

Agnes knocked on Maddie's office door for the second time that day.

"Come in." Maddie called. She hoped it was David but instead Agnes opened the door and closed it behind her as she stood there staring at Maddie.

Maddie's heart dropped. "What is it Agnes?"

"Mr. Addison just called. "

"Oh really?" Maddie feigned disinterest. "What did he have to say?"

"Well, he said to tell you." Agnes paused. "That he won't be in today."

Maddie shrugged nonchalantly but inside she was furious with David. "That doesn't surprise me Agnes." Maddie looked at Agnes seriously. "David has taken me and Blue Moon too much for granted lately. Agnes call him back and tell him maybe he shouldn't show up tomorrow as well."

Agnes hesitated. "Oh, well I don't think that will be a problem Miss Hayes."

"Really?" Maddie was confused.

"Well I think it might be kinda hard for him to come in tomorrow."

"And why is that Agnes?"

"Well he's three thousand miles away."

Maddie didn't like the sound of this. "What are you talking about Agnes" Three thousand miles away? Where is he?"

"He's in Philadelphia." Agnes told her unhappily.

"Philadelphia?" Maddie felt uneasy. "Why is he in Philadelphia?" Maddie got up and began to pace around her office; her heels stomping into the carpet with each angry step. "Oh well you don't have to tell me. Was he invited to some party he couldn't miss? Some old friend invite him to a hockey game? Some old flame call and invite him to dinner?" Maddie was angry

and hurt. "And he didn't even have the decency to tell me that he was going away!" Maddie huffed.

Agnes kept trying to get Maddie's attention but she ignored her. Finally, Agnes had enough. "Miss Hayes! Stop and listen to what I am trying to tell you!"

Maddie gave her a dirty look. "What is it Agnes? And why are you yelling at me?"

"Mr. Addison got a call from his brother last night. His dad was robbed leaving his store last night. They must have been looking to see if he had any bank deposits on him on. He's was beat up pretty badly. He has a broken arm I think maybe some bruised ribs too. They need Mr. Addison to come help out at the fish market while he recovers."

Maddie's hand went up to her mouth when Agnes told her about David's father. She felt awful that she rambled on about David shirking his responsibilities and he was in Philly living up to family responsibilities. Oh, he must be so upset. Maddie thought to herself; maybe he needs me. I need to talk to him.

"Agnes why didn't you put David through to talk to me when he called?"

"Oh well umm you see Miss Hayes ahhh Mr. Addison said he didn't want to talk to you. He was very adamant about it and said to me to just relay the message to you. I'm sorry." Agnes said nervously.

Maddie was hurt he didn't turn to her for help but then again how could she blame him? They had said some pretty nasty things to each other last night. Things had been going downhill with them for a long time and Maddie was sad to realize they may have just hit the bottom. She knew a lot of it was mostly her fault and she felt heartsick to think she may have not only tossed away a lover but her best friend too.

"You have nothing to be sorry about Agnes. I'm sure he was just in a hurry. Did he say anything else? When he will be back? "

"No Miss Hayes it wasn't a very long conversation. I'm sorry he didn't say anything else. He sounded worried about his Dad. He told me he'll be in touch."

"Yes I'm sure he will Agnes. Thank you for relaying the message to me."

Agnes knew that Maddie probably wanted to be alone so she nodded her head and walked out of her office and shut the door leaving Maddie sitting there alone going through a myriad of emotions.

After she had time to think Maddie felt a deep fury and hurt burning through her body. She was pacing around her office her emotions ranging the gamut between deep hurt and utter fury. How could he just leave without any word? Suddenly she stopped that train of thought. Hadn't she done the same thing? David had a valid reason for leaving for Philadelphia. His family needed him. What had been her excuse? Maddie knew she had been wrong staying away from David for so long. She knew it had driven a wedge between them especially when she finally did come home married to another man. So many obstacles she had thrown in their path to be together. Finally it looked like the path was finally clear only to be reconstructed once again stronger than ever. She understood his leaving in the middle of the night but how could he call Agnes and not her? Maddie didn't forget their fight for a minute but she was still his boss and he should have called her directly. He probably doesn't want to talk to me after the horrible things she threw at him. But he was no angel either. And how dare he have sex with that tramp on the same couch they had made love on? Maddie shook this thought out of her mind. She forgot her own pain and began to think about David's father. Agnes had told her David said he would be ok but he had been beaten up pretty bad. Maddie liked David's dad and hoped he would recover quickly.

