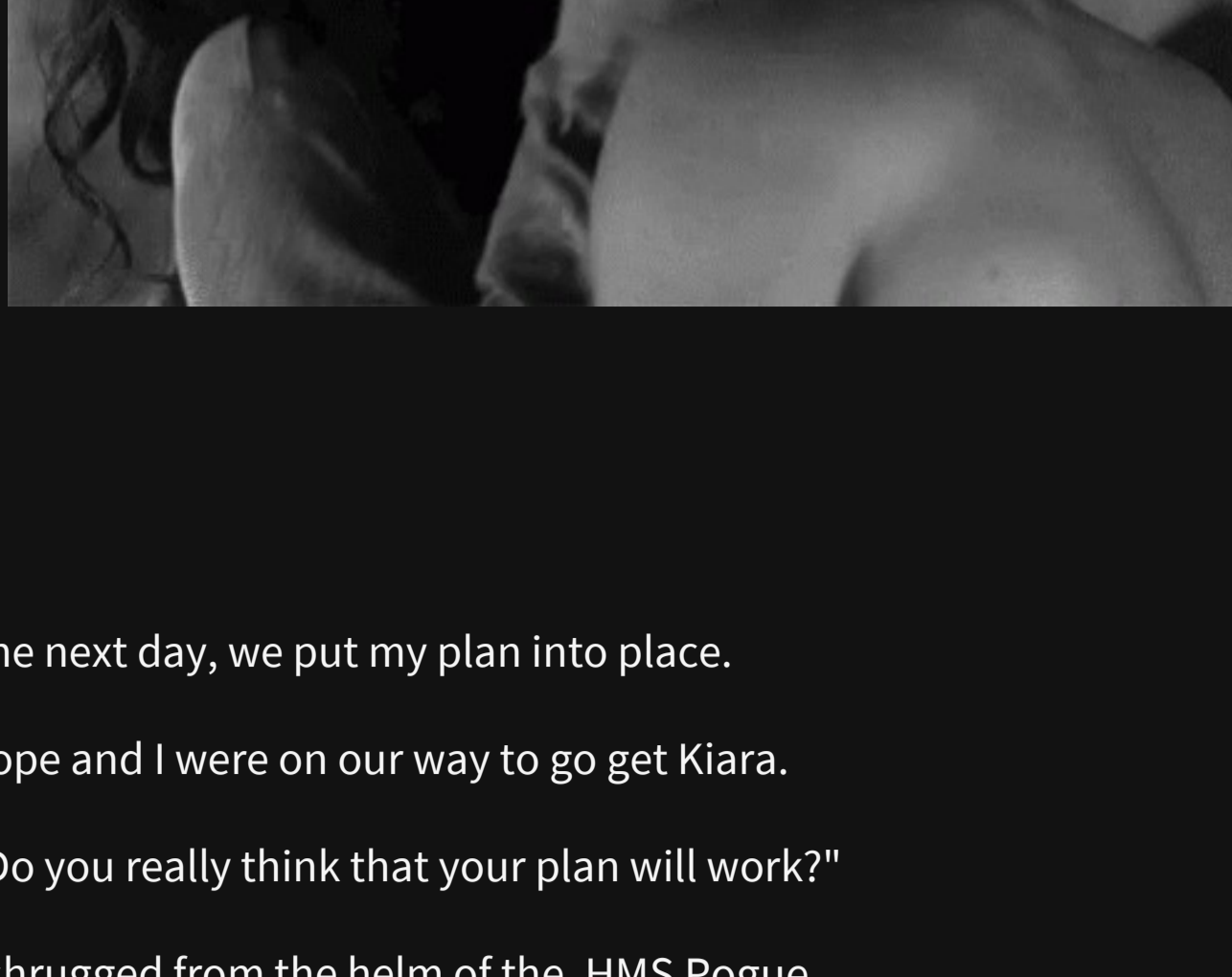


## Chapter Thirty-Four



The next day, we put my plan into place.

Pope and I were on our way to go get Kiara.

"Do you really think that your plan will work?"

I shrugged from the helm of the HMS Pogue

"I have a strong inkling."

"How strong?"

"Like the smell of JJ's cousin's cripple strong."

