

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

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Jane's POV

I woke up to the smell of something potently sweet lingering in the air. It was day two of living with my grandmother and it seemed her newfound purpose was feeding me. She complained saying I was too skinny and needed to have my energy for when it came time to deliver.

I drew my curtains and opened the window allowing the sweet air into the room. My body quivered in delight, welcoming the fresh air into my oxygen stream.

My grandmother was excited about having a great-grandchild and I didn't realize before that I wasn't only making abuelo a great-grandfather. I was making my parent's grandparents as well.

"You're such a sweetie," I heard my grandmother say to someone and I heard a man chuckle.

I went over to the bathroom and brushed my teeth. I had been using my grandmother's clothes. It was baggy on me and very freeing.

The best thing about living here as a kid was that I could stay in PJs all day. It's not like it was any different when I lived on my own but here it just felt right.

Mateo would have loved it here.

And I missed him.

I missed him to the point of heartbreak and tears. I had formed a connection with him and I only hoped he didn't worry about me and where I was. I also hoped Alvaro would keep to what he told me about wanting Mateo to stay on the right path in life.

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

where I was. I also hoped Alvaro would keep to what he told me about wanting Mateo to stay on the right path in life.

When I was done taking care of my morning bathroom duties I walked down the old rickety staircase. The more I stayed here the more I wanted to tell my grandmother to sell the place and move with me.

I wouldn't mind having her around. I needed someone I could rely on. I couldn't do this alone as much as I thought I could. My grandmother could teach me a lot about motherhood and I could take care of her in her old age.

But I knew it wouldn't be easy for my grandmother to just sell this place and move. It was of great sentimental value to her. It was the first home she and my grandfather shared.

I walked into the kitchen to see a man seated at the table. He was wearing a brown button-up shirt and blue faded jeans. "Good morning, sweet pea," my grandmother said, "this is my friend's, grandson. The one I told you about."

"Brady this is my granddaughter Jane," she introduced and I smiled at the man.

"Pleasure to meet you," he said, "I have those exact same pyjamas," he teased and I blushed. It was an old pair of striped pyjama bottoms and a red oversized t-shirt that said merry Christmas.

I sat down across the table from Brady and he smiled at me. He seemed comfortable in my grandmother's house with the way he lounged in his seat. "Brady just came over to do some work on the porch. I thought I'd fix it," my grandmother explained, "I can't have you falling."

"It's no trouble. It's my day off," Brady said, "and anything for my

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

grandma's best friend."

"Such a sweet man, ain't he Jane?" my grandmother commented, pinching the grown man's cheek.

"Well, I should get started. There is quite a bit of work to do on that porch, " Brady stood and I noticed he was a tall lanky man, "thanks for the iced tea, nana." He put on his baseball cap and left the kitchen.

My grandmother looked at me. "You know that's how I met your grandfather," she said.

"He was sitting in your grandmother's kitchen?" I asked sarcastically."

She smiled. "Actually he was delivering milk."

I laughed. "Are you seriously trying to set me up with him? I'm pregnant with another man's child."

She chuckled. "Sweetheart, you seem so sad. You keep staring off into space and I get the feeling you ain't telling me everything. Maybe you could use a friend to talk to."

I stood going over to my grandmother. I hugged her for being so great and wished she was my mom instead. "Don't worry about me. I'm fine. I just have a lot on my mind, nana. Which reminds me. I think I'll go into town today. I need some clothes."

"The airport still didn't call about your luggage?" She questioned.

I shook my head. "No."

"Well eat something before you go out," she said, "I made muffins and I'll hear nothing about his only eating twice a day. You eating for two

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

now," she scolded.

"Yes nana," I sounded like a child.

I took a muffin and a glass of iced tea and went up to my room. I couldn't live in my grandmother's clothes and I only had one set of clothes that were my own.

I washed them yesterday so I could use them today and go get more clothes. I also needed to get a job fast before my grandmother got suspicious.

I told her that I only had to go in on Monday to work and she believed me, but now I had to find another job in retail. I should have just told her the truth. She seemed very understanding and didn't judge me.

I couldn't deal with the number of lies I was telling her. But maybe the less she knew the better it would be.

I took a quick shower and got dressed while I finished my muffin and iced tea in my room. It was delicious and anything my grandmother made tasted amazing.

"Do you need anything while I'm gone?" I called as I descended the steps.

