzing.

“I have been!” Williams stated who had been quite this whole time. Tate laughed and continued watching the turkey. He neither confirmed or denied how he felt about Willow. He was leaving in the morning for a month and who knows where the military would send him after that. Willow’s future was up in the air with her promotion as well and he wouldn’t interfere. Tate knew Willow wanted it and he wouldn’t stop her.

Willow pov

It was noon and technically time to eat, but one person who rsvp'd wasn't here. Her mother. They Hayes came in only twenty minutes ago. Honestly Willow was surprised they came at all. Marge has a big dinner every year around three. Thanksgiving was a lot of little things and without her and Gina there to help her, Marge would be swamped.

"You want to call her?" Marge asked nicely and Willow shook her head no. Willow still didn't have her mom's number in her new phone yet. It seemed like it was a good thing that her parents didn't know her number as they always disappointed her.

"Let's eat, everyone has a dinner of their own to get back to " Willow said loudly.

"Oh don't worry about that, Gina is holding down the dinner while we were away," Marge stated from her place in the line. Well that was interesting, Memphis had been so mad at Gina when they divorced she hadn't been allowed back at family events for years.

Now she had gone to two this year, it looks like they are headed toward reconciliation. Willow wished her heart didn't pinch at that, but it did a little. Memphis went from sleeping with her to going back to his ex-wife within the span of two months.

"We don't!" One of Tate's friends said loudly and Willow was brought out of her melancholy. Everyone was still going through the "buffet line" as Tate liked to call it. Willow waited until the line was down to make herself a plate, she was slow and clumsy now as she was about to enter her last trimester. It turns out she didn't have to wait, both her uncle James and Tate brought her a plate. She smiled at both of them and gave them a small thanks. She slowly started eating her thanksgiving meal.

"So where do you normally go for thanksgiving?" Marge asked after a few minutes of eating.

“Normally the four of us end up at Denny’s,” Johnson stated as he started shoveling in food at a rapid pace.

“None of your friends have dinner?” James asked.

“Well Jamison’s wife does... but she doesn’t like us very much,” one responses and Willow couldn’t remember his name.

“I can’t imagine why,” Willow responded and everyone laughed. The table continued to eat and talk genially for awhile until-

“So Tate you ready to leave tomorrow?” Benson asked.

“You headed overseas?” Uncle James asked as he ate his food slowly and methodically as always.

“No, me and Willow have been working on a book for the past few months. I’m doing a few books signings.” Tate explained with a smile her way.

“Oh that’s lovely!” Martha said with a smile pointed in Tate’s direction.

“Yeah, I’m hoping it will do well,” Tate responded.

“Is your contract based on sales?” Rowan asked and Tate shook his head.

“Well of course I would like my book to do well and yes my contract is commissions based. I mainly want it to do well cause if it does well, Willow can be up for a promotion. She has the chance to become an editor,” Tate told the room and Willow froze. She hadn’t told anyone except for Tate and Uncle James. The entire room collectively shifted to Willow.

“Oh that’s wonderful Willow, you have been wanting to be editor for awhile now,” her father-in-law told her and she smiled. Willow was frozen, but not her Uncle James.

“Yeah it’s definitely not ideal that the job is in Georgia, but I can always help with the

move, I even offered to move myself,” James told the room. Her former in laws and Rowan looked to her in shock. Tate and his friends continued to eat like it was no big deal.

“Georgia!” Marge screamed looking at her in shock. Willow just shrugged and continued to eat.

“Were you ever going to tell us?” Her father-in-law asked.

“Honestly I only told uncle James a few weeks ago, and I doubt I will even be offered the job.”

“What about the baby? What about Knox?” Marge asked.

“What about that cheating prick?” Her uncle’s voice was hard and unyielding.

“Uncle James, why don’t you help me plate up some pieces of pie,” Willow suggested.

“I’ll help him Willow,” Tate told her and got up along with her uncle. Her former in-laws look wounded and she felt bad but she wouldn’t waver.

“Marge, Jim you have always been there and supported me ever since I met you. I love you very much, but I have to do what’s best for me and my daughter. I’m sorry.”

“But-“ Marge started and Jim stopped her with a hand on her shoulder.

“If and I stress if I get this job you are more than welcome to visit me anytime, you have been my parents these last years than my own have been, I’ll never forget that,” Willow stated and they both nodded. Marge hugged her.

“I’m sorry for being selfish and wanting you with us, you do what’s right for you Willow.”

“You are always welcome to visit me, I’ll make sure there is room for you,” Willow told her and Marge stated.

“I’ll be there all the time, you won’t be able to get me away.”

“Deal.” They managed to go back to dinner, but it wasn’t the same as before. The Hayes left shortly after and Willow felt bad.

“Don’t feel bad Willow, they are Knox’s parents and in the end they will be in his corner.”

“True, but they have also called him out on his crap too,” Willow told her uncle.

“Your right and I do like them, but I’m on your side, always.”

Memphis pov

The atmosphere for Thanksgiving this year was different and just didn’t feel right.

Willow was gone and Gina was here.

Memphis didn’t invite her and when he asked his mother why she was here, his mother said she needed Gina’s help.

His parents were gone for about three hours which everyone found to be beyond weird. They refused to comment on their whereabouts and simply went about their day as normal. His father went back to watching the game with the men in the living room and his mother went back to the kitchen inspecting the food. The mood wasn't as festive as when they had left.

The dinner itself that was normally a happy and lively affair now was just depressing. This was more than Willow not being here, his mother was deeply sad. It seemed to radiate off of her, even Jackson noticed.

"Grandma sad?" That seemed to send her over the edge and his mom started to cry. His father went to console her while the rest of the room sat bewildered.

"Is it bad news?" Gina asked.

"Yes."

“No,” his parents answered at the very same time. His father sighed, while his mother continued to cry.

“We were invited to dinner at Willow’s,” his father started and Memphis discreetly looked to his brother who seemed hurt.

“While we were there it was told that she was up for promotion.”

