

Sienna

“I’m so happy we could finally get together,” Charlotte announced from across the table.

We were sitting in a quaint little Italian restaurant, at a table right by the front window. And even though there was obvious passive-aggression in Charlotte’s words, I couldn’t help but feel that this evening would be... nice.

“It’s lovely.” I smiled at her. “Tell us, what have you both been up to?”

“Well, we just got back from a month-long stint in Bora Bora. It was the opposite of a *bore*,” Daniel said, waiting for us to laugh at his joke. I let out a polite giggle, and Aiden forced a smile.

Charlotte’s mouth didn’t budge.

“Yes, it was nice. Although the sun gets old after a while, doesn’t it?”

“I don’t think the sun’s gotten old in the billions of years it’s been burning, Mom,” Aiden responded.

I kicked him under the table. *Play nice, Aiden.*

“You mentioned pack business the other night,

YOU MENTIONED PACK BUSINESS THE OTHER NIGHT, Aiden. What was that about? Is there anything we should know about?" Daniel asked, stuffing a piece of bread into his mouth.

I watched as his tanned hand spread more butter onto a new piece of bread before he finished chewing.

"No," Aiden replied. "Nothing to be concerned about. Just some leadership stuff."

"I don't need to remind you that I was once a leader, son," Daniel responded with his mouth full.

"No, you don't, Dad."

"All set to order?" the waiter asked as he appeared at our table, and we nodded.

After another hour and a half of semi-nice conversation, we were finishing our meals and ready to get out of there.

Aiden and I might not have been prazed at the moment, but I was more than happy to engage in some plain old normal lovemaking.

Dinner with my in-laws was about as much interaction with them as I could take in an evening.

We put on our coats and headed outside, about to

say our goodbyes, when I heard an unmistakable voice call my name from across the street.
“SIENNA!”



I turned to see my mom sprinting across the street, much to the dismay of the cars trying to drive.

Shit.

Mom knew everything about Aiden’s parents, and she wasn’t exactly their biggest fan.

As much as I loved the fact that I knew she’d try to stick up for me, I didn’t want to cause a scene.

I just wanted the night to be over.

“Hi, Mom,” I exclaimed with fake sincerity as I hugged her.

“Hey, Melissa.” Aiden hugged her next. “Melissa, you know my parents, Charlotte and Daniel,” Aiden introduced.

Melissa nodded, smiling at them. “Of course, I didn’t know you were back in town.”

“Just got in from Bora Bora a couple days ago,” Daniel responded.

“Wow,” my mom replied, without a trace of sarcasm. “Well, let’s have a family affair, then,



shall we? I'll whip something up! Brunch, noon tomorrow. Everyone in?"



Okay, what?

I glared at her, trying to get her to take back the invitation.

This was not the reaction I was expecting.

Maybe Mom wasn't as loyal as I thought, and now I'd have to sit through brunch with passive-aggression and baby questions flying through the air?

Hell no.

"Mom, I think Aiden and I are busy tomorrow afternoon."

"Oh, nonsense, sweetie. Nothing's more important than family," she said back to me, and I glared even harder.

"Well, we think it sounds lovely," Charlotte announced.

Daniel nodded enthusiastically beside her. "Absolutely," he affirmed.

"Great. It's settled."



“Mom, can I speak to you for a second? Privately?” I asked, leading her away from the group. When we were out of earshot, I started frantic whispering. “*Are you crazy?!*” I demanded. “This is a recipe for disaster.”

“Oh, stop with the dramatics.”



“I’m not being dramatic! You have no idea what can of worms you just opened.”

“Sienna Mercer-Norwood,” my mother interrupted me.

“Stop thinking about yourself. The baby that’s inside you, that’s who you should be worrying about now. Do you understand me? And that baby deserves two sets of grandparents.”

With one final look, my mom walked back over to join the others, leaving me behind to think over her words.

Aiden

“Don’t forget the ice cream!” Sienna shouted from the bedroom.

“I have the ice cream!” I called back, carrying the bag filled with food to the front door. It was already ten past noon, and we were supposed to be at Sienna’s parents’ house ten minutes ago.



But Sienna kept stalling.

“Sienna, come on. It’s not going to be any better if we show up an hour late.”

She appeared in the hall, finally dressed and ready to go. “That’s where you’re wrong. If we’re an hour late, that means an hour less time we have to spend in that awkward mess of a brunch.”

“It’s not going to be that bad,” I assured her.
“Look, your parents are awesome. My parents will be polite. They have no reason not to be—”

“No reason except that *they found out about the pregnancy through the Pack News*,” she reminded me.

Oh yeah.

She might just have a point.

I shook my head. “Okay, even if they are mad—”

“They are mad,” she confirmed.

“Even if they are, this is our duty as children. We have to be civil. We’ll smile, we’ll eat French toast, we’ll answer their questions with one-word answers, and then we’ll come home and make love in every room,” I said, pulling her closer to me by the collar of her jacket.

