

Chapter Three

Regina stirred feeling oddly stiff. Everything felt heavy and sore like she had run a marathon. Her head pounded and her mouth felt like it was full of cotton. Was this a hangover?

Memories started piecing themselves together. She remembered the audition, arriving late to help with her sister's catering job, the wine, and...

Regina bolted upright clutching the blanket to her chest. Beside her another form mumbled. Holding her breath she turned expecting the worst. It was worse than she could have ever imagined.

Beside her lay Marcus Avery, the biggest playboy in New York. Hardly a week went by that he was not on the cover of some gossip magazine with a new woman, sometimes two, on his arm. And all when he was practically engaged since birth.

Elizabeth Quenn was the daughter of a close family friend and since they were little they had been groomed with the intention that one day they would marry. It was also well-known that Elizabeth was ercely jealous and though she couldn't stop her would-be ancée from carrying on his illicit affairs she could make the lives of those women a living hell afterwards. Many young society butteries had fallen because of Elizabeth's mechanizations.

Neither Marcus nor Elizabeth showed any remorse for the lives ruined by their impossible love triangle. And now Regina was their next target.

No, no, no, no...

She was not going to be their plaything. Stumbling out of bed she reached for her clothes only to freeze as a sticky wetness coated her inner thighs. Cringing with embarrassment she grabbed her clothes and rushed to the bathroom. Quickly cleaning herself up she dressed and splashed water on her face to nd her hands trembling.

If she was discovered it would be over. Elizabeth would plaster her face in the gossip columns. Not only would her dreams be over, her family would be dragged into it. Elizabeth wouldn't be satised with only ruining her reputation. No, Regina's entire family would be targeted. They had no power or prestige to thwart Elizabeth's mechanizations. It would almost be too easy. Her sister's catering business was still establishing itself, her mother would be so embarrassed and her father...

If she was discovered.

It was still late. The household was asleep. Perhaps she hadn't used up all her luck after all.

Breathing deep Regina stepped out of the bathroom and crept back into the dark bedroom. Marcus snored loudly from the bed. Creeping toward the door she mentally calculated if she had everything. She was once again in uniform. Her keys were in her skirt pocket. Her phone was safely locked up in her car. She certainly didn't want to see another wine bottle.

Her jacket!

Regina paused, her gaze struggling to scan the dark room. Where did she leave it? Biting her lip she turned to go in search of it just as Marcus stirred. She froze as he rolled over mumbling to himself before falling back to sleep.

The room fell silent again. Breathing out slowly Regina turned back to the door. Her sister wouldn't be happy that she lost part of her uniform but replacing it was a lot cheaper than if she was found out now.

Slipping out of the room Regina paused glancing down the hallway. As she suspected it was deserted. She hesitated not sure which direction she should go before heading back to where she hoped the kitchen was. Getting turned around once and bumping into a rather confused, elderly servant she managed to reach her goal. From there she headed out the exit and across the lawn to the back of the estate where they had been told to park in the servants' parking area.

Her little turquoise Geo Metro sat undisturbed and she quickly slipped into the driver's seat nally daring to let out a relieved breath. She had made it. She was out and no one knew she had been there. As Regina slowly caught her breath and calmed her racing her heart there was a sudden tap on her window.

Jumping, she nearly screamed looking out the window to see a security ocer beside her car. Shaking she cranked down the window as he ashed a light in her face.

"Ma'am, you can't park here. This is private property."

"...Ah yes...sorry. I just...I got turned around and...I had to pull over and get my bearings...but I'm okay now," Regina hurriedly made an excuse.

He seemed dubious, studying her. With a frown he looked over her vehicle and glanced at his own before looking back at her and saying, "Well, move along."

"Yes sir. Of course. Thank you," Regina nodded jingling her keys before starting her vehicle.

Nervously she buckled her seatbelt as he walked back to his car. She checked her rearview mirrors spying another gure beside the patrol car, probably the trooper's partner watching to make certain she didn't try anything. Trying not to appear suspicious she pulled out of her parking spot and headed for the road. The patrol car followed a pace behind as she made it to the cross street. Hesitating at the stop sign she turned heading for home. Glancing out her rearview mirror she watched him turn in the opposite direction. Only then did she breathe easier but her hands continued trembling all the way home.

* * *

Reaching her parents' home she let herself in as quietly as possible. Taking off her shoes she padded her way upstairs where hers and her sister's childhood bedrooms were located. Pausing at the top of the stairs she turned to the bedroom on her right. Opening the door she peeked inside.

Savannah was sound asleep curled up in what used to be Renata's bed. Most of the room was still the same as it had been when it was her sister's, however there had been some adjustments. For starters there weren't many toys aside from model and science kits. Savannah didn't have much use for dolls and ponies but she was fascinated by growing crystals and other experiments.

Careful not to wake her Regina adjusted the toddler's blankets before retreating to her own room. This room had been the same one she had since she was a child though much of the furnishings had changed now that she was grown. Most of her childhood toys had been boxed up and donated to one place or another. She had purchased new curtains and bedspread making it more suitable for an adult.

With a sigh she collapsed on her bed. She made it. She was home and no one was the wiser. Considering how drunk Marcus had been she doubted he would even remember her, certainly not among all his other conquests and no one else had seen her.

She did leave her coat but there were no markings, nothing to connect back to Renata's catering service let alone Regina specically. If Marcus did remember anything he would probably assume she was a servant of some sort and quickly forget about her.

She was safe. Her family was safe. As long as she never spoke of this night no one would ever know.