

Chapter 5

My next class included Ethan, Kat, and Jessie. It was a love-hate situation. Sitting next to Kat kept Ethan from tormenting me, but Jessie and her friends constantly threw insults my way. For someone who acted invincible, her words hurt a lot.

I had been dreading gym class all day. We were split between volleyball and basketball for the next month or so. Sports were always challenging for me, and as funny as it sounds, the ball always seemed attracted to my face. I chose volleyball since Ethan and Kieran weren't in that group, but to my dismay, Jessie was.

My options weren't great: basketball with the intrusive twins or volleyball with mean comments from Jessie. I'd choose mean comments any day. While the medium-sized gym shirt fit me comfortably, they only had a size small in the shorts. Though I was naturally slim, my hips flared out along with a full bottom, making the shorts ride up my thighs. They looked like they were going to tear at any moment, though the weird mesh material gym shorts were made from was typically strong.

I somehow managed to survive fifteen minutes of dodging the volleyball when something had to happen. Jessie served the ball, and someone on the other team hit it back. The ball was heading straight for my face, and I braced myself for impact. Instead of getting hit, I was abruptly knocked to the ground. My head bounced against the linoleum floor with a sickening crack. A dazed whimper escaped my lips as my teeth clicked together.

"Sh*t, Sophia. You okay?" Lilian's familiar voice spoke from above me. She offered her hand, and I gratefully took it as she pulled me to my feet. The world wobbled a little, and I knew I'd have a killer headache tomorrow, but I'd survive.

"What the hell happened?" I groaned, feeling the side of my head for any traces of blood. I turned to Lilian's gaze and saw the smug eyes of Jessie, snickering with another girl. She gave me a taunting wave when she caught me looking.

"Jessy happened," I gritted my teeth, answering my own question. I noticed the rest of the class had stopped playing basketball to gawk at what had just happened. My eyes scanned the other kids until they landed on Ethan and Kieran. My heart nearly dropped at their sweaty physiques and tousled hair. What made my blood run cold were the murderous glares they were throwing in my direction.

"Lilian, take Sophia to the nurse," the gym teacher snapped. "Everyone else, get back to playing!" A couple of whistle blows later, it was as if nothing had happened. Lilian walked me to the nurse's office, where we both sat waiting.

"I'll be back in a jiffy, honey. Some poor kid threw up in science class," the nurse shuddered and zipped from the room.

"At least you're not the only one having a bad day?" Lilian giggled.

"Fair point," I chuckled dryly, my head beginning to throb. "At least everyone saw her knock me to the ground."

"It's not like anything will happen to her," Lilian grimaced.

"Why not? Everyone saw her knock me down. Since when is that okay?"

"Since she's Jessie, favorite toy to Kieran," Lilian laughed humorlessly.

I shook my head. "What the hell is up with these people? How can they not get in trouble?"

"Their parents basically own the town," Lilian shrugged. "No one wants to get on their bad side, especially the twins."

"That needs to change," I muttered. "You don't have to sit here with me, you know."

"Any excuse to miss gym is fine with me," Lilian chuckled. "How's your head feeling?"

"Like I need a new one," I said, hoping the nurse would give me some Advil.

"Oh, that reminds me. There's a party this Saturday, and I want you to come with me. I'll invite Kat too after school," Lilian grinned.

"How did that remind you of a party?" I shook my head.

"No clue, but are you interested?"

Lilian was one of those girls who fit into every social group. A lot of her friends were athletic, but she tended to fit in everywhere.

"I suppose," I shrugged. I only worked from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so I had time to shower and get dressed.

"Great! Wear a dress or something. I've got these heels I've been dying to wear."

"I don't have any dresses, and I'd rather be comfortable," I shrugged. I wasn't planning on drinking or smoking; I was simply going for a friend. The last thing I wanted was to stand out.

"Wait, will the twins be there?" I scowled. I definitely wouldn't show up if they were going.

