

My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter 41

Willow pov

Stop sweating!!! Willow starts fanning herself as she checks the time again. Crap. Ten minutes until Tate gets here. She slathers on more deodorant and waves her arms about like a chicken. Willow hasn't been on a date in over five years. She is so nervous, not to mention ginormous. Willow thinks back to her Christmas evening laying in bed with Tate. That was just magical, but there was nothing more than just kissing. She wasn't ready and honestly being this pregnant didn't feel right. Even if the man acted more like the babies father than her actual father. Tate showed up the next day with another present that he accidentally left behind and it was a pink giraffe outfit. It was so cute she actually cried. That is when he asked her out on a date Saturday night.

So here she was freaking out about going on an actual date with Tate, a man that was so far out of her league he could be in another galaxy. Willow also couldn't figure out what to wear as nothing fit her and she couldn't afford those cute maternity clothes. Knox's alimony payments literally just covered the mortgage payments, she had to cover everything else on forty grand a year. This is why she was hoping she got the new job as she saw the cost of living in Georgia was lower than Massachusetts.

Ding-Dong! Willow heard the bell ringing pulling her out of her thoughts and sending her into a panic.

“Coming!” She yelled while looking at herself in the mirror once more before going to her door. Willow was surprised that Tate wasn't in her house. She walked to the door and opened it to find Tate standing there with a bouquet of flowers and a smile that could light up a room.

“Good evening beautiful,” Tate greeted with a smile that lit up his face and did funny things to her insides.

“Hey Tate!”

“These are for you,” Tate handed her the flowers and stepped inside while shutting the door.

“Thank you! They are beautiful,” Willow said with a blush. She quickly went to get a tall glass as she didn’t have a vase.

“There,” she said with a smile as she placed the flowers in the glass.

“Ready?” He asked breaking Willow away from smelling the flowers, she nodded quickly turning around to grab her purse.

“Where are we going?” She asked ados Tate led her out the door.

“You will see...”

“Ohh come on you have to tell me!!” Willow cried out.

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Tate took her to the Paul Revere House, and she had a blast. Willow went to the museum when she was in like third grade so it was nice to see the museum with fresh, adult eyes. Now they were at a small restaurant Tate claimed to have the best burgers in Boston. Willow gave him a side eye but was more than willing to try the hole in the wall diner. They often had the best foods.

Tate helped her settle down in a booth and then sat across from her. Tate handed her a menu and Willow quickly perused the menu when a young woman came up to them eyeing Tate the whole way.

“What can I get you to drink?” The waitress said with a flirty smile.

“Water please,” Willow asked and she looked back down at the menu.

“Same,” Tate responded curtly. The waitress walked off. The menu had a lot of variation burgers.

“What are you getting?” Willow asked as she saw Tate wasn’t looking at the menu, just as her looking at the menu.

“Triple bacon burger,” he responded with no hesitation. Willow let out a small laugh as the waitress came back with their water. She sat it down.

“There you are, do you know what you want?” She asked Tate while ignoring her.

“Do you know what you want babe?” He asked sending shivers through her. Willow nodded looking back at the menu.

“Okay well I’ll take the triple bacon burger with extra fries.”

“All right you want everything on it?” She asked.

“No onions,” they both answered and Tate smiled at her. The waitresses frowned and finally looked at her,

“And you.”

“The Hawaiian burger please,” Willow asked. The woman turned around and left rudely.

“I’m sorry about that,” Tate said loudly enough for her to hear.

“It’s not your fault, so what was your favorite part of the museum?” Willow asked getting back to them.

“The silver collection was really interesting,” Tate responded surprising her. “What about you?”

“The lantern,” Willow stated giving the cliché answer and Tate clearly wasn’t surprised. Willow had stayed at the lantern for at least fifteen minutes reading the plaque and staring at the amazing piece of

early American history. Tate let out a tiny chuckle and grabbed her hand.

“I was surprised that is where you took me though?”

“Where did you think we would go?” Tate asked with a smile.

“The movies,” Willow responded with a smile. Tate shook his head?

“That’s weak!” Willow couldn’t help but laugh at his response. Their banter was broken up by the waitress rudely putting down their plates on the table.

“How does it look?”

“Good thank you,” Willow responded but Tate was silent. The woman finally left and they got down to eating.

“Why is yours called Hawaiian?”

“It has pineapple and Canadian bacon on it, want it?” Willow asked and removed the

ham. He took it and popped it right into his mouth.

“Why didn’t you order it without the ham?” Tate asked.

“The waitress isn’t very nice,” Willow responded and bit into her burger.

“Mmmmm.” She moaned as the first bite of her burger hit her taste buds.

“Told you,” Tate said around a mouth full of his own food.

“Please, it’s good but it’s not like it’s the best burger I’ve ever had!” Willow said while munching on a fry.

“Oh yeah? Where was the best burger you’ve ever had?” He asked as he took a huge mouthful of his burger.

“There was a hole in the wall shop just outside of Reno. It had the best burger I think I’ve ever had,” Willow said remembering. “So why did you take me to

the museum tonight? Out of everywhere in Boston?” She asked him before taking another bite of her burger.

“Well, that’s easy. You love history and I figured you hadn’t been to your local stops in awhile.” She laughed and nodded her head,

“Guilty, it was I think our third grade field trip.” Tate smiled,

“Yeah, it’s also the dead of winter and my options are limited.”

“Very true! The snow tends to limit you,” Willow responded.

They spent the rest of their time eating and talking like normal. However, now there was an additional sexual tension in the air that Willow was looking forward to exploring. Tate paid the bill despite her wanting to go Dutch, he was adamant that he was a gentlemen.

Tate returned her to her house that night early, it was only 10:30. Tate walked her to her door,

“Do you want to come in?” Willow asked fully expecting him to say yes and spend the night.

“I’m sorry I can’t,” Tate told her with a shake of his head. Willow turned around and gave him a confused look.

“I have to leave in the morning at 0500, it’s also why our date is so early,” Tate responded with a rueful smile.

“When will you be back?” Willow asked.

“Hopefully within a week,” Tate said and leaned in and gave her a searing kiss.

“I’ll miss you,” she told him lowly when he pulled back slightly.

“I’ll miss you too, I always do,” Tate responded and gave her another deep kiss

where he slipped in some tongue. Their mouths fused together, and Willow wrapped her hands around his shoulders. He finally pulled away with a pained look in his eye, “I’ll text when I can.”

“Be safe,” Willow said as she went in the house. She watched Tate leave and hated every minute of it, but she knew who Tate was when she met him.

James pov

His ducks were all in a row and he was getting ready to execute them. The Silverton’s only had two businesses left where Silverton was the primary stockholder. James had spent the last several months buying stocks in the rest of his businesses. The fool wasn’t even aware he had been bought out. This is what happens when a person overextends themselves. He had a meeting with the Silverton’s and his

son in an hour. It was time to end this nonsense.

The whole Silvertown family walked into his office where he and Rowan were sitting like they owned the place. Mrs. Silvertown though, she was a nice woman who didn't deserve what was going to happen to her. Her maiden name was Gleason and she was from old family money which is how Silvertown got the money to start his first two businesses.

"What is the meeting about Mr. Cunningham?" Mrs. Silvertown asked nicely while the other two sat haughtily. James stood up and walked around his desk,

"Several months ago something came to my attention that angered me a great deal." James said looking from Regina to Mr. Silvertown.

"Regina here has been blackmailing my son for years with sex videos as well as pictures. Which at the time they were taken make

them child pornography and as everyone knows is a federal offense,” he said lethally causing the repulsive Regina woman to shrink down in her seat.

“What?” Mrs. Silverton asked in horror.

“The worst part is this vile human being has naked pictures of Willow which is the true reason my son has been with you for the past several years, it’s not that he likes you.”

“That’s a lie! Rowan loves me!” Regina screamed out. James was livid by this whole situation and finally had an outlet,

“Shut your filthy mouth!” James screamed and the woman dare to sit in front of him deviantly. Fortunately for her Rowan decided to speak up,

“Regina you know the truth, I can’t stand you! I was going to break up with you, I could handle a sex tape leak, but you knew Willow could never recover from her pictures being leaked. You are a horrible

person with no morals what so ever.” His son said and the woman started to cry. James looked to Silverton,

“I’m aware that you both were in on the blackmailing. You will delete everything within the next forty-eight hours and if you think I won’t find out you haven’t then I will go after everything you have. You will be penniless by the time I’m done with you. This is your only warning, you two went after my children. This ends now, you both leave them alone, do you understand?” James asked leaning in further.

“Yes of course sir,” Silverton responded. Regina refused to comment and James smiled and nodded to the man who appeared to be his body guard.

“Bo, why don’t you introduce yourself?” Bo pulled out his badge,

“I am Special Agent Bo LeFluer.” The Silverton’s started to finally realize the deep shit he and his daughter was in.

“She will delete all of the pictures immediately won’t you Regina?”

“Yes...” Regina mumbled into her hands still crying pathetically.

“Quit acting like a toddler!” James stated harshly. Regina pulled her hands down and looked up at him, James saw no tears in her eyes.

“I do not know what deal you had with my ex-wife nor do I particularly care. My son has told me that he wants nothing to do with you and your cheating self and I am inclined to agree with him as I can’t see a single redeemable quality you possess.” Regina went to open her mouth, “Silence! You do NOT speak when I am speaking to you. I will tell you once again you will delete these photos and disappear from our life’s or I will

end yours. I will bankrupt your father's company's, and put you in federal prison before you can do anything about it. The only reason I haven't is because your mother is a decent person. Do not mistake my kindness for weakness like my ex-wife did. I already own all but two of your father's companies."

"Mr. Cunningham-"

"No, it's time to leave, you overstayed your welcome. Remember forty- eight hours."

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Rowan pov

"Did that really happen dad? Am I free?" He asked his father in shock. His dad smiled at him and gave him a slap on the back.

