

I wake up to the smell of bacon. I bat my eyelids as I open my eyes, Chase is standing in front of me with a tray in his hand.

"What are you doing?" I ask him.

"I'm here to serve you breakfast in bed." He says, smiling.

"Aww, that's so sweet." I tell him, sitting up.

He places the tray in front of me.

Heart shaped pancakes sit on the plate with strawberries, grapes and bacon by the side.

Orange juice fills the glass in front of me.

"You made this?" I ask him.

"Because I know that you can't cook to save your life." I add.

"No. I ordered it from a waffle house, but it's the thought that counts, right." He tells me, with a sheepish grin.

I take a bite out of the pancake and it tastes like vanilla.

"These are really good." I tell him, my mouth filled with food.

"I'm glad you like it." He says, staring at me.

"What are your plans for today?" I ask him, eating a grape.

"I'm going to the office, then having dinner with Bella and her family. It's her fathers 60th birthday." He tells me.

Bella.

His ex-girlfriend that he didn't tell me about.

"Bella?" I ask him, even though I heard what he just said.

"Yeah." He says, touching my hand.

"Did you date her?" I ask him, shoving a strawberry in my mouth.

Chase coughs uncomfortably.

"Um, we dated for a while, it wasn't that serious." He tells me

"For three years?" I say, looking at him.

"How did you know that?" He asks.

"She told me at the gala last night. She also told me how you guys did it every week." I tell him, jealousy creeping its way in.

"Look, it was a long time ago, I feel nothing for her." He says, squeezing my hand.

"I know. I just feel like a step down from her. She satisfied you every week, something that I haven't done because I'm not ready to have sex yet. Something I've deprived you of. Do you think of her?" I ask him, knowing that I'm playing with fire and I could get burnt any moment from now.

"How can you ask me that? How can you say that? I'm in love with you, I don't care about that. We have a deeper connection." He says, staring at me.

"I just want to know that you're being loyal and honest with me and yourself." I tell him.

"You're the one I love, not Bella. Now eat, so that I can run you a bath." He says, kissing my forehead.

"I mean these centrepieces are way off." Megan says, rambling.

"Then tell the wedding planner that." I reply, yelling at her.

I'm so frustrated.

Megan and I have been looking at centrepieces for her wedding that's coming up in two weeks.

Megan can be quite annoying at times, because she can't make a decision to save her life.

She's always torn between one thing or another.

"I mean I would, but she has no taste." Megan says, frowning.

"Then, why did you hire her?" I ask.

"Because she was cheap." Megan tells me.

"Girl, you better get it together." I tell her, as I walk through shelves filled with flowers.

"I know, but I feel like I haven't found the one yet." She whines.

"Bitch, you've already found the one. You're getting married to him in two weeks." I tell her.

"I was talking about the centrepieces, Aria." Megan says, rolling her eyes at me.

"Oh, I knew that." I lie.

"Now come on, let's look at the tulips." She says, dragging me along with her.

"How was the dinner?" I ask Chase, as I fix him a plate of spaghetti.

"It was great." He says, sitting on the stool beside the island.

I place the plate of Spaghetti in front of him and he plants a kiss on my forehead.

"Thanks babe." He says taking a bite out of his food.

"So, how's Bella?" I ask him, toying with a loose thread on my shirt.

"She's good, she looked really good today." He says, munching on a meatball.

"You seem pretty hungry for someone who just got back from dinner." I tell him.

"Yeah. I didn't really like the food there." He says, as he continues eating.

"I'm going to take a shower now." I tell him.

He just waves his hands trying to mumble something with his mouth full.

I walk to the shower and I take my clothes off and I stare at my reflection in the long mirror on the wall.

I admire my curves and my face. I'm really pretty and I sometimes pick on myself for the way my body looks. But I just have this new found confidence.

I step into the shower and I turn on the faucet, cranking the hot water all the way up.

This is the life.

The hot water runs down my back calming my aching muscles.

I'm so stressed.

I need a vacation.

After five minutes of bliss. I turn the shower off and I step out. I wrap my robe around my body and I leave the bathroom.

I walk to the bedroom and Chase is on the phone with someone.

"Yeah, I know but can't it wait." He says to the person on the other end.

I walk to my dresser and I pick a pair of shorts and a bralette and I get changed.

When I walk back out, Chase is sitting on the floor in a crouched position, with his head hanging low.

"Babe, what's wrong?" I say, as I walk towards him.

He doesn't respond.

I sit on the floor, beside him and I try to lift his head up when I hear a snuffle.

