

Chapter 14

~ADAM~

"I'm having a guest over tonight," I tell Ashton. He quirks a brow and takes a seat on the sofa opposite me. "Is it someone that I know? Or is she someone I can have some fun with?"

His question fuels anger deep within, and it takes all of my self-control not to snap at him.

"You are not to lay a finger on her," I warn him. "She's mine."

He holds up his hands in a defensive pose, "wow, you don't have to get all worked up. I'll try to keep my distance for your benefit."

I can't hide my annoyance with him, and instead, I pick myself off the sofa and walk towards the treasure room. We kept everything of great value to us inside of here, including the many books about the flaming whisperer.

Tonight I would be closer to confirming my suspicions about the pretty redhead. I pull one of the books out of the shelf and turn the pages until I reach the chapter I was looking for.

I slowly read through it until I reached the part about the golden candle.

"With just one look at my golden flame, the whisperer will be so enchanted by me that she will touch me: nothing

will stand in her way. When she touches me, her body will burn like it's on fire, do not doubt that it's her." I read the verse aloud.

I pull out a key from the bottom draw and walk over to the protective glass case; it's where we kept the candle safe and tucked away. I opened the case and pulled it out.

If I wanted to test her, I'd need to place the candle somewhere that she would no doubt see it.

Now I had to wait for her to come. I had faith that she would; if the pull that I felt mirrored what she felt, then she would be here tonight.

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~AMIERA~

"I know nothing about this girl," My mother says to me.

"How can I know that you'll be safe at her home?"

"Mom," I whisper. "So far, Abigail is the only friend that I have. Even though I've only recently become her friend, she's more of a friend to me than Aria ever was. This is my chance to move on from the hurt I've been feeling. You forced me to attend a party just because Aria and Bryan would be there. I went because you insisted. All I'm asking is to be able to spend one night by her home. You can drop me off and meet her and her family if that will help clear your mind."

My mother takes a moment to think about what I'm asking for before she sighs, "I guess you haven't exactly done

anything for me not to trust you right now. If it's going to help, I will let you go. But you need to be careful, and a car will be waiting for you first thing tomorrow morning."

My eyes widened in shock; I didn't think that this would work so quickly. It wasn't exactly quick; I've been begging since I got home from school, but it was still unbelievable.

I gave my mother a giant hug before rushing out the door; I needed to get out of here before she changed her mind. My parents were the type to change their minds rather quickly.

I tell the driver where to carry me, and within an hour, I'm already by Abigail's house. I wait for the driver to leave before I knock on her door. Thankfully, Abigail's parents are out of town for the night. Of course, my parents would have never agreed if they knew this. And Abigail's parents wouldn't have let me leave if they were here.

"I can't believe your parents actually let you come." She screams as she pulls me in for a tight hug. "We have to get you dressed, and then I'll drive you there."

My body is trembling; I'm not used to breaking the rules like this. Lying to my parents is one thing but lying to them and then going to a dark whisperer's home all by myself . . . I was asking for a death sentence.

"We need to get you something beautiful but also sexy." She tells me while clapping her hands with excitement.

She walks with me towards her closet and pulls out

some of the options she'd already laid out for me.

"Do you like this?" She asks as she picks up a long white dress with a slit in the middle. I take a look at it before shaking my head.

"Hmm," she says as she picks up a short red dress.

"What about this one?"

I like this one a bit more, but it seems to be just a little too short.

"I've never really seen you wear anything like this before," I tell her. "I'm surprised that you have pieces like this in your closet."

She laughs, "my mother loves fashion, and she loves giving me things to dress up in. But I always pack them away and never really wear them. They may be a little big for you, but we can fix that in time for you to leave."

"What about this?" She asks, pointing to a long-sleeve black shirt with a matching mini skirt.

My eyes are drawn to the outfit, and even though it may be sexier than the type of clothes I usually wear, I think that this is the outfit I need to meet Adam in.