"Yeah bud you are, if that woman or your family ever gets in contact with you just document it and let me know. I meant what I

said, Regina will go to jail if those photos are leaked,” James told him in all seriousness. Honestly Rowan wanted Regina to go to jail. She was a truly awful person and stole years of his life. Rowan was too embarrassed to tell anyone, she had given him and STI back in college. That’s how bad her cheating on him was. Rowan wanted to leave her their sophomore year in college after that incident. Then she whipped out those pictures and he was trapped ever since. The rug of idolization had been ripped out from under him and was left with nothing but disgust. But Regina had him by the balls and she knew it.

Regina told him that he was free to sleep with other women, but he was hers alone at the end of the day and he would marry her when he graduated from Harvard law school. Rowan spent his undergrad years in a haze of drinking and sleeping with different woman. Honestly him and Regina barely saw each other as she didn’t go to Columbia.

Regina had only come to New York for the parties and shopping on the weekends. Rowan was like his father, highly intelligent so keeping his grades up was no big deal. However, things changed when he went into law school. He started to take life more seriously, and wanted to be free from Regina. She was rude, crass, and spoiled. She came to visit him once a month and would embarrass him in front of his future colleagues with her antics. He hated every minutes and he couldn't believe he was now free of her.

"So I heard you got a job offer from Cohen," his father said with a smile on his face pulling him back to the present.

"Yeah I did," Rowan said with a smile proud of himself.

"Well are you going to take it?" His dad asked surprising him.

"You think I should?" His dad nodded,

“I do, you know what I think of the public defenders office and I haven’t really been a lawyer in years now. I’m so diversified that I only use my knowledge of the law for my business interests. Unless you want to work being my private lawyer.” Rowan shook his head knowing that working with his dad wasn’t the best fit for him and he smiled, not being offended,

“I think working for Cohen will teach you everything you need to know, he’s the best.” His father told him surprising him. Rowan nodded and thought long and hard about Cohen offering him a job.

“I had thought about it dad, I told you why I wanted to be a public defender,” Rowan hesitated not wanting to tell his father he looked up to Mr. Steele.

“It’s okay son, Steele had everyone fooled for a long time, but I suspected for a long time that he had been having an affair.” He gave his son a look, “The DA doesn’t make you

come in every Thanksgiving and Christmas morning like he did,” James said with a quirk of his lips.

“Was he always cheating with mom?” Rowan asked upset that his mom lied to him. His dad sighed,

“Look son while I don’t regret having you, ever. You and Willow are my world I would kill for you, but my regret is that I didn’t think I could love some one enough to stay monogamous for. So I didn’t try to find them, and when your mother came along she...” his father broke off. “I shouldn’t be telling you this.”

“No please tell me! I need the truth,” Rowan stated.

“Rowan I didn’t come from a wealthy family, I got my money to go to school from my time in Desert Storm,” his dad had told him that before. “I was young did my three years and went to school immediately after. My time in

combat, plus coming from a poorer family allowed me to read a person right away. It helped me become an incredible lawyer. The only downside is it's bad for your personal life. I knew your mom only wanted me for the money I was going to make. She was interested in Steele until she found out he was going to be a public defender," his father revealed.

"They slept together back in college?" He asked incredulously and his father nodded.

"Your mother has always been candid with me until these last few years. Her jealousy of Willow has been ridiculous." His father sighed and Rowan couldn't believe he had been so wrapped up in himself that he had missed it. There was silence for a few minutes before he talked again,

"Dad, what do you think of that Tate guy?" Rowan asked his father nervous to hear his opinion. His dad sighed,

“Honestly son?” Rowan sighed, “he’s a good guy, he’s been through a lot in life and he treats Willow the way she deserves.”

“I was afraid you were going to say that,” Rowan felt defeated.

“But that doesn’t necessarily mean they will work out,” his father said surprisingly.

“What?”

“Military life is hard on relationships, I found that out from my first relationship and it made me not believe in love: Willow will be having her baby soon Rowan and all of her focus will be on her little girl. She may be moving, who knows how her life can turn out. Tate could be an incredible partner, or he could crack under the pressure.” His dad paused for a minute, “I think you just need to be her friend for now, I know that’s shocking given all that I have said to you when you were teens. I just want what is best for you both.” Rowan nodded and for

the first time since he was a kid he gave his dad a real hug.

“Thanks dad.”

Regina pov

She was furious. The ride home was spent with her parents arguing back and forth while she sat in the back fuming. She couldn't believe Rowan broke up with her. Her! Regina Silverton!

When they finally got home she tried to get in her car to return to her loft. She just now realized that they didn't take a limo to the Cunningham's like they normally did when travelling together as a family. She had just made it to her car when a voice called out.

“Not so fast Regina Silverton,” her mom said stopping her escape. “Inside, we have a lot to discuss.”

“Moonmmm!!!” Regina whined and stomped her foot.

“No! We will go in and talk about this right this minute,” her mother stated. The three of them walked inside to the family room.

“Regina give me your phone,” her mother demanded.

“No!” Her mother demanded holding it close.

“If you don’t give it to me now I will just delete the pictures from our shared iCloud, you seem to forget me and your father pay for everything,” her mother raised her voice at her. Regina unlocked her phone and handed her phone over to her mother mom.

“Good lord Regina do you really need to save all of these d.ick pics?” Her mother asked and she rolled her eyes.

“Mother!”

“I don’t see any videos of Willow or a tape of you and Rowan,” her mother continued looking through her phone.

“Regina!” Her father scolded.

“Fine, they are in a separate folder,” Regina sighed.

“There, gone,” her mother stated after a few minutes.

“Can I go now?” Regina asked not caring that she sounded like a child.

“Yes you can leave and come back with the usb or whatever it is that contains the back up images. Don’t think I’m dumb, I mean I know I married your father but..”

“Really?”

“Yes really Harry I put up with all of your affairs, but this blackmailing James Cunningham? You are a fool, I’m done,” her mother said shocking her. “John escort my daughter to her loft and make sure she doesn’t make any copies.” Regina looked to the last servant the family still had.

“Mom you can’t really be that dumb to be taking James’s words that seriously are you? I mean really mom?” Her mom’s face transformed into one she had never seen, and her mother walked right up to her. Slap. Regina’s head snapped to the side and she cupped her cheek and looked up at her mother in shock. Her mother in her whole life had never laid her hands on her.

“Give me your keys Regina Silverton now!” She stood there in shock and her mother apparently had enough and took her whole purse.

“I’ve had enough! I’ve given you and your father everything and this is how you both repay me. I’m done! Regina you have wrong James Cunningham that man is ruthless, and you are a fool if you think he will spare you. I won’t be caught in the path of a man who my parents are scared of. Since I paid for your loft and your car I will be taking it back.” Her mother looked at her father, “I

will stop payment regarding everything in the house, you are on your own and my lawyer will get ahold of you soon.” Her mom walked out the door with John following her closely.

“Dad? What just happened?” Regina asked. Her father sighed,

“We overplayed our hand sweetheart.” Her father kissed her head and left the room. Regina sat down and plotted her next moves to get Rowan back. She did not spend ten years into their relationship to lose him now.

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Willow pov

New Years passed with little pomp and no circumstance from her home. She never got the big deal about New Years and simply ignored the holiday. She had only received a couple of texts from Tate. She hasn't stopped

worrying about him though and missing him. He was due to return in a week, and Willow was counting down the days.

Willow had been back at work for a few days when she got an odd email from her boss letting her know she would have to come in for a second interview. Mary had given her a few options to chose from and Willow had checked the option of next Monday afternoon. It the the afternoon after her doctors appointment. Willow was finally at the stage in her pregnancy that her appointments were every two weeks instead of every month. Honestly it was such a pain in the butt, she was getting so large and the trip to her doctors office was always stress inducing. Despite having Davis drive her to every appointment. Her uncle James offered to take her to every appointment, but she turned him down think it was unnecessary.

Willow was no longer bothered that she got sympathetic looks at being massively

pregnant and alone at her OB's office. She was past the point of caring now. It was winter time and the slick/icy conditions worried her that she was going to fall.

...

Willow walked out of her appointment happy, but tired and got back into the car with Davis. She was happy that she got a good report on her daughter from her doctor.

"Where to now ma'am?"

"The publishing house and I told you to call me Willow Davis, you've known me my whole life," Willow says on a sigh as her back is killing her. She is so over being pregnant.

"Sorry about that, force of habit," Davis said as she got herself situated in the car. "Are you okay Willow?"

“Not really, I’m exhausted, my whole body aches, and my doctor keeps on telling me that I’m gaining too much weight. Though I’m unable to do anything too strenuous as I still on watch from my stay in the hospital.”

“Do you want me to?—“ Davis asked and Willow cut him off.

“No don’t bother uncle James with this, he won’t say anything but I know he’s dealing with a lot in the divorce,” Willow told him and Davis just nodded. Willow knew something had been bothering her uncle the last few times he had come over, he just wouldn’t say what it was. She assumed it had been the divorce. Her uncle really wasn’t a practicing lawyer any longer as he had so many companies, so Willow didn’t think he could be worried about a case.

The rest of the ride was silent and Davis helped her into the publishing house as the road was still slick from a recent storm. She

waved Davis goodbye and thanked him for his help.

Willow walked into the Publishing House and she once again went to the conference room. She would go by her desk later to see if she needed to pick anything up. The conference room was empty, so she sat and decided to check some emails while she waited.

She expected to see Brent walking through the door after waiting ten minutes, but to her surprise it was the nice older woman she had met before. An older gentleman accompanied the woman and Willow attempted to stand, but they waved her off.

“Please no, stay sitting.” Willow wanted to get up but her body followed its commands and sat back down. The couple came and sat across from her at the table.

“Your Willow Steele correct?” The woman asked reaching her hand out.

“Yes,” Willow stated offering her own hand and shaking her hand. “I’m afraid I never got your name.”