Is he crying?

Chase never cries. I mean, the man didn't even shed a tear when his grandmother died.

"What's wrong?" I ask him again, touching his hand.

"I have to tell you something." He says, as he lifts his head up to look at me.

"What is it?" I ask him.

"Well, I've been lying to you." He says and my heart stops.

This can't be good.

"About what?" I ask, my voice a little bit strained.

"Bella and I got engaged today." He informs me.

"Yeah, and I'm Michelle Obama." I reply, sarcastically.

He can't be serious.

"What?" He asks me.

"I thought we were both saying things that could never happen." I say, chuckling.

"I'm serious." He says, staring at his hands.

"How?" I ask him, my tone serious.

"The dinner today was set up by our parents, to break the news to Bella and I about our marriage." Chase says, running his hand through his hair.

"H-how?" I ask him, dumbfounded.

"My parents gave me a year. Well, gave us a year." He says, and I just stare at him in confusion.

I do not understand a word that's coming out of his mouth.

"What do you mean by that?" I ask him.

"That we were on borrowed time. After I told my parents that I was dating someone that wasn't white. They gave me an ultimatum. They said that I could only date you for one year and that when the time was up they would get Bella and I married. But, I fell in love with you and now, if I don't marry Bella I will get cut off for life." He says, staring at me.

"You say it like loving me is a bad thing." I tell him.

"No, not at all. Look at me, please, just look at me." He pleads, but my eyes remain at my feet.

"Bella and I dated for three years and in those three years I was miserable. When we broke up, my parents started doing business with hers so it was awkward most of the time. I mean, we hooked up here and there. But, it was never serious. And then I met you. You've changed my life, Aria. You've made me realise the difference between what I want and what I need." He tells me, but all this is just going into one ear and flying out the other.

He is engaged.

He left this apartment in a relationship with me and he came back betrothed to someone else.

"I mean, is this 1738 where parents decide for their children what's best for them and arrange marriages. This is beyond me. How can you be engaged to someone that's not me? I mean, we're in a relationship, so it's not odd to imagine that I'd be your fiancé." I tell him.

"I know, but you have to understand. I'd get cut off. My inheritance, my company, everything I've worked for, studied for, just down the drain." Chase says, and I get up.

"Who gives a shit, like who gives an actual fuck. Unlike you, I don't have a "huge" company or inheritance. I just have a farmhouse in Detroit that says "St. Laurent" at the front of it. I also went through this same situation with De'shaun, but I chose you. I chose us." I tell him, my voice betrays me by cracking.

"Do you know what it's like dating a black girl?" He says and I lose it.

"What?" I gasp.

He stands up and tries to touch me, but I move away from his reach.

"Do you know what it's like dating a "white" boy? People are always going to hate, you just have to figure out how to deal with the backlash and carry on." I tell him, raising my voice.

"That's the point, I'm not you. I'm not used to this. This backlash." He replies.

"Well, it's a good thing I'm well acquainted with it." I say, folding my arms.

"Look, I'm going to talk to my parents, okay." Chase says, trying to reassure me.

I'm so confused.

"You couldn't talk to them a year ago. What's talking to them now going to do?" I ask him.

"I don't know. I've never been in this position before." He says.

"No shit." I reply.

"I just don't want to lose everything for someone who isn't worth it." Chase says and I raise an eyebrow at him.

What the hell did I see in this dude in the first place?

"You know you can just tell me to go. You don't have to say these horrible things to me." I tell him.

Turning away from him and I walk into the closet, I slam the door behind me. I sit on the floor, my knees to my chest and I start sobbing.

I hate crying.

It makes my nose red and my eyes all swollen.

I can't believe that whole conversation with Chase just happened.

I just need to go some place where I can recollect my thoughts, because my brain is a mess right now.

I remove my suitcase from behind the drawer and I place it on the floor and I just stuff clothes inside it until it's too full to close.

I eventually close the suitcase and I roll it out of the closet.

Chase is sitting on the bed when I come out.

"Where are you going?" He asks me, standing up.

"Away." I reply, as I roll the suitcase out of the room and into the living room.

"Wait, Aria." Chase calls from behind me.

I don't reply.

I just keep on walking towards the front door.

He grabs my hand and I remove it from his.

"Don't touch me. Ever." I tell him and his face sinks.

"Look, I'm in a sticky situation here." Chase says, rubbing his face.

"Love means sacrifice, Chase. Do you even know what that means?" I ask him, raising my voice.

"Of course." He replies.