“That’s great!” Memphis stated truly happy for her.

“The job is in Georgia, and she told us if she gets it, she has every intention of taking it,” his father finished. Knox’s face mirrored what Memphis felt in his heart, pure anguish. He just wasn’t allowed to show it.

“That’s lovely, I hope she gets it,” Gina said with a smile on her face.

“You are such a bitch,” Knox stated and left the room.

“What?” Gina asked.

“He’s not wrong,” Memphis added in and tried to go back to eating like everything was normal. Gina clearly wanted to say something but their son was watching with his sharp gaze.

My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter 36

The days moved on slowly and the Boston days got colder, the nights became bitterly cold. Willow who was used to sleeping with Knox had a hard time sleeping by herself. Willow couldn’t stay cold no matter how many blankets she wrapped herself in. The snow started to fall and Willow watched from her window with a sad smile on her face and a mug of hot chocolate in her hand. The Christmas season normally was her favorite time of year, but this one was going to be one full of transition. She just hoped to weather it better than her neighbors whose car was currently crashed against their garbage cans.

Tate's book released the day after Thanksgiving, one of the biggest shopping days of the year and it did very well. Willow suspected it had to do with his picture on the front displaying his muscles to draw in readers. However, it was a really compelling read if she did say so herself.

His book wasn't on the New York Times best sellers list, but she talked to her boss Mary and the predictors were that it would be on the bottom end of the list by Christmas. She was so happy for him, he poured so much work and sweat into that book. Tate had send her a few pictures from his book tour and he looked happy.

She never heard from her mother as to why she didn't show up at her Thanksgiving dinner and at this point it didn't bother her any longer. She did receive a graduation party invite to Rowan's party and Willow felt torn on how to respond. She put the invite on her table and kept it there to deal with

later. She had more pressing issues to deal with.

Willow went into the office the first week of December and found a note from Mary. It was an appointment with the big boss of the Boston branch for an interview. It was right before Christmas, so it was true. The owners were going to make a decision at the beginning of the year.

Willow had an appointment with her Doctor the next day. She was entering her third trimester now! Finally! She was happy to be entering this stage of her pregnancy, but she was dealing with the pains it brought.

Willow's low back aches constantly, she can barely sleep any longer, it's just not a good time.

Willow was excited to see what her doctor had to say.

Doctor Rayas was happy with her and her babies development other than a quick

mention of her weight gain. She had gained five pounds more than average. Willow simply shrugged her shoulders and said she hadn't been able to exercise given the fact that she was on light bedrest. Doctor Rays scolded her and told her that she needed to walk everyday. Willow buried down some irrigation and agreed to exercise some more.

Her Doctor also signed her up for birthing classes at the hospital. When she asked if they were Lamaze classes she said no. These classes help first time mothers know what to expect during labor and delivery at the hospital. They also help you care for a newborn. Willow took the information and wondered who she would go with.

Willow was doing all of her Christmas shopping online this year. She didn't have it in her to walk the stores. Willow had also been spoiled after her uncle had hired a housekeeper who cleaned and grocery shopped for her once a week.

Rowan was easy, she got him a really nice personalized briefcase since he was graduating in a week. Her father-in-law had a knife collection and she always added to it every year with a new one. She got him a new Damascus knife she found. Jackson she got him a cool Harry Potter Lego set, he loves Lego's and she loves Harry Potter so it's perfect. Willow know she shouldn't cause Knox won't get her anything or just something crappy, but she found herself looking at decent watches. Knox had been saying he wanted a nice watch earlier this year, he surely meant a Rolex but she couldn't afford it. Willow quickly bought a seiko watch within her budget before she changed her mind. Her mother in law was pretty easy. She scheduled her a spa day filled with pampering for both of them. That way they got to spend some quality time together. Memphis she honestly wasn't sure if she should get him anything or not. In years previous it was always from her and

Knox. This year seems very odd to buy him a gift when he's not even her friend let alone brother-in-law. Then she saw it as she was looking for gifts for Tate, a motorcycle leather jacket. It was an amazing steal and marked down fifty percent. Memphis had been complaining that his old one had a few holes in it. She quickly bought it before she talked herself out of it.

It was Tate and her uncle she had trouble finding gifts for. Her uncle was insanely wealthy so he could literally buy anything he wanted. Tate on the other hand moved around often and Willow wasn't sure what he would value. She spent hours searching online shops searching for gifts. She still hadn't been able to find anything as Christmas was fast approaching.

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The day of her interview came and Willow was a nervous wreck. Willow during her Christmas shopping had bought several

different outfits. When it came time for the day of the interview she tried on all of her outfits none of them looked right on her. She looked like a massive whale and her anxiety was through the roof.

She was having a massive meltdown in her bathroom when her uncle James walked in. She had given him a key several months ago so Willow wasn't surprised upon seeing him walking in. She was busy trying not to have a full scale panic attack. Her uncle sat down next to her and rubbed her back soothingly like he used to over the years when Willow cried over her father not showing up.

"What is it Willow tree?" He asked gently.

"I am a ginormous whale and I'm going to tank my interview and be stuck in this town forever!" She wailed out.

"Sweetheart you are not a whale you are pregnant," he said firmly but softly.

“My doctor told me I was gaining too much weight.” She insisted still crying.

“She’s wrong,” he said flatly. Willow couldn’t help but laugh.

“It doesn’t work like that Uncle James.” Willow responded.

“Yes it does, look at me.” Her uncle wiped her eyes as she looked into his eyes. “You are not gaining too much weight and you will rock your interview. If not then it wasn’t meant for you.” Her uncle’s reassuring words caused her to calm down enough to get off the floor and finally get dressed for the biggest interview of her life. To be fair she only had two or three. She picked out a black pencil skirt, a white shirt, and a blazer with her uncle’s help.

“There you look very professional and the blazer helps to hide your stomach, though I don’t think you need to do so.” Her uncle James told her helping soothe her anxiety and

boost her confidence a little. “Do you need a ride?” Willow shook her head negative and then asked,

“Why are you here?” Her uncle smiled at her,

“I just wanted to see how you were doing, I know how you get nervous before big events.” Willow sat down and attempted to put on some light makeup, her eyes were so puffy though.

