

## The Billionaire's Twins Play Matchmaker Book One: Chapter 24



Macey stirred. Her body was warm, enclosed in his strong arms. Julius breathed against her shoulder. Her muddled mind slowly pieced the night together causing her face to warm at the memory of her inhibition.

God! He even licked her there!

He had never done that before. His love making had always been tender and considerate but not...what should she even call it? She had no words for the things he had done to her.

"What are you thinking about?" Julius groggily stirred.

Macey stiffened. She wasn't certain when he woke and she didn't know how she could face him after last night.

"Macey?" he kissed her neck. "Baby? Did you not enjoy it?"

"...I did. Very much."

He nuzzled her and his embrace tightened.

"...You never did any of that before."

"For six years I've fantasized about everything I would do to you once I found you again," he whispered.

"You have?"

"If you let me...I'll take care of you all day and all night. Just tell me what you want. I'll make all your wishes come true."

Macey bit her lip. How long had she waited for those words? How many nights had she longed for his warmth, his touch? It had been so hard in the beginning with her pregnancy hormones running rampant. There were nights she couldn't sleep at all. At those times Vicki was a life saver. They stayed up eating rocky road and watching her favorite movie on repeat while she confessed her heartache.

She was not only a shoulder to cry on but a confidant. Vicki alone knew Macey's whole story: growing up and falling in love with Julius, enduring her one-sided loveless marriage and finally leaving. Not only did Vicki listen but she became her number one supporter and cheerleader. Vicki seemed to always know when Macey needed a night in and when she needed to get out and feel normal rather than wallow in self pity. She never insisted Macey move on rather she said Macey needed to let her heart grieve and heal in its own time.

Macey remembered coming home after a failed blind date to find Vicki awake and ready to hear the details while the kids slept. She cried her eyes out that night complaining how much it hurt to think Julius had moved on while she was trapped loving him. Most people told her to just forget him but Vicki had different advice: *Plaisir d'amour ne dure qu'un moment. Chagrin d'amour dure toute la vie.*[1] If you love him...love him. There is nothing wrong with that.

But what if I always love him? What if I never get over him?

Sweetheart, I am French. To me unrequited love is as natural as breathing. Your heart will heal when it is ready and will open itself to new love...and if it doesn't maybe it is trying to tell you something. *Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas.*[2]

Was this what her heart had been trying to tell her? Julius hadn't moved on as she thought he did. He had been trying to find her all this time hoping to bring their family back together. Could it be that somehow her heart knew that? Was this why she never could let him go?

"Macey?" Julius stirred pulled her closer as he propped himself on his elbow and turned her so she lay on her back looking at him. He was surprised to see tears seeping from her eyes. "Shh...don't cry. Did I say something wrong?"

Macey shook her head unable to formulate the words she wanted to say. Instead she mumbled, "Just hold me...please?"

His embrace tightened pulling her into his chest as he kissed her forehead and whispered, "As you wish."

Macey relaxed in his arms, "You remembered my favorite movie."

"Of course I did. I remember everything about you."

She didn't know how long she lay there but eventually she realized they had to get up for the kids soon. When she decided to move she found she couldn't. It seemed every part of her protested making it difficult to breathe.

"What's wrong?" Julius sensed her discomfort.

"I...can't move. Everything's just so sore."

Julius chuckled kissing her, "I'm sorry. I was too eager last night."

"It's not funny. The kids will be up soon. What time is it?"

"Six. Relax. We have time."

"Time to what? I can't move."

"Don't worry. I'll fix it." He chuckled before sliding out of bed. "Stay here...I'll be right back."

"Stay here..." she snorted. "Like I have a choice."

His laughter echoed back to her as he entered the master bath. Macey tried to sit but everything protested and brought tears to her eyes. A few moments later she heard him running a bath. Soaking in warm water did sound good but how was she supposed to get to the tub?

"Okay beautiful. Let's go," Julius said as he returned.

She looked at him but quickly looked away realizing he was very much naked. Her face reddened as she covered it with her hands.

"What's wrong?" Julius asked leaning over her.

"Don't you think you should put something on?" she mumbled.