Maddie sat at her desk and paged through her rolodex finding David's brother's new phone number. From what it sounded like from David Richie had finally settled down with a great job and a new apartment. Maddie dialed the unfamiliar number with shaky fingers. Her heart pounded as she heard Richie's voice answering the phone. "Hello."

"Richie. It's Maddie. Maddie Hayes." Maddie spoke quickly trying to hide her nervousness. "I was sorry to hear about your father. What happened? How is he?"

"Maddie. He was robbed and beaten at the fish market last night but he's gonna be alright. He has a..."

David heard Richie talking into the phone telling Maddie about his dad's condition. Why was she calling? He was overwhelmed over what was going on with his dad, taking over the fish market and coping with things in Philly; he didn't need any additional problems or drama from Maddie. When David felt his back to the wall he tended to find escape through avoidance. He could not avoid his problems here but he could ignore *her*.

Richie was trying to get his attention by handing him the phone.

Maddie asked Richie to talk to David. Her heart constricted when she heard David's snide voice saying to tell her he was on a date. Then Richie must have covered the phone with his hand because everything was muffled. She was about to hang up when she heard David's voice. "What do you want?" He asked icily.

"Well how are you too David?" Maddie heard only breathing. "I just wanted to know how your father was doing."

"He's ok."

Maddie proceeded to question David about his father but all she got from David were one word answers. She was getting annoyed. "Why didn't you call me to tell me you were leaving for Philadelphia?"

Maddie heard an ironic laugh. "You mean like you called me to tell me that you were booking it to the windy city?"

"Must you throw that in my face now? I'm just concerned about your father."

David itched to hang up. "Thanks for your concern."

Maddie ignored the hostility in his voice. "So what are your plans?"

"My plans?"

"Yes David as your boss I would like to know how long you will be away."

"No clue." David muttered.

"No clue? What does that mean?"

"It means that I have to see how fast my dad gets better. I have to help out. Ok?" David didn't want to talk anymore to Maddie. He didn't want to think of her. It hurt too much. "Listen I gotta go. I'll keep in touch."

Maddie heard the click of the phone in her ear. She refused to allow David's attitude get to her. She covered her face with her hands and fought back tears. Damn David Addison.

The next few weeks went by slowly for Maddie. Life felt different; being in the office without David was different. The office was too quiet, her life was too quiet. You'd think it would have made her happy to have the peace she had wished for so many times. She realized she hated the peace and quiet. She missed David. She missed his loudness and his exuberance for life. She was trying very hard to forget him but he had wormed his way into her life and her heart. No matter what happened between them Maddie knew she loved David. She wanted to believe that he loved her too but his silence was telling her otherwise.

Maddie shook her head and sighed. She hadn't spoken to David since the day after he left for Philadelphia. She would get weekly updates from Agnes. David would call her to touch base or Agnes would call him to inquire about his father. It was usually a short and quick conversation. Agnes would tell him about the cases they were working on David would apprise her of his dad. David told her the same thing every time they spoke; that his father was still recovering and that he was still working at the fish market. Agnes always inquired when he was coming home and David gave her the same answer which was he didn't know. Agnes always asked if he wanted to talk to Maddie. He always said no. Agnes didn't tell Maddie that part of the conversation. She knew Miss Hayes was hurting and she didn't want to be the one to pour salt on her wounds.

Maddie had reached out to Ritchie a couple times to ask about his dad and how David was doing. Funny how David was never around when she called. She knew he was avoiding her and that was slowly killing her and breaking her heart. Sometimes Maddie thought about how she left him for 4 and 1/2 months and wondered how he managed without her for all that time. It had

only been a month that David was gone and she was falling apart. She missed him badly. So many emotions filled her; sadness, hurt, fear and yes, even anger that he left. She slowly came to realize how David must have felt during the time she was in Chicago. At least Maddie knew David left to help out his dad and not that he was running from her. Maddie sat back in her chair. Maybe he is running from me now though. He never asked to speak with her when he called Agnes either. Didn't he miss her? Obviously, he didn't.

