

Chapter 5

Alina's POV

"I seriously cannot believe you are wearing ats," scolded Chloe when I got into the taxi.

"I told you I was not wearing heels. It's bad enough that you're forcing me out in this," I pointed to the green, silk dress. "I am not about to make even more of a fool of myself falling ass over tit in a pair of your ridiculous shoes."

"Eek! I am so excited to see Madeline's at. I wonder what it's going to be like. I bet it's edgy and cool with quirky artwork all over the walls. Did you know that Madeline's boyfriend is an MMA ghter and he trains others? He's, like, really talented!"

"No, how would I know that?" I replied, a little too defensively.

"Yeah, he's pretty intimidating from what I've heard about him. Not someone you want to mess with. And he loves Madeline ercely. Apparently, he once beat a man for even ogling at her in a club!"

"What a hero!" I rolled my eyes at her enthusiasm. I couldn't help but be sarcastic. I would be mortified if someone behaved that way because of me. But I will never know what that feels like, I guess, as I am sure no one will ever love me as much as that.

After twenty minutes, the car came to a stop and Chloe paid the taxi driver and climbed out. I hesitated for a moment and wondered how pissed off Chloe would be if I quickly slammed the door and told the driver to take me home. Extremely pissed! I know I could never do that to her either. There was no way out of this. I suddenly felt a wave of adrenaline rush through my body and I gave myself a pep talk.

I can be anyone I want to be tonight. I don't know these people and will probably never see them again, so f**k it. I am going to let loose and have fun!

I stepped out of the taxi and the cool evening breeze hit me, sending a shiver through my body. We linked arms and quickly ran up some stone steps towards a vast, black door.

"Well, this is it," Chloe said, typing the at number into the intercom. The door buzzed and we waited for an answer. I took a minute to look around at my surroundings. We were on a respectable road full of townhouses, most had been converted into ats. I didn't know the area well, but I knew we were on the outskirts of London, away from the hustle and bustle of the city. What caught my attention immediately was to the right of the building there stood the beginning of a large, wooded area. This was quite unusual in a place like London.

BUZZ

The latch on the door opened and we were met by a giant of a man. He was handsome with brown hair and brown eyes, although a little terrifying.

"Name?" he asked in a gruff tone.

"Oh um... I'm Chloe and this is Alina. We are friends of Madeline's," Chloe answered nervously.

He looked us both up and down slowly with an expressionless face and then opened the door wider for us to pass through.

The at was on the second oor and was much bigger and homely than the building looked on the outside. It had all of its original features from the Victorian era with an open replace in the middle of the living room but also lots of modern designs that made it contemporary yet chic. Chloe was right, it was edgy and cool.

The rst thing I noticed was a divine smell as we walked in. It was a mixture of an earthy pine scent with a masculine aroma of sandalwood. The second thing I noticed was that there weren't that many people here for a house party.

There were a few girls huddled together around a built-in bar in the corner of the room sipping their drinks, a couple sat smoking what appeared to be m*****a on the sofa, and a group of ve people in the middle of the room chatting.

One of the girls, who was wearing leather trousers and a grey crop top with Doc Martins, threw her head back and let out a laugh that lled the room like music. Madeline.

"There she is. Let's go and say hi," said Chloe, pulling me in their direction. "Madeline, hey! Thank you so much for inviting us. Your place is awesome!"

"Chloe, Alina. You guys made it! Welcome," she looked genuinely happy to see us. "You both look spectacular and I see you took my advice, Alina," she winked at me, then scanned my dress. I instinctively started blushing when I realised the rest of the group (who were dressed quite casually might I add) had turned their attention towards me.

I remembered the promise I made to myself and held my head up a little higher, looking her straight in the eyes with as much condence as I could muster.

"Yes, I did and thank you. I love it. You also look gorgeous yourself, Madeline."

Her eyes gave a little twinkle at my compliment and then she politely changed the topic and introduced us to her friends. What was strange was how good looking they all were. They gave off an aura that was unnerving yet compelling.