“I’m Nancy and this is Ray,” the woman who was now Nancy introduced her to the man who was clearly her husband. Willow shook her husbands hand when the names finally registered. Nancy and Raymond Bateman. They owned the publishing house! There was a small chuckling from Ray,

“I see she has figured it out.”

“Don’t be too hard on her dear, the other candidates didn’t figure it out at all,” Nancy said with a smile on her face. Willow could tell she was blushing hard.

“All right let’s get started,” Nancy said and this time she led the interview, while Ray mainly listened. The interview asked a few normal questions, but it got complicated pretty quickly.

“So Willow you are aware that the job is in Georgia correct?” Nancy asked and Willow nodded her head.

“Yes ma’am, I do.”

“Your husband doesn’t have a problem with moving?” Ray asked her. Willow started fidgeting in her seat,

“Well we are legally separated at the moment. I thought a new start would be good for me and my baby after everything that had happened,” Willow said with a smile on her face and rubbing her belly.

“What-?” Ray started to ask a clearly intrusive question but Nancy broke off as it was illegal to do so. Willow let out a sigh and decided to just bite the bullet and hopefully it would make her look better.

“Look my husband had been cheating on me for months when I found out I was pregnant, I tried to do the right thing after filing for divorce. Which was keep him involved in the

pregnancy, but he never showed to any of the doctors appointments.” Willow looked and saw it had the desired affect on Ray, Nancy’s face changed to one of sympathy. “I didn’t tell you to make me feel sorry for me and give me the job. I could tell Ray was judging me like I was in the wrong and it couldn’t be further than the truth, if you want to get ahold of my lawyer Mr. Cohen I will let you do so.”

“No that’s not necessary,” Nancy rushed out to say. Once again it was also illegal, but the fact that Willow was offering changed things a little bit. The interview didn’t last long after that and honestly Willow was confused by their faces when they shook her hand as she left the conference room.

Willow tried to keep her spirits up as she left the office in an Uber, she didn’t bother calling Davis again.

She sat on the couch her mind in a whirl over the interview when her phone started

buzzing. She pulled out her phone and a huge smile came across her face as she saw Tate's name on her caller ID. She clicked the accept button and put the phone to her ear.

"Willow?" His slight southern drawl could be heard on the phone with a slight crackle.

"Tate??" She asked.

"Hey babe, I only got a few minutes but I wanted to call you. How are you?"

"I miss you, so much. How are you? Are you safe?" Willow asked desperately. Tate let out a small chuckle,

"Yeah babe I'm safe and I'm missing you like crazy. Im pretty sure I had a wet dream about you last night," Tate whispered and Willow barely heard him but felt herself get wet.

"You did not!"

“Well I did have an amazing dream about you!” Tate laughed and Willow smiled,

“Oh really? Tell me about this dream...”

Memphis pov

Staring at the woman sitting across from him Memphis couldn't help but hold in a groan. His mother had been trying to get him to go on a date with this woman for the past several months. He always declined claiming he was too busy, that was a lie. Memphis had been hung up on his brothers wife. What he had saw on Christmas Eve made him finally wake up, he had screwed up big time. In so many ways. His brother never saw him as family and from what he could tell was in a relationship with his ex-wife. Memphis wasn't bothered by it as his feelings for Gina were long gone. He was bothered by the double standard to which his brother held him.

“Hahahaha,” the woman sat across from him giggling like a hyena at a joke he didn’t tell. She batted her humungous eyelashes at him so much he thought they were going to fall into her salad.

‘Of course she only ate salad’ he thought glumly as he remembered Willow eating a cheeseburger from McDonalds.

“You are so funny Memphis,” the woman said as she rubbed his forearm.

“Thanks,” he said wryly. He had barely spoke on this date. He was never going to forgive his mother for this.

Memphis had never been happier when the bill came and the woman whose name he couldn’t remember just sat there with a smile on his face. He once again remembered Willow fighting with him to pay for the bill at McDonald’s. He quickly paid and they walked out of the restaurant and got in his truck.

In the truck she continued feeling him up and Memphis tried to gently push her off of him. He had never been more thankful to see her apartment complex come into view.

“Well this is it,” he responded as he parked the vehicle and waited for her to get out.

“My daughter is with her grandparents for the night if you want to come in?” The woman asked. Memphis looked the woman over and despite the fact that it has been months since he had gotten any, this woman did nothing to stir his desire at all.

“Yeah I’m sorry I need to get back to my son,” Memphis responded trying to let her off easy.

“Oh okay, well can I have your number?” She asked.

“Don’t you have it from my mom?” Memphis asked confused.

“Yeah, but I’m asking if I can call you?” She asked him.

“Look Lisa-“ the woman shrieked nearly breaking his eardrums.

“My name is Lana!! This entire time you didn’t even know my name?” Lana shrieked looked at him and he just shrugged his shoulders. “Ugh I can’t believe this.” The woman opened his truck door and stomped out.

“Finally, the date from hell is over,” he said to himself as he watched Lana get safely into her apartment. He wasn’t a total ass. He drove home hearing his phone bing multiple time with text messages. When he got home one was just a phone number and he checked that one first.

(617)448-4826: hey I’m really sorry for overreaching and I’d love to go on another date with you.

Mom: how was the date with Lana? I told you she was a great girl right?

Gina: hey want to meet up tonight?

Memphis read all of his messages and only responded to his mother, telling her he didn't think it was going to work out with Lana. Now he remembered why he stopped dating, this shit sucked.

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Willow pov

It was the end of January and the beginning of February started this month. There were a lot of big changes occurring in her life. The first one being she was closing in on her last month of pregnancy so she was going to her Doctors appointments every week now. Tate had only managed a few texts since their phone call a month ago, but he was

scheduled to come back this week and she was so excited.

She had been waiting on tenderhooks for the last few weeks to hear about the job. She picked up every unknown number hoping it was the call and only ended up talking to telemarketers wanting to extend her car's warranty.

Her Uncle James and Rowan had something big to tell her so they wanted to have dinner to talk about it. Willow decided to make lasagna as it was a favorite in the family. She was taking a break from her work when she heard Bertha her housekeeper come into the house.

Bertha came in with an arm full of groceries for dinner that night looking frazzled.

“What’s wrong B?” Willow called out to her housekeeper as she started to get up. Bertha quickly came up to her and helped her get up.

“Oh my daughter’s school called, she’s at the nurses office,” she said waving her away.

“Oh no! What’s wrong?” Willow asked concerned.

“She has a fever and I can’t find anyone to pick her up,” Bertha told her with a tear in her eye.

“Oh go ahead and leave and I’ll make sure my uncle pays you for your time,” Willow told her.

“Oh no! I couldn’t,” Bertha tried to protest.

“Nope, I insist. I can make dinner for once, I used to do it all the time.” Bertha looked torn for a moment before she finally nodded,

“Thank you Ms. Steele.”

“Call me Willow.” Bertha grabbed her purse and walked out of the door in a hurry.

Willow started putting the groceries away and started prepping for dinner. She was

going to make lasagna. The key to a good lasagna was simple, use good variety of soft cheeses, good pasta sauce, and don't use too much pasta. People ruin lasagna but using too many noodles. They want it cheesy!

She started getting into the familiar act of cooking. Boiling, shredding, and browning the hamburger. Willow quickly assembled the entree and placed it in her oven and sat down as it takes around forty-minutes to cook.

Rowan and her uncle James came in her house just as she was sitting down. Willow smiled, but stayed seated as her feet were swelling slightly.

"Ohh! Lasagna," Rowan said as he went to clean up the hazard of a kitchen she had left behind.

"You don't have to-"

"Oh it's no problem," he interrupted and continued cleaning. Her uncle came and sat

next to her with a smile. Willow looked between the two of them.

“You born seem like you are in a good mood.” Willow commented as she watched the two of them. It was nice to see the father and son getting along. Rowan had always been a bit of a momma’s boy despite James taking an active interest in his life.

Rowan helped with a lot of the other meal prep so when it was time for the lasagna to come out she didn’t have to do much. She got off the couch and went to get the lasagna out of the oven.

“Willow here let me help you,” Rowan said as she bent forward to get the lasagna out of the oven. Rowan placed it on top of the oven for her, while Willow got the green beans out of the microwave. She turned around to see Rowan also taking out the garlic knots out of the oven so she didn’t have to do that either. She cut of the lasagna and got out the plates and then carefully cut up the lasagna

and dished it up. Her uncle took her plate to the table while Rowan took her glass.

“You guys know I’m capable of carrying something, I’m only pregnant,” Willow said with a small laugh.

“Well it’s better to be safe than sorry,” uncle James told her. They all sat down to eat and Rowan broke the silence after the first bite.

“Willow this is so good.”

“Thank you,” Willow responded with a smile. They spent the first few minutes just enjoying the meal in silence.

“Well Willow there’s something we both have to tell you,” her uncle James broke the silence.

“Diane is still fighting the divorce,” Willow surmised. Her uncle James pulled back surprised,

“No actually we are hammering out the fine details now and should be done within a couple of weeks.” Willow was surprised to hear that given how vindictive her former aunt Diane turned out to be.

“What are you fighting over?” Willow asked and her uncle James sighed

“She wants the house.”

“Why don’t you give it to her? That way you can be rid of her once and for all,” Willow asked and then looked to Rowan, “no offense.” Rowan just sat there and shrugged his shoulders as he took another bite of food.

“That’s the first thing I bought when I won my first multimillion lawsuit, so no I won’t give it to her Willow, it’s mine,” her uncle said and it was clear he was masking his fury.

“I get it uncle James, but I’m not sure why you had to come over here to dinner to talk

about the divorce,” Willow said slightly confused.

“Oh that’s not why we are here,” James responded. Willow was confused,

“Okay, what’s going on?” Willow looked between her uncle and Rowan for an explanation.

“Well...I accepted a job from Cohen’s office,” Rohan announced and Willow smiled.

“That’s great,” Willow said smiling at him. She was truly happy for him. He deserved the best and Cohen was one of the best lawyers in town.