It took me another hour to get dressed after Abigail insisted on putting makeup on me. She was pretty good at it; I couldn't make myself out in the mirror. Somehow she made me look beautiful.

"Adam is not going to be able to look away from you tonight" She teases me. I can't help but blush at her

tonight." She teases me. I can't help but blush at her compliment.

Would he really like what he saw? Even though I looked beautiful, I didn't think that I could ever compare to Lizzie.

Maybe tonight, I could ask him if they were back together. If he were in a relationship with her, that would mean there was no chance for anything between us.

Why was I even thinking in that direction? Even if they weren't together, there still wouldn't be a chance for us. Our worlds were too different, and our parents would never agree to our relationship.

"Are you ready?" Abigail asks me as she starts the car.

"Remember that I'll be one phone call away if you need me. Also, call me as soon as you're finished so that I can come to pick you up."

I take a deep breath, "let's go."

Along the drive, Abigail tries her best to calm my nerves by playing music and telling funny stories. For a while, the both of us just sing along to songs about heartbreak, and it's honestly more fun than I've ever had with my friends before.

"We're here." She says to me as we pull up to the red castle. It's the first time that I've ever been this close to the forbidden palace. It's much nicer than I've always thought it would be. From the stories I've heard, I expected to see bats flying all around and dead birds on the ground. It wasn't spooky at all. The color was unusual; there weren't any other

red castles around, except for other homes of dark whisperers.

"It's going to be okay," Abigail says as she holds my hands. "I'm right here if you need me. Just call."

I suddenly wish that I'd asked Adam for her to come with me as well. I was in so much shock when he asked me that I didn't even consider bringing her along.

I say goodbye and walk towards the guard booth. The guard there gives me a suspicious look; obviously, he hasn't seen me around here before, so it might be strange to him.

"I'm here to see Adam. I was invited."

My voice sounds shaky to my own ear.

"Are you sure?" The guard asks me. "I've had many young girls like you claiming to be invited to these things. Are you telling the truth?"

I let out a sigh; what did this man take me for? Why would I pretend to be invited?

"I'm sure," I mumble.

"What's your name, miss?" He asks; there is still a bit of suspicion in his eyes.

I have to wonder if Adam set this whole thing up to embarrass me. Did he not tell the guard that he would have an unusual guest coming here tonight.

"Amiera."

His eyes widen at the mention of my name.

"You should have said..."

"You should have said so earlier miss, please come this way." He tells me as he opens the gate for me.

I'm guessing that Adam did mention my name to the guard for him to react in this manner.

I follow him into the castle, and I'm in awe at how beautiful it is. I've heard stories of this kingdom, and they were all lies. Some said that there were dried-down trees all around with dead animals stuck to the walls. I didn't see anything like that. The castle was mainly made of glass; everywhere you went, there were mirrors and statues made of gold. It was a beautiful and fantastic art piece.

As I walk through the red carpets, I feel my heart begin to pound loudly against my chest. I can't believe that I'm really doing this. I'm in Adam's home, and we're about to have a movie night.

"Just have a seat in one of these chairs, and I'll inform Sir Adam of your arrival." He tells me.

I nod and watch as he walks away down the hallway.

I place my hands on my lap and clasp them together. I don't know where I'm getting the courage from, but this is one of the most dangerous things I've ever done. My parents would kill me if they ever found out what I was doing.

I just had to make sure that they never did. If somehow they learned even the tiniest bit of truth from this night, things would get terrible. They would host a family meeting with Adam's family telling them to keep his son away from

me.

I shake my head; I didn't even want to think about that.

My legs are shaking now, and I'm regretting this crazy decision of mine. Is it too late to leave now?

My thoughts scatter away when I hear footsteps. I look up just in time to see Adam strolling towards me. He looks like a dashing prince, I mean, he is a prince, but he fits the role perfectly.

He doesn't smile, and I wish that he would; just once, I want the opportunity to take a picture of him smiling and keep it with me forever.