Suddenly, I felt a shift in the atmosphere. My whole body tensed as the air prickled with anticipation. The hairs on my body stood to attention when I felt a burning gaze at the back of my head.

"Ah, there you are, darling! Come here and meet my new friends," Madeline called to the presence over my shoulder.

My heart started to race as I heard heavy footsteps approaching and that heavenly scent of pine and sandalwood became overwhelming. When I turned my head, I came face-to-face with those crystal blue eyes and the whole world melted away. His eyes were xed on mine, encroaching on my soul. I noticed the look of surprise and shock in them and then I watched as his lips parted slightly and his breath hitched. I let out a gasp.

I actually gasped out loud! Kill me now!

"Don't worry, he is used to getting that reaction from women," came Madeline's chuckle, reminding me that we were not the only two people in the room. I felt my cheeks burn crimson with embarrassment. I watched as she snaked her hands through his arm and started to caress his huge biceps.

"This is Logan. My boyfriend," she smiled sweetly.

I glanced back up at his face, but he hadn't reacted to my humiliating behaviour. Instead, he continued to stare at me intensely. I was starting to feel hot and uncomfortable under his penetrating gaze. I immediately looked away and saw a man coming towards us with a few glasses of champagne in his hands. Before I could stop myself, I grabbed one from his hand and downed it in one go and then grabbed another.

"Woah! Calm down there, buttercup!" said the man I had just stolen drinks from. He looked amused with his lips pulled into a sideways smirk. He was also very attractive with auburn hair and chocolate brown eyes. Physically, he was bulky, like all the other men at the party, but not as muscular as that Greek god, Logan.

"Yes, Lina! I like your thinking!" shouted Chloe, also snatching the remaining glass from the stranger's hand and drinking it in one go.

"Wahoo! Let's get this party started!"

Everyone cheered, apart from Logan, and one of the girls in the group, that Madeline had introduced as Emma, went to the bar and grabbed a bottle of tequila. She started pouring it into shot glasses and handing them out to us. Oh, no! What had I started?

I looked around the group and my eyes rested on Logan again. He still hadn't taken his eyes off me. What was his problem?

I took the shot glass from Emma, maintaining eye contact with him, and threw it down my neck. As the liquid burned my throat, I fought the urge not to gag.

Madeline stood on her toes and leaned into him, whispering something in his ear while peering over at me. I swear I saw his icy blue irises turn a few shades darker at what she said before he dramatically gripped her arms and shouted, "NO!" in her face. In a ash, he was storming out of the room with Madeline in hot pursuit after him.

Everyone fell silent.

"Hmm, trouble in paradise!" Emma mumbled and took a sip of her drink.

That was weird. I wanted to know what Madeline said to him to make him react that way, but I had a strong suspicion that it might have involved me and I wanted to stay out of it!

The shot was making my head feel fuzzy and I suddenly had the urge to be alone for a moment and collect myself. I turned around and slammed straight into the auburn-haired man.

"Hey, watch it, buttercup. I don't think you should be stealing any more of my drinks if you are drunk already!" he teased with a cheeky grin.

"I am not drunk," I glared at him, "just lost my balance for a second and you so happened to be in my way. And please stop calling me buttercup!"

He laughed and held out his hand. "Alright, what should I call you then?"

"Alina," I said sternly, shaking his hand.

"Darius," he replied, turning the back of my hand up to his lips and kissing it lightly.

I couldn't help but smile back and shake my head. I'll give it to him; he was rather charming.

"Darius, would you be so kind as to point me in the direction of the bathroom, please?"

"Oh no, you're not going to throw up already, are you? The night's only just begun!"

"No, I am not. I just need a wee if you must know."

"Too much information, buttercup! It's down the corridor and the rst door on your left," he smiled smugly.

Wow, he was really annoying!

"Thank you. That wasn't so dicult now, was it?"

"Hurry back now, buttercup! I miss you already," he mocked.

I put my middle nger up at him before walking away. Somehow, I think I had just made a new friend.