"No sweetie, I'm good." She called back from the kitchen.

I left the house to see Brady crouching and checking the floorboards on the porch. He looked up at me and stood, dusting his hands. "Heading out?" He asked.

"Yeah, I'm just going into town."

He walked ahead of me. "I'll give you a lift, I need to get some paint and

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

nails." I thought about it for a minute if it would be a good idea and he turned back to look at me. "It's just a lift." He smiled reassuringly.

"Oh go with him," my grandmother said and I looked to see she was standing by the door, peeping at us.

"Okay," I agreed.

He pressed a button on his car keys, unlocking the white double cab van parked on the field. I had to climb into his van because it was too high for me to get in. He got into the van with ease and he backed out of the yard.

"So what do you need from town?" He asked.

"Just clothes," I muttered feeling awkward about this.

He turned up the radio a little and I settled into my seat, moving to put my seat belt on. The town was give or take fifteen minutes away from my grandmother's ranch.

He drove into the town and memories of when I'd come here for the summer holidays and Christmas break flooded through my mind of how I'd make new friends that I knew I'd never see again.

But it was fun.

The bonfires and the music and dancing. The food festivals and carnivals. Those were all good memories of when my life was so simple and carefree.

"Do you have a particular style of clothing?" Brady asked and the way he spoke to me was as if he was walking on eggshells.

"Whatever is comfortable." I shrugged.

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

"Walmart then?" He questioned, "we can get everything at once."

"Fine by me."

He pulled into the Walmart parking lot and we went into the store together. I loved Walmart. One place for everything was an easy fix and saved a lot of time.

I went off into the clothing aisle and Brady wandered off to the home repair aisle — I guessed. I grabbed a pair of shorts, two pairs of jeans, a summer dress and four t-shirts.

It would just have to be enough for now.

Brady came over to me and he had a box of nails and red paint in hand. "Just one more thing I need to get," I said and he looked curious.

"My grandmother needs a new phone," I said and he chuckled.

"That she does," he agreed. "My grandmother has been trying to tell her that for the last year."

"She's stubborn. She doesn't believe in technology."

We walked over to the electronics aisle and stood in front of a display case that had all the new phones on the market. We both hunched over to look at the phones.

"I'd recommend getting her something like my grandmother's. She can show her how to use it."

I nodded. "Which one does your grandmother have?"

"That one," he pointed at a newer model of a Samsung.

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

"Do you think she is going to be mad at me for this?" I asked and he chuckled.

"She's gonna be furious, alright. Nana Paisley is repulsed by technology. Do you know how many times I walked in on her smacking the TV around."
"

"Yeah, I will have to get her a new TV as well sooner or later. But we'll start with the phone first."

Brady called for a sales representative and I paid for the phone. We went up to the cashier and he pulled out his wallet. I handed the cashier all the money I had left before he could.

"Not cool," he said.

"It's my grandmother's porch why do you have to pay for the paint and stuff."

"Hey she and my grandmother are like sisters which makes her my nana too," he smirked.

We left the store with our stuff. "Okay I didn't mean to insult your honour back there," I said and he erupted with laughter.

"My honour?" He questioned, "you scorned it." I could tell he was joking with the way he laughed.

"I'm glad she has a best friend and you. I know she gets lonely. I haven't come around much. I just got so busy with work and moving up and down."
"

"Yeah," Brady's brows furrowed. He moved to open the canopy part of

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

the van. "After my grandfather passed your nana has been there for mine. Helping her to adjust."

"How long have they been friends for?" I asked. I was feeling guilty for not being more involved in my grandmother's life.

"How old are you?" He asked.

"Ever heard the saying that you should never ask a lady her age?" I teased.

He grinned. "Just tell me."

"Twenty-four."

"We'll they have been friends for forty years," he said.

"Then how come we've never met?" I asked.

"I know our grandmothers have a bad memory because of their old age but I didn't think you would, Jane," he chuckled. "I thought you'd recognize me by now."

"So we met before?" I looked at his face properly and he did seem familiar.

"We were kids. I came over with my grandparents and parents for Christmas one year. It was just after your grandfather passed away."

I snorted. The memory of that Christmas, coming back when Jason got his first video game and I got bath salts from my mother. "Well, how was I supposed to remember you? You looked like a dork back then."

He smiled. "Like you were any cooler in your Hannah Montana t-shirt."