I want to groan at my thoughts. Again, I have no words, none for my craziness. Something about him brought out the insane, reckless side of me. Was it because of his dark energy?

Stop Amiera, don't blame him for your own actions. He isn't doing anything, my feelings are entirely my own, and no one is forcing it onto me.

His eyes are staring into my own, and it doesn't stray at all. I've seen guys look at a woman's body while staring at her, but that's not the case with Adam. He doesn't look at my figure, he doesn't look at what I wear, he's looking into my eyes, and he's doing a damn good job at it because I would be falling if I wasn't already sitting on a chair.

But he could also not be staring at my body because there wasn't anything good there to see. If it were Aria or his

But he could also not be staring at my body because there wasn't anything good there to see. If it were Aria or his ex-girlfriend, I was sure that things would be different. He couldn't be immune to their beauty; I didn't know a single guy that was.

"Follow me," he says.

I quickly grab my purse and pick myself off the chair. I stand up so fast that I'm falling straight back to the ground. Adam catches me just in time so that he's now leaning over me, and my body is inches away from the floor. His eyes search my face as though he's looking for something, and I can't help but drown in them.

I want to cry when a hiccup leaves my mouth. Why is this happening to me? Why do I always hiccup when I'm around him? What the hell was wrong with me?

Chapter 15

"I-I'm sorry." I stutter when he slowly pulls me back up and puts some distance between the two of us.

"Come," he says once more, and I try my best not to fall again while keeping up with his speed.

Why was he walking so quickly? It was hard to walk in these damn heels; I shouldn't have chosen to wear them tonight.

I don't know who the friends are he's invited to this movie night, but I'm not excited to meet them. Adam's friends weren't the nicest people around; they were mean and didn't hide it from anyone.

I had to wonder if Lizzie would also be here tonight. I prayed that she wouldn't be; I don't think I'd like to be in the same room with the two of them for the second time today. One time was enough torture for me.

"We are almost there," he says.

Suddenly, he stops walking, and I bounce straight into him.

"I-I'm sorry." I apologize for the second time tonight.

He turns around slowly, and somehow I'm leaned up against the wall next with him hovering over me.

"I can hear your heartbeat from here. Are you scared of me?" He asks.

I think about his question for a few seconds. I'm not

I think about his question for a few seconds. I'm not scared of him per-se; I'm afraid of the feelings I encounter whenever I'm around him.

I slowly shake my head, and for some reason, he seems to relax a little after knowing that it wasn't him I was scared of.

Why would he think I was afraid of him? If I were afraid, I wouldn't have taken the risk to come all the way over here to meet him.

"My friends aren't exactly the friendly type." He warns me. "If you stick by my side, you'll be okay."

My heart warms for some silly reason. He wasn't trying to protect me; he was only warning me. He was a good host, that was all.

He waits for me to calm down a bit before opening the door to the right of us. The noisy room grows quiet the moment that I enter. All eyes are on me now, and everyone is definitely in shock to see that I'm the person that Adam has invited over.

Did he not tell anyone that I was going to be here tonight? Judging by their expressions, I already had my answer.

"What's 'miss I always follow the rules' doing here?" Andrea asks. I've never spoken to her before, but she was always around Adam and Ashton.

"Is this some joke?" Ashton asks. "What's she doing here?"

Jarod looks at me from head to toe while chewing on a piece of gum. "Am I the only one that's happy to see her? For once, we might have some extra fun and excitement here."

"I was expecting to see Lizzie tonight," Brenda mumbles as she rolls her eyes. "I was not expecting the girl that can't create fire."

This is precisely the kind of reaction that I was expecting from his friends. In fact, this was nice compared to what I was used to from bullies at school.

"She's my guest." Adam snaps. "I don't want to hear another comment from anyone of you. Let's just watch the movie. If you have a problem with her, you are welcome to leave."

Again, my heart does this weird tingly thing, and it was only because of him. Why is he acting so nice to me all of a sudden? I don't want him to be this nice; I don't need his protection. I'm used to people talking bad about me to my face by now.