“I also broke up with Regina,” Rowan stated with a big smile on his face.

“Yeah-huh,” Willow said with a nod as she clearly didn’t believe him. Those two were toxic and would never be done with each other.

“I’m serious I-“ Rowan started but James interrupted him.

“Willow, while Rowan was enamored with Regina in high school, that fell away in college. Right Rowan?” Uncle James explained and then looked back to Rowan. Rowan nodded,

“Yes, I wanted to break up with her. I couldn’t, she wouldn’t let me,” Rowan explained and Willow was even more confused.

“What do you mean she wouldn’t let you?”

“She had certain pictures of us being intimate together, and she threatened to put them out on social media,” Rowan retold clearly embarrassed as his ears were becoming red. Willow didn’t know how to respond to that, but she was definitely angry that her friend had dealt with this for so long.

“That’s awful Rowan, I can’t believe she would do this to you, I thought she loved you,” Willow said but in truth yeah Regina would totally do this. The table was silent again and Willow looked around not understanding why there was nothing but silence.

“What? What is it?”

“Willow I was on the fence about telling you this with your pregnancy, but you should know that Regina took pictures of you changing when you were at our house in high school,” James told her sympathetically.

“What?” She choked out and started to panic. Willow felt her phone ring in her pocket, but was unable to reach for it as panic was flooding her body. Her flight or fight mode was kicking into high gear and she could feel the adrenaline flood her body as she hadn’t felt in years.

“No Willow, it’s okay, I made sure that if she ever releases them then she will be charged...” her uncle’s voice started to fade as the taunts from her high school bully started to come back to her. She tried her deep breathing, focusing on a single point. Uncle James, her single source of safety her entire life, but none of it was staving off the panic attack.

She was back in high school, Regina and her tribe of mean girls calling her fat, brace face, crater face, telling her no one would ever love her. Then they got physical; slapping her, pushing her down the stairs, pouring soda in her hair and down her shirt. All while Rowan watched on and on occasion laughed. She just wanted her best friend back. She suffered alone. Willow was always alone, she had no one.

Her chest started to constrict and she felt an enormous pain in her chest. It felt like some

one was sitting on her chest, she couldn't breathe, she was going to die.

"Dad what's wrong with her?" Rowan yelled.

"She's having a panic attack! She's not responding to any stimulus. We have to get her to the hospital," he yelled and Rowan went to grab her. Willow wrenched backwards.

"Don't you touch me!! This is all your fault!! You're going to hurt me!!" She yelled and then without warning her vision faded to black.

My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter 45

Rowan pov

He listened to the heart monitor and watched Willow sleep peacefully. His father sped them to the hospital at illegal speeds when Willow started to bleed from her legs. His father got them to the hospital in fifteen

minutes and Willow in a bed being tended to shortly after he carried her through the door. Willow was taken out of their eyesight for over an hour before anyone would answer their questions about her well-being.

His father asked for frequent updates and the hospital claimed that the two of them had no right to know what was happening to Willow as they weren't next of kin. His father surprised the hell out of him and claimed to be Willow's power of attorney, which included medical decisions. He pulled up something on his phone and he wasn't questioned again.

The situation also changed when Willow's doctor showed up on scene a few hours later as dad had gone to several of Willow's doctor's appointments.

It had turned out that Willow had dealt with severe anxiety and had massive panic attacks in high school. Her doctor stated that it was a family doctor that treated her so

Doctor Rayas had no idea she was dealing with this.

“Could the anxiety medication be affecting the baby?” His father asked. His dad was talking to the doctor just outside the door. Rowan was sitting in the chair next to Willow’s bedside while she was resting.

“I just got ahold of him and apparently Willow had been off anxiety meds for at least three years now, and according to Willow she hasn’t had a panic attack since her first year of college. She did reach out to go back on the medication a few months ago when she split from her husband. When the doctor found out Willow was pregnant, the doctor mentioned the slight risks to the fetus. Apparently Willow decided to deal with her anxiety without medication. The doctor suggested therapy, yoga, and meditation to cope.”

“What are the risks?” His father asks.

“Well it depends on what was prescribed, but generally these drugs can pass through the placenta and are exposed to the baby. Which caused concern for Willow and she decided to tough it out...” Rowan could no longer hear what the doctor was saying as a nurse walked in and started to take Willow’s vitals. The nurse apparently saw his concerned expression and gave him a small smile.

“Don’t worry sir, we just gave your wife a sedative that is safe for the baby. She should be awake soon,” the nurse told him and Rowan just smiled not bothering to correct her.

“Thank you.” The nurse quickly finished and walked out of the room. His father entered and sat in the chair next to him.

“When did you become her power of attorney?” Rowan finally got the chance to ask the question that had been bugging him for several hours.

“She asked me after her last stay in the hospital, with her being legally married to that prick until the baby is born she wanted me to make the decisions for her that would be in accordance with her interests,” his father responded.

“What are those?” He asked looking back and forth between Willow and his dad. Afraid of the answer.

“Willow wants her daughter to live more than anything in this world, the baby is her priority.” His father grabbed Willow’s hand, something he was too afraid to do.

“Dad I did this to her,” Rowan said as the guilt finally started to crush him. His father just sighed and didn’t respond to his comment which furthered his guilt.

“Dad-“

“Son, you may want to leave the hospital as she should wake up anytime soon,” his father said.

“Is the baby okay?” Rowan asked dejected by his father’s dismissal.

“The baby’s heartbeat is a little low and Willow’s blood pressure is high, so she’s staying here tonight.” His father explained and Rowan didn’t know what that meant, but he just nodded and left the room.

Willow pov

White ceiling.

Constant beeping noise.

That’s what Willow woke up to and Willow was beyond confused as to where she was. She was trying to piece together the last thing she remembered. Rowan was telling her that Regina had naked pictures of her. The beeping started to accelerate again.

“Willow, breathe,” her uncle’s calming voice came through her mind. It didn’t help her at all. Her mind still raced, then she felt it, her

daughter kicked. Willow touched her belly and her uncles voice came to her again,

“That’s right Willow think of your daughter, her arrival is due in three or four weeks.” Willow started to calm down and breathe normally.

“Is my daughter okay?” Willow asked nervous of the answer. Her uncle nodded,

“You still have to stay the night and are being monitored carefully as you had started to bleed again.” Dread filled her swollen stomach at hearing the news. She couldn’t believe it, after all these years she had another panic attack. Willow had been monitoring her anxiety so well, or so she thought. Willow had secretly known that is why her blood pressure had always been so high. She just did what she did best, buried the problem.

“Willow why didn’t you tell me?” Her uncle James asked with concern in her eyes. Willow just shrugged,

“It honestly hasn’t been a problem in years. I was able to go off my medication during my last year in college,” Willow told her uncle with a small smile.

“Is this the real reason you never wanted to come to any of our parties?” Uncle James asked and Willow nodded.

“When my dad made me come to that party and I saw Regina for the first time I expected to have a panic attack right away...but I didn’t, I honestly couldn’t believe it.” Willow smiled, “I had been under so much stress which had been adding to my anxiety unknowingly.” Willow sighed and rubbed her forehead.

“What happened today?” Her uncle asked her gently.

“I don’t know, when Rowan talked about her having those photos of me,” Willow paused and started to breathe heavy.

“It’s ok,” her uncle tried to soothe her.

“It was like I was right back in high school and Regina was taunting me. Laughing at me for being fat, my acne and braces,” Willow took a breath and her uncle grabbed her hand. “The worst thing she did was one day when we were changing in PE some one took my clothes. I went to go find my PE uniform to change back into them but they were soaked in the showers. When I went to to call Rowan they...they took pictures of me in just my underwear,” Willow had to take another break because she was getting upset again.

“I fought for the phone to get it back, it fell and it broke. I don’t know what happened to it. I went to call Rowan, but he never answered. I had to dry out the clothes the

best I could and go back to class,” Willow informed her uncle and he looked furious.

“Can I please explain my moronic sons behavior before I explode? Or do you need time?” Uncle James asked and Willow thought about it.

“Well just skip the part about the pictures,” Willow asked and he nodded.

“Regina had them in her possession and from what I gather in college after Rowan found out he was being cheated on he broke up with Regina. Regina told him no and black mailed him with a tape they had made. Well when Rowan told her to released apparently that woman decided to get more creative and use photos of you against him.”

Willow sat there for a few minutes after hearing that Rowan had been black mailed for several years. It made his behavior for the last several months make sense, but it didn't make up for the years in high school.

Rowan turned his back on her and he hadn't once tried to make amends for what he had done, hell he never even apologized. Willow didn't think she could forgive, but it was beside the fact. Rowan just started to randomly pop up in her life now like it was totally normal and it wasn't. She just didn't want to deal with the pain of talking about it, to anyone.

She looked back at her uncle and decided not to say a word about the topic anymore. Willow would worry about the photos another day, Willow prayed that her uncle was on top of it.

"Hey do you know where my phone is?" She asked her uncle diverting the topic, and he simply reached into his jacket pocket. It was Friday evening when everything went down and she had no idea what time it was.

"You've been asleep almost all night," her uncle stated as he looked at her phone. It was six in the morning and he found multiple

messages and missed calls from Tate and a few from an unknown number. The unknown number was from Nancy and it simply said to call her back. Tate's called once and sent her a few messages about him returning next week. Willow simply responded by telling him that she was sorry she missed his call and couldn't wait to see him. Willow knew she would have to wait at least another hour before she could call Nancy back.

The nurse came in to check her vitals and to bring her breakfast. Willow ate slowly and when she was done the nurse helped her to get up and go to the bathroom. The nice nurse, whose name was Sheila helped her get into the sit down shower and wash herself. The process was awkward and long, but Willow knew she would have to get used to it as soon she would be back soon for the labor.

When Willow got out her uncle was gone and the nurse thought it was a good idea to check her cervix and to have an ultrasound done on the baby. The nurse gave her a concerned look, but didn't say anything.