Maddie was wondering when Agnes would hear from David. She ached to hear his voice. The day was dragging by Maddie was picking at her Caesar salad. She had no appetite lately. Maddie was trying to keep her mind on all the paperwork she had piled on her desk. She was tired. A sudden knock on the door made Maddie sit up. Why did her heart always hope it was David at her door.

"Come in." Maddie called.

Agnes didn't know how she was going to relay Mr. Addison's news to Miss Hayes. She had spent the last month sparing Miss Hayes further aggravation and hurt over Mr. Addison's refusal to speak with her. She had kept that information to herself. She never wanted to pour salt on her beloved boss's wounds but now she had to make the deep cuts burn before it was too late.

Maddie watched Agnes walk into her office. Her usual chipper secretary looked pale and worried. "Is everything ok Agnes? You're looking a bit pale."

Agnes looked at Maddie and flopped into the chair in front of her desk. "Mr. Addison is is"

"Mr. Addison is what?" Maddie felt her heart beating fast. "Is he ok? Is he hurt?"

Agnes shook her head. "No nothing like that."

Maddie was getting annoyed. "So what is it Agnes?" She asked with annoyance coating her voice.

"He thinks he is going to stay in Philadelphia. He just called me. He said he was going to start a new life there. It was where he belonged." Agnes was near tears. "What are we going to do Miss Hayes?"

Maddie was stunned. How could he leave her? She wanted him so badly. Didn't he want her anymore? Maddie felt her heart shatter into a million pieces. She tried to put up a front for Agnes but she could hear the shakiness in her voice. "What are you saying Miss Dipesto?"

Agnes shook her head. "Mr. Addison just called to tell me he is staying in Philadelphia! You can't let this happen. You belong together."

Maddie's heart couldn't believe what her ears were hearing. "Calm down Agnes. I bet he doesn't mean it. He would never leave me to run Blue Moon alone. He loves this place!" Maddie didn't know if she even believed the words that were coming out of her mouth but she had to convince Agnes as well as herself that David wouldn't leave them.

Agnes blew her nose in her handkerchief. "You think?"

Maddie nodded her head. "I know." She forced a smile. "Leave it to me Agnes. I am going to go to Philadelphia to see what is going on."

Agnes smiled and nodded her head rapidly. "Great, great Miss Hayes." She bounced out of the chair and headed for the door. "I'll book a flight out for you for tomorrow morning."

"Oh Agnes don't forget to reserve a hotel room for me either."

Agnes nodded and rushed out of the office leaving Maddie to wonder if she was doing the right thing. She sat back in her chair and hoped she was.

Maddie couldn't believe she had actually flown to Philadelphia to bring David back home. In a way it reminded her of another time she had flown across country for David but she didn't want to dredge up those old memories now. She was lucky that Richie had been home when she showed up at his apartment to see David. Richie had been happy to see her she hoped the other Addison brother would be happy too.

After Richie left her alone to wait for David she began to second guess her impetuous trip. Maddie was just about to leave when the door swung open and David stepped into the apartment. He stopped short when he saw her. Maddie saw numerous emotions cross over David's face from joy to sadness to anger in the course of a few seconds. "What are you doing here?" His voice was cold as ice.

"Well I wanted to visit your father." She looked into his eyes. "And I wanted to see you. To talk to you."

David took his wallet and keys out of his pants and flung them on the table. He averted his eyes as he began to take off his fishy smelly clothes. "I don't think we have anything to talk about." David walked into his bedroom Maddie followed.

"Well I think we have a lot to talk about."

"You do huh?" David peeled off his jeans and flung them into the bathroom. He faced Maddie clad only in his boxers. "I need a shower."

David shut the bathroom door behind him. Maddie sat on his bed to wait. She heard the shower running as she thought about what she wanted to say.

A few minutes later Maddie heard the shower stop. David came out of the bathroom wearing only a towel slung low on his waist. Maddie swallowed hard.

"So talk." David stood in front of her casually drying his hair with another towel.

"How's your dad?"

David erupted into laughter. "You came all the way out here to ask me how my father is doing." He shook his head. "Guess you haven't heard of a phone. You know you dial it...and."

"Well every time I called you wouldn't talk to me."

"So? Why do you want to talk to me? Seems you said all you needed to say the last time I saw you." He frowned. "And you said some pretty nasty things to me."

Maddie stood up. "And so did you."

David nodded. "So there you have it."

"Have what?"

