

Chapter 12: Day Two

I was sitting on the back deck of the villa, sipping coffee and typing up emails and notes for my assistant when Piper emerged from the bedroom. Her little pajama shorts were doing wild things to my mind, but I shook the thought away and returned to my work.

"Good morning," she said brightly.

"Morning," I replied, not looking up from my laptop.

"Have you had breakfast?" she asked quietly as she sat across from me.

I shook my head, continuing to type.

"How about I order something in then? Are you more of an avocado toast or pancakes person?"

"Whatever I want. Honestly, I'm not even that hungry." I continued working, not looking up at her.

She walked back into the villa and emerged twenty minutes later in a pair of shorts and a shirt. Her hair flowed down her shoulders in waves, and her skin had a glow about it from spending yesterday in the sun. She sat beside me at the table silently as I continued to try and ignore her as I worked.

"Are you excited about our little adventure today?" she asked as she played with a piece of her hair.

"Not really. I'm not a big fan of snorkeling," I heard, still not looking up from my computer. "Do you mind? I have a lot of work to get through."

She exhaled at me before getting up from the table just as someone knocked on the door.

"Breakfast!" she exclaimed, setting a plate down in front of me. I looked over to see a stack of pancakes.

"You went with pancakes..." I mumbled.

"They're macadamia nut pancakes with passion fruit syrup—they sounded amazing," she replied as she took a bite. "Ohh... they taste amazing too!"

She looked up at me with a sarcastic glare. "If you were a healthy-breakfast person, you should have said so. You lost your chance to an opinion when you got all snippy."

I rolled my eyes at her. "Keep talking like that, and I'll ignore you."

She gave me a sideways glare. "That's fine, I'll go stay with Ariana. She's nicer anyway."

I chuckled before closing my laptop and pulling my plate toward me, taking a bite. "Oh wow, these are really good."

"I told you," she smirked before taking another bite of her food.

After breakfast, I finished my work before heading inside to change. I sat on the bed, pulling on my shoes when Piper walked in.

"Ariana is here. Apparently, she wants to leave right now instead of in thirty minutes," she said.

"Well, tell her she's just going to have to wait a minute. I'm not ready," I heard.

Piper gave me a wide-eyed stare before leaving again. "I'll just meet you out front with everyone."

I sat in the back seat of the car in dread as we drove to our destination. We climbed out of the car to see a secluded beach with white sand everywhere. Everyone commented on how beautiful it was. All I could think of was how many different ways there were for us to drown.

"Ready?" Piper asked, taking my hand.

I took my hand away. "I guess."

She looked at me sideways. "Is everything okay?"

I narrowed my eyes at her. "Everything is fine. You just seem to be getting a bit too comfortable with my family."

Piper rolled her eyes. "Tate, I told you. I have to make this believable, or nobody will buy this whole fake relationship. A real girlfriend would make an effort with your family. Stop reading into it."

I let out a huff. "I'm not. I'm just saying you're getting really friendly."

"Fine," Piper grumbled. "I'll stop being friendly." She walked off in frustration, leaving me behind in the back of the group and ignoring me for the rest half of the day.

We spent hours bobbing up and down in the water, looking at the shore and wildlife. The turquoise water was so clear, and I liked the fact I could see everything around me. And below me.

Halfway through, we stopped for lunch, enjoying the scenery as we sat under a canopy for a luxury beach picnic. I had to admit, as far as snorkeling goes, this wasn't horrible. I sat beside Piper and looked out at the water, trying to ignore it when she scooted away from me.

"Piper," I whispered. "Stop making a scene."

Piper glared at me. "I'm sorry, Mr. Young." She scooted back toward me, this time practically sitting on me. She ate in silence, only speaking when someone else spoke to her.

I let out an irritated huff before walking off to talk to Jason near the end of the meal.

"What did you do?" Ariana growled as she smacked my arm.

"Nothing! Why?" I hollered, rubbing my arm.

"That girl is mad at you, what did you do?"

I rolled my eyes. "Don't worry about it, Ari."

"I swear if you mess that up, I'll beat you," she heard before sitting beside her new husband.

A little while later, we made our way from the beach and back to the cars.

"What did he do?" I heard Ariana quietly ask Piper as we walked back down the trail.

Piper shook her head. "He just said something dumb. I'll consider forgiving him later."

"Good, let him stew. I hate it when they say stupid things and then wonder why we're upset," Ari whispered again before walking toward the head of the group.

I moved alongside Piper and took her hand. "Seriously?" I whispered.

"Seriously what?" Piper glared.

"Seriously, stop stirring up drama. You're here to make things easier, remember?"

Piper smiled at me with a dark grin. "Ariana asked me a question. She can tell I'm irritated. Would you rather I lie and make her dig deeper? Mr. Young, I am a professional. I'm not going to ruin this for you, so don't worry about it." She snatched her hand away from mine and walked away from me.

When we reached the resort again, we all returned to our rooms to rest for a while.

"Professional? You call that professional?" I hollered as we walked into the villa.

"I'm not the one yelling," Piper replied, crossing her arms over her chest.

"Miss Stringer, you seem to forget that this is an arrangement. That I am paying you to behave yourself!" I yelled.

She looked up at me with defiance in her eyes before looking away. "Yes, sir," she spoke quietly, all of her fire gone.

She turned and walked out of the back door toward the pool. I let out a huff and went to the room, slamming the door behind me.