When Willow was finally left alone it was around seven thirty and she decided to risk it and to go ahead and call Nancy back. The waiting wasn't doing any favors for her anxiety and stress. Willow dialed the unknown number, which is hopefully Nancy's direct number.

"Hello?" A female voice answered.

"Hello, Nancy?" Willow asked the woman on the other line.

"Yes this is Nancy who is this?" Nancy asked.

"This is Willow Steele, I was just returning your phone call," Willow responded.

"Oh yes, I was just calling you about the editor position..." Nancy took a brief pause

and Willow waited with her heart in her throat. “I would officially like to offer you the position of editor to our Savannah office.”

“Yes, of course. I’m more than willing to accept,” Willow replied in a daze.

“Okay Ms. Steele we still have to send you a formal contract offer. Please wait, read it over carefully, and send it back to us signed,” Nancy continued to speak and Willow was just on cloud nine, so beyond giddy that she finally got the job. Life was finally going her way for once!!!

My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter 46

Knox pov

Gina walked in the door on Saturday morning and he once again wondered how his life came to this while laying in bed. Things were going well with his brother, his family, he got an apartment, and now he was

sleeping with his brother's ex-wife. God he really didn't have a back bone did he? Gina just pestered him until caved and ended up sleeping with her and the sad thing is she wasn't very good in bed. Neither was Regina, he sighed heavily as he felt Gina walk into the bedroom. She had made herself at home the last few weeks and Knox didn't bother saying anything about it.

"Why aren't you in the hospital making sure your baby is okay?" Gina asked him as she stared at him laying in the bed.

"What are you talking about?" He asked her and sat up. Gina rolled her eyes at him and Knox stifled a groan. He hated that passive aggressive shit.

"A nurse came in from her shift last night telling me my sister in law had been admitted again, hell I never knew she had been admitted the first time," Gina said as she put her purse down.

“Yeah she was bleeding and almost lost the baby,” Knox said remembering what his father told him. He never even got to see her when she was in the hospital a few months ago.

“Why haven’t you been to the hospital?” Gina asked.

“I wasn’t called, I’ll call my parents and see what they know,” Knox said and reached for his phone. Gina scoffed and he looked up,

“Look I’m sorry I just don’t think I can do this, you just aren’t who I thought you were. I mean I should have known better.” She rambled and he was confused.

“What are you talking about?”

“I mean, I know I’m not any better, but I thought you were at least going to try and be a decent dad to your daughter.” Gina looked him up and down and it was clear she found him lacking.

“I want to be, but she won’t let me be,” Knox tried to defend himself, but he knew it was weak.

“Why is that?” Gina asked him and he snorted.

“Oh please like you are a saint!” Knox said raising his voice having enough of her bullshit.

“Look I had my own reasons for doing this, but I think we should stop,” Gina said and he honestly didn’t care that she wanted to stop whatever this thing was between them. Knox was curious as to what she was referring to.

“What are your reasons?” Knox wanted to know.

“Please don’t tell me you are this clueless,” Gina asked and he didn’t respond. “I did this to get back at you, and Memphis, and Willow.” Gina said with a wave of her hands.

“Willow? What did Willow ever do to you?” Knox asked confused. He understood him and his brother. He was a bastard that convinced her that his brother was cheating, and his brother could be a bastard himself when he was mad. Willow though, she had barely been around Gina. Gina interrupted his musing by laughed.

“Memphis is in love with Willow and has been for awhile, so this is my way of getting back at her,” Gina said smugly before turning around and walking out the door. Knox left standing there stunned and unclear on how to proceed.

Willow pov

It was Wednesday before she was able to go home and she had been going nuts in that hospital room as it was only Tuesday. She had been hearing a little bit more from Tate as he was heading back stateside. Willow didn't know the process of him coming back to the states and honestly she didn't think

she could ever know. Willow was just given a general estimate of Friday or Saturday. She had originally planned to pick him up from the airport with a sign, but now it looks like her uncle was going to have to be volun-told to do so. She knew he wouldn't mind as uncle James has taken a liking to her new boyfriend. Boyfriend, it was so crazy to think of that mountain of a man as her boyfriend.

Willow had gone back and forth on whether to tell Tate about her being in the hospital, but ultimately she decided against it. Tate would only worry about her and he couldn't do anything from where he was. Her uncle knew her wishes if anything happened to her.

Her uncle had brought her laptop so she could work. Nancy and Ray had sent her the official offer of the job. She mentioned it to him and her uncle immediately took the laptop and read over the offer.

“Nope, unacceptable,” her uncle muttered under his breath. He continued to read it and muttered.

“Uncle, what? I just want to be able to move on and accept this job.” Willow muttered.

“Willow this offer leaves a lot to be desired, please let me take care of this for you, I promise I won’t be unreasonable.”

“What is the issue? And our versions of unreasonable vary widely,” she told him with a raised eyebrow.

“They don’t offer an upfront bonus, or moving expenses. What is also concerning is that this is a brand new branch for them, so they have no option to hire within the branch. They need you more than you need them right now, let me do what I do best,” her uncle pleased and Willow nodded her head. Her uncle typed on her laptop for about an hour while she did some work on her phone.

“There all sent,” her uncle James stated and handed back her laptop. Willow side-eyed him but didn’t say anything. She quickly checked the sent folder and scanned the document he sent.

“Prepared by James Cunningham huh?” Willow asked wryly. Her uncle James shrugged and Willow let it go. While normally she didn’t want her uncle’s name to get her anywhere, this time she let it slide. Willow really wanted this job. She also couldn’t afford to pack up and move to Georgia all by herself. Willow looked to her uncle and knew that he would help her if she asked. Though at her age, she shouldn’t have to ask. He was also already footing what her insurance didn’t cover for her hospital stays. It was already in the tens of thousands. It was crazy, her uncle took care of it before he left the hospital. Though a bill was accidentally sent to her home a few weeks later and if she knew her uncle didn’t pay it Willow definitely would have had a stroke.

Why was it so expensive to stay in the hospital??

Willow heard a knock on the door and closed her laptop. She was expecting a medical professional, but instead she found her soon to be former in-laws. Willow wasn't sure how they found out she was happy they came to see her.

“Willow how are you?” Marge came to give her a hug, one that Willow returned.

“I'm doing okay, definitely ready to get out of here,” she said and looked at her uncle.

“Tomorrow,” her uncle gave her a firm look.

“What happened?” Her father-in-law asked.

“She had a panic attack that caused her blood pressure to spike. There was once again some blood that the doctor can't confirm the source of the blood,” her uncle explained.

“Is the baby okay?” Her mother-in-law asked with concern on her face.

“Yeah, the baby has been checked twice a day since we were here. She is doing good.” The four of them sat and chatted for a few minutes before another nurse came in to check her vitals. The men left the room when the nurse started to pull her gown up. The nurse felt her stomach, which Willow assumed was to feel the position of the baby. The nurse had a small machine to hear the babies heartbeat and as always hearing her daughters heartbeat filled her with joy. Willow however, saw the concern in the nurses eyes.

“What’s wrong?” She asked.

“Nothing, the doctor will be in shortly,” the nurse responded and as the nurse walked out the men came back in.

“That is probably our sign to go, we just wanted to make sure you were okay,” Marge stood up and walked to her husband.

“Marge, it’s not that I’m not glad to see you, but how did you find out that I was here?” Willow asked her mother-in-law as they were getting ready to leave. The married couple looked at each other hesitating and Willow knew the answer.

“Knox, how did he know I was here?” She asked confused. The two didn’t comment and simply left the hospital room. Willow forgot about the strange conversation as her doctor walked in a few moments later.

“So what’s the prognosis Doctor? Can I go home?” Willow asked. Dr. Rayas looked at her with a sad look on her face.

“Willow you may be here until the baby’s born.”

“What?” Her and her uncle said with shock in their voices.

“Your baby’s heart rate is too low and we need to monitor it constantly. If there is any dip we will either need to induce you or take her out via C-section.”

“But-“ Willow honestly wasn’t able to say anything.

“Is this because of her anxiety?” Her uncle asked the question she wanted to.

“It could be, but it also could be that the cord is wrapped around the baby’s throat. The position the baby is in we are unable to see on the ultrasound,” Dr. Rayas explained.

“How is that possible? Those things are 4D now!”

“Yes, but they aren’t infallible. There are still misgenderers and the larger the baby is the harder it is to get a clear picture.” Her Doctor looked at her, “we will continue to monitor your baby and you closely and evaluate you every day. Okay?” Willow just nodded shakily.

She had to control her breathing otherwise she was going to lose it. It has been years since she had a panic attack, but now that she did it was like the lid had been blown off.

“Think of your baby Willow,” her uncle’s voice filtered in her head. Willow nodded, and remembering what she worked on with her Doctor all those years ago.

“I’m thinking of naming her Aspen.”

“Like the place?” Her uncle asked engaging in keeping her distracted.

“No, like the tree,” Willow responded and before Willow could respond her phone started to ring. She saw it was Tate and went ahead and picked it up.

“Hey sexy! I was hoping I could surprise you by coming home a little early. I used the emergency key to get in, but you’re not home. Where are you?” Tate asked and Willow just handed her uncle the phone as she couldn’t

deal with anything at the moment. Willow continued her distraction game by thinking of what kind of house she would live in with her daughter in Georgia, while her uncle went outside the room to talk to Tate.

My Husband Cheated with My Bully Chapter 47

Tate pov

This is definitely not what he envisioned when he returned home early. Of course driving like a madman to the hospital is better than finding Willow in bed with another man like his last relationship. Tate had thought his return home would be more something along the lines of slipping quietly into bed with Willow and rubbing her belly before she woke up. However, nothing ever goes according to plan he thought with a sigh. Then he quickly laid on his horn before flipping of the guy who cut him off. Fucking Boston traffic I was the worst.