"Listen I got too much on my plate now to go 10 rounds with you. Go home. You don't belong here. I got nothing to say to you." David threw her an icy glare. "I'm through with your games."

"Fine."

"Fine!"

"How dare you be mad at me when you're the one who was caught screwing another woman!"

"And as I recall you are the one who said we were nothing but pals. Didn't you?"

Maddie couldn't form any words to make him understand why she said they were 'pals' since she didn't understand why she said it herself. She just knew she was trying to get David to admit they were NOT pals but she couldn't admit that to him. Not here. Not yet.

David stared through her with green laser beams. "Well, didn't you?"

Maddie shrugged. "I made a mistake coming here." Maddie told him defeated. "I'll just pay a visit to your father since I am already here. I want to see how he is and give him my regards." She stared into David's eyes looking for some warmth. She didn't find it. "Anyway, then I will leave for LA." She turned away. "Sorry I bothered you." She snapped.

David sighed. "You didn't bother me. Sorry I'm behaving like such a jerk but I don't understand why you are here?" He combed his hair with his hand causing his still damp hair to stand up on his head. "I mean last time we saw

each other you told me you loathed the sight of me.” He shook his head. “And then you come here. You are one hell of a confusing woman, Maddie Hayes.”

Maddie turned to face him. “I had to come. I wanted to see you. To talk to you. You wouldn’t come to the phone.” She shook her head. “Agnes told me you are thinking of staying here. I couldn’t let that happen without talking to you.”

David began to throw on his clothes. He pulled a black t-shirt over his head. “So talk.”

Maddie didn’t know what to say. She was getting annoyed with his cool attitude. She watched David pull on a faded pair of old jeans as she thought of something to convey what she wanted to say without saying too much. “Well I have to know your plans since if you do stay here I have to find another partner.” Now, why the hell did she say that, she thought miserably. That wasn’t what she wanted to say. Sometimes she couldn’t believe what actually came out of her mouth.

David laughed but it was not a happy sound. “Really? Ok. I can understand that. Well, let’s just say then maybe you should start interviewing.” He flung at her icily.

“Fine. Ok so I guess I will see you around.” Maddie felt tired and sad. “Can I call a cab please?” She walked out of his bedroom. David followed.

David wanted to take her in his arms but how could he when she didn’t care. But why did she come here? Ok, she said to see my dad and to see if I was going to quit but that couldn’t be the reasons. Could they? She must care for him. Right? David mentally shook his head. How could he be with her when she won’t even admit her feelings? She was always pushing him away. One step forward 4 steps back always. He couldn’t let her leave like this and never see her again. “Listen, I’ll drive you to your hotel.”

“Don’t bother David. I can take a cab. I’ve bothered you enough.”

“Stop. You didn’t bother me.” He slid his feet into his sneakers and grabbed his keys and wallet off the table. “Come on.”

Maddie reluctantly followed David out to his mode of transportation. David led her to a black pick-up truck that had seen better days. She climbed up into the passenger seat. The truck reeked of fish.

David started the truck. "Sorry it's probably not up to your standards but it's my dad's work truck. We use it to pick up the fish. Sorry." David suddenly felt ashamed of the truck, the fish market and his life in Philly."

Maddie turned to David who was staring through the windshield. "It's fine David."

He shrugged as he pulled out into traffic. The ride was quiet and uncomfortable. Both were wrapped up in their own thoughts and fears. Finally David broke the silence. "Hey listen I'm kinda hungry and I bet you are too. How about we stop at the diner over there?" David pointed to a corner diner named 'Jake's'.

Maddie shook her head. She wanted to just go back to her room and cry herself to sleep. She couldn't bear to be around David knowing he hated her. "No, thank you. I'm not hungry."

"Come on. I'm starving and if I don't get something to eat I'll pass out." David told her as he pulled into a parking spot in the diner's lot.

"Just take me back to the hotel. I said I wasn't hungry."

David threw her a dirty look as he opened the truck door. "Well then you can just sit out here in the dark alone and wait for me." He jumped out of the truck and strode into the diner without a backward glance.

