

Getting Ready

"Hey Emry, do you have everything you need for your costume?" Elle asked, placing her bags on my bed.

"I have most of it. The only problem is the blonde wig. It's so itchy, I don't think I can wear it. But I'm worried that without it, no one would recognize who I am," I replied.

"I agree, don't wear it if it's uncomfortable. Besides, you're going as Harley Quinn, and that's enough," Elle reassured me.

"You're right. No wig it is," I said, tossing the wig across the room.

Suddenly, a knock at the door was followed by the exclamation, "The party starter is here!" Elle and I burst out laughing, knowing it must be Malia, always the jester of the group. Since discovering that she and Randon were mates, Malia has mellowed out a bit, and I must admit, I do miss her sassy ass at times. "We're in the kitchen!" I holler, and Malia responds urgently, "We need to go now! We're running out of time to nish our costumes."

Heading to Malia's SUV ,Elle and I quickly gathered our belongings and rushed over to Malia's at grey Honda CR-V. Although I also have a motorcycle – a Kawasaki Ninja H2R to be exact – it's simply too small to accommodate all three of us. That's why we're opting for Malia's SUV instead. Although Elle can drive, she chooses not to, and we tease her about it, but we don't push her to explain why driving makes her nervous. We let her know many times that we're always here for her when she's ready to talk about it.

As we all piled into the car, I took the passenger seat while Elle sat in the middle of the back seat. Without delay, I started surng the radio channels, searching for some great tunes to play. After some searching, we nally found our favorite song and began singing along together. As Malia turned up the volume, our singing grew louder. "Sometimes all I think about is you! Late night in the middle of June! HEAT WAVES BEEN FAKING ME OUT! CAN'T MAKE YOU HAPPIER NOW!" Upon arriving at the store, I asked my friends, "What else do you guys need for tonight?"

"I could use some more makeup," Malia replied.

"I'm still on the lookout for a small basket to complete my costume," Elle chimed in.

"Well, I don't need anything, so I'll just browse and window-shop. How about we regroup here in an hour or so?" I suggested.

"Sounds like a plan!" Ellie agreed.

As they walked away, Malia shouted "Ciao!" while pulling Elle along with her. I'm truly grateful for these girls, who are more than just my best friends but my soul sisters.

I know where I'm headed, but my friends don't. It's my little secret; I'm passionate about working on cars. There's something exhilarating about getting dirty and starting up an engine that I've put together or xed. Unfortunately, I haven't been able to nd a place to put my skills to use. Perhaps it's because of my gender, or maybe because I don't own a car. Either way, it's been a challenge.

Last summer, I was riding my bike and not paying attention, causing me to slip and slide down the road. I ended up taking it to a nearby shop called WW Motors, which is short for Werewolf, and met a wonderful mechanic named Chris Holmes. He worked his magic and repaired my bike in less than a day, making it run as if it were new. Chris is a 22-year-old, 6'5" tall, 195-pound man with a charming personality and outstanding mechanical skills. Although I was attracted to him, I turned down his advances because I was committed to my mate, wherever he may be. Nonetheless, Chris remained a tempting prospect as time went on.

As I turned the corner, I noticed that the garage door was open. When I walked in, I saw Chris leaning over a Ford Model T. I playfully grabbed a rag off the tool box beside him and lightly hit him on the butt. He jumped up so quickly that he hit his head. Giggling and rubbing his head, he said "Emry, you've done that to me twice this week. Just so you know, payback is coming." "Well, you should be more aware of your surroundings", I replied. "Anyway, I don't need anything from you. My friends are doing some last-minute shopping, so I thought I would come to visit." I walked over to the open toolbox, grabbed a wrench, and started tightening the bolts on the engine of the Ford. "You amaze me, Emry. It's astonishing how you know which tool to grab without asking," Chris exclaimed. "Thank you", I responded. "Hey, are you ready for the party tonight?" Chris asked. "I guess, but I really don't like getting all dressed up," I replied. "Then don't go! Stay here and hang out with me. We'll work on the cars and have a good time," Chris suggested. "As tempting as that sounds, I promised my best friends that I would go. I never break my promises." "That's one of the things I love about you," Chris said with a smile.

