

## Chapter 5 An announcement part 2

"You look beautiful." My father said for the umpteenth time. His arm was linked with mine as he guided me into the huge and luxurious banquet hall of the Palace Royal Club. Together, we greeted the guests without mentioning at any point that we were father and daughter.

I smiled in response and quickly found my friend hooked arm in arm with a man almost six feet tall, with brown eyes that I remembered even though he had a tan, a perfectly groomed stubble, and an athletic body.

"Hey! You look beautiful. Mr. Doinel, I hope you don't mind if I steal your daughter for a few minutes. I'll bring her back in an instant."

My father gave her a serious look, but she didn't erase the smile from her face. She was more animated than anyone else in this place.

"Miss Dubois, I see you're still a troublemaker, nevertheless, I'll lend her to you."

I laughed at my father's words. He had always called my friend a troublemaker, and that's just who she was and always would be.

"Thank you for your compliment, Mr. Doinel." She said with a wide