Maddie was flabbergasted at his cavalier behavior. How dare he! She would give him a piece of her mind then call a cab from the diner. Maddie threw open the door and stomped into the diner. She looked around. It was a small quaint place more like an old fashioned luncheonette she remembered from her childhood. Maddie's eyes rested on David who was seated at a booth in the back reading over a menu. She strode over to him purposely just as the waitress approached his table. She saw David look up at the sexy brunette with a twinkle in his eye and felt her anger fade away replaced by a red hot jealousy. She hated to see David look at anyone else with that twinkle in his eyes that should be reserved for her! She took a deep breath and forced a

smile to her face. She walked swiftly to the table interrupting David and that woman's smilefest. "David." Maddie smiled down at him and sat in the seat across from him.

David turned his attention away from Lucy the waitress to Maddie who was looking at him with a smile he knew was fake. He knew her too well. Damn, was that green in her blue eyes? He looked at her with a raised eyebrow. "So you hungry after all."

Maddie picked up the menu out of David's hands. "Starved." She told him burying her head in the plastic menu.

Maddie pretended she wasn't paying attention to the banter between David and the brunette as she read the menu.

David smiled up at Lucy. She smiled down into his green eyes. She had a crush on David Addison since they were kids but he never gave her the time of day. When she heard he was back in town she did everything she could think of to get him to notice her as a woman but he didn't seem interested. The drop dead gorgeous blonde that just sat down across from him and was pretending to memorize the menu was probably the reason for his indifference towards her. She mentally sighed. "The usual Dave?" He had been coming to the diner a few times a week for dinner and he usually ordered a cheeseburger with fries. David nodded. "Sure babe." He looked over at Maddie who was engrossed in the menu.

Babe! He called her babe? Maddie's insides clenched. She heard David call her name. She put the menu on the table.

"Here's your chance *pal*. We can have cheeseburgers together." He made a show of looking at his watch. "Does it matter that it isn't noon?" He couldn't help but throw her words back at her. He knew he was being childish, immature and spiteful but he couldn't stop himself.

Maddie didn't like one bit that David was making a joke out of her feelings on that long ago day before she ran away to Chicago. And throwing in the word *pal* just added to her discomfort. She wouldn't take the bait and start an argument. She just smiled at the green eyed bastard across from her. "Fine." She looked up at the waitress. "I'll have a cheeseburger."

Lucy looked down at Maddie. Wow, she was a beauty. She knew she had seen her somewhere but she couldn't place it. One thing she did know was that she wasn't from around here.

Maddie noticed the woman staring at her and she began to feel ill at ease. "Is there something the matter?" Maddie asked.

Lucy shook her head. "I know you! I'm just trying to figure out from where." Lucy studied her intently.

David broke out into laughter. "Look close Lucy. You may have seen her pictures in a few hundred magazines or maybe from shampoo commercials."

Lucy snapped her fingers. "That's it!" She smiled broadly. "You're the Blue Moon Shampoo girl!" She looked at David. "How do you know her Dave?"

David looked at Maddie with a smirk. "We work together. Work? Worked?" He shook his head to clear it. "She's my boss."

"Wow!" Lucy was excited. "That's great! You guys in business together as detectives?"

David nodded. "Yep."

Lucy stood shock still just looking back and forth between Maddie and David. "Gee a guy I grew up with hob knobbing with the stars." She waved her hand back and forth at them. "You guys an item?"

David answered her in a flash. "Nope. Just chums, friends." He raised a mocking eyebrow at Maddie. "*Pals.*"

Finally, Lucy left to place their order. Maddie and David sat in silence. Lucy kept stealing glances at their table. Maddie noticed how she couldn't seem to keep her eyes off of David. "One of your flavors?"

David didn't answer. He was saved by Lucy placing their food in front of them. He winked at Lucy as she walked away. David took a big bite of his burger. Maddie began to eat but the burger seemed to stick in her throat. She hated that he wouldn't talk. She hated the silence between them. She felt sad and lonely.

David watched Maddie eat from under his eyelashes. He wanted to kiss the ketchup off the corner of her mouth. “You have some ketchup on your mouth.” He told her handing her a napkin.

Maddie took the napkin and wiped her mouth. “Thanks.” She chewed on a fry. “So what are your plans? I mean if you stay here?”

David swallowed hard. So she didn’t care if he stayed here. Nice. “Why do you care?” He snapped. He looked at her with green fire.

What is up with him? “I was just asking David!” She cried. “Stop snapping at me!” She jumped up from the table. “I’m going to ask your girlfriend to call me a cab.”