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

I laughed. "I can't believe you remember what t-shirt I was wearing."

"I thought you were cute," he shrugged and got into the van.

I got into the van as well. "So how long are you staying?" He asked and I moved to put my seat belt on as he started up the van.

"Not long. Maybe just a few months."

"A lot can happen in a few months," he said.

His statement had a hint of suggestion in it and if his family was close to my grandmother I was going, to be honest, and clear with him before my intentions got lost in jokes and playful banter.

"Yeah, like my stomach would grow..."

He eyed me from the corner of his eye. "Your grandmother's cooking is delicious."

"I mean I'm pregnant," I said and he looked at me.

"Oh," his eyes widened. "I didn't know-" he cleared his throat.

Silence settled between us and he shifted around in his seat uncomfortably. "Does your grandmother know?" He asked after a while.

I nodded. "Yes, I told her. She would find out eventually and I didn't want to hide it. It's not like I'm ashamed."

He nodded as I spoke and it kind of ate at me wondering what was running in his head about me. "I'm married," I clarified and he did a double take looking at me. "And no she doesn't know that part because everything happened so sudden and even my parents don't know."

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

"Where is your husband? He just lets his pregnant wife get on a plane by herself?" He sounded outraged by that idea.

"No, he would never let me out of his sight. I left without him knowing. We had a really bad fight and I just wanted to get out."

He sighed. "Why are you telling me all this?" He asked, "I mean if you didn't tell your grandmother then why me?"

"Because for the past two days I spoke more lies than I can ever remember telling in my whole life. It just feels so good not to lie.

"Your secret is safe with me," he smiled. "But was the fight that bad between you and your husband that you are not planning on going back to him for months?"

I remained silent. I didn't know how to explain the next part. That I wasn't planning on going back to him. I was going to go to a whole new country and try to raise this child on my own— if my grandmother refused to come with me. Which was very likely.

He pulled into my grandmother's ranch and he refused to let me carry anything into the house. "You know my hands still work right?" I said.

"Yeah, but you're not supposed to carry anything heavy." He brought all the bags inside and I saw my grandmother in the living room watching TV.

"Hey sweetie," she greeted, "get everything you need?" She asked with a secret smile on her face as she looked between me and Brady

An awkward silence settled in the room and Brady and I just stared at each other. "I'm going to start on the porch," he said.

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

"Thank you for the ride." I smiled at him and he tipped his cap before going back outside.

I got my grandmother's new phone out of the bag and put it behind my back as I walked up to her. "I got you something," I said sitting next to her on the couch.

She tucked my hair behind my ear. "What is it, sweet pea?" She asked and

I pulled the phone out, showing it to her.

Her eyes widened in surprise and I couldn't tell if she was happy or displeased. "You shouldn't have, sweetheart."

"You needed a new one. The signal on your old phone is weak and your speaker has a problem. Plus on this, we can video call and it will be easier to send texts."

"You shouldn't have worried. I'm an old gal. I barely get calls."

"Brady said his grandmother would show you and that she has the same phone."

"Hmm," my grandmother mused, "you two got to talking." She grinned, taking the phone from me and examining it.

"Yeah, we did. He would make a great friend," I emphasized the word friend and she sulked. "I need to put my unborn child first and I don't want someone else," I admitted.

She patted my hand. "Okay, I wasn't trying to get you two together after you told me about your boyfriend. I just wanted you to be friends." She chuckled. "His family is like family to me that's why."

Chapter 15: Peach iced tea.

"Oh."

"I made some fresh peach iced tea. Why don't you take some out to him, " she suggested.

I stood. "Your iced tea is the thing of magic. You should really bottle the stuff up and sell it."

"You know I always wanted to open a small cafe," she said as I walked to the kitchen.

"What stopped you?" I asked.

"I was full of excuses and after your grandfather, I just lost all enthusiasm for anything."

I grabbed the jug of tea out of the fridge and a glass from the cupboard. I walked into the living room to see my grandmother was lost in thought. "You're never too old to follow your dreams, nana. You're a great cook."

"Thanks, sweetheart," she beamed at me and I moved to take the tea to Brady outside.

I balanced the glass between my side and arm as I moved to pull the door open. "Nana made more iced-" I paused as I stepped outside.

Alvaro was standing in front of the house and a menacing smile lit up his face as his eyes landed on me. The glass I was balancing fell and shattered. "Nice to see you too, darling." 1