Julius burst out laughing before gently prying her hands from her face to kiss her nose saying, "Considering where my mouth was last night I think seeing little junior is the least of your worries."

Macey stifled a shriek and her face grew even redder, "Thanks a lot. I'd almost forgotten that!"

Julius chuckled scooping her into his arms and carrying her bridal style, "Don't worry about it after all we both belong to you, beautiful. We'll do it all again tonight."

Macey continued to hide her face unable to meet his gaze as memories of their passionate night returned to her mind. There weren't words for her level of embarrassment.

Still laughing Julius carried her into the bathroom and carefully settled her in the warm water of the Jacuzzi tub. Macey gasped and sighed as the water enveloped her. It did feel good. A moment later Julius joined her pulling her into his arms so she rested against his chest. Fiddling with the controls he activated the jets and adjusted the speed. He sat between two jets allowing their current to swirl around her. Macey moaned relaxing.

"Better?"

"Hmm." She rested against him.

Julius smiled enjoying her in his arms where she fit so neatly. How could he have been so stupid? If his younger self were in front of him now he would kick his ass. After a few minutes he grabbed a bath scrub and gently washed her kissing her shoulder.

"Julius?"

"Yes beautiful."

"Did you mean what you said?"

"About what?"

"About...taking care of me?"

"Yes." Julius kissed her temple. "Every word."

She sighed, "H-how is that supposed to work?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well...the kids and I have to go back to Paris. They have school. I have commitments...and so do you."

She felt him tense the moment she mentioned leaving but he slowly relaxed again. Finally he answered, "That's not a problem. I'll go with you."

"You can't just quite work."

"I haven't taken a vacation day in almost ten years. I'd say I'm overdue," Julius replied. "Besides dad's wanted to break into the European market for awhile. Someone needs to be there to make it happen."

"So...you'd really just leave everything behind? Move to a new country where you don't know anyone?"

His embrace tightened and he kissed her again, "All I need is you and the kids. Nothing else matters."

"Julius." Macey shifted to look at him.

He smiled at her conflicted expression saying, "Just say the word. Whether we live here or in Paris or split our time between both...it doesn't matter to me as long as we are together."

She wanted to say something but she didn't know how. Instead she stayed silent cuddling against him. He held her content to have her in his arms...for now. Eventually she knew he would want an answer but she didn't know what kind she would give him.

\* \* \*

"Mister DaLair! We've been expecting you!" the owner of the tailor shop greeted.

Julius nodded as he held the door for Macey and the kids. Though he was not one to reserve a whole store like his father Julius did prefer to alert shop owners when he planned to visit. It was the best way to ensure prompt service especially if he was in a rush. He was no stranger to this store as the owner knew him for years.

Reagan was in his mid-fifties. His hair was thinning and he had put on some weight since his prime but he was the consummate professional welcoming more than a few of New York's elite through his doors, particularly the DaLairs.

Julius had always been a loyal customer and Reagan extended the red carpet treatment whenever he arrived but this was the first time he came shopping with a woman let alone kids in tow. The woman was quite beautiful with her vibrant red hair. Her look was mimicked in the energetic little girl who skipped into the store ahead of them. The boy on the other hand had a more serious look as he slowly took in his surroundings.

"Hello Reagan," Julius said, "we have a party to go to tonight. Me and my son need to look as good as the ladies."

Caden wrinkled his nose at his father's statement but was excited to finally do something his sister took for granted. For once he would be the one trying on new clothes with his parent.

"Your...son..." Reagan looked at the young boy again. There was definitely a strong resemblance. "I see. What kind of event are you attending?"

"A grand opening for an art gallery," Julius said taking out his phone to show him a picture he snapped at the last store. "This is what the ladies are wearing."

The image showed Macey in an off-the-shoulder, forest green gown. It flared just below her hips giving her more freedom of movement than her previous dresses though it stayed in the mermaid style which she preferred. Beside her Aria modeled a velvet green dress with puffy shoulders and a black layered skirt. It had a lacey hem with beaded neck line.

"So what do you think?" Julius asked. "You got something to help us compete with that?"