David’s hand grabbed Maddie’s elbow. “Sit down Maddie. Don’t embarrass me here. I know these people.”

“I just want to call a cab David.”

He pulled her down next to him. She felt his thigh touching hers and she pulled away. “I said I will drive you.” His voice was serious.

Maddie sighed. “I just want to go to bed.”

“That can be arranged.” A smile was creeping up the side of his face. “Let me just pay the check and we can get outta here.” He snapped his fingers. “I’ll have you in bed PDQ.”

“Very funny Addison.” She was not amused. Why did everything always come down to sex with David? “You know what I meant!”

“A man can wish can’t he?” He wiggled his eyebrows at her.

Maddie ignored him. She watched as he went over to Lucy to pay the check. The waitress leaned over and whispered something into David’s ear that caused him to burst out laughing. She wished she knew what the joke was.

David drove Maddie back to her hotel. The ride was uncomfortably quiet. He pulled up in front of the hotel. He turned to Maddie. "So what are you going to do now?"

"Now?"

"Tomorrow?"

"Well, I would like to visit your dad before I go back to LA. And I have a friend or two I want to see while I'm here. I guess I'll head back home in a couple of days."

David nodded. What was going on between them? "Why did you really come here?"

Maddie didn't know what to say. He didn't want to come home and she wouldn't show him how much that hurt her. She knew they were having trouble in their 'relationship' but she still believed it was too precious not to fight for but if David didn't feel the same way what could she do? Maddie didn't answer him. She opened the truck door. "Well good night David." She looked at him as she stepped to the ground. "Or is this goodbye?" Before he could answer she turned her back and walked into the hotel.

David wanted to run after her but he stopped himself. What could he say? Why doesn't she tell me why she came here? Was it really to see if he wasn't coming back to Blue Moon? Or was it something else. He had to know the answer before she left. He was going to drop in at his dad's tomorrow and hopefully she would be there.

David raced home from work to shower and change his clothes. Richie had clued him in that Maddie was going to visit his dad at 4 and he wanted to be there. He wouldn't admit to himself that he wanted to be there to see Maddie so he told himself that he wanted to be sure his dad wouldn't say anything to embarrass him. Maddie had grown up in a world that was glaringly different from his own. Her parents had a maid and belonged to a country club while his dad and his wife took care of their own chores and were proud members of the local bowling team. He knew he shouldn't be ashamed of the way he grew up. Just because Maddie's family had more money than his and enjoyed different things didn't mean they were better but it did underscore why

he and Maddie were just so different from each other. He dismissed these thoughts from his head as he threw on a faded pair of jeans and a black t-shirt.

David was hoping that Maddie wasn't feeling out of place at his dad's house. He opened the door with his key and was pleased to hear laughter coming from the living room. The sound of Maddie's laughter was always music to his ears; especially now since he hadn't heard it much since she lost the baby. David once again shook these thoughts out of his mind.

Stephanie noticed David first. She waved to him as he walked into the room. "Oh look David is here! What a nice surprise! We're having such a nice visit with your partner."

Maddie turned and looked up at him with a smile. He gave her a half smile and turned away quickly. David looked at his father. "How are you feeling today Dad?"

"Good! Great!" Better everyday son. Glad you came over while Maddie was still here. How did everything go today?"

"Fine everything went fine. I left Keith there to take over for the rest of the afternoon."

Maddie watched David and his dad make small talk. He always looked so ill at ease when he was talking to his dad; she remembered how it had been when David's father had been in Los Angeles for his wedding.

"Good he's a great worker. I mean if I can't have either of my sons there let me tell you this Keith is the next best thing. I can't say I wasn't disappointed that neither of my boys wanted to work with me at the fish market." David Senior looked over at Maddie with a smile. "But they have to live their own lives and they have to do what makes them happy." He looked at David. "You are happy aren't you son?" David Sr. nodded his head toward Maddie. "I mean how could you not be working with such a beautiful woman every day? Just looking at her all day would make any man happy."

David didn't answer. He looked over at Maddie who was looking breath taking in a fitted dark blue dress that showed off her amazing body and brought

out the color of her eyes. David looked away. He heard his dad continue with the conversation.

David Senior looked over at Maddie. "So you making my boy happy?" He winked and Maddie blushed. David wanted to yell that no she made it her business to make him miserable from as far back as he could remember. And why was she really here?

