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He should know better. Should remember not to ask what else could go wrong. He'd never had security guards corner him like a criminal before. And it definitely wasn't something he'd wanted to experience.

"Okay. I can answer questions." He kept his hands out to show they were empty. "What's this about?"

"We got a report that you were stalking and acting suspiciously." The officer on the left shifted, tucking his thumbs in his belt loops as if to emphasize the Taser strapped there.

"Stalking?" Was this guy for real? Did they mean Bree?

"Sir, now calm down. We can talk about this up in our office where it's more private." Mr. Right-Side moved a few steps closer, and Nathan inched back.

"But I wasn't stalking. Ask Bree. She'll tell you."

He looked her way, hoping against hope that she wasn't still mad at him. She stood, half facing the counter still, mouth agape, as his drama played out behind her. If her eyes got any bigger, they'd roll out of her head. Would her shock lift in time to help him out?

“Let’s just walk this way and we’ll talk about it, okay? That’s all we’re going to do. We’re not arresting you or anything.” Beltstrap clapped a hand on Nathan’s shoulder and nudged.

“Well, I should hope you’re not arresting me. I haven’t done anything wrong.” Nathan considered digging in his heels but then changed his mind—that might make him look guiltier. Though how he looked guilty at all, he couldn’t fathom.

He’d just been trying to help Bree. Was that so wrong? Was the universe suddenly against him in every aspect of his life? If he thought it would do any good, he’d blame his dad for this catastrophe, too, but he didn’t have time to figure out all the connections to make it work.

“Nathan?” Bree’s voice finally called out behind him, now that the two guards had walked him fifteen yards toward the escalators.

“Bree, I guess I’m headed this way for now.” Nathan craned his neck to answer her, but the officers wouldn’t let him turn enough to actually make out more than her long, brown hair.

Several more steps. If he got on that escalator, what would he face? How could he prove he wasn’t stalking her? He had been standing fairly close and watching her more than anything. Maybe it looked bad. But bad enough to report him? That must’ve been what the car rental clerk had done when he stepped into the back of his office space.

Why had Nathan let Josh talk him into this trip? He hadn’t wanted to come. Not really. Not without ... not without the one he planned to share it with in the first place. The one who was letting him get dragged off for stalking her in the airport. Didn’t they have a better relationship than that, despite everything?

“Wait!” Bree’s voice was breathless, but it was closer than it had been. “Wait, please!”

One guard kept his hand on Nathan’s shoulder; the other turned to see what was going on behind them. “How can I help you, Miss?”

“He wasn’t stalking me.”

“He wasn’t?” Mr. Beltstrap pushed his hat back on his head. “It sure looked suspicious when we walked up. And if it hadn’t looked a little hairy, Barry over there wouldn’t have called it in.”

“I know it didn’t look normal, but it’s a long story.” Bree pushed a wayward strand of hair off her forehead. “I promise. You don’t have to keep escorting him away. He didn’t mean anything bad towards me.”

“And how can we know that?”

“I wouldn’t try to save someone who was stalking me, would I?” Bree propped her fists on her hips and got that sassy look that always warmed his middle. Still worked, even in this insanity.

“So, you know this guy?” The man holding Nathan peered around him and motioned with a fat finger.

“Yes. I know him. He’s my ...” Her eyes darted up and met his, and in that moment of hesitation, he knew his whole week was about to change once again. “... fiancé.”

She left off the *ex*. Why had she done that? To convince these goons they were together? Her pause hadn’t made it very convincing, though it shattered a bit of his heart to hear it again.

“Your fiancé?” Mr. Right-Side shifted and raised a brow. “You don’t sound so sure.”

“Sorry. The ... relationship status ... is a bit new.” She pulled out her phone and punched something before holding the screen for the officer to see.

“And this is?”

“Our engagement photos.” She tucked her left hand behind that giant purse and pointed with her right. “See?”

“Well, it at least proves you know each other enough to take pictures together.” He handed back the device, and the other guy eased his grip. “Are you sure you’re okay?”

“Perfectly fine. Thank you so much for your concern, but it really is unneeded.” She flashed a giant smile his way.

“Okay, buddy. You better thank your fiancée that she’s willing to vouch for you. But if we see you in here again following another pretty girl around, we won’t hesitate to walk you off and ask those questions we had.” The officer thumped his arm, and then they stalked off.

Nathan’s legs felt about as solid as marshmallow fluff. He glanced around and headed toward the first seat he could find, sliding down onto the hard plastic and sinking his head into his hands. Maybe if he squeezed his eyes closed hard enough, when he opened them again, everything would be normal—no airport, no hurricane, no Bree, no crazy rental car clerk who thought he looked shady.

Nope. He blinked. He was still here in la-la land. If this was what Texas was like, he wasn’t sure he liked it.

“That was ... close.” Bree perched on a seat beside him.

“That’s one word for it. *Insane*, *surreal*, and *terrifying* are others that come to mind.”

She hummed her agreement but said nothing else.

His brain raced back to the claim she’d used to help clear him. “Your fiancé, huh?”

“At least until we can get out of this airport.” Her expression could only be called sheepish. “It was the only thing that came to mind.”

“I can’t believe you still had those photos on your phone. Or that they didn’t notice your lack of a ring.” He slumped

down in the seat, a mixture of relief and adrenaline loss making his spine curl.

“I thought about deleting them the other day.” She played with a loose thread on the edge of her suitcase. “I just couldn’t do it. Not yet.”

He nodded. For the first time in a long time, he had no idea what to do with his current situation. And it choked his need to be in control.