“When was I nervous before a big event?” Willow asked.

“When you were the turkey for the thanksgiving play back in elementary,” her uncle teased her. Willow couldn’t help but laugh.

“Can you blame me? RoRo was the pilgrim that was going to cut my head off!” They both broke out into peals of laughter.

“That boy was terrified he was actually going to cut your head off,” James said and Willow responded with,

“I know. I finally just had to fall down dead cause he wouldn’t come near me.” Willow continued to put on some makeup and then asked her uncle,

“Is he ready for graduation?”

“Yup, he’s got his job lined up at and everything.”

“I got an invitation by the way,” Willow mentioned.

“Oh I wondered who he gave the other invite to, his mother is furious,” James smiled with glee.

“What do you mean?” Willow asked.

“In a lot of Ivory schools you can only have a certain number of invites. Harvard it’s two, Rowan sent his to me and it looks like you.”

Willow was beyond shocked that Rowan sent her an invite, but it is most likely cause of his issues with his mother. Willow was even more torn on what to do now.

“Speaking of Diane, how is your divorce going?” Willow asked refusing to call her aunt.

“Oh the usual, served the papers. Now she’s fighting it tooth and nail. You know how it goes,” her uncle said with a sigh and she responded with one. Yeah unfortunately she knew exactly how it went.

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Willow walked into the conference room with her anxiety all over the place. She thought it was just going to be Brent Jamison the man who ran the publishing house, but she was wrong. Mary was also here and a older woman who she didn’t recognize, though she had a kind face. She smiled at everyone and sat down in the chair that was

provided. There were no introductions given, she would be more nervous except Mary welcomed her.

“Have a seat Willow.”

“Good afternoon,” she smiled at everyone in the room. Brent remained stoic, but the woman responded with similar gestures. Willow wasn’t surprised by Brent, she had never personally interacted with him, but she had seen him around the office and he was a typical prick.

Brent pulled out a stack of books and Willow recognized them all as her books, well books she helped to edit. They had been clearly chosen by the interviewers; one was a massive flop that cost the company money, the other the author was notoriously hard to work with, and the last was Tate’s book.

“All right I’m sure you recognize all three of these books, which one if you could do it again would you not have published?” Brent

asked. Willow pretended to think long and hard about the answer, but she knew how she would respond immediately.

“I would do nothing different, I stand by my work,” Willow stated confident and she could tell Brent was a bit miffed.

“Even this book?” Brent asked lifting up the book the publishing company considered a flop.

“Have you read that book Mr. Jamison?” Willow asked and he was taken aback.

“No, I haven’t,” Brent responded.

“While it is considered to be a flop regarding sales it tells the true story of a German girl during World War One. She experienced so much of the war and us publishing that book allowed her story to be remembered. While unfortunately it’s not as popular as Anne Frank’s story, it doesn’t mean it’s not history and important. The sales are abysmal here because Americans aren’t interested in WW1

stories they want WW2 stories though if you look at overseas sales it has done quite well. The book has fared well in academia as well, which to me is just as important, so no Mr. Jamison I don't regret publishing that book," Willow stated firmly and the women smiled while Brent looked pissed off.

Shit! There goes the job.

My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter 37

Willow pov

She walked out of that interview feeling down, but she tried not to let it bother her. Mary caught on to her feelings and walked up to her.

"Hey, why don't we do some shopping if you feel up for it?" Mary asked and Willow nodded. Today was a better day for her as her back wasn't bothering her and her feet that had been swelling up weren't

today. Willow agreed and the two of them left after Mary wrapped some things up in her office.

Mary took her to an antique shop and Willow found herself getting lost in the shop. She found a couple of items that really talked spoke to her. Willow had been bouncing around the idea of making a scrapbook for her uncle, but she saw a nice photo album sitting there next to the photo frames.

Willow grabbed them both and thought she would figure it out later.

It was when she found the books that Willow truly found the jackpot. Mary had immediately gone to the book section as apparently this shop is known for having a lot of first edition books.

Willow literally gasped in shock when she saw them. It was an original “The Road Back” by Eric Remarque and right next to it an original “All Quiet on the Western Front.” Her and Tate had so many conversations

about these books. Tate had read the first book, but not the second one. Willow had read the second as it was assigned to her for a course. She fell in love with the book and was astonished to see both books here. She quickly took the items to the front before she changed her mind. The total amount was going to hurt her bank account for the next month, but she knew it would be worth it to see Tate's face light up. She left the shop in a good mood knowing she was just about done with her Christmas shopping.

Knox pov

Life was so hard without his wife. He had never realized how much he had taken advantage of his wife, of his Willow until he was back in his own apartment. Yeah he meant the cooking and cleaning but it was more than that. Willow encouraged him when he wasn't pushing himself, and was there for him when he was down.

Knox hated sleeping alone, without his wife to hold onto. He knew he should stop referring Willow as his wife as they were legally separated. Knox just couldn't, he just looked at their old photos when they were happy. It hurt but it also helped to keep him focused on getting his life back together. It was December and his daughter would be here in February. It physically pained him to hear that Willow may be moving away. Knox knew it made him a bad guy to hope that she wouldn't get the job, but it's not like he was winning any upstanding citizen awards as it was.

Knox surveyed his apartment and it felt just depressing as Christmas was approaching. Willow was the one who loved Christmas, he could care less about the whole ordeal.

Knox remembered their first Christmas in their crappy little studio apartment right off campus. Willow came home one Saturday from her shift at a diner all excited cause she

managed to find a busted little Christmas tree. Willow put it up and decorated the small delapidated thing and when she was done looked at him with gleeful eyes. 'How does it look?' He couldn't say anything but, 'Amazing baby.'

Willow squealing in excitement and they had amazing, passionate lovemaking next to that shitty little tree all night. That was the first Christmas he brought Willow home as well and he knew he would marry her. Who knew that he would blow up his relationship in less than ten years?

