

Chapter 18: Four Years Later (Tate)

“Are you ready, babe?”

I let out a hum as I struggled with my cufflink. “Almost,” I called out from the bedroom.

“We need to leave if we want to make it to the house by dinner!” Jamie’s voice echoed through the apartment as I finished getting ready.

I hadn’t been back home in four years. Not since Ariana’s wedding. After everything blew up in my face, I had agreed to give Jamie another chance in order to appease my mother. Even though we were together, I had shut myself out. I hadn’t quite forgiven her for the past.

I walked out of the room in my tux and looked at Jamie as she twirled before me in her sparkling black gown. “What do you think?” she sang.

“You look beautiful. Let’s go,” I replied quickly as I stepped toward the door. We walked out to the town car waiting to take us to the airport and began our short journey back to Boston.

I stepped out of the car and stood in front of my family’s home with a sense of dread. If I’d had my way, I wouldn’t be back here. But Jamie had forced me into coming. Not that I had much of a choice. I wouldn’t have ever heard the end of it if we missed my father’s big sixtieth birthday.

“Mr. Young, how nice to see you,” Francis spoke slowly as he opened the door.

“Good to see you, Francis,” I replied as we entered.

“Everyone is in the sitting room,” he said as he walked past us into the dining room.

We walked through the house and into the sitting room.

“Oh, Tate! There you are!” my mother chimed as we walked in.

“Hello, Mother,” I said as I bent down to kiss her cheek. After greeting everyone, we talked for a few moments before the bell rang and guests started arriving.

Soon the whole house was filled with loud conversation, light music, and horrible passed hors d’oeuvres.

I stood in the corner, chatting with Jason and Ari until Jamie glided up and twisted her arm through mine. “Hello, dear. I have some people you really must meet.”

I took a deep breath and put on my fake business smile as I was pulled toward a small group. After introductions and random business chitchat, one woman spoke loudly. “So, when are you two lovebirds tying the knot?”

Jamie grinned brightly at the question as she placed her left hand gingerly on my arm. Her hand was situated just so, showing off her large engagement ring.

I just about choked on my drink at the woman’s bold question. “We… we’re in no rush,” I replied quickly, trying not to notice Jamie’s look of disappointment.

After a very long evening of pointless chatting, we finally excused ourselves from the party and made our way out to the car.

“Why are we leaving so early?” Jamie whined.

“We aren’t leaving early. The party is almost over, and it’s nearly eleven o’clock. We won’t make it back to New York until early in the morning.”

“Why can’t we just stay the night? I’m sure your mother won’t mind,” she replied, her whining continuing as she pulled my arm.

I snatched it back. I didn’t want to stay any longer than I had to. “I have work to do tomorrow. I’m not staying the night. You can either get in the car or find your own way home.”

She scowled at me before sliding into the backseat of the town car waiting to take us to the airport.

As we stepped onto the plane, Jamie dropped into a seat, her face pouty and her arms crossed. I ignored her and sat in a seat farther down the aisle.

I was not about to have this fight. After takeoff, Jamie made her way down the aisle and sat across from me.

“What is your problem?” she hummed.

“I don’t have any problem, Jamie. I told you I have work tomorrow. It was your choice to make a big deal out of it,” I replied, refusing to look up from the emails on my phone.

She shook her head in anger. “And what the hell was that about earlier? We aren’t in any rush? Tate, we’ve been engaged for almost a year. When are we getting married?”

I pinched the bridge of my nose, a headache slowly approaching.

“Jamie, I’m not in the mood for this. I’ve already told you, I have no desire to get married any time soon. You have the ring— isn’t that good enough?”

She let out a hum before looking out the window. “Then what are we even doing?”

I closed my eyes and took a deep breath. “Then end it…”

She glared at me, unhappy with my answer. I knew she wasn’t going to end things, though. She liked the lifestyle too much.

She liked being in all of the right circles and the even more lavish life I could give her. She stood from the seat and moved back to where she had been before.

I didn’t quite trust her, especially after what she pulled in the Maldives. But my parents essentially gave me an ultimatum after theiasco with hiring an escort for my sister’s wedding.

So I had given in to Jamie’s attempts at reconciliation, let her move in, and played the part of the dutiful uncle. Thankfully I could spend most of my time at work and not have to deal with it.

I kept my eyes closed and drifted off to sleep, silently wishing my life had turned out differently.