“So, what now?” He straightened again, leaning forward, elbows on knees. “What’s your plan? Rent a car and see Dallas, then fly home?”

Bree shook her head. “I canceled my flights, remember? I plan to drive home. Turn this into a road trip. It’s what I do best, right? Of course, since I set Katie up with Camden and Skye is off to see her sister in Colorado, I’ll have to figure out how to do it solo this time.”

A fire crept into his throat as she oh-so-casually mentioned one of the reasons he’d ended their relationship in the first place. Had she forgotten how it hurt him? How her last adventure caused so many fights only a month before?

Bree knew the moment Nathan got angry again. His whole demeanor shifted, his spine straighter than she’d seen it this whole time, his jaw like iron, his blue eyes like steel. What had she said? Was it because of Camden?

And here she’d thought they were doing well, all things considered. Sort of. If you didn’t count him being upset at her being here in the first place, or the canceled cruise, or the tornadoes in the area, or the whole stalker episode. So, maybe not the greatest moment in their history.

“You plan to just pick up some random guys on this trip

too? Let them follow you all the way back?” Nathan’s voice was as cold as his posture.

“I told you.” She turned to face him more fully. Maybe without a computer screen between them, he’d finally understand. “I didn’t pick up random guys during our trip last month. Camden was interested in Katie, and Ryan just wanted to have fun with Skye. Neither of them paid me any attention. The only guy I wanted to talk to each evening was you, and as soon as you found out about them, all you wanted to do was fight.”

“You think I *wanted* to fight?” His voice screeched, and he cut a look back towards the car rental place where this mess began. He calmed the tone and leaned toward her. “I don’t understand how you can blame me for this.”

“Because you didn’t trust me.” She poked his shoulder. “You promised me forever. Said we’d get married and make everything work out. And then you called it off for no good reason.”

“No good reason?” He brushed her hand away.

“Yes. No good reason. Because I had no interest in those guys and they had no interest in me. In fact, when you saw Camden that Saturday, if you’d paid any attention at all, you’d have seen he only had eyes for Katie. And we left Ryan in Atlanta. But you didn’t believe me.” The last few words slipped out in a little whine as the ache festered in her chest, but she couldn’t pull it back. She didn’t want to—he needed to know he’d hurt her.

He opened his mouth, then closed it again, leaning back against the seat. What went through his head? Had she finally convinced him? Was he concocting some other arbitrary argument? What was the point of all this?

“You want me to trust you?” The question was barely a whisper, but she heard it.

“You can’t have a relationship without trust. I thought I had yours, but you proved me wrong.” She slid the strap of her bag back up on her shoulder and stood.

“Show me.” He came out of his seat too.

“What?”

“Show me what it was like to have guys tagging along on your road trip. I was never invited on one, but you let those strangers join what was supposed to be your bachelorette fling. So, I’ll join this one.”

“You can’t just join my road trip.” She put a hand on her hip and eyed him warily. Now she really didn’t know what was going through his head. This was nothing like the Nathan she’d known in college.

“Why not?” He motioned around as if to imply she had no other options for passengers.

“Because, for one thing, I’m not with Katie and Skye this time. And for another thing, you’re not a stranger following me. We know each other. Have a history. It’s nothing like what happened a month ago. Besides, if you were like them, you’d be interested in Katie or Skye.”

“No.” He shook his head. “Let’s just pretend I’m a stranger and I see you the first day of your trip. And then what happens? Tell me how it worked.”

She pinched her lips together, wondering at the sense in this idea. Was he trying to work his way back to her? Or trying to justify his actions? Either way, the stubborn streak that ran the full length of her five-foot-two frame kicked in. She’d prove him wrong.

“Fine.” She planted her feet. “I guess the first two nights, you’d stay in the same hotel but some other room. Then, when I left for my next location, you’d secretly find out where it was so you could follow. You’d stay at a separate location that night. Then, the following day, you’d find a way to discover we

were once again traveling in the same direction, and you'd join me there and then take me to one of my favorite pastimes.

"And that would basically be it unless you wanted to act more like Ryan than Camden. In which case, you'd cause trouble the next day and make everyone mad."

She bit back the words she wanted to add—that maybe he was more like Ryan. He wasn't. Somewhere deep inside this man was the guy she'd fallen in love with over old movie screenings on campus, school plays, study sessions, and dreams of what might be. Something had happened after graduation to change that, but she couldn't figure out what it was.

"How about we just start with the first day? We'll rent a car and find a hotel where we can get separate rooms. Then, you can show me how you explore a town and find all the fun things to do you always talked about on your road trips."

"Rent a car together?"

"Might as well save some money, right?"

"Did you cancel your flights?" Something held her back, and she scrambled to find more obstacles to keep this plan from happening.

"I didn't, but I will. Let's get the car situation worked out first, and then we can find somewhere else to go before I make those calls. I don't exactly love the ambiance here." He glanced around as if scared someone else would misjudge his intentions.

"Um, okay." She shifted and grabbed her suitcase handle. "But maybe we pick a different rental place?"

A chuckle escaped him as he bent over to pick up his bag. "Fine with me."

So, they were really going to do this. Take a road trip together even though officially they weren't supposed to be spending this week together at all.

Because they hadn't gotten married the day before.

What had she just agreed to? It was like the worst joke of a honeymoon she could imagine. And no telling what might happen by the end of the week.

If there was one thing she'd learned from her multiple trips with Skye and Katie, it was that you felt one of two ways about your buddies by the end—you hated them, or you loved them more than ever. Could her still-wounded heart take this risk? Could she prove she was still the woman he'd wanted to spend forever with?