Tate thought about his time overseas as he continued to fight Boston traffic to get to the hospital. The last mission had two primary objectives, one was to take out a cell of terrorists, the second was to set the bait for Smitty. It had taken months to open the guys up to the idea that the traitor in the unit was Smitty. No one wanted to believe there was an inside man at all cause most of us had been together since basic. However, Smitty was the newest member to the unit. He joined them six years ago, but he managed to gain everyone's allegiance same as the rest, with blood and sweat.

While most of the guys were against the plan that had been put in place, our CO didn't give anyone involved a choice. He said he couldn't ignore the evidence that was brought to him. Tate felt shitty that he was the one who brought the evidence forward, but he would have been eaten alive by guilt otherwise. What Tate believed was occurring is considered treason and whoever was doing it

would get a twenty-year sentence at Leavenworth.

Four men knew out the twelve men in the unit, not including the CO. The CO handpicked everyone who would be in on the inside mission, Tate had no control of it. The five men were him, Johnson, Garcia, and their other sergeant Holmes.

When the cell was raided there was nothing but some C4 and a couple of AK-47's and some WW2 surplus bolt act rifles, mostly mausers. That was typical for the small terrorist cell that had been raided.

Johnson quickly came in with the baited AK-47's. There was about ten of them and they each had a GPS location tag on them. Well they technically had two. One that would have been easily found if swept for and then a second installed in the butt of the gun. We were praying that they wouldn't be found. There was only about ten of them, if there were too many then it wouldn't be believable

for a cell this size. While they are around a thousand in the states that isn't the case on the black market. They would go for double if sold in Mexico or another country that had strict restrictions on guns.

The raid itself went down flawlessly as the team was a well-oiled machine. There had only been about five men planning to blow up a local mosque and placing the blame on America. When the raid was over and the prisoners were being secured everyone noticed that Smitty was the first to volunteer to take stock of the weapons. The entire unit was aware of the missing weapons from the last mission, but only four were aware of the bait.

Tate went with him and made sure he had clear view of him the entire time. Tate's stomach sank when Smitty caught sight of the AK's. It was full of greed and anticipation. While he knew the finicals were damning, Tate still held out hope that

it was a mistake. The weapons cache was quickly loaded onto their huge humvee's and Smitty stayed close to them the entire trip back to the base. This didn't go unnoticed by everyone in the unit. There were a lot of covert glances everyone gave each other as well as Smitty who was either ignoring them or didn't notice.

The men in the unit all wore body cams and everyone else reviewed his body cam and could clearly see the same look he saw on Smitty's face when the debriefing was over a week later. It was just five of them in the room and no one talked for the first five minutes after Tate had paused the footage.

"Whose going to sit on them first?" Tate asked the room finally breaking the silence.

"I'll do it, you have a woman to get back to Walker," Johnson told him. Tate smiled and quickly left the room. His buddy's made a lot of jeers and kissing noises at him like a bunch of high schoolers.

He made a beeline for the showers as He hadn't showered in two weeks. The only thing he used to clean himself was baby wipes to give himself a whore's bath. The wipes were definitely a life savor in the field. He quickly showered thoroughly and changed into an army green Tshirt and his camo pants and combat boots. He didn't want to bother with returning home to get his civilian clothes. He went outside and jumped into the car.

When he got to Willow's house he let himself in with the key she gave him and was bothered by how quiet it was. Her car was in the driveway so she should be home. Tate walked to the bedroom with lead in his belly, but found it empty. His search of the house and she was nowhere to be found. Tate finally called Willow but it wasn't her who answered it was James. He gave him a quick run down of what had happened and stare quickly jumped in his truck.

Tate finally made it to the hospital and gave his truck to the valet. He rushed to the room, but was brought up short by a woman in scrubs and James Cunningham standing in the hallway.

“Hey what’s going on?” He asked as he approached the two standing by the door. James looked relieved to see him while the other looked weary. He seen that look a lot, it was common as many people thought all veterans were prone to violent outbursts due to PTSD. Which was honestly bullshit. He kept his mental health in check with regular visits to the shrink.

“Who is this?” The female asked.

“This is Tate, Willow’s boyfriend. Willow this is Dr. Rayas, Willow’s doctor.” Tate put his hand out for a greeting despite her less than friendly welcome and the woman took it.

“It’s nice to meet you ma’am.” When she pulled away he asked again. “What’s going on with Willow?”

“We think she is experiencing contractions, but she won’t say anything,” James said looking between the two of them.

“How far along ish she?” He asked the Doctor.

“She will be thirty-seven weeks tomorrow,” James responded that time.

“Is that bad?” Tate asked as he clearly knew nothing about pregnancy. He had always meant to read the ‘what to expect when you were expecting book,’ but he just never had time.

“No according to the scans the fetuses lungs look well developed which is what we worry about at this stage,” Dr. Rayas informed him seeming to warm up to him slightly.

“So it’s safe to deliver now?” He asked.

“Well...”

“What?” Tate asked as he started to panic a little.

Willow pov

Tate walked into her hospital room, still in his uniform and sat next her bed with concern in his eyes.

“Hey Will, what’s going on here?” Tate asked her as he put his hand on her belly like always. Willow smiled feeling overjoyed at seeing him again, despite everything that has been going on. She looked into his eyes so full of concern that without a doubt, she had fallen in love with him. Willow couldn’t believe it, she didn’t know how or when it happened. She just knew that it did, Tate was the only person who had shown her any care or affection other than her uncle. Knox had just wanted her like some trophy.

“I hear you might be experiencing some contractions?” Tate asked as he pulled her out of her thoughts. She shook her head,

“No they are just Braxton-Hicks contractions.” Tate gave her a look,

“Come on Willow, if both your uncle and the doctor think they are contractions then there is a possibility that-“

“No!-“ Willow broke off on a gasp as she felt a pinch and a quick rush of liquid.

“What?” Tate asked as he stood up and started to panic.

“Tate, I’m not an expert or anything. But I think my water just broke.” Willow looked at him and his eyes widen and he ran out of the room yelling.

“James! Her water broke!” Willow would have laughed at the hilarity of the giant of a man running around in a panic if she wasn’t in a panic herself.

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Willow pov

Dr. Rayas checked her and despite having her water break several hours ago her cervix wasn't dilating. She was started on Pitocin and trying to control her anxiety. Tate and her uncle James were vital for her to keep her blood pressure down that was rising with every contraction.

"Okay Willow, I think it's best at this point that we go ahead and get you an epidural. It will help you with the pain and should help you dilate," a doctor came in and told her. Willow saw that it wasn't her doctor.

"Where's Dr. Rayas?" Willow asked.

"She went home to rest, if there is an emergency she should be back in plenty of time. Now do you agree to the epidural?" The female doctor asked and Willow nodded

her head. She always wanted an epidural when the time was right. It wasn't long after that a male anesthesiologist showed up shortly after and explained all of the pros and cons to getting an epidural. She signed off on the paper work and he got her in the position to put the very large needle in her back. Willow never actually saw the needle, she just knew she was getting a needle in her spine.

"Just relax and I'll be as quick as possible," the doctor told her and Willow rolled her eyes. She did her best to control her breathing, but it didn't change the fact that she was freaking out.

"Just relax, just breathe," Tate told her as she clung to him for support as she felt the needle puncture her spine.

"All right the needle is in, just another minute here to get the meds in," the anesthesiologist explained. Then Willow suddenly felt an odd sensation float through

the lower half of her body. “Do you feel any better?” The Doctor asked and Willow was too afraid to move or nod her head.

“Yeah,” she croaked out finally. Then there was a lot of tape put on the length of her back,

“There you are good to go.” Willow felt odd about resting on her back so she stayed on her side facing Tate.

“How do you feel?” He asked and Willow smiled.

“Like I just had a needle in my spine,” Willow smiled. “But better, you know you don’t have to stay here with me at the hospital.”

“I wouldn’t be anywhere else,” Tate smiled and gave her a brief kiss. Willow was feeling relief as the medication made its way through the lower half of her body.

The next several hours were spent the contractions rising in intensity and her dilating slowly. Willow's blood pressure was still elevated and she could tell that everyone around her was starting to get worried. Willow tried not to freak out as it would make her blood pressure rise, but some things are out of our hands.

Exhaustion was starting to set in after ten hours, but there was nothing Willow could do against the exhaustion. She tried to rest, but every time she tried to sleep a contraction gripped her. Thankfully the epidural did help with the intensity of the contraction, but she was still in pain. She was

Tate and her uncle James refused to leave her side or sleep. Knox had arrived at the hospital along with the rest of the Hayes's. Willow didn't care about their arrival and was only worried about her pain management.

It was in the evening that the nurse checked her cervix that she told her she was at a nine and close to being ready to push.

“Shouldn’t you get the doctor?” Her uncle James asked in a firm voice.

“The doctor is on the way,” the nurse shrugged off the comment.

“The doctor better be here in the next fifteen minutes or she’s fired!” Her uncle thundered. Willow normally would have tried to calm him down, but she was fighting another contraction.

“Sir, I hear threats every day,” the nurse said nonchalantly.

“Lady you should have checked with the woman who just came off duty, I’m James Cunningham. I play golf every Thursday with Roy Richards and-“

“Uncle James!” Willow shouted at him as she watched the nurses face pale whiter than the

white walls behind her. Her uncle looked between the two of them and said lowly,

“Get the doctor here now!” The nurse nodded before quickly leaving the room,

“Was it really necessary to name drop the owner of the hospital?” Willow asked as she struggled to get comfortable.

“Yes! That doctor should have been here an hour ago! He’s only the CEO.” Uncle James fumed and she fought another contraction. They were coming really fast.

“They are coming really fast,” Tate said out loud her thoughts.

“Cause she’s going to need to push soon, Tate go get a nurse. Preferably not the fool who just left.” Tate went running out of the room.

“Uncle she just checked me,” Willow cried becoming annoyed.

“She can do it again,” he told her firmly.