Knox just had to inspire to the finer side of things, not realizing how truly poisonous it truly was. Regina had been reaching out to him again and so had Gina. He knew he should block them both as talking to both women is what ruined his marriage and relationship with his brother. His brother was such a better man than him and Knox always knew it. That is why jealousy always

festered inside him and it ruined him. Knox felt his phone vibrate in his hand.

Gina: you busy tonight? I can show you what you've always been missing out on 😊

Knox held his phone and looked at his daughters nursery debating what to do for ten minutes before finally making a decision. He quickly shot Gina a text back and left his daughters nursery.

Willow pov

She went to Rowan's graduation. The speech's were long, the seats were hard, and she was so uncomfortable. The look on Diane and Regina's faces though, that was priceless. The two of them had gone to the graduation expecting to be able to get in on their name alone. They were fighting with the attendant when her and Uncle James walked up. Uncle James's presence was enough to keep the women silent as the two of them presented their invitations and their

jaws dropped to the floor and they were waved in. Willow couldn't help but be a bit petty and give them both a wave as the two of them walked past.

The ceremony last two hours and Willow was miserable. She did some last minute online shopping and played games on her phone. Willow got a look from her uncle, but she just gave him a smile. Willow perked up when her uncle James nudged her with his elbow. That must of meant that Rowan was getting close.

“Rowan Cunningham, Cum Lade,” his name was announced and Willow started cheering for him while Uncle James let out a sharp whistle with his fingers. Rowan managed to find them despite being hundred of people in the audience and gave the two of them a big smile. There was cheering until Rowan left the stage.

When the ceremony was finally over the two of them waited for Rowan to give him “congratulations.”

Rowan came out to them quickly with a huge smile on his face and swept her into a hug.

“I’m so glad you came Will!” He said in her ear, Willow smiled and hugged him back despite the fact that her back was killing her. Those damn chairs!

“Congratulations!” She told him when he pulled back. Rowan looked to his father and put his hand out. James ignored that and pulled his son in for a hug. James whispered something in Rowan’s ear that Willow couldn’t hear, and when Rowan pulled back he had tears in his eyes.

“Hey why don’t we go out for dinner?” Rowan asked. Willow looked shocked and so did uncle James.

“I figured you would go out with your friends one last time son,” uncle James

stated. Rowan started to shake his head when a man of similar age and build as Rowan walked up.

“Hey Cunningham, you ready to go? We have reservations in an hour.” Willow looked her to her uncle who had a smirk on his face. The man looked and realized it was James Cunningham and his face blanched, “I’m sorry sir!”

“It’s all right,” James turned to his son. “I’m proud of you son, Willow tree I’ll go get the car,” Willow nodded.

“You can come with us,” Rowan said and Willow laughed and walked much slower to the exit.

“It’s okay, RoRo, go have fun with your friends like uncle James said.” Rowan followed her and helped her as the place was super crowded and people were bumping into each other.

“You really can,” Rowan tried again.

“Rowan, I’m pregnant I’d definitely be a bore for you and your Harvard friends,” Willow stated.

“Please don’t talk bad about yourself like that,” Rowan said.

“It’s all I’ve ever known, you know that better than anyone,” Willow said with a little heat.

“Willow-“ Rowan started but Willow cut him off.

“I got you something it’s a Christmas/graduation gift, your father is coming over Christmas morning. You are more than welcome to come,” Willow stated as they made it outside. Rowan was about to respond when they heard a bellowing screech.

“Rowan Cunningham!” Willow looked to two both Regina and Diane stomping toward them.

“They waited this whole time!” Willow asked shocked.

“The ceremony was three hours!” Rowan said in horror. The woman were closing in on them when a sharp voice halted them.

“Diane!” The women both looked at uncle James’s face that was filled with anger. “I told you to leave as our son doesn’t want you here.” James turned to us, “kids in the car.” The two of them felt like children again as they got in the car and uncle James drove away. Rowan was dropped off by his buddies, but he turned around before uncle James took off,

“I’ll see you for Christmas!”

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The week leading up to Christmas was filled with work, wrapping presents, and a lot of baking. Her housekeeper Bertha helped her quite a bit and Willow appreciated her extra time. Bertha was of course being paid, but

Willow sent Bertha home with gifts for her and her children. Bertha was so thankful when Willow first presented them to her she cried. Willow was surprised by the outburst but Bertha told her that none of her employers gave her any sort of Christmas bonus and things were tight for her this year. Willow went to her room and grabbed some extra cash and sent her on her way.

Willow dropped off the Christmas presents as well as lot of baked goods to her former in-laws on the twenty-second. Martha wasn't much of a baker and had started relying on Willow for deserts on Christmas. Martha thankfully was the only one home and promised to visit with her father-in-law sometime in the evening.

The last few days leading up to Christmas was finishing her uncle's gift as his was a lot of work. Willow's work was closed as it was a family business. This was a blessing and a curse as she wasn't getting paid for her time

off work. She only got paid for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Willow tried to focus on her uncle's and Tate's gift. She also went to her parents house when she knew her parents weren't home and went through their photo albums. She also made a pit stop at her uncle's house while he was at work as well. Willow managed to find quite a few pictures when she was younger, but as she got older the pictures were few and further in-between. She had the few recent ones printed out, such as from her gender reveal party and her divorce party. Her uncle also had taken a picture of her during her graduation from college as well. Though one could see the interaction seems forced. Willow isn't sure if she wants to include these in the photo album or not.

Willow hadn't heard much from Tate this past week and it always made her sad when she didn't get to talk to him. Then on the

twenty-third he gave her a call. The two of them didn't talk on the phone much so she was nervous. He told her that he wasn't sure if he could make it back to Boston on time for Christmas. Willow understood but she was still sad. She had everything done, she had no work to do, the only left was to focus on her work Christmas party tomorrow. The rest of her holiday was mainly spent alone. This new reality was depressing until she rubbed her belly and realized she wouldn't be alone for long. Her daughter would be with her soon.