Normally when Julius known for suits he was indifferent but this time there was a distinct playfulness and eagerness in his attitude. Reagan had snapped the DaLairs for a long time and his mind slowly recalled fitting him for a wedding tux several years ago. Could this woman be that bride? And the children...

Reagan smiled brightly saying, "Well, let's see what we can do."

Julius scooped up Caden and carried him as they followed the shop owner into the store. Now he had a better view of the racks of suits in various colors: black, white, gray, brown, green, blue...even pink. There were just as many racks of dress shirts also in multiple colors, styles and material. Along the wall were accessories: boutonnières, ties, tie clips, belts, hats, cufflinks, shoes, even sunglasses among many things Caden couldn't identify.

"A gallery opening would be a black tie affair so I think we should keep it simple with a basic black suit," Reagan said selecting one of the suits. "Now we have this. It's simple but as you can see the material has a satin finish that adds a little extra."

"What do you think, Caden?" Julius asked as they felt the heavy material.

"Will it be too hot?" Caden asked. Though he was excited to match his father his main concern was comfort. He didn't like anything that was too heavy or would be hot and constrictive.

"That's a good point," Julius agreed. "We'll be there all night so it should be breathable. Reagan?"

He nodded like a wise sage sensing what his clients wanted. Leading them to another rack of suits he selected one that was lighter and softer but still fitted. Caden seemed to find this one acceptable.

"It comes in children's sizes too, right?" Julius wanted to be sure.

Reagan nodded. A salesperson brought a tape to take Caden's measurements then selected a small range of sizes to see which fit best. A selection of shirts was also chosen allowing them to choose the most suited for comfort. Then they retreated to the dressing rooms with a few accessories to complete their look before showing the girls.

During this process Macey and Aria quietly wandered through the accessories. Aria giggled at some of the choices and designs. She had never been to a men's clothing shop before so it was a new experience and she had a hard time even identifying most things.

"What do you think, ladies?" Julius asked as he and Caden emerged from the dressing rooms.

The pair strutted and turned as if on a run way. Somehow they had gotten a hold of matching sunglasses and they wore them as if they were 80's heartthrobs as they posed. Aria giggled at their father's silliness. Macey chuckled. She knelt and straightened Caden's tie. Like her, he was not a big shopper but he was smiling broadly losing most of his reserve. It seemed the more time he spent with his father the bolder he became.

"I think you both look very handsome," Macey said placing a green, silk handkerchief in Caden's chest pocket. "There. The final touch."

Caden's grin only got bigger. Now he really did match his mom and dad. Macey kissed his forehead and stood. Moving to Julius she fitted a similar handkerchief in his pocket. He caught her hands before she could pull away and kissed them. Her cheeks took on a faint blush which only made him smile more. Julius leaned his forehead against hers not caring if anyone saw him. After tonight everyone would know how he felt...and most importantly she would no longer have any doubts.

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Outside the shop Katherine pressed herself against the window watching the scene as the foursome shopped. She had slept in her car expecting Julius to leave for work and give her the opportunity to confront the redhead. To her surprise they all left together heading for the shopping district. Confused she followed as he first brought them to dress shop looking for matching gowns for Macey and Aria. Katherine's face burned with rage.

How many times had she begged Julius to take her shopping? All she wanted was his attention and pampering but each time he shrugged her off. She thought it was because he hated shopping but he didn't seem to mind it at all today.

In fact he looked to be thoroughly enjoying himself even as the women tried on multiple dresses before deciding on the ones they wanted. She watched him wrap his arms around Macey and slowly spin her as if they were dancing in a ballroom. Laughing lightly Macey played along much to the children's delight. Why? Why did he show her so much care and attention?

Now she watched them shop for suits so he and Caden could match as well. The way the pair strutted out of the dressing rooms wearing matching sunglasses as they spun and struck poses showed how playful Julius could be. He was all smiles, relaxed and happy as he took Macey's hands in his and kissed them. It was clear he didn't care who saw. Katherine gritted her teeth and clenched her hands. She was going to make that bitch pay.

[1] The pleasure of love lasts only a moment. The pain of love lasts a lifetime. (French Proverb)

[2] The heart has reasons that reason cannot know. (Blaise Pascal)