She looked up at me, her long eyelashes batting. “Promise?” she asked.

I leaned down and kissed her, relishing the softness of the moment. “Promise.”



“You’re late!” Melissa thundered as soon as the door swung open.

“It was Aiden’s fault,” Sienna said as she kissed her mom on the cheek and walked inside.

“It was not my fault,” I said, laughing, as I hugged Melissa and followed my mate.

“Bad children!” she called out after us as we unloaded the ice cream and fruit into the kitchen. “Everyone’s already at the table, come on.”

We walked into the dining room, and I was blown away by the spread. The table was covered in platters of waffles, pancakes, eggs, bacon, hashbrowns—literally, every breakfast food I’ve ever loved was there.

“Melissa,” I declared. “You’ve outdone yourself.”

“What, you’re not gonna look up from the food long enough to say hello to your parents?”



I looked up and saw my dad smirking at me, my mom pursing her lips in the chair beside him. I walked over to them, bending down to kiss their cheeks.

“Hi, guys,” I greeted them, and then I headed around the table to kiss Selene’s cheek and shake Jeremy’s hand. “Sorry we kept you waiting.”



“Don’t sweat it,” Jeremy answered. “It’s not like any of this stuff tastes better hot, anyway,” he joked. I smacked his arm.

Sienna appeared in the dining room, Melissa trailing behind her with a jug of mimosas. “All right, everyone, sit!” Melissa ordered as she started to pour. Robert walked into the room a few seconds later.

“Hello, all.” He smiled at everyone at the table as he pulled out a chair.

“Not to rush everyone, but I’m giving it another ten minutes before Vanessa wakes up from her nap and starts wailing, so can we eat? Please?” Selene asked.

“Yes, yes. Eat!” Melissa announced, and everything erupted into chaos.

Plates were passed, food was thrown, and forks were used without reservation. As soon as I brought the first bite of waffle to my mouth, I was

in bliss.

“See? Not so bad,” I whispered to Sienna with my mouth full. But she still didn’t look convinced.

Sienna



I watched as everyone around me laughed and ate, but I was barely touching my food. I had no appetite. The pit in the bottom of my stomach kept me full, and it wasn’t getting any smaller.

For some reason, I had this gut feeling that shit was about to hit the fan.

I wanted it to be a nice family brunch, I did.

I wanted to think of my baby and allow her the chance to have two sets of loving, incredible grandparents, just like my mom said. But something inside me was uncertain.

More than uncertain... it was wary.

“Sienna, you look lost in your thoughts,” Charlotte observed across from me.

I smiled at her. “Just thinking about all there is to get done this week,” I told her.

“Well, don’t think too hard. Stress isn’t good for the baby,” she said, and I had to ston myself from



the baby,” she said, and I had to stop myself from rolling my eyes.

“Good to know—”

“Speaking of the baby, have you had time to look into your medical history?” Charlotte pressed, and I heard the rest of the conversations at the table die down.

Everyone here was aware of Charlotte’s *ways*, and they probably wanted to see the drama themselves.

“By medical history, you mean...”



“Your parents’ medical history. Your real parents, I mean,” she said, her eyes skirting over to Mom and Dad. I felt anger rush through me. *How dare she?*

How dare she come into my parents’ house, eat their food, and denounce them as my parents in front of my family?

“These are my real parents,” I said, smiling through clenched teeth. “If you’re asking about my birth parents, the answer is no. I don’t know much about them.”

“Well, aren’t you worried about the health of your baby?”

“*Mother.*” Aiden tried to interject, but she just

kept speaking.

“I mean there are so many unanswered questions. Do you even know what your own birth was like? How can you be prepared for mothering a baby whose genes you know nothing about?”



I felt tears spring to my eyes as Charlotte kept badgering me with questions.

Only, it wasn't her incessant interrogation or even her patronizing tone that was causing me to lose my cool.

It was the fact that everything she was asking me I'd already asked myself.

They were the questions that plagued me every time I thought about what it would be like to finally meet my child. *Our child.*

How would I be able to explain where he or she came from if I didn't know myself? How would I be able to handle health concerns or genetic differences if I had no idea what to expect?

I felt like I was moving forward, creating a future, when my past had never been understood.

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"Mother, enough," Aiden repeated, louder this time, and it finally got Charlotte to pause.

"You know, dear, I don't mean any of this rudely. I just want you to be prepared. There's nothing more important than a baby."

I looked at her, taking in her perfectly madeup face and the diamond around her neck. But her eyes didn't look malicious—they looked honest. And that was what caused the pit in my stomach to grow.

Because if Charlotte had been acting maliciously, speaking with nothing but false venom, I could've handled it. But she hadn't been.

She'd been speaking the truth.

Next Chapter