My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter 38

Tate pov

He hung up the phone with Willow feeling like utter horseshit. Tate knew Willow wanted him to spend the holiday with her and there was nowhere else he wanted to be. He looked out the giant plexiglass windows

of O'Hare airport and there was nothing but ice and snow on the runway. God he hated the Midwest and the east coast, basically anywhere that had snow.

He also hated this damn book tour and was glad it was over. While there were about half of the people that showed up were veterans who were inspired by his story or wanted to support him. When veterans showed up state was always humbled by their support and words of encouragement.

The bulk of the people who showed up were women and wannabe's. The woman all slipped their number into his pocket while giving him a hug and pushing their boobs into his chest while posing for pictures. Tate gritted his teeth through it all but threw all the numbers away as they made him feel repulsed.

The wannabes were all men who came up to him boasting about how they could all join the special forces if they wanted too. Tate

forced a smile and thanked them for buying his book. God he hated that crap. If everyone could do it then why didn't they?

The absolute worst though was his publicist, who has been trying to sleep with him since he started this book tour. Gloria had tried every step of the way to get in his pants and before he might have slept with the woman. Now her desperation just repulsed him. She was always near him, asking him out to dinner, trying to play footsie with him, or running her hand all over him. It started off subtle, but apparently he couldn't possibly be interested so Gloria ramped up her seduction tactics. The woman was even jealous of other woman who came to the book signings like he belonged to her. It was crazy and Tate had enough.

It was last night and their last night in the same hotel together. Tate came out of the shower and he found her in his bed naked. He had his towel low on his hips and Tate

won't lie he stared at her body. Though all he could do was compare Gloria to Willow. That woman just came up short in every area, she was too desperate, too skinny, too orange. Tate wanted Willows curves, her adorable shyness that drew him in, not to mention her natural skin tone.

"Come on, you know you want me," Gloria purred. Apparently him standing there thinking of another woman for a minute gave Gloria the wrong idea. Tate couldn't deny that he was a prick at this moment as he took the towel off and showed her his still limp dick. Tate went to grab his clothes and wanted this woman out of here.

"Clearly not, now get out. I put up with this crap the entire trip. You need to get the memo," he said as he put on his boxer briefs that fit him like a glove. "I'm not interested." The woman huffed,

“Well I never!” Gloria got out of his bed in a huff and Tate got dressed and left the hotel for the airport.

His flight was supposed to leave tonight and he would be in Boston for Christmas Eve to spend with Willow and his buddies. When he got there he found out that his flight was delayed and when he asked the frazzled woman behind the desk she said indefinitely. He groaned but didn't take his frustration out on the poor woman who was dealing with enough already.

Tate quickly went to the car rental place and got in the very long line. He stood in that line for over an hour. He finally got to the front and was informed the only car that was available was a Chevy Cruz. He was pissed but he got it anyways as he didn't have a choice.

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Tate was fifteen hours in and should normally be in Massachusetts by now as it's only a sixteen hour drive. However, the roads were pure shit, the drivers were being fools, and this damn car was a death trap. His neck had a crick in it from having to keep his head tilted as the damn car was too small.

He hated winter.

He pulled over and got some gas, stretched his neck and got back on the road. It was noon and he was only on the western part of New York. Tate still had a hell of a drive to go before he got to Boston.

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He finally made it to Boston, it was six in the evening and fully dark by the time he pulled into Willow's neighborhood. He turned off his lights before pulling into her driveway. He looked into her bay window and there she was. She looked so sad sitting there next

to her lighted Christmas tree. Tate got out of the car and continued to look at her. What was she drinking? Probably hot chocolate. The driving for a whole day was worth it to see her face. Tate pulled out his phone and sent her a quick text.

Me: Look out the window.

He watched her pick up her phone and she immediately whipped up and looked in his direction. She immediately smiled and her face transformed into one of pure delight. His chest felt light in a way he hadn't felt since he left her. Tate walked up to the porch and as he reached the porch Willow opened the door. Before he could think he leaned in for a kiss and thankfully Willow returned his kiss with equal intensity. Tate pulled back and he smiled before placing a hand on her belly,

"I missed you both so much." Willow smiled and led him in the house.

“I missed you too Tate, I’m so glad your here.”

Memphis pov

Shock, that’s all he could feel at this moment as he stared down the present Willow had got him. Once he started his own family the Hayes family tradition became to open presents on Christmas Eve and then to eat dinner Christmas morning. The whole family was shocked minus his mother who handed the gifts out that Willow still bought the family gifts, including Knox who hurt her so badly. The only one who didn’t get a gift was Gina. Memphis opened his gift and was still in shock five minutes later looking at it.

It was the nicest leather jacket he had ever seen, let alone owned.

“It’s probably not even real leather,” Gina whispered. Memphis knew it was real leather, but checked the tag anyway and low

and behold “100% leather.” Gina just mumbled under her breath.

It was the nicest and most thoughtful gift he he got this year, for the past several years actually. Memphis looked at his son who was putting together his Lego set given by her. He loved that woman, he was done denying that he was in love with Willow. Memphis got up and walked out the door with Gina hot on his heels.

“Memphis where are you going?” He ignored her and honestly he could tell her and Knox had started sleeping together. The two of them had not only been given each other glances, but have been touching each other when they thought no one saw. The only one who didn’t see was Jackson.

Honestly it made things easier for him, Memphis wasn’t the least bit bothered by it. He looked at his brother who had just opened up his watch and literally had tears in his eyes. His brother was never going to

learn and Memphis was tired of being the good guy.

“Gina you need to get over your jealousy,” Memphis stated and walked out the door.

It took longer than he wanted to drive over to Willow’s place as the roads were covered in snow. Memphis finally made it, but it seemed that he wasn’t the only one.

Memphis gripped the steering wheel hard, his knuckles turning white as he saw the two of them kissing. It seemed that him trying to figure out his issues drove Willow into the arms of another man.