“Uncle James you are getting on my nerves, and I’m feeling weird,” Willow said as she had a weird sensation in the low of her stomach.

“What does it feel like?” Her uncle ask and Willow couldn’t respond as she didn’t know.

“Does it feel like you need to poop?” A different nurse asked as her and Tate walked in the room. Willow thought it was the best term to describe it.

“Yeah that’s the best description.”

“Okay you are feeling the need to bear down and push, let me check you,” the nurse quickly raised her gown and inserted her fingers. “You are at a ten and ready to start pushing.” Then suddenly the nurse went out the hall and started calling for some nurses. Two other nurses came in and started moving things around. Willow was

frustrated as they should have done this earlier.

“Okay Willow when you feel the next contraction start to build we are going to lift your legs toward your chest you are going to push until the count of ten okay?” The new nurse told her.

“Okay,” Willow muttered starting to feel a little scared.

“It’s going to be okay Willow, you are going to meet your baby soon,” Tate told her encouragingly.

“It’s coming,” Willow said.

“Where’s that damn doctor.”

“Okay, here we go,” the nurse stood on one side and pushed her leg up in the air while Tate grabbed the other leg. “Push Willow,” Willow pushed for all she was worth as the people around her counted to ten. “Good relax.”

Willow continued to push through several contractions before Dr. Rayas managed to show up and her uncle was furious.

“We will have words about this,” her uncle muttered to the doctor.

“James Cunningham, please just shut up and support me or leave the room!!” Willow shouted at her uncle as she got ready to push through another painful contraction. The doctor gave a small smile and Willow was pissed at her as well,

“I’m not happy with you either, you were supposed to be here!” Willow started to grunt as she let a contraction ride itself out without pushing due to this damn drama.

“I’m sorry Willow,” Dr. Rayas told her and Willow nodded. She didn’t have time to feel anything as another contraction gripped her and she had to push again.

“Everything is looking good Willow, keeping pushing you are doing great.”

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“I can’t do this! I can’t do this!” Willow panted out as her body wracked in pure agony.

“Yes you can,” Tate told her and her uncle echoed this affirmation.

“Willow you have to!” Her doctor told her from her spot at the base of the bedside. She had been pushing for over an hour and the baby was not coming out. Willow knew something was wrong as they were watching the heart monitor on the baby closely.

“Just a few more pushes Willow,” her doctor encouraged. Willow grunted loudly as another contraction gripped her body and she pushed with all of her might.

“There the head is starting to come out Willow, you are making progress.” That helped Willow with the next few pushes as she grunted through the pain.

“Okay, she’s almost here, Willow you are crowning. Just a couple of more pushes and your daughter will be born,” Willow said and she felt her uncle James leave the room. Willow continued to push. Then she felt her uncle James return and then she knew Knox had entered the room.

“Okay Willow one more push and the baby will be out.” Willow felt Tate and the nurse help her push one last time and she felt her daughter being expelled from her body. She immediately knew something was wrong as her baby should have been immediately placed on her chest.

“What is it?” Willow asked as she tried to get up to see what is wrong. Arms gently put her back down.

“It’s okay Willow, we just have to check some things.” Her doctor told her and that didn’t help ease her concern either.

“Uncle James what’s wrong?” Willow asked her uncle. Willow was only able to see that her daughter was placed in the bassinet and being monitored by several nurses. Willow herself was being poked and prodded by doctors, but that didn’t matter. She just cared about her daughter at the moment.

“Willow your daughter had the cord wrapped around her neck twice and she is being closely monitored to make sure her breathing is fine,” the doctor told her and Willow was too numb to cry.

“When can I hold her?” She asked.

“Soon, a pediatric doctor will arrive shortly to make sure everything is okay and she will hand you your daughter, you yourself tore and you will need some stitches.” The nurse came over and started pressing on her belly hard enough to make her cry out in pain. Willow just kept her eyes on her daughter, waiting to hold her.

Knox pov

He couldn't believe it! He actually got a phone call saying that Willow was in labor. When he got to the hospital he waited with his parents and his brother Memphis. While he was itching to fight his brother with what he heard from Gina. Knox decided to let it be for now.

Several hours later that gigantic man went running out of Willow's room and Knox shot up feeling jealousy.

"Don't Knox." His father warned him.

"Not here," he wanted to fight his fathers order but he knew he had to listen. The man returned with a nurse and he didn't come back out. Hours went by and still no word from anyone in the room.

Then suddenly James Cunningham came out and looked at him in distain.

“You may come in if you can stand in the corner quietly.” James left and Knox took off like a shot. He quietly entered the room and was shocked by what he saw. Knox stood in the corner and watched as his daughter was born. It was painful as hell to watch another man support his wife. It was supposed to be him. Then he saw his daughter enter the world with the cord wrapped around her neck, but she was awake, alert, and looking directly at him. Knox fell in love for the second time and this love was like nothing he had ever felt before.

His heart broke when Willow asked why she couldn't hold their daughter right away. He wanted to hold her as well, but he knew he would have to wait.

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Willow pov

Her daughter was finally placed into her arms after twenty minutes of waiting. She counted. Knox was still able to cut the umbilical cord, though it was more symbolic as the doctors had already cut it. Willow was totally exhausted, after twenty hours of grueling labor the adrenaline was wearing off. She wanted to pass out, but Willow held on and looked at the precious miracle that kept her going for so many months. She fought her depression, anxiety, and her will to continue forward was this precious bundle in her arms. The pain was worth it, she was worth it and so much more.

Willow looked into her daughter's dark blue eyes, her cute little button nose, and saw her full head of black hair. Her heart just burst full of love in a way that she had never felt before. Motherhood truly was out of this world.

“She’s beautiful,” her uncle James told her. She didn’t respond to her uncle’s comment,

but she suddenly felt herself being stitched by the doctor. She flinched slightly, and then looked at the doctor before looking back at her daughter who looked directly at her. Willow was simply captivated by the small alien looking creature that came out of her.

Willow could feel her energy continue to leave her body and became worried that her arms wouldn't be able to support the baby. She didn't want to do it, but she looked over at Knox and offered him their daughter. He graciously picked her up with an ease Willow was shocked to see.

When the baby left her arms the doctor and nurses seemed to swoop in a flurry of motion to her body. She was poked and prodded. Willow watched her ex-husband hold their daughter with detachment and a building anger. Willow was getting angry that Knox had just left her during this past eight months and he could just sweep in and bond with the baby like this. He shown no

interest in their daughter until now, and she couldn't help but feel resentful.

She tried to fight it off as logically she knew that Knox was her daughters father and he had the same amount of rights as he did. Though her heart told her Knox was a son of a bitch that cheated on her with her bully. Tate seemed to feel her pain and reached out to give her a kiss on the forehead.

“You were so amazing, never met anyone who could take pain like that,” Tate whispered in her ear. Willow leaned into him and Knox looked up and looked at the two of them with jealousy. The moment was filled with tension.

“Here, let me hold my first grand baby,” uncle James chimed in and broke some of the tension. Her uncle James held the baby with wonder on his face.

The next hour was hectic as everything was still going on. The baby was in uncle James

arms for a minute before the nurses took her back, weighed her, and got all the necessary information. Willow had the men leave the room so the nurses could clean her up. She wouldn't get a bath yet, but she was covered in sweat, blood, and poop. The anesthesiologist came down to remove her epidural.

When she was finally resettled on the bed with fresh sheets the nurses brought back the baby along with Knox and his parents into the room. The nurse had just put the baby in her arms and Marge quickly went to look at the baby.

“Oh, she's adorable, have you decided on a name yet?” Marge looked at Knox who shrugged. Willow pulled her bundle of joy who had finally closed her eyes.

“Aspen Grace,” Willow said with a smile. Marge gave her a big smile,

“Oh Willow that’s beautiful, and she looks just like her father.” Willow felt more people come in and didn’t bother to acknowledge who it was. The door had been opening and closing for five minutes.

Tate came up to her and whispered in her ear,

“Hey I know it’s a bad time but I need to go.” Willow finally pried her eyes from the baby and looked at Tate. She knew immediately that he wasn’t just leaving the hospital, he was leaving for a mission or whatever they called it. She was heartbroken, there was no denying it.

“All right everyone clear the room,” her uncle called out and she was grateful to be given a moment alone with Tate.

“Don’t look at me like that or I won’t be able to leave,” Tate told her in a strained voice.

“Here at least hold Aspen,” Willow said as she handed her daughter to the man who

supported her through a lot of her pregnancy. Tate looked panicked as he took the tiny bundle, but her daughter let out a sigh. Tate looked down at Aspen with so much love. Willow smiled indulgently as the giant of a man held her seven pound and nineteen inch daughter. She quickly looked around and found her phone and snapped a picture of the two of them. Tate smiled and sat down on the bed.

“What are you doing?” Willow asked as Tate got out his phone.

“I want a picture of my girls,” Tate responded as he held up his phone to take a selfie. She looked absolutely awful, but stare had a large smile on his face and Willow couldn’t help but smile in return. He quickly snapped a picture and then returned Aspen to her arms. Then he snapped a picture of the two of them. Tate’s phone buzzed in his hands and a Willow knew he had to go. Tate

leaned in giving her a sweet kiss on her lips before kissing her on the forehead.

“I’ll miss you both so much.” Willow wanted to tell him that she loved him, but she knew that it wasn’t the right time yet, not now.

“Please be safe. I don’t know what I would do without you.” Willow watched Tate walk out of the room and her heart broke. Knox immediately walked back in and Willow rolled her eyes. He was followed by her in-laws and Memphis.

“Where’s my uncle?” Willow asked completely ignoring the Hayes brothers.

“He was on a phone call, can I hold my grand baby now?” Marge asked and Willow finally conceded. Willow handed her daughter off to Marge and watched as Aspen was held by everyone in the Hayes family quietly.

Memphis pov

Work got over at five and he pulled his phone out of his locker to see several text messages in his family chat.