Pope laughed from next to me, throwing an arm over my shoulder as I steered us up to the dock.

"You better get her to come or the rest of my plan won't work!" I yelled at her Pope as he jogged away.

I didn't have to wait long before Pope returned with an annoyed Kiara.

"What the hell is going on?"

I smiled as my friend climbed on the boat.

"It's a code red, dude. JJ and John B conked out in the marsh. They need a tow."

"Uh, okay. Well, what does that have to do with me?"

I gave her a pointed look.

"We need you for mechanical."

She rolled her eyes as I pulled away from the dock.

"John B and JJ are up in the Alp," Pope said as I navigated through the marsh.

"Can't you guys do anything without me?" Kiara asked as we pulled up next to Heyward's boat we were borrowing.

I told Pope to take over, and Kiara and I jumped onto the second boat.

I led the way into the cabin, faking a look of concern as I squatted down next to JJ.

"What happened?"

JJ and John B both look up at Kiara as she stepped in behind me.

"Uh, the alternator's, uh, not alternating anymore," JJ quickly lied.

"It's not charged," John B added.

"Did you check the plugs?"

I stood up, and the boys followed.

"No, you should check 'em," JJ said, all but pushing me out of the way.

"You guys are useless."

JJ grabbed my hand, said a half-assed apology, and pulled me into a run out of the cabin.

"Uh, is this a joke? There are no plugs, like, at all!"

I threw my shirt over and jumped over the bow of the boat, hearing John B call out a 'Sayonara' before going under water.

I swam behind JJ towards where Pope moved the Pogueto, laughing as I heard Kiara yelling at us. I grabbed JJ's outstretched hand, waving at Sarah who was suddenly screaming next to Kiara.

"Get your asses back here!"

"We can't!" John B yelled back as JJ pulled me into the boat.

"Not until you two deal with your shit!" I shouted, waving as Pope slowly started to pull away.

"I will kill every single one of you!"

"You can't just leave!"

"There's food in the cabin, and JJ rolled a blunt!"

JJ and I gave a thumbs up as he called out.

"Hydroponic!"

John B sat at the helm and started moving us away.

"Godspeed!" Pope yelled as we pulled away, unable to hear Kiara's curses as the wind whipped in our faces.

JJ and I sat on the bow the whole ride back to the Chateau. He threw his arm over my shoulder and spoke into my ear.

"Do you think your plan will work?"

"Well, they're either gonna talk out their differences or kill each other."

JJ laughed and kept his arm around me until back at the house.

The four of us went inside made a quick dinner of frozen pizza before splitting up to do our own things. Pope ended up on the dock to fish, John B went to take a shower, JJ disappeared into my room and said something about changing, and I grabbed a book and went out to relax in the hammock.

I was part way through the current chapter when a voice startled me.

"Can I join you?"

I looked over the top of my book to see JJ standing there in a pair of grey sweatpants and cut off shirt and holding a sweatshirt in his hand.

"That depends."

"On what?"

"If that is for me," I laughed, pointing a finger at the sweatshirt.

I watched as he grinned and held out the sweatshirt. I returned his grin, setting my book down long enough to pull the sweatshirt over my head before picking it back up.

"You can join me now."

He laughed, climbing in on the opposite end of the hammock. I continued reading.

I finished the rest of the chapter when JJ suddenly started moved, causing the hammock to sway back and forth.

"Dude, what are you doing?" I laughed, dropping my book away from my face to watch JJ getting out of the hammock.

He walked up to my end, a smirk plastered on his face. He reached out, picking me up from under my knees and back, and I yelled out in protest.

"JJ!"

I clung to around his neck, my open book resting on his shoulder, and glared as he smirked down at me. He got back into the hammock, situating the both of us so his legs were going long ways in the hammock and mine were hanging slightly over the side with one of his arms resting behind my neck and the other across my lap.

JJ pulled my body against his chest, resting his cheek on the top of my head.

"You can keep reading now."

"What the hell?" I laughed, removing my arms from his neck and holding the book up to read.

"You were too far away."

I smiled, shaking my head at his antics and snuggled into his chest, leaning my head on his shoulder. I resumed my reading, and JJ began skimming his fingers up and down the bare skin on the side of my leg.