Memphis returned home still stinging over what he saw. When he came home Memphis didn’t react to seeing Gina and Knox cuddling together on the couch.

“Where’s Jackson?” He asked walking into the room and his brother threw Gina off of her. Memphis didn’t say anything as he truly didn’t care.

“He’s asleep,” Gina stated. “What’s wrong? Your precious Willow refuse you?” She sneered. Memphis didn’t respond and started to walk off but Knox stopped him with a hand on his shoulder.

“Remove your hand Knox,” he stated lethally. His brother realized he was serious and removed his hand,

“What is she talking about?” Knox asked.

“It’s none of your business, just like it’s not my business you are banging my ex-wife, just wrap it up. I don’t need to explain to my son why his next brother will also be his cousin,” he voice was so lethal that Knox pulled back. Memphis had never treated his little brother this way, but it has become increasingly clear his little brother didn’t view him as family.

Memphis has finally come to the conclusion that he missed out on an amazing woman for a man who clearly wouldn’t help him if he

was dying. Memphis would never regret anything more in his life than how he treated Willow, he can only hope one day in the future that he can redeem himself.

My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter 39

Willow pov

Warm, she woke up feeling so warm for the first time since winter set in. Willow opened her eyes and could tell it was early morning. She always woke up early on Christmas morning, even after she grew older and the presents from her parents still weren't the best. The anticipation was still there, what this magical day could bring.

Willow looked and saw Tate's hand on her protruding stomach and couldn't help but smile. She remembered last night feeling so lonely after her work party. The party wasn't too bad, she got Todd in the Secret Santa and he got her some crappy stationary that had a

‘T’ on it. Willow pasted a smile on her face and enjoyed the party, but she didn’t hear from Tate at all that day. She was so bummed that she didn’t hear from him, but figured that he was having fun celebrating the end of his book tour.

Willow returned home that night and made herself her mother’s homemade hot chocolate with whipped cream and sprinkles on top. She sat there drinking her drink while staring at her tree, but not really looking at it. She was just thinking of her life.

When she received the text from Tate telling her to look outside she fully expected to see a package that had been delivered in her driveway. While most places don’t deliver on Christmas Eve, there are the few who do for the right price. Willow in a million years will never forget seeing Tate’s smile as he stood there next to that ridiculously small car.

Willow opened the door and before she could get a word out he was bending down and

kissing her. It was amazing and truly more than anything she could have imagine and Willow would be lying if she said she didn't do quite a bit of imaging.

Tate came inside and they drank the rest of the hot chocolate before Tate went to take a shower. He came out in nothing but a pair of boxer briefs and Willow felt herself drool a little. He was definitely the sexiest man she had ever laid eyes on. Tate didn't say anything, he just asked if he was sleeping on the couch? Willow told him that he could sleep wherever he liked and walked into her room. Tate followed shortly after and they settled into bed. They made out like teenagers, but Willow just wasn't ready for anything given she was massively pregnant. They eventually fell asleep cuddled together.

Which brings Willow to Christmas morning cuddled together and her savoring every moment.

“I know you are awake,” Tate whispered in her ear while rubbing her belly. Willow could feel his massive erection poking her in the butt, but she didn’t mention it. That thing didn’t exist at the moment.

“Am not,” she responded with a smile thinking of his comment.

“Oh yeah? Then what do you call this?” He asked and Willow thought for a few moments.

“A dream,” she responded and Tate rolled her over and gave her a dazzling smile before giving her a sweet kiss.

“I guess I have to agree with you.” Tate went in for another kiss when suddenly—

Ding-dong. Rate groaned at the intrusion and Willow couldn’t help but giggle at the look on his face.

Her doorbell rang again and she quickly got out of bed and her bladder decided to make itself known.

“Its open!” She yelled passing the door and ran to the bathroom. She quickly went to the bathroom and did her business. Willow came out to see her uncle James and RoRo in her living room while uncle James were putting the presents under the tree. Willow still dressed in her Christmas pajamas so Willow decided to indulge in being a kid again before she became a mom herself.

“Ohh! Presents, what do I get?” Willow grabbed one and shook it while holding it next to her ear. Her uncle James smiled,

“Oh! It’s an easy bake oven! Or a cabbage patch kid!” Willow named the two famous toys that she always wanted that her parents never got her, but her uncle did.

“Not this year kiddo.” He said with an indulgent smile on his face.

“It’s ok uncle, last thing I need is RoRo cutting the head off my doll again,” Willow gave Rowan a look.

“I said I was sorry! I even tried to glue it back on!” Rowan said with embarrassment ringing his ears and her uncle laughed.

“The head fell right back off the second I held it! I was traumatized!” Willow said outraged. Unbeknownst to the other men in the room Tate had walked in and started laughing. They turned and smiled at the new addition. He looked amazing with his slightly distressed jeans and tight black T-shirt.

“It’s not funny Tate! I still have nightmares,” Willow said in mock anger. Tate walked up to her and pulled her to him by her waist,

“Aww I’m sorry.” He gave her a quick kiss on her head and Willow couldn’t help but blush.

“All right do we want breakfast or presents first?” Willow asked.

“Breakfast,” the men responded somewhat in unison.

“I’ll help,” Tate responded.

“I mainly just need to make the eggs, bacon, and sausage ,” Willow responded as she started getting out stuff. Willow had made several pastries the day before such as cinnamon rolls, scones, muffins, and croissants. Her and Tate quickly fried up the meat and laid out the food buffet style.

Tate let everyone get their fill and then quickly grabbed the rest of the food for himself. His plate was piled high with food. Willow wished she knew where he put it.

“Willow your cooking gets better every time I eat it,” her uncle James complimented her. The other men who were too busy eating simply just nodded their heads while grunting.

“Well I bought the croissants, but I made the rest.” Willow didn’t like the attention on her,

so she shifted it to the presents. Willow went to the Christmas tree and found Rowan's present and quickly handed it to him.