Knox: Willow's in labor!! Headed to the hospital now!

Mom: okay will be there as soon as your dad gets home from work

Knox: okay just made it to the hospital.

Mom: we are getting ready to leave, I'm sure Memphis will be here when he gets off work too.

Knox: can't wait for you to keep me company.

Memphis let out a sigh, he was excited that his niece was going to be in the world, but not excited about having to wait around in the waiting room with his brother.

Despite him and his dad working at the same plant, they didn't work in the same area or

have the same start times. His dad started earlier than he did and got off at three in the afternoon.

Memphis responded to the text group by saying he would come by later on in the evening. It was a weekday so he didn't have Jackson. He went home, took a shower, and had dinner. He looked at his phone and saw it was almost seven. Memphis left for the hospital and went ahead and left for the hospital.

He sat opposite his brother and parents in the waiting room for several hours. Memphis was shocked to see James Cunningham come and get his brother at one point in the evening.

It was at one point that everyone had come out of the hospital room and Memphis figured that the baby was being cleaned up along with Willow. He was shocked to find that tall motherfucker come out of the room as well. He went to check his phone in the

corner while his brother went to approach James.

“I just wanted to say thank you, for letting me come in to see my daughter being born,” his brother told James Cunningham who scoffed.

“Ever the imbecile, that was Willow’s wish,” James responds shocking everyone in the waiting room.

“What?” His father asked James who just nodded.

“Willow told me verbatim that he’s not allowed in the room until the baby is close to coming out, I do think he is within his rights as a father to see his child being born.”

James walked off in the opposite direction. Memphis assumed to check his phone. No one said anything to his brother, and a few minuets later the nurse came out letting them know it was okay to enter. Memphis hesitated following his family, but his

mother made sure he did. When he entered the room it was like a punch to the gut to see Willow sitting there with a tiny bundle in her arms.

Memphis was eventually handed the little girl named Aspen and he couldn't help but melt as she looked into his eyes. Memphis like everyone else in the room fell in love with the little girl with the dark blue eyes.

"Here MEMP give me my daughter," Knox told him and reluctantly Memphis handed the bundle over to his brother. He looked over at Willow who sat there looking so detached from what was going on around her that his heart hurt. Memphis had to leave the room, he couldn't take it.

Willow pov

They were finally alone, it was one in the morning and everyone had left with promises to return in the morning. Knox had tried to convince her to be allowed to stay,

but she didn't think it was appropriate. Willow told him that he could come back in the morning. Aspen was asleep but Willow couldn't seem to fall asleep with her. She also couldn't seem to fall asleep either. Her uncle told her before he left that he would make sure her attorney knew she delivered the baby so the divorce could be finalized. Willow just nodded and told him to get some sleep.

"It's just me and you now girl," Willow told her daughter who was wide awake just like her. The hospital had a nursery, but Willow just couldn't bear to part with her just yet. Never.

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It was bright and early and the lactation consultant came in and started to work with her on trying to feed her baby. Willow and Aspen were both on the verge of tears. Aspen was getting hungry and the nurse had suggested to try and feed her. Willow had

brought her to her breast and unlike how it is portrayed in the movies Aspen didn't immediately latch.

Willow tried everything to get her daughter to latch onto her right and nothing was working.

"Willow. I think it would be best if we give Aspen some formula while you pump to try and get your colostrum to come in," the consultant whose name is Emily said.

"Why can't we wait longer until it does?" Willow asked.

"Aspen is getting frustrated and the more frustrated she gets the less likely she is going to latch on and be able to feed from you okay?" The consult asked and Willow just nodded as the woman went ahead to get some formula for her daughter. Willow who was trying to comfort her new born baby that was crying started to cry with her as she felt like a huge failure. She couldn't even

do something as basic as feeding her baby, the most natural thing in the world.

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Tate pov

In the twenty four hours he had left the base and coached Willow through labor the AK's were stolen. Tate wasn't told anything other than a message from Johnson.

"They're gone." He knew that that meant and it was bad. Tate reflected on the labor and holding Aspen for the first time as he drove back to the base. He never experienced something like that before and honestly it was a lot. Tate didn't have plans to be by Willow's side during the labor process, but when she grabbed his hand and asked him to stay he couldn't say no.

Tate had felt pain, hell he had been shot, gone through torture training, but it all

looked like a walk in the park compared to pushing out a baby. Then to find out he had to leave was the worst feeling in the world. Tate had never been bothered to tell his ex-wife that he was going on a mission before, this time he wanted to stay. Willow took it like a champ, he knew she wanted him to stay, but she smiled and told him to hold the baby. In that moment he couldn't help but imagine what it would have been like if he had met her before and Aspen was his daughter. A voice in his head screamed at him that he could make Aspen his own while he stared down at her in awe.

Tate made it back to their base and made it past security. He got out of his truck and entered the building quickly heading to their conference room. He could hear yelling from a mile away. It was Munch, the units hothead. Tate entered silently and saw Munch was yelling at Benson who started to yell back. In the field Benson uses a clear head, but he couldn't stand to be yelled at.

Benson was like him and grew up in foster care. He looked for Smitty and saw him chill as a cucumber eating his bag of sunflower seeds. Tate hated that nasty habit of his.

“Enough!” The CO walked into the room, Tate looked around seeing that all twelve of them had been called in. Everyone quickly sat straighter with the CO in the room and the yelling had instantly stopped.

“What’s going on captain?” Garcia asked from his spot next to Smitty.

“The cache of weapons your unit brought in last night were stolen from evidence,” the CO said looking at everyone in the room.

“What does that mean sir?” Black asked clearly worried. The CO who was in his fifties and had seen everything there was to see in this man’s military let out a weary sigh.

“Buckle up boys, that means we are all under investigation.”

“Fuck,” everyone in the room groaned. Tate looked at Smitty again through the corner of his eye and could see he was still unruffled by the news. That wasn’t good.

Investigations lasted for months and went into everyone’s personal life’s for the past fifteen years. The fact that Smitty wasn’t nervous meant he had help from a higher up and some one else on the team was fucked.

Willow pov

She and Aspen had returned home from the hospital three days ago. Willow had a very hard time adjusting to life with a newborn. Aspen woke up every three hours and cried. Willow would feed her, check her diaper and Aspen would stay awake for an hour and then go back to sleep. Then the cycle would repeat itself all over again, all day and all night. Willow was beyond exhausted and still healing from the hard labor. The hospital sent her home with several of those freakishly large pads as she hadn’t stopped

bleeding. Willow remembered from her labor class she would continue to bleed for several weeks. She was in a tremendous amount of pain and the doctor prescribed only a small amount of pain medication, so Willow was rationing them wisely. She took one every morning when the pain was the worst and the rest of the day she would simply take Tylenol if needed.

Willow had been unable to get Aspen to latch while at the hospital and she had simply given up. Her milk hadn't come in yet and Aspen was only angry as she rooted. Willow did continue to try and pump exclusively until her milk came in, which was yesterday. It took four days for her milk to come in. She was finally able to put some milk in with the formula. That was a small victory and Willow savored it. Though the victory was hollow as she was so chapped and bleeding that every time she pumped she cried from the pain. Willow was unable to muster up the energy to try and get Aspen to latch

again, honestly she couldn't take the pain her daughter would bring her.

Needless to say Willow was a mess after coming home from the hospital. Her lifeline was her uncle James and her housekeeper Bertha. Her uncle had been coming by midmorning to help her and Bertha would stop by late afternoon to help as well. They were instrumental as the two of them would stop by and get anything Willow may need. Bertha helped to wash bottles, cook a small dinner for Willow, and clean up the pigsty of a house she had in the short span of twenty-four hours. Her uncle James would hold and feed Aspen while Willow would pump or take a shower. Her uncle James also took her and Aspen to the doctor appointments that she needed. Due to the cord wrapped around her neck Aspen's liver was slower to function and caused her to be jaundiced. Willow had to take her to get her blood drawn to test her bilirubin levels every day. It was exhausting. Willow went to meet with

Aspen's pediatrician today as well and the doctor had no concerns other than the slight jaundice of her daughter.

Knox came over a few hours every night after work to spend time with Aspen. Willow hated every minute of him coming by and she could feel her resentment start to build even further. Knox got to go to work every day, spent a few hours a day with his daughter and then go home to enjoy his evening and sleep a full eight hours of uninterrupted sleep. While she was up every three hours. Willow spent the time Knox was at the house locked in her room. She told him when Aspen's next bottle was and usually put in noise canceling headphones. Knox had the balls to ask for help the first day he came over as he couldn't get their newborn to settle down. Willow told him that if he couldn't take care of their daughter for a few hours a day then she would never let him take Aspen over night when she got older.

The only good news she got was yesterday and day she received two emails that made her happy enough to smile in her exhausted state. Willow received an email from Nancy stating that the counteroffer she had sent would be acceptable and they would cover all moving costs. Her job would start April 1st. Willow did the math in her head, Aspen would only be two months old by then. Her company only provided six weeks maternity leave, so she would have to be back at work for two weeks to wrap up her projects up at the office. Willow tried not to think about it as she was already stressed.

The second email Willow got was from her lawyer who sent her official divorce papers and Willow smiled. She was finally free of Knox Hayes. What made her happier was that she got sole custody of their daughter Aspen Hayes, which meant there would be no problem when Willow moved them to Georgia. Willow sat on her couch holding her daughter and started to laugh like a crazy

person. She couldn't believe she was finally free of that man. The rush of the feelings that she felt of that moment were inexplicable; joy, relief, and that tiny bit of sadness that her marriage didn't work out.

Willow went back to Nancy's email and thought about Tate briefly before accepting the job offer. Willow had to get out of here, this house where she made these memories with Knox. It wasn't good for her or Aspen. Willow looked down at her daughter who was looking up at her with her blue eyes and reaching her hand up for her. Willow grabbed her hand and kissed it.

"I'm making the right decision for us baby girl, I swear."