

Chapter 23

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On Sunday afternoon, I get two pieces of good news:

First, Andrew managed to refund the tickets and I won't have to work for free.

Second, Cecelia is going to be gone for two whole weeks.

I'm not sure which of these revelations I'm happier about. I'm glad I don't have to shell out money for the tickets. But I'm even happier that I don't have to wait on Cecelia anymore. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree with that one.

Cecelia has packed enough luggage to last her at least one year. I swear to God, it's like she's put everything she owns in those bags, and then if there was any space left, she filled it with rocks. That's how it feels as I'm carrying the bags out to Nina's Lexus.

"Please be careful with that, Millie." Nina watches me fretfully as I summon superhuman strength to lift the bags into her trunk. My palms are bright red from where I was holding the straps. "Please don't break anything."

What could Cecelia possibly be carrying to camp that's so fragile? Don't they mostly just bring clothing and books and bug spray? But far be it from me to question her.

"Sorry."

When I get back in the house to retrieve the last of Cecelia's bags, I catch Andrew jogging down the stairs. He catches me about to lift the monstrous piece of luggage and his eyes widen.

"Hey," he says. "I'll carry that for you. That looks really heavy."

"I'm fine," I insist, only because Nina is coming out of the garage.

“Yes, she’s got it, Andy.” Nina wags a finger. “You need to be careful about your bad back.”

He shoots her a look. “My back is fine. Anyway, I want to say goodbye to Cece.”

Nina pulls a face. “Are you sure you won’t come with us?”

“I wish I could,” he says. “But I can’t miss an entire day of work tomorrow. I’ve got meetings in the afternoon.”



She sniffs. “You always put work first.”

He grimaces. I don’t blame him for being hurt by her comment—as far as I can tell, it’s completely untrue. Despite being a successful businessman, Andrew is home every single night for dinner. He does occasionally go to work on the weekends, but he’s also attended two dance recitals this month, one piano recital, a fourth-grade graduation ceremony, a karate demonstration, and one night they were gone for hours for some sort of art show at the day school.

“I’m sorry,” he says anyway.

She sniffs again and turns her head. Andrew reaches out to touch her arm, but she jerks it away and dashes to the kitchen to get her purse. Instead, he heaves the last piece of luggage into his arms and goes out to the garage to dump it in the trunk and say goodbye to Cecelia, who is sitting in Nina’s snow-colored Lexus, wearing a lacy white dress that is wildly inappropriate for summer camp. Not that I would ever say anything.

Two whole weeks without that little monster. I want to jump with joy. But instead, I turn my lips down. “It will be sad without Cecelia here this month,” I say as Nina comes back out of the kitchen.

“Really?” she says dryly. “I thought you couldn’t stand her.”

My jaw drops open. I mean, yes, she's right that Cecelia and I have not hit it off. But I didn't realize she knew I felt that way. If she knows that, does she realize I'm not a big fan of Nina herself either?

Nina smooths down her white blouse and goes back out to the garage. As soon as she leaves the room, it's like all the tension has been sucked out of me. I always feel on edge when Nina is around. It's like she's dissecting everything I do.

Andrew emerges from the garage, wiping his hands on his jeans. I love how he wears a T-shirt and jeans on the weekends. I love the way his hair gets tousled when he's doing physical activity. I love the way he smiles and winks at me.

I wonder if he feels the same way I do about Nina leaving.

"So," he says, "now that Nina is gone, I have a confession to make."

"Oh?"

A confession? I'm madly in love with you. I'm going to leave Nina so we can run off together to Aruba.

Nah, not too likely.

"I couldn't get a refund on those show tickets." He hangs his head. "I didn't want Nina to give you a hard time over it. Or try to charge you, for Christ's sake. I'm sure she was the one who told you the wrong date."

I nod slowly. "Yes, she did, but... Well, anyway, thank you. I appreciate it."

"So... I mean, you should take the tickets. Go to the city tonight and see the show with a friend. And you can stay at The Plaza hotel room overnight."

I almost gasp. "That's so generous."

The right side of his lips quirks up. "Well, we've got the tickets. Why should they go to waste? Enjoy it."

“Yeah...” I toy with the hem of my T-shirt, thinking. I can’t imagine what Nina would say if she found out. And I have to admit, just the thought of going gives me anxiety. “I appreciate the gesture, but I’ll pass on the show.”

“Really? This is supposed to be the best show of the decade! You don’t like going to shows on Broadway?”

He has no idea about my life—what I’ve been doing for the last decade.

“I’ve never even been to a show on Broadway.”

“Then you need to go! I insist!”

“Right, but...” I take a deep breath. “The truth is, I don’t have anyone to go with. And I don’t feel like going alone. So like I said, I’ll pass.”

Andrew stares at me for a moment, rubbing his finger against the slight stubble on his jaw. Finally, he says, “I’ll go with you.”

I raise my eyebrows. “Are you sure that’s a good idea?”

He hesitates. “I know Nina has jealousy issues, but that’s no reason to let these expensive tickets go to waste. And it’s a crime you’ve never seen a show on Broadway before. It’ll be fun.”

Yes, it will be fun. That’s what I’m worried about, damn it.

I imagine my evening unfolding. Driving out to Manhattan in Andrew’s BMW, sitting in the orchestra for one of the hottest shows on Broadway,