

Chapter Four

Harrison's POV

I don't know how I ended up playing messenger boy for my father, but somehow, I find myself standing outside of domestic arrivals with a sign that laughingly says 'Mrs Cadell.'

Three minutes they've been married, but the old man is acting like they've been together forever and she's just coming back from a holiday.

Why the woman can't get a cab back to the house is beyond me, I have a damn job to do, I don't have time to pander to some gold digging stranger that my father has suddenly decided to shack up with. I don't know if the old man is having some sort of midlife crisis or something, but if he is, I wish he could have just bought a ridiculous sports car like other men searching for their lost youth, rather than marry someone he hardly knows. I glance down at my watch for the fifth time, the light landed nearly an hour ago according to the arrivals boards, where the hell is this woman? How long does it take to get your ass through arrivals? Especially when your new husband is footing the bill to haul all your worldly possessions across the country so all you should have is a goddamn carry on. Supposedly there is also a daughter attached to the money grabbing harlot who has her talons in my father. Yeah, thanks dad for that bombshell on top of your marriage, just what I need, a screaming kid running around the house when I'm still trying to deal with PTSD.

I admit I kind of zoned out after we were dragged back to the house and informed that our new stepmom and her young daughter would be arriving in Maine in three days' time. That was enough information for me to know that my life was about to be trashed and there was f*ck all I could do about it. I only zoned back in when Dad announced that I'd be picking them up, the look he gave me told me that I was expected to follow orders and be damn polite about it.

So here I am, the dutiful son, standing at the end of a roped-off walkway, holding a stupid sign, waiting for what I assume will be a platinum blonde thirty-something with a, whoops, the condom broke, annoying kid that she got from one of her previous wealthy boyfriends.

The glass doors whooshed open again and a thin brunette walked out pulling a case with some damn Disney character on it, her other hand grasped around the hand of a little girl who looked about six and was screaming blue murder. It was hard to make out what the child was saying, but it sounded something like she was demanding Mr Monkey.

'Daddy will get you a new one, now come on, he's waiting for us' the woman snaps at the child in annoyance, tugging her along as she marches toward me.

I straighten up, sure that I've finally got my cargo, sneering slightly at the woman's use of Daddy, like my father is just going to step into the role that her sperm donor left.

I'm surprised when the woman doesn't even glance my way, dragging her daughter past me and toward the exit as the girl continues to scream.

I'm considering following when the door opens again, my gaze straying back to the exit where a conservatively dressed woman in her forties walks out, pulling a black suitcase with wheels on. Two steps behind her is a tall blonde girl in her late teens, the most obnoxiously coloured pink suitcase clasped in her hand.

I literally forget how to breathe, my mouth drying as I take in the young girl, slightly worried at the extreme reaction my body has to a complete stranger.

The woman's gaze sweeps the line of waiting drivers as she walks past before her eyes land on me and light up.

I stare speechlessly, a sense of panic gripping me as she hurries up to me, the teenager following along reluctantly, coming to a halt behind the woman as she stops in front of me, smiling widely and introduces herself. 'Hi, I'm Lorraine McIntosh, well Lorraine Cadell now I suppose' she laughs nervously, waving at my sign.

I give her a curt nod, trying to get my head back on straight, and reach out to take her bag from her hand, lifting it easily. I then reach out toward the young girl behind her, realising that she's slightly older than I first thought. I originally thought she was last year of high school, but closer up I feel that she's most likely college age. Older, but still too young for a guy like me, even if she wasn't my new sister.

The teenager pulls the suitcase away from me instinctively, her body going tight as she eyes me warily.

'No, it's OK, I can wheel it' she says stubbornly, placing it to her side the furthest away from me.

'This is my daughter, Eden' Lorraine adds, waving to the young girl who is biting her lip nervously but has her back ramrod straight like she's trying to put out this persona of being in control.

I stare at her through my sunglasses, studying her face, my gaze raking over her heart shaped face, her nose covered with a smattering of freckles that no doubt become more pronounced when she's out in the sun of her Miami town. I try not to notice how her blonde hair falls down past her shoulder blades, making it the perfect length to wrap around my stomach, or that her blue eyes are like the ocean, pulling me in.

Her pouty lips are pressed in a line as her blue eyes seem to dare me to try and take it from her.

I clench my hands tightly around the sign I'm still holding, bending the edges, before abruptly turning around and striding toward the terminal exit. I don't know what it is about that girl, but she makes me feel weird and I don't like it.

Once outside, I pop the trunk, picking up the mother's case and placing it in the back before turning to find the daughter struggling next to me, trying to lift her case herself. I wait impatiently for a few minutes before, with a growl of frustration, reach out and snatch the handle from her hand. Girl needs to stop being so damn stubborn and let me help, we'd be on the road already if she'd just swallow her damn pride.

As my fingers curl around the handle of the case, the edge of my pinky grazes hers and a jolt of electricity flows up my arm making me still. I peek over at the teenager trying to see if she felt it too. The small gasp and slight step back tells me that she felt it too.

I feel her eyes moving toward me, so feeling slightly off kilter, I quickly throw the case in the boot and slam it shut, moving toward the driver's seat without looking back. I need to put some space between me and the blonde girl, get myself back under control.

I hear the door open behind me, the two women climbing in, but I keep my face forward, staring out the window as they get comfortable and secure their seatbelts.

As the door shuts on the passenger side, I hear the girl's voice again, the sound soft and sweet, washing over me. It takes a moment for her words to register, but when they do, it's like a gut punch.

'Most drivers open the door for their passengers' I hear her mutter under her breath.

Driver? I'm not a f*cking driver! I'm a damn security specialist who is playing lackey just because my father asked me too.

I lift my gaze to the mirror, staring intently at the teenager, her head raising slightly until she's looking back at me, a slight shudder running through her as she holds my gaze even though I'm wearing sunglasses. I don't think she meant for me to hear her, but the fact she's staring me down instead of averting her gaze, owning her words, makes the lower part of my body twitch involuntarily.

Ripping my gaze from hers, I put the key in the ignition, start the SUV, and check my mirrors before I pull out into the line of traffic that is crawling along beside us looking for a space to pull into.

Inching down the road, I reach the exit, winding down my window to tap my card to pay the toll, waiting for the barrier to lift before driving through the space and out onto the busy Maine roads heading back to my father's house.

In the back, Lorraine is pointing out scenery as we pass, excitedly telling her daughter all about the different sights there are in Maine, sights that I barely acknowledge anymore. It's weird to listen to someone who is so excited about things that are not even a blip on my radar.

'Oh! Lorraine suddenly gasps, and I flick my gaze up to the mirror for a second to see her grab Eden's hands with her own. 'I almost forgot, Henry has arranged for you to start school next week! Won't that be exciting?'

Eden's eyes widen a fraction before she forces a smile, 'yeah' she agrees, 'that sounds great.'

Lorraine nods, 'I know you worry about falling behind so we thought you'd like to just get straight in there. You know, the sooner you get into your new college, the sooner you can make some new friends, maybe even find yourself a boyfriend?' the woman teases.

My hands tighten around the steering wheel, my teeth grinding together as I'm hit with a weird stab of irrational anger.

'Yeah' I hear Eden agree lightly, 'you never know mum, some friends would be nice.'

I note she sidesteps the boyfriend comment and my shoulders relax slightly before I shake my head slightly. What the f*ck do I care if she gets a boyfriend, she's only here because my dad decided to put a damn ring on it.