After conversing with Chris for a while, I considered inviting him to join us, but ultimately decided against it due to the possibility of an awkward encounter with my potential mate. As I made my way back to the SUV, I noticed that Malia and Elle were also returning. When asked if I found anything, I joked that I was just window shopping. Malia pointed out how dirty my hands were, likely from touching something oily. I laughed and cleaned my hands with a napkin from the center console without giving away where I had just been.

Malia taunted me, "You didn't buy anything, did you? Boo-hoo."

I replied, "I'm sure you went on a shopping spree and cleared out every store."

She smirked, "Perhaps, but I can't wait for you to see the colors I got. You're going to love them."

When we arrived at my place, I opened the door and led the way. Malia followed with her hands full of shopping bags.

Asking about her recent purchase, I inquired, "What the hell did you buy?"

"Well, if you must know," she began, before being interrupted by my surprise attack. I turned around, grabbing a pink powder popper, and chased after her as she ran and screamed through the house. Malia protested, "No Emry! You'll turn me pink!" as I continued my pursuit. Eventually, I managed to corner her and let out a loud "POP!" The pink powder covered her entire body, leaving an outline on the wall. Elle and I couldn't contain our laughter, falling to the oor in ts of giggles. Malia retaliated by jumping on us, covering us in pink powder as well.

"Now we all have to shower!" Elle whined, still chuckling.

Malia jumped up and said "I call rst dibs in the shower!" as she took off running up stairs. Leaving pink powder every step of the way. Elle and I stayed down stairs to clean up the mess. Thank goddess my parents were out or I would be in so much trouble. My mother hates powder poppers. By the time Elle and I reached my room, Malia was out of the shower and Elle got in next.

"I can't believe you and Randon nally agreed on a couple's costume," I said to Malia.

"To be honest, I picked it out and didn't give him a choice," she replied.

"That sounds like you," I teased.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Malia, slightly offended.

"Nothing, Malia, you know I adore you. You just have a way of persuading others when you want things to go your way."

"Well, I didn't want to look ridiculous being the Little Mermaid while he dressed up as something entirely different. That's why he had to be Prince Eric," explained Malia.

"Whatever you say, girl," I shrugged. As soon as Elle nished her shower, I hopped in to scrub off the pink dye.

After showering, I emerged to begin getting ready with my friends for the upcoming event. Malia was in charge of makeup, while I took on the responsibility of doing hair. Elle conrmed that all of our costumes were ironed and hung up neatly. Malia's outt was comprised of a long red wig, a purple seashell bra, a long green pencil skirt, and green glittery high heels. On the other hand, Elle's costume was a black and red mini skirt, a black halter top, a red cape with a hood, and red stilettos. As for me, I wasn't too thrilled about my outt, feeling a bit exposed and uneasy.

Embracing the Harley Quinn character, I put on my daddy's little monster t-shirt, ripped jean shorts, shnet stockings, and combat boots. Malia went rst with her wig, which I helped style to make her look like the Little Mermaid. Then, I did loose curls on Elle's long hair to transform her into Red Riding Hood. Then Malia did my makeup while Elle styled my hair in pigtails, which is the part that I usually dread. Finally, we were ready and headed back downstairs to meet my parents who were just getting in.

"My goddess, you girls look amazing!" my mother exclaimed as she saw us.

"Thanks, Mom," I replied.

Concerned about our attire, my father suggested, "Aren't you two going to be cold? You should put on more clothes."

"No, sir, I think we will be just ne," Malia responded.

My mother then suggested we take a picture, and we never turned down a photo opportunity. The three of us took two great pictures, and the rest of the time we goofed around, picking each other up and having a blast. Suddenly, I checked the cable box and realized, "Girls, we have to go now or we are going to be so late."

As I ushered the girls out the door, I turned to bid my parents farewell. Once outside, we quickly made our way to Malia's SUV. Elle hopped into the back while I took the front seat, ready to head to our destination. I asked Malia if Randon was already at The Liquid Meadow, to which she conrmed that he and his friends had arrived about an hour earlier, as he needed to welcome the guests. Elle chimed in, saying that it's always good to show up fashionably late.