

Their Human, Her Mates Chapter 4

Hadley POV

“And this is the sitting deck. It has shuffleboard, ping pong tables, and ring toss. We mostly direct our senior citizens this way. They can relax in the shaded area, and step out on the deck to the lounge chairs to enjoy the sunshine,” Mrs. Meyers waves her hands in the direction of a shorter deck connected to an open air pavilion with the various games set up.

“We have a total of 6 swimming pools, and we also have a private beach and small marina. Guests can rent paddle boards, small boats, jet skis and any other water-running device they can want during their stay. We used to offer tours with the dolphins and party boats, but the, uh, woman running the program had to leave suddenly. We use a friend’s services now for those sorts of events. I’ll be sure to get you her number.

“Simone and her husband are close friends of our family and she is close to your age. She would be an excellent contact to have since her husband owns quite a few businesses related to our line of work.”

“Resorts and hotels?” I asked, wondering why she works so closely with someone in the same line of work as her.

“He doesn’t have any resorts or hotels, but he does own many restaurants, condo buildings, night clubs and Simone took over her family’s charter business.”

“Wow,” I stared at her open-mouthed, impressed that someone my age could be so....accomplished. “She’s my age?”

“Oh, yes. Lovely girl,” she gushes, “She is quite close with my daughter-in-law, and her husband has always done business closely related to ours. I will have to have you meet them sometime. I’m sure Simone and Carli would love to get to know you.”

“Carli?” I ask. Did she mention a Carli already? Something I’m starting to learn is that Vivian Meyers is a talker. She likes to talk about anything and everything, and sometimes it’s hard to keep up.

“Oh, Carli. Carli is, uh, my oldest son’s boss?” She tells me like it was a question, “I’m sure you will meet her at some point. She and Lilly are close

friends. My youngest two used to have the hugest crush on her. It was quite entertaining watching her put them in their place over and over again. She is, uh, married to someone quite important to our, uh, city."

"Like the mayor?" I asked, confused.

"No, but kind of. Parker is the leader of a large organization that, uh, does various things for the city. He may be more important than the mayor to, uh, certain people in Miami."

Vivian seemed nervous about the way the conversation was going, so I didn't ask any more questions. The more she talks about these people, the more she sounds like she is part of a cult. It's....off putting. It's like she's talking in code and trying to hide all her real meanings.

Vivian has told me nothing but great things about her oldest son and his wife, Matt and Lilly, but she doesn't speak much about the other two sons. When she speaks of her oldest, her voice is laced with adoration and pride. The other two, there is still adoration, but there is always this undertone of exasperation and annoyance. I hear that most big families have a black sheep. Maybe hers has 2? I wonder what the deal is with them?

We made our way back to the offices located behind the front desk, Vivian chatting away, stopping in front of the office that is now mine. An adorable older gentleman is applying vinyl lettering with my name on the front of the glass door.

Pride fills me, knowing that I'm finally accomplishing something for myself, away from my father's control. I was raised in the hotel industry. I went to college and got my BCs in hospitality and hotel administration, but I never got a chance to do much with the degree. Fedal did not want me straining myself in a man's world, so he said. He probably just didn't want me witnessing his son being a pig.

I left my phone back in New York at the train station, smashed to pieces at the bottom of a trash can, not wanting my dad to be able to track it and find out where I was going. I already had a burner phone I used when I applied for the job in the first place, and my family doesn't know about it or this job.

After Vivian leaves, I open up my email on my laptop, scanning the various vendors and points of contact left for me by the previous coordinator. It's a

general email account for the person who holds this position in the hotel, but the last woman left personal contacts here as well.

There are two at the very top of the list under favorites that have hearts, eggplants, and tongue emojis in the names instead of their actual name. How inappropriate and unprofessional.

I hope it wasn't Vivian's daughter-in-law because that could get awkward, especially since there are quite a few emails left in the sent box to each of them. No incoming emails, but lots of outgoing.

Curiosity gets the best of me and I open the top few. This girl screams desperate. Whiny complaints about not calling her, having her number blocked, apologizing for certain smells which make me cringe, and so much more. The email addresses are very similar. 'MM1025' and then different numbers for each following that. Maybe it was the same guy with two different email addresses?

I quit snooping, then deleted and blocked the email addresses. I don't want any part of what is contained in those emails. He or they were probably a lot like Zeki. A playboy that runs through women like toilet paper. Disgusting.

I spent the rest of the afternoon organizing my new office. I used the remaining money on the gift cards I collected to buy little desk plants, cute sticky notes and notebooks, and frames to put the few pictures I brought with me. The picture of me and my mama is sitting on my desk, but the rest are taken of places in New York I will miss.

I brought a picture of my dad, but we have been on such bad terms because of the whole forced marriage bullshit that I didn't want to have his negative energy taint my new life and new sense of freedom.

Dr. Amanda Phillips, the woman who I am now living with until I can find my own place, is the sweetest. She made me a goal and vision board to bring to work and hang up in my office and it was the first thing I did. It's currently blank, and I'm staring at it, trying to decide what to put as the focal point of the thing.

Amanda is a shrink, a damn good one. My first two days here, she had me pegged. She knew exactly what I was running from after just a few conversations skirting around my issues. I've never had a chance to think or

make decisions for myself, but I broke the barrier put around me by taking a chance and moving down here.

She confirmed what I always knew; that my relationship with my father was unhealthy. He said he was making my decisions for me for my own benefit, but he wasn't taking my happiness and wants into consideration. He was abusing the control he had over me. I didn't think the control he implemented over me was a form of abuse, since physically I was fine, but after she talked me through the situation I was in, and how that put me in a fight or flight situation, it became clear to me that I was very in an abusive relationship with my own parents.

Now that I have a fresh start, I want to focus on my independence.

Independence.

That will be the focal point of my new board.

I rip a paper out of one of my new notebooks, take a sharpie, and in big, cursive script write 'INDEPENDENCE', then tack it onto the center of the board.

"Perfect," I muttered under my breath, placing my hands on my hips and staring at the board.