

## Chapter 26 Confessions of a Nanny

Moana

“Good morning.”

I jumped, clasp my hand over my heart and taking in a sharp breath as I slipped out of Edrick’s room, only to be immediately met with a familiar voice.

Ethan’s smiling face stared back at me. From one look at him, I knew that he knew that something was going on.

“Uh– I-It’s not how it looks like,” I stammered, looking around frantically with my back against the bedroom door in the hopes that no one else was watching.

Ethan merely chuckled. “Are you really an au pair?” he asked. I could sense a hint of humor behind his voice and it helped me relax just a tiny bit, but I still feared that I had ruined Ethan’s impression of me. I liked him as a person and desperately did not want him to think that I was just after his brother for money or s\*x.

“I am, I swear,” I replied, grabbing Ethan’s arm without thinking and pulling him away from the door in case Edrick was awake and listening. “I’m not a mistress, or anything like that.”

“Well, not that it’s any of my business, but it does sort of appear as though you might be,” he replied.

I shook my head vehemently. “No, really,” I said, lowering my voice so that no one else could hear. “Edrick and I have a sleeping arrangement.”

Ethan chuckled again. “A sleeping arrangement?”

“Not like that,” I insisted. “An actual sleeping arrangement. For some reason, my presence helps him sleep better than the pills and the alcohol, so he asked me to sign a contract to sleep with him until his insomnia improves.”

“Really?” Ethan asked, sounding a bit surprised. “Edrick has had sleeping problems since before Ella was born.”

I shrugged. “I don’t know why, but for some reason, it just works. He usually falls asleep as soon as I do and wakes up as soon as I do.”

Ethan furrowed his brow. “How did you both come to realize this?”

I felt my heart skip; I couldn’t possibly admit to Ethan that I had already had a one night stand with his brother, so I merely shrugged. “We both nodded off in the living room one night,” I lied. Ethan still seemed a bit suspicious, but didn’t say anything more.

“Come on,” he said, changing the subject and turning to walk down the stairs. “Breakfast is ready.”

I stayed firmly planted in my spot as he walked away, my eyes still wide. Ethan, noticing my absence by his side as he took the first step down, turned back to face me. “Don’t worry,” he said with a smile. “We’re friends. Your secret’s safe with me.”

Ethan’s kind words helped to allay my fears for the moment, although the lingering possibility of Edrick’s and my secret being discovered still loomed heavily above my head. What made it even worse was knowing that, should we be caught, it would ultimately somehow wind up being entirely my fault. I couldn’t be entirely sure that anyone, including Ethan or Ella, wouldn’t still take the Alpha CEO’s side of the story over the poor human nanny’s side of the story, and I especially couldn’t be entirely sure that Edrick wouldn’t throw me under the bus if our arrangement came to light.

Still, I decided that I needed to continue with my duties and go downstairs to wake Ella up and give her breakfast. When I arrived downstairs, however, she wasn't in her room. I heard the sound of voices and silverware clattering, so I went to look for her there.

When I entered the dining room, Ella, Ethan, and Verona were already seated at the table. This dining room was much smaller and more intimate than the massive banquet hall that we dined in the night before, with a quaint and round family-sized table in the center that was covered by a lace tablecloth and laden with a beautiful array of breakfast foods. Ella, who was sitting next to her grandmother, jumped up when she saw me and skittered across the room to throw her arms around me excitedly. She was still in her pajamas and had a bit of whipped cream on the side of her mouth, and obviously appeared to be currently experiencing a sugar high.

“Good morning, Moana!” Ella exclaimed as she clung to my legs. “Breakfast today is Bell-jam waffles and... om—” She paused, chewing on the syllables on her tongue, before giving up and turning to look at her grandmother for help.

“Omelette du fromage,” Verona said with a chuckle. “And it's Belgian waffles. Not bell-jam.”

“Right,” Ella said, turning back to face me. “Will you eat with us?”

I glanced up at Verona, who cast me a warmly approving look, then looked back down at Ella. She still had whipped cream on the side of her mouth, so I wiped it away with my thumb before it got smeared all over my silk pajamas and nodded. “Sure,” I said. “I'll eat with you.”

Once Ella was back in her seat and happily shoving even more copious amounts of waffle and syrup into her mouth, I pulled out the chair beside her. I went to lift the silver dome that was covering my plate, but before I could, a servant scurried over and did it for me, revealing a steaming hot waffle with fruit on top and an equally steaming omelet on the side.

“Thank you,” I said. “This looks delicious.”

“Our chef is simply the best,” Verona said before popping a strawberry into her mouth, letting it sit on the inside of her cheek as she stirred cream and sugar into her coffee. I took a sip of my own coffee, feeling my worries slip away as the warm, sweet liquid filled my mouth. Even the coffee tasted as though it was made from the most expensive beans.

“Do you cook, Moana?” Ethan asked, cutting his omelet with a fork and a knife.

“Oh, I mean... I help the servants at the penthouse,” I replied. “I wouldn’t say I do so much cooking as I do peeling potatoes.”

“Moana makes me sandwiches for lunch sometimes,” Ella chimed in, sitting up on her knees to reach across the table for more syrup. Verona gently slapped the back of the little girl’s hand, growling at her under her breath to sit back down on her butt and not her knees, and poured the syrup for her. “Her sandwiches are the best.”

“Oh?” Ethan asked, raising his eyebrows. “I’m a bit of a sandwich connoisseur myself. I’ll have to try one of these sandwiches sometime.”

I felt my cheeks blush a bit, but it quickly turned to laughter as Ella practically shouted with her mouth full, spitting waffle everywhere: “What’s connoisseur mean?”

While we were laughing, Verona glanced up, wiping the tears from her eyes with her napkin. “Good morning, darling,” she said. Ethan and I both looked up as well to see Edrick standing in the doorway; he was fully dressed, not in his pajamas like the rest of us, and had a sour look on his face.

“It’s time to go home. The car is waiting out front.”

Verona was taken aback by Edrick’s overreaction, but I instantly felt a pit in my stomach as I saw Edrick’s eyes flicker between Ethan and I for a brief moment.

If Edrick wasn't going to answer my questions about his poor relationship with his brother, then I was determined to find out in other ways. As soon as I had a chance, I would have to ask Ethan.