David looked over at Maddie from the corner of his eye to see her response. He saw her shrug. Her eyes caught his. "I try. I may have made more than a few mistakes but well I try."

That answer seemed to satisfy his father. He watched as he gave Maddie a big smile then he turned to him. "Yes well you did very well for yourself son. Building up a detective business. And of course working with a beautiful partner." David Sr. looked proud. "And believe me I'm thrilled that Richard is doing so well in his new job. Just hope my boys settle down soon with nice girls and maybe give me a grandchild or two before I'm too old to enjoy them." David's father laughed.

David and Maddie looked at each other and Maddie looked away first.

"Yeah well Dad let's see how long Richie lasts at this job before you marry him off." David told him snidely.

David Senior ignored his younger son's tone. "Well he did say there was this nice girl at work. The secretary I think."

Maddie was listening to David and his dad goes back and forth. She could tell David was nervous.

"Maddie are you looking to get married? I do have two handsome sons." David's father asked jokingly.

"Dad really."

Maddie just continued to sit quietly. She wasn't sure what to say. Stephanie broke in diffusing the awkward moment. "David would you like something to drink? I just made some iced tea." Stephanie asked looking to change the subject.

Maddie knew all about Stephanie and she wondered how David was doing around her. Thankfully his dad didn't know of David's dalliance with his wife and Stephanie didn't remember.

"No thanks Steph. I'm fine."

"Maddie would you like some more tea?"

"Oh no I'm good too. Thank you Stephanie"

"David sit down by your partner. Why are you standing in the middle of the room? Sit down." David's father told his son.

David slowly walked over to the couch Maddie was sitting on and sat down next to her.

"Oh it was such a nice surprise when Maddie called and said she was in town and asked if she could come by. I can't believe you didn't tell us she was coming to Philly to visit."

"Well I didn't know she was coming either."

"Yes it was a spur of the moment trip." Maddie put in.

"Are you sure you don't want to say for dinner?" Stephanie asked Maddie.

Maddie shook her head. "No thank you but I have dinner plans with a friend."

David looked over at her. A friend? What kind of friend he wondered? Male or female?

"So any friend I know?" David asked Maddie.

Maddie shook her head "No one you know David."

David's father broke in. "Well it's wonderful to have you here. I'm happy that we got the chance to sit down and get to know you better. The last time

we met I was too nervous about getting married.” David Senior laughed. No one brought up David’s ridiculous behavior.

Stephanie nodded.

“Oh it was a beautiful wedding. I was very happy to be there.” Maddie smiled.

“Well you and my son looked wonderful together. Everyone said so. Everybody thought you were a couple.” David’s father studied Maddie. He didn’t miss the slight blush that appeared on her face. He wasn’t dumb. There was more between his son and his business partner. What business partner flies 300 miles to visit their associate’s injured father? He decided to stir the pot. “So Maddie are you single?”

Maddie got a little flustered. “Well umm.....” Maddie started to say something.

David interrupted her. “Dad really I don't think that really matters to you. Can you lay off the personal questions?”

“Well I’m just getting to know your partner better.” The older man winked at Maddie. “Such a gorgeous woman won’t be single for long.”

“David you’re embarrassing your guest!” Stephanie told him firmly.

“Am I?” He asked Maddie.

Maddie did feel uncomfortable with that line of questioning but she couldn’t say it. “No, no. It’s fine.” She laughed. “Yes, I am single.”

“So what are you kids wasting time for?” David’s dad looked at both of them as if they were idiots. “You’re both young single and healthy! Come on! You guys will make beautiful babies.”

Maddie turned pale. She swallowed hard and bit down on her lip to stop the tears that threatened. Would it ever get easier? She didn’t know. She saw David’s face tense and she caught his eye.

David felt like breaking something. He was angry at his father for bringing up such a painful subject. Of course the old man didn't know but that didn't help much. "Mind your business dad!" David snapped.

David Senior's face turned red. "Don't you use that tone with me!" He told David. "You're still my son and I will knock that smirk off your face."

"Look at my face dad. Not smirking." David turned away from his dad and toward Maddie.

"So Maddie I bet you have to get going huh?" David hoped she would leave. It was getting very uncomfortable.

