

Chapter 13: Day Three

I spent the rest of the evening avoiding Tate. He was exactly as people described him—hard and brutal. The next morning, I stepped out of the bedroom and sighed as I looked outside. I needed to clear my head before breakfast.

I knew I had to keep things professional, which meant apologizing for last night. I hated it, especially since I hadn't done anything wrong. I walked down the boardwalk to the beach, making my way through the white sands. I looked out at the ocean, carrying my sandals in my hands as I strolled along the shore.

"Piper?"

I glanced up to see Tate standing a few yards away. I took a deep breath before turning around and walking back down the beach, not wanting to deal with this right now.

"Piper, wait!" he called, jogging down the beach until he was beside me. "What are you doing out here?"

"I just came out for a walk before breakfast," I replied, my voice tense.

"Same," he nodded. "Look, I'm sorry about how I acted yesterday. I was just in a mood and I took it out on you. You've been making this trip so much easier for me."

I hesitated before letting out a long breath. "I'm sorry, too. I shouldn't have gotten upset. You're right, I'm here to do a job, not get cozy with your family. The lines blurred. It won't happen again."

We continued walking down the beach together in comfortable silence until we made our way into the resort restaurant where everyone was waiting.

"There you two are!" Harris exclaimed. "Where have you been?"

"We took a walk on the beach this morning," Tate said, smiling as he pulled out my chair for me.

"The beach is to die for this morning, so calm," I added as we looked at our menus.

After breakfast, we returned to our rooms to grab our things. We were heading to the main island's downtown to shop.

I grabbed my purse and sunglasses and made my way to the door where Tate was waiting.

We wandered around the shops, enjoying the vibrant colors and lively sounds. I smiled as we looked at little trinkets and souvenirs from vendors and decided to buy a cute little bracelet from one of the shops. It wasn't fancy, but I loved it.

I took Tate's hand as we walked, trying to ignore the fact that he kept stealing glances at me. I couldn't deny I enjoyed it.

At lunchtime, we found a little café with live music playing. It was fun and lively, and I enjoyed the whole experience. As we finished eating, Tate's father took my hand.

"How about a dance?" Harris asked softly.

I smiled up at him. "I'd love to!" He spun me around the little dance floor in the middle of the café, and we swayed to the music.

"I haven't seen Tate this relaxed in a long time. I can't pretend it doesn't have everything to do with you," Harris said as we danced.

I smiled lightly. "I don't know about that..."

"He loves you. He might not have said it, or even know it himself. But he does."

I inhaled sharply at his words, unable to respond. There was no way Tate felt anything but a mild kindness toward me. "Oh..." I said quietly, suddenly feeling guilty about lying to all of these people.

After lunch, we all made our way back to the resort. I spent the car ride in silence, not quite knowing what to say.

"Are you alright?" Tate asked as we walked toward our villa.

"I'm fine, just a bit tired," I replied with a small smile. "I think I'm going to lie down for a bit."

As we walked into the villa, Tate stepped toward me, his body close to mine. He looked down into my eyes and placed his hands on my arms. "Go rest, I'll sit out on the back deck to give you some quiet."

I took a deep breath. "You don't need to do that," I said quietly, still looking up into his eyes as though I was trapped.

"Unless you want me to come nap with you," he whispered, his voice quiet and husky.

I stepped back, pushing my hair away from my face. "You're the boss, you do whatever you want. I'm going to change."

I quickly walked into the bedroom and changed into something more comfortable. I climbed into the bed, the soft blankets cocooning me as I drifted off to sleep.

An hour later, I woke up to find myself alone. I walked outside, only to find Tate had disappeared.

"Huh..." I said, scratching my head as I made my way back inside. Then I heard the front door open.

"Oh, hey!" Tate called as he walked in. "How'd you sleep?"

"Good," I replied. "Where did you disappear to?"

"Jason asked if he could borrow my laptop, so I walked it over," Tate replied, sitting down on the couch.

I sat beside him on the couch and leaned my head back. "Do we have anything planned for this evening?" I asked.

"Nope," Tate responded. "Just dinner in a few hours."

I nodded. "Sounds good. I think I'm going to go for a swim. You?"

"A swim sounds nice," Tate agreed, standing from the couch.

I slipped into a black bikini and made my way out back where Tate was already in the pool.

I walked down the steps into the cool water and floated around for a minute until Tate swam up beside me. I smiled up at him before splashing him in the face.

We splashed each other back and forth, laughing and yelling until Tate pushed forward. He grabbed my waist, pulling me to him.

I inhaled sharply at his touch that sent tingles through my whole body. "I'm glad you're here," he whispered as his face moved closer to mine.

I smiled up at him. "I'm glad you're enjoying yourself."

Tate looked into my eyes, his gaze almost reaching into my soul. Suddenly I was lost, and I found myself kissing him.

I pulled back, surprised at myself. "I— I'm sorry, I don't know what—"

I stopped, interrupted by Tate cupping his hand around the back of my neck and pulling my face to his, crushing his lips to mine.

I wrapped my arms around his neck, pulling him closer as our lips melded together. He held me in his arms, our bare skin tingling as our bodies pressed together.

I inhaled sharply as his hands traveled down my body, touching every inch of my skin. I wrapped my legs around his waist as we kissed deeper.

I could feel his hardness pressed against me, rubbing against the bottom of my swimsuit.

I untied his swim trunks, pushing them down as my hands traveled to his throbbing desire. He untied my bikini, his mouth trailing kisses down my neck and breasts as he removed my suit.

I moaned as he sucked and kissed, his hands moving up and down my body as he caressed me.

I wrapped my legs around him again, this time teasing his tip with my entrance. He shivered at the sensation, pressing his lips to mine as I slowly lowered myself onto him.

He thrust into me over and over as the pressure built inside us.

I held onto his strong arms as our bodies moved in the water until our ecstasy spilled over. He pulled me close, our chests heaving as we tried to calm our breathing.

Tate kissed me again, this time slowly.

I pushed away from him with a smile before turning away and swimming down the pool to catch my bikini before it floated away.

I climbed out of the pool and wrapped a towel around myself, letting Tate take my hand and lead me inside where we showered together, washing off the chlorine and holding each other in the warm water.