I soon found it hard to focus on the words instead of on the blond drawing random shapes into my thigh. His other hand was digging under the sweatshirt as he began tapping a random beat against my hip bone. I could feel his eyes boring into my face.

"I can feel you staring at me."

I looked away from the pages and up to JJ, seeing a so smile resting on his lips.

"You make funny faces when you read."

"Excuse me?"

"Well, you bite at the inside of your cheek, causing your face to do this."

He moved his jaw from side to side and winked his nose a couple of times causing me to pout.

"I'll remember that before I read in public again, thanks."

"It's cute."

I pursed my lips as I looked back to my book, trying to ignore him and finish another chapter.

We sat in silence for a while after that, only breaking our comfortable silence saying hi to Pope as he walked into the Chateau from the docks.

As the sun started to set, it began to get harder and harder to read. Soon, I was squinting to try and see the words in the dim light. I gasped at the book was suddenly ripped from my hands.

"JJ!"

I glared at him as he saved the page I was on and sat the book down on the ground.

"Oh, please. You could barely see the words anymore."

I crossed my arms over my chest and pouted in protest. JJ's face appeared inches away from mine, so close that I could feel his breath fan over my face.

"Are you jealous that the book has had my attention?" I asked, feeling a sudden rush of confidence as I smirked at him.

JJ's face twisted into a pout.

"No."

My eyes widened and my mouth dropped into a wide smile.

"You totally are!"

"Shut up."

"It's cute."

He sent me a playful glare before darting his eyes towards the Chateau. His arms tightened around me once again and brought me closer to him. His lips brushed over mine, and one of my arms wrapped around his neck and the other rested on his cheek.

JJ's lips pressed against mine, taking them in a passionate kiss. I returned it with just as much fever. With my neck starting to tense up but not wanting to break the kiss, I tried to move to get more comfortable and somehow ended up straddling JJ's lap.

I gasped, pulling away to balance myself before I fell out of the hammock, and JJ laughed, grabbing my hips to help steady me. He sat up, trailing his hands under the sweatshirt and up my back, before reconnecting our lips.

A shiver ran up my spine, following the trail of JJ's hands as his tongue slipped into my mouth. His lips fell from mine, placing small kisses from to chin and across my jaw before leaving open-mouthed kisses down my neck.

His hands gripped the hem of the sweatshirt, and I led my arms over my head as he tugged it off, throwing it to the ground next to my book.

While JJ has seen me in this swimsuit thousands of times, I've never been straddling his lap, and he's never looked at me the way he was in that moment. I felt my whole body heat up as JJ dragged his eyes slowly up and down my form before returning to my eyes.

"You're so beautiful."

I blushed and wrapped my arms around his neck.

"Shut up."

It was my turn to restart the kissing, and I could feel JJ smirk against my lips.

His hands began rising back up from my waist and up my spine. His fingers found the clasp of my swimsuit top, and before he could undo it, I quickly pulled away, closing my eyes and reaching behind me with one hand to stop his.

"Wait."

"Did I do something wrong?"

I shook my head, keeping my eyes closed.

"I'm just, I'm not-"

"Josephine."

I opened my eyes, meeting his intense gaze with a shy one.

"It's okay."

The blond's hands fell away from my swimsuit, and one landed on my waist while the other brushed a piece of hair away from my face.

"I'm sorry."

He gripped my chin and forced me to look him right in the eye.

"You don't need apologize."

"You're not mad?"

His face scrunched in confusion.

"Why would I be mad?"

I began to fiddle with my fingers.

"This is normally the part where the guy calls me a tease and then storms off in a huff."

"Well, those guys are stupid and pigs."

I couldn't keep the laugh in, and his hand slid from my chin to my cheek.

"I can wait."

I smiled and pressed a kiss against his lips.

"Thank you."

He reached down and picked up his sweatshirt, causing us both to burst into laughter as he nearly tipped us out of the hammock. He slipped it on over my head before wrapping his arms around my waist and leaned back, causing me to lay down on top of him.

I rested my head on his shoulder and pressed a kiss into his jaw. His arms tightened around me as the sun finally disappeared, surrounding us in complete darkness.

"Goodnight, sweetheart."

I buried my face into the crook of his neck.

"Goodnight, J."