"Here RoRo, this is also a graduation gift," Willow stated as she handed Rowan his gift. Rowan opened the personalized old school briefcase and he couldn't help but smile.

"It looks just like dads," Rowan commented.

"Yeah it took me forever to find it, but I remember how much you playing with it when were kids and saying when you were a lawyer you were going to have one just like it," Willow commented with a smile.

"Thanks Willow," Rowan stated and gave her a tight hug.

Willow was super nervous to give her uncle his gifts as they didn't cost that much money.

"Here uncle James, I hope you like them," Willow said and Tate held her hand as he

could tell she was nervous. He opened the framed photo first.

“Willow this is-“ he started but she cut him off.

“Yeah Aunt Camilla sent that to me, she snapped it when we weren’t looking I guess. I thought it was such a good picture and decided to frame it. I got one for me I need to hang up, I thought you might like it too..” Willow started to ramble while not looking at her uncle until he wrapped her in a hug.

“I love it Willow.” Willow returned the hug and then gave him the last gift and he opened quickly as well.

“I went on a scavenger hunt for our best photos, I even braved my parents house.” Uncle James laughed and Willow could see tears in his eye as he quickly flipped through the pictures.

“I love it Willow,” uncles James stated

“Hell, I just got you cigars and your favorite whiskey,” Rowan stated and her uncle laughed.

“Johnny Walker Blue is a fine gift,” her uncle responded as he quickly opened her sons gift of the whiskey.

“I didn’t get you anything,” Tate chimed in. Her uncle gave him a shrewd look,

“We both know that isn’t true,” her uncle responded and Willow was confused. Though her uncle gave her his gifts and they were much appreciated. Her uncle got her a three person week long trip to one of his luxury resorts any where in the world.

“Wow uncle James this is too much,” Willow said overwhelmed.

“It has no expectation date, I know you will be overwhelmed with the baby so just wait a few months or a year and just call up my travel agent and she will take care of everything.” Willow gave him a big hug and

then there were a few more gifts open, but nothing much. Tate refused his gifts until he had hers, Willow was beyond surprised that state had gotten her something.

“Are you still having dinner tonight?” Her uncle asked as Rowan excused himself to go to the bathroom.

“Yeah, Tate is leaving for a bit as he hasn’t been back home and we are going to do something small like Thanksgiving.”

“I wish I could come, but-“

“You have your annual Christmas party that I refuse to be apart of, don’t worry uncle James I get it, and I’m so glad you came,” Willow said hugging her uncle.

When everyone left Willow went to lay down for a bit before she started dinner when she saw it. There was a tiny box with a note on it. She opened the box and saw two identical necklaces, though one was smaller than the other. They both had a tiny giraffe charm

attached to a beautiful dainty silver necklace. The only difference was the initial that was in each necklace. The adult one clearly was for her as it had a 'W' and the child had an 'A.'

Willow opened the letter and read.

Willow

I know I don't deserve your forgiveness, but I am truly sorry for what I have done for you. I love you very much and can only hope one day you know that I did it for your own best interest.

Yours Always

RoRo

Willow was confused by what Rowan meant by protecting her, how was he protecting her.

Willow fingered the A charm with a smile on her face. When they were little they had

always joked about having tree names and so did their classmates. It didn't bother Rowan until high school. When the two of them were in junior high they used to joke that they would name their kids tree names as well. They looked up tree names all for the sake of good fun until Rowan seemed to come across a name he really liked. Aspen, Rowan thought it was a great name for our first baby. Willow rubbed her belly and she couldn't lie saying she hadn't thought about the name during her pregnancy as she had grown to love it as well. Willow had thought of other names as well; Laurel, Ash, or Hazel. She always just came back to Aspen for some reason.

Willow closed the box, put the letter back in its envelope, and put the gift in her bedside dresser. This was a problem she would think about another day.

**My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter
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Rowan pov

He left the gift for Willow in her room when he went to the bathroom. Rowan originally was so excited to give it to her, but then that guy walked out of her bedroom and he just chickened out.

“Wuss out?” His dad asked as they got into the car. Rowan didn’t respond as they started to drive away. His dad started to laugh,

“You’re one to talk, you are still letting mom come to the party tonight,” he pointed out and his father didn’t look happy with that.

“Yeah, well she promised to bring the signed divorce papers tonight.” He gave his dad a look,

“Well it seems we aren’t so different after all then?”

“Am I dropping you off at your apartment?” His father asked after a moment.

“No just take me back home, the party is there anyway,” Rowan commented and he didn’t want to have to deal with Regina until then.

Rowan looked at the briefcase Willow got him and couldn’t help the smile that formed his face. It was the exact replica of the one his father used for ten years. His dad even gave it to him when the suitcase was retired and a new one was bought. Rowan laughed thinking of all the mock trials he and Willow had over the years. He threw a massive fit when his mother threw it out one summer while he was away at camp. He didn’t talk to her for a week.

When he arrived back to his childhood home he went to his room and sat on the bed reliving all the memories the two of them shared. He remembered one Christmas he picked out a ring, when he gave it to Willow it was a promise he would marry her someday.

Rowan opened the briefcase and came across three pictures of him and Willow. Rowan smiled as he looked at them before replacing them in his new briefcase.

Rowan thought of Regina and the fact that she hadn't gotten him a single gift for Christmas in the entire time they had been together. This year he finally grown balls and decided to get her what she gotten him. Nothing. Honestly he didn't expect anything from Willow this year, she didn't get him anything for the past few years. He was beyond shocked she had gotten him something, he was pleasantly surprised though.

Tate pov

God he couldn't believe this, he was nervous. Tate honestly couldn't remember the last time he was nervous. His buddies showed up at his place midafternoon ready to go. He had already returned that death trap of a car and uberred home. He spent his Christmas

Day showering and running his hands over the gift he got Willow unsure.

His buddies joked that it was going to be a ring and he was going to propose to his one and only true love. Johnson got himself a slug in the arm over that. It wasn't that Tate didn't see a forever with Willow and her daughter because he did and that scared the fuck out of him. Willow was a forever type girl and he wasn't sure if he was the forever type of a guy.