"Then if you do, you'll know what to sacrifice. Your privilege or me." I tell him, before I leave the apartment.

When I get outside, I am blasted by the cold wind. Then I look down at my outfit and realise that I'm still in shorts and a bralette.

I take a coat out of my suitcase and I put it on.

I get into my car and I drive to Megan's house.

Hope she likes company at two in the morning.

I arrive at Megan's house and I knock at her front door.

She opens the door with a knife in her hand, and we both scream at the sight of each other.

"What are you doing with a knife?" I ask her.

"What are you doing at my house at two in the morning?" She asks me.

"Um, Chase is getting married to Bella." I tell her.

"Who the fuck is Bella?" Megan asks, staring at me.

"I need a drink." I say, pushing past her as I walk into the house.

"Oh, you brought a suitcase. Yay." Megan says, sarcasm clear in her tone.

She hated sharing her space with people, but I was an exception.

I drop my suitcase beside the staircase and I walk over to her bar and pour myself a full glass of rum.

I'm about to get so drunk and regret it tomorrow.

"What are you doing?" Megan asks me.

I down the drink in one gulp.

I burp in her face.

"What's going on?" Megan asks, taking the bottle away from me as I am about to pour myself another glass.

"Hey no fair." I tell her, talking like a toddler.

"You said something about Chase being engaged." She says.

"Oh yeah, he got engaged today." I tell her, looking around.

"To you?" She asks me.

"Nope." I say, playing with my hair.

"Then who? You're the only one he's seeing right?" She asks me.

"Maybe." I say, shrugging.

"Then who is he getting married to?" Megan asks me, frustrated.

"Bella, his ex-girlfriend." I inform her.

"How?" She asks me.

"That's what I said." I tell her.

"I thought you guys were good." She says, sitting on the barstool beside me.

"I thought so too. Apparently, if he refuses to marry Bella he'll get cut off for life. No inheritance, no company, nothing." I tell her.

"Oh, I'd dump your ass." Megan says, laughing and I stare at her.

"But he shouldn't though, you two make each other happy." She continues.

"This is some Romeo and Juliet bullshit right here." I tell her.

"All my life I've just wanted to be chosen. Chase is the best boyfriend that I've ever had but I guess it wasn't meant to be." I say, folding my arms.

"C'mon don't say that." Megan says, as she rubs my back.

"You know yesterday at the gala, I met his mother and she was all like "You will never be enough for my Chase." I tell her.

"No way." Megan says, staring at me in awe.

"Did you tell Chase?" She asks me.

"No, what difference does it make. She hates me." I say, putting my head on the table top.

"There, there. It'll get better now." Megan says, rubbing my back again.

"It just hurts, you know. When you give someone your all, and then when it's time for them to do the same thing, they just walk away from it all." I say, sniffing.

"I feel you. Like I get it." She says, holding my hand.

"Do you really, though?" I ask her.

"Of course. This same shit happened between me and Corey. The only difference is Corey left me for a bag of weed and twenty dollars." Megan says and I laugh.

"Don't try to be funny right now." I tell her.

"For real, I'm not." She says.

"Like, I just wanna know what I did." I tell her, as I start sobbing.

"Aww come here." She says, hugging me.

"I mean, what did I do? I was nothing but loyal. I didn't see any signs. Is it me?" I ask her.

"Most definitely not." Megan says, stroking my hair.

"It's unfair because you'll give someone your all and then he'll leave. And you'll lose all common sense, waiting for him and hoping that he'll see the light and show up at your door." I tell her, as tears stream down my face.

"Sometimes breaking free from the things that hold you bound can mean losing a part of yourself in the process. This is a blessing in disguise. You shouldn't have to be with someone who is unsure of you" Megan says.

"You know he ain't shit right." Megan adds, wiping my tears.

"I know." I reply, chuckling.

"Now dry your tears. Let's go out tonight." Megan says, clapping.

"Hell no. Nope." I tell her, sniffing.

"Why?" Megan asks me, looking surprised

"The last time I went partying with you, you left me with a homeless guy who tried to grope me. Never again." I tell her.

"You're acting like he didn't turn you on." Megan says and I slap her right on the head.

"He was fifty-three!!!" I reply, chuckling.

"So. You would have had a sugar *zaddy* right now. Instead of bawling your eyes out over Chase." Megan says, smiling.

"Like, I can't with you." I tell her, as I stand up from the bed.

"Where's the vodka?" I ask her.

"Top shelf baby. Knock yourself out." Megan says, before she walks out of the room.