He turns the projector on, and the movie begins to play.

I jump a little when I feel him right behind me, he leans closer to me, and I gasp when his hand gently grips my waist. I'm about to ask him what he's doing when he guides me to a chair. It was only then that I realized I was still standing while everyone else was already seated and paying attention

to whatever movie Adam had just put on.

I hoped that this wouldn't be a horror. I was not too fond of movies that had me jumping in my seat and scared for my life. Just from the beginning alone, I can tell that my nightmare is confirmed. This is a damn horror movie.

I can hear Adam's breathing next to me; he's so close that his scent is taking over the smell of everything else around me, even the high aroma of the perfume Abigail gave to me.

My heart is still beating from being in his arms earlier, even though it was just because of my carelessness. I'm tempted to trip once more just to end up in his arms again.

I felt warm and safe there; I can't remember ever feeling like that in Bryan's arms. It's crazy that just one touch from him makes my heart flutter like this; even now, when it's all over, and I'm seated in a room filled with a bunch of his friends, my heart is still pounding like I just ran a marathon.

A woman's scream rudely distracts me from my thoughts. I realize then that it's just from the movie.

"You don't like it?" Adam whispers, I shiver when he leans in closer, and his hand accidentally touches mine.

I swallow when he doesn't bother to move it and instead keeps it right there.

"Don't like what?" I ask. I'm too lost in the rush of feelings to understand his question. He must think that I'm dumb.

"The movie." He answers. "I can tell that you don't. Are you even paying attention to it?"

"I—,"

"Are you two going to continue to talk throughout the entire movie?" Brenda demands. "It's annoying."

Adam picks himself up and offers his hands to me. I look at his extended hand and gently place my own in it. My heart skips a beat when his hand closes over mine as he guides me out of the room.

"We don't have to be in there if you don't enjoy the movie." He explains. "Just so I know for the next time, what kind of movies do you enjoy?"

Was there going to be a next time?

I blush, "romance."

He gives me a questionable look but does not comment on my response.

"Where are we going?" I ask him. I don't trust myself when I'm with him all alone. When we were alone the last time, I embarrassed myself by kissing him on his chest when he didn't even want me to.

I wouldn't mind doing that again, however.

I groan; here goes my dirty mind.

Adam glances at me, and I wonder if he somehow knows what I was thinking. "Since you like romance, I'm taking you to our library. You can find books there that may

interest you."

I was surprised by his response; he made it look like he cared about what I wanted to do.

As far as I knew, he wasn't this type of person at all. Adam Ashford was not a caring person; I always thought of him this way.

"Are you just planning on watching me while I read?" I find myself asking him the moment we enter the library.

He stops walking and turns around to look at me, and I mean, really look at me. He takes his lazy time dragging his eyes up to my entire body, from head to toe. My feet are frozen on the ground; I can't think clearly when he's looking at me like that. It's the first time tonight that he's paid attention to my outfit and the way it sits on my body. He even takes in my makeup. Would he know that I dressed up today just for him? Would that please him at all?

"Watching you doesn't sound like a bad idea." He finally says.

I can't hide the instant blush on my face even if I wanted to.

I'm about to respond when something catches my attention. It's gold and shining very brightly.

"Is that a gold candle?" I ask him.

His head instantly snaps up the moment that I mention the candle.

I walk with him towards it, and he removes the glass

the candle.

I walk with him towards it, and he removes the glass casing around it, "it is; it's been passed down for generations."

I don't know why but I can't seem to look away from it. "It's beautiful."

For some reason, it seems to shine more after I've complemented it. Its beauty so enchants me that I reach forward and touch it. The moment that I do, however, I'm not prepared for the rush of emotions that trap my body within its grasp.

"What's wrong?" Adam demands after noticing that I'm in discomfort.

My eyes widen, and before I know it, I begin to scream. "It's burning!"