Maddie nodded. She wanted to run out of there and burst into tears. She looked at David. "My cab will be here soon. I would just like to use the bathroom first."

Stephanie showed Maddie where the bathroom was leaving the two men alone.

"What was that about?" David Senior asked his angry son.

"What was what about?"

"Don't do that."

"Do what?"

"Do what you always do. Make jokes. Why when I mentioned a baby did you get mad and Maddie looked like she was gonna cry?"

David ran his hands through his hair. "She lost a baby dad ok. Just a few months ago." David's father stared into his son's eyes. "Yes it was mine. We're having a hard time. Please dad let it be. Don't say anything more."

David Senior was stunned. "I'm so sorry David. I didn't know."

David nodded. "I know."

The men stopped talking when Maddie walked back into the room.

“Well I guess I will be leaving soon.” Maddie told them. “I was so happy to see you again.”

David’s father took her hands. “I promise your partner will be back soon. I told him he should get back home.”

“I don’t want you to push yourself dad. I’m perfectly happy to work at the fish market.”

David Sr. laughed. “Since when? When you and Richie were boys you hated working with me at the market. I think you both were afraid that girls wouldn’t want to go out with a guy that reeked of fish.”

“Yeah well I’m not a kid anymore dad and you need me now.”

David Sr. nodded to Maddie. “So does she.”

David shook his head. “Believe me dad she doesn’t need me at all.”

Stephanie noticed Maddie looked sad. She put her hand on Maddie’s arm. “Are you sure you won’t stay for dinner?”

Maddie shook her head. “No thank you. I have plans with an old friend.”

David smirked and raised an eyebrow. “A pal?”

Maddie ignored him.

David went on. “Yeah me and Maddie here are more than business partners.” David said snidely. “We’re pals.”

David and Stephanie didn’t know what David was talking about but they could both see he was doing it to annoy Maddie.

Stephanie interrupted. “How about you David? How about staying for dinner?”

David shook his head. “No can do. I have an old friend I have to meet too.” He winked at Maddie. “Yep a real pal.”

Maddie was saved by snapping at David by the sound of her cab honking.

“You know about the little party we are having tomorrow night? You have to come Maddie!” David's father told her.

"Ahhh Dad no Maddie probably has plans with her pal."

Maddie interrupted David. "What's tomorrow night?"

"Oh please how could she not be interested in a little party for her partner's birthday?" David's dad knew they needed to be thrown together. He never knew how stubborn his son could be with a woman.

"Oh yes your birthday is in a few days. There's a party? No, David didn't tell me. But we really haven't had much time to talk while I've been here."

"Well you have to be there." Stephanie added her two cents.

“Where is the party?” Maddie wanted to know.

"No place you would care to hang out. Trust me I know." David answered back with an attitude.

"A good friend of mine owns a bar. He said we could have the party there." David's told her.

"I'd love to come." She turned to David. “We've spent the last five years spending our birthdays together.”

“Things change.” David looked at her. "Listen it's really not your type of party."

"It's a party David why wouldn't I like it?"

"Yeah well it's in a bar and you never wanted to go into any bars with me and since when do you love parties?"

Maddie ignored him. "Well I better get going. The cab is waiting."

Maddie went to shake David's father's hand but he got up out of his chair and hugged her again. Maddie turned to Stephanie and hugged her tightly.

"We will see you tomorrow night?" Stephanie asked.

Maddie nodded.

"Call me tomorrow and I'll give you the directions. Unless David can pick you up?"

Maddie shook her head. "Oh no I have some things to do tomorrow. I'll just take a cab over to the party it will be easier."

"David be a gentleman and walk Maddie outside to her cab."

"Dad I'm sure Maddie can walk to the cab herself. She doesn't need me."

Maddie looked over at him. He caught her eyes she looked hurt. "Fine. Come on." He took her arm. David followed Maddie out the front door and down the front steps.

"Listen you really don't have to come tomorrow night."

"I'll be there tomorrow night unless you don't really want me there."

David shook his head. "I want you to be there."

They both stood there staring into each other's eyes for a minute both wishing the other would say something. Maddie made the first move and kissed David on the cheek.

"Have a nice time out with your friend tonight." David said to her. *Who are you going out with? I hope it's not another man. I love you.*

"You too David." Maddie said back to him. *Who are you going out with? I hope it's not another woman. I love you.*