"They never come to our parties," Lilian scoffed. "They must think theirs are better or something. Who even throws parties out in the middle of the woods? Weirdos."

"That is weird and slightly murder-ish," I agreed.

Lilian had to return to class when the nurse brought a green-looking kid into the room. After looking me over and giving me some Advil, she told me I could head home.

"No thanks," I shook my head. "A friend drives me home, and I really don't feel like walking."

"I can always call your mom," the plump nurse offered with a soft smile.

"No, no. Not necessary. She's working and won't be happy if she gets a call."

"Well, alright dear. Just take it easy and drink lots of water. Wouldn't hurt you to see a doctor," the nurse advised.

"Yup, sure. I'll have a doctor check me out," I lied. There wasn't a chance I'd be going to a doctor anytime soon. I had no idea where the closest doctor was, and I was fairly sure I didn't have any insurance.

I left the nurse's office before she could say anything else and headed to my locker. I sat in the hallway for another half hour before finding the motivation to pull myself from the floor. Going home early wasn't an option. Darren would likely be home, and he'd go straight to Lauren if he saw me.

The bell signaling the end of class rang as I stood from the floor. I moved slowly, flinging my locker open and stuffing my books into my ratty backpack. Once the second bell sounded, kids began flooding from class.

The familiar yet intoxicating scent of cologne and male sweat filled my nose. I resisted the urge to sigh and slammed my locker shut.

"Looks like the little doll is having a bad day," Ethan smirked, his dark eyes flickering to his brother and back to my face. Ethan stood on one side of me, much too close. Kieran stood on the other, his dark eyes looking down at my head.

"How's your head, sweetheart?" Kieran's voice was rough, but the corners of his lips turned down. Their mind games made my head throb all over again. One minute they insulted me, the next Ethan wouldn't keep his hands off me. Then they'd hurl death glares my way, only to care about my head later.

Before I could say anything, Kieran gripped my chin, turning his face to his. His touch sent a strange shiver down my spine, and I shuddered as Ethan's breath hit my ear. Kieran's other hand was surprisingly gentle, confusing me further. He reached out and touched the spot I had slammed into the gym floor. A hiss of pain left my lips under his touch, and I cringed away, pressing closer to Ethan.

"Poor little doll is hurt," Ethan murmured in my ear. "You know what that means, Kieran."

"We'll make you feel better, sweetheart," Kieran's voice was a rough murmur as his fingers held my chin tightly.

My heart hammered in my chest, and the urge to run was ever-present. I was at war with myself. Part of me wanted to run, while another part basked in their gentle touch and the attention they were giving me.

A yelp of surprise left my lips as Ethan's hands grasped my waist. His fingers teased the end of my shirt, grazing the soft skin beneath it.

"S-Stop," I muttered, pushing his hands away. He swatted my hands aside effortlessly as Kieran tilted my head.

"Shh," Kieran's minty breath wafted across my face enticingly. Kieran tilted my head to the side, and I jumped as a pair of soft lips collided with my neck.

"What are you doing?" I yelped as his lips moved down my neck. It felt good, an understatement. Some hidden part of me wanted to stay in this empty hallway with them, no longer plagued by life outside our little bubble.

"Making you feel better, doll," Ethan murmured, his fingers tracing patterns on my bare stomach. Kieran was skilled with his mouth, leaving little pecks and nibbles down my neck and shoulder, making me gasp in both pain and pleasure.

"Sophia?" Kat's familiar voice echoed down the hall, along with her pattering footsteps. The clock on the far wall showed 2:12 p.m., two minutes past the second bell.

Faster than I could mentally handle, Kieran and Ethan retracted themselves from me.

"Until next time, sweetheart," Kieran murmured in my ear, his light stubble tickling my cheek. I visibly shivered from his rough voice, my eyes fixed on the smirk his full lips formed. I wanted to kiss them both, but I also wanted to shove them away and run.

The twins turned and left me alone in the hall. Kat came into view only a second later, a strange look on her face. Well, the twins were right about one thing. My headache was a fading memory.