

5: Enchanted to meet you.

“Enchanted to meet you”.

Christian Kingston.

I saw her the minute she stepped in. She radiated this aura that was impossible to draw attention to her, making heads turn and it certainly did—countless heads turned in her direction, mesmerized by this unfamiliar woman that holds influence no doubt.

It was the light whispers of people that had me turning around, wanting to see who could be reason for the hushed murmurs and the captivating aura that almost everyone present at the Ballroom had to turn their heads to get a glance at her. I honestly had no expectation when I turned around, reason being, there's not a single soul present that entices me, nor will have me moved.

Not in terms of riches, and definitely not in terms of looks when it comes to women. I've seen more than one can expect, and I wasn't swayed by any, I wasn't about to be by one.

However, I was gravely mistaken, because I was enchanted by the very first glance. I couldn't recognize her face, I'm certain I've never seen her before else I can't forget a face like that.

She exudes an elegance unrivaled in her oxblood gown, a rich hue that complements her grace that shown without much effort. It features a low neckline, allowing a subtle glance at her collarbone. It didn't expose much, rather, it bordered on the line between seducing and modest. A look that will leave one yearning for more. The fabric drapes, accentuating her silhouette with a refined and tasteful design.

Her hair, elegantly left down, forms beautiful curls that frame her face with a touch of natural allure. Each curl seemed as though it was effortlessly placed, embodying a sense of refinement and poise. A pair of stunning earrings glint subtly—diamond, pure diamond. A slender bracelet adorns her wrist, matching the earrings.

She descends the stairs elegantly, as if her steps were calculated. One step after the other, her leg exposed through the slit on the right side, giving a glimpse of the heels that marry style with comfort—designers no doubt as well. I recognize them almost instantly, having bought a similar pair for a special someone.

And her face, God she's beautiful. She didn't hold up a smile, rather, her expression was passive but she pulled it off effortlessly—the matching matte oxblood lipstick added this powerful aura to her that screamed not to be messed with. And her expressionless eyes showed she doesn't give a f**k what anyone thinks. I wonder who she is.

“Sir, your mother has left another message.” Carter, my assistant's voice came, putting an end to the small trance I found myself lost in.

I blinked, shifting my attention away from the stranger and focused it on him, my brows drawn in. “What is it this time?” When my mother leaves a message, there's a throng of things it could possibly be about. However, there's something she's been persistent on for a while that makes me certain this time around, it's about that same thing.

“The daughter of Karl and Rose has returned from her business trip to the UK, and your mother has set up a chance for you two to speak during the ball.” He turned around, his gaze falling on someone in the distance—a young lady speaking to two familiar faces, Karl Rutherford and Rose Rutherford, the hosts of the ball and two good friends of my parents.

They have quite the influence alright, easily standing as one of the top five families in America. Karl is an old businessman and his wife, Rose, was an actress. Still is, but only for the biggest of projects with the highest budgets. I grew up to my mother watching her shows and obsessing over it.

They have two children as far as I'm concerned, the eldest, Alan, is a popular musician—one of the top in the entertainment industry no doubt having followed his mother's footsteps. He's on a tour at the moment if I'm not mistaken. And the second child, the daughter, followed in her father's steps—destined for greatness in the business world, so people claimed.

Apparently, she dominates business better than most men, and if what I heard about her is right, she does. I have never met her though, nor have I bothered to know what she looks like. However, when I followed Carter's line of sight, my eyes fell on a woman I'm certain no doubt is the infamous Rutherford daughter. Zara.

She's younger than I expected, at least she looks her age—easily standing at twenty-six, she has managed to handle half her father's business, and she does it well.

“—your blind date with her is tonight.” Carter added, looking up to meet my gaze with a sheepish look.

I quirked a brow, knowing my mother set me up to this with him no doubt. No wonder he did well to convince me into coming when I had zero plans of showing up initially. “Not happening.” I dismissed with a casual wave, turning around and taking steps away in case the older couple recognize, and try to strike up a conversation with me, or ultimately trap me in this so called date with their daughter.

Carter followed after me, no doubt to try and convince me into speaking to her at the very least, but I knew better. “Sir, your mother has already informed the family that you two would meet and talk tonight. You can't leave.”

“I can, and I will.” I could spare a few minutes, speak to the lady, and pretend as if we aren't—compatible, because I know we aren't, at least, not in a relationship kind of way. For a relationship solely based on business, she's perfect. But, I have no interest for anything of such, and I doubt it's what my mother wants as well.

I knew something had to follow, because the Carter I know wouldn't keep shut just after saying that. However, when I didn't get any response from him, I found it weird so I turned around to see what could be the reason he was suddenly quiet.

He held up an apologetic look, and I didn't have to wonder further because a familiar voice came, from the device he held in his hand. “Christian Ian Kingston!” My mother's voice rang loud through the phone, a few people surrounding us had to turn around and stare.

I glared at Carter, knowing he no doubt had her on call from the beginning of our conversation. All I got was an apologetic smile in return. Taking the phone, I brought it to my ear after removing it on speaker so no one would eavesdrop any further. I can't have my mother embarrassing me in public. I'm Christian Kingston for goodness sakes.

“Mom,” I acknowledged, and from the intake breath from the other end, I knew she was preparing for a rant. “I have no interest in speaking to this lady, nor will I be.”

“Christian, do you want me to have a heart attack and die soon? Hmm?” Cue the dramatic mother act, ladies and gentlemen. “My friends, they all have grandchildren, and then there's me...my son wants me to die without seeing my grandchildren.”

“You have a grandchild.” I deadpanned, wondering when she'll stop using that to blackmail me. She has no basis for it really.

She was quiet for a few seconds, knowing I've gotten her there but she was quick to bounce back. “You're also my child and I want to see my grandchildren from you. I am tired of seeing you single, you are of the age to be married, young man!” Remind me again why she's so concerned about my marriage?

I sighed, knowing it's impossible to argue with her. We've been on this for more than a year, I'm getting tired of it really. “Mom...” I thought of the best way to finally put an end to this once and for all. “...please stop setting me on a dates.”

“I will until the day you bring home a wife!”

“I have a girlfriend.” I have no idea when that slipped out of my mouth. But, it's too late to back down. “I have a girlfriend, and I'll introduce her to you soon. I promise.” I would hire someone to pretend if it comes down to that.

It didn't reach that point though, because shortly after making that promise, a certain brunette stepped into my arms and claimed me in public. It may have been a show for her at that very moment, but what she didn't know was, I had claimed her as well.

And there's no way I'm letting her go.