Tate got married when he was young and dumb in his mid-twenties. He felt lonely and his ex didn't want to marry him, Layla just wanted to marry a special forces soldier and be a military wife. It ended the way those marriages always ends. She slept with other men and a bitter divorce ensued for both of them. Tate hadn't heard from her since she called him an emotionless robot. He didn't disagree with Layla's assessment as that's what she made him.

...

Tate and his friends ended up over at Willows at three in the afternoon. She looked tired but happy to see them. They quickly came into her house and started getting rowdy.

“Hey I better open my presents now,” Benson laughed and immediately went for the Christmas tree. Willow laughed and Tate went after him.

“None of those presents are for you shithead!” Tate screamed as they started wrestling.

“Wait! One has my name on it!” Benson cried holding up a present.

“No it does not!” Tate screamed and grabbed the gift away from him. He read the name tag and sure enough it read “Benson” on it. Benson grabbed it back out of his hands and said smugly,

“Told you so fucker!” Tate looked at Willow who simply shrugged her shoulders,

“I got everyone a small gift. I hope they like it.” Tate was beyond shocked that Willow had gotten them anything. The guys all dove for the tree and had tore open their gifts.

“Willow you didn’t have to do that,” he said walking up to her as she watched the guys open the gifts with a smile on her face. The gifts were smallish things like tactical knives, a flask, heat gear, but they were nice. The men had a secret Santa within the unit and for the men that came what Willow got them would be their second gift this year. Tate knew the men were definitely touched by Willow getting them a gift.

“Uncle James helped me, do you like them? Willow asked clearly nervous.

“Yes ma’am!” Benson said and the others echoed.

“Just one question,” Johnson asked and then shut his mouth when Tate gave him a glare. Willow laughed,

“No it’s okay, what’s your question?”

“They want to trade,” Tate stated frustrated.

“As long as you don’t fight like little kids, that’s fine.” Tate was surprised how well Willow handled having these grow ass babies kids in her home. The said kids quickly traded their gifts, each knowing what gift suited the other wanted. They smiled happily at each other,

“Don’t you have something you want to say?”

“Yeah, when’s dinner?” Johnson asked which earned a hard punch in the shoulder from him.

“Ow! I was only joking!” Johnson responded.

“Thank you ma’am,” was chorused rang out in the living room and then they immediately began to start picking up the mess they had made. Willow went to the kitchen and he followed.

Dinner wasn’t like Thanksgiving and Tate wasn’t by any means complaining. There was ham, and plenty of sides to eat. It was quickly plated up and devoured by the men sitting at the table.

When dinner was over Willow got up to clean the table but Tate stopped her.

“No Willow, you cooked we will clean up.”

“We will?” Johnson asked and got a shoulder punch from Benson.

“Of course we will, why don’t you rest.”

“Okay,” Willow sat down and put on a Christmas movie. It wasn’t until he sat down and saw that she put on “Elf” and he couldn’t help but smile.

“I love this movie!” Benson laughed as Ferrell sprayed perfume in his mouth and everyone else laughed as well. Tate settled into the couch next to Willow and rubbed a hand over her belly. He couldn’t remember having such a nice Christmas such as this one before.

...

It was after the guys left that the two of them finally decided to exchange gifts.

“I’m a little nervous I hope you like it,” Willow said as she handed him two gifts. He opened one that was clearly a book, but was still surprised and delighted to find “All Quiet on the Western Front.” He quickly thumbed through it and saw that it was an original edition and realized it was definitely more expensive than he thought. They had spent so many conversations about this writer.

“This is amazing Willow! I love it,” Tate said looking up at her and smiling.

“The sequel was my gift to myself, they were a pair,” Willow said smiling. “Here I got you this as well, Johnson helped me with it as well.” Tate opened it and was surprised to find a simple locket, when he opened it he almost cried. On the right was a picture of his unit, but on the left was a picture of his grandfather and him. His grandfather was the only male figure he had in his life and when he died Tate’s life went to hell.

“I’m not sure if you like it, I know it’s old-school and probably lame,” Willow started to ramble on and Tate was honestly so choked up he couldn’t reassure her. When he was gone on missions he wasn’t allowed to bring his cell phone. Security risks. He would have killed for something like this, and he loves it so much more knowing she made it for him. The pictures were placed in the locket

clearly dine by a professional and looked amazing!

“Tate?” Willow asked unsure.

“I love it,” is all he could rasp out. Willow’s eyes light up at hearing he loved the gift. Tate presented her with his gift and Willow opened it slowly. Tate was just as nervous as he waited for her judgment of his gift. Thankfully he didn’t have to wait long. Her face alighted with surprise and delight.

“Tate I have never had anything this beautiful before! I love it!” Willow looked at the delicate charm bracelet he painstakingly picked out for her. The charms each represented different aspects of her personality that he had come to love, there was a book charm, an old school pram, a giraffe, a four leaf clover, a globe as she loved to travel, an initial W, and a US Army emblem. That one represented himself, he couldn’t help himself. There were a few others but those he loved the most.

“Here let me put it on you,” he said after a moment of her admiring the bracelet. Willow smiled and held out her hand patiently. He was glad as it took several tries to get the damn clasp done. Willow laughs slightly,

“Funny is it?” He asked and Willow nodded trying to smother her smile.

“Well do you think this is funny?” He asked and swooped in for a quick kiss that he had been dying to do all day. When he pulled away Willow looked at him with a serious expression on her face.

“No it’s not funny.” Tate finally looked down and managed to clasp the bracelet.

“There you go beautiful.”

“Come on Tate, don’t make fun of me,” Willow said looking away from him. Tate grabbed her by chin and turned her to look him in the eye.

“Willow, I find you the most beautiful thing in the world, both inside and out.”

“Tate I...” Willow clearly didn’t know what to say so Tate simply told her what he thought was best.

“How about we go to bed?” Willow simply nodded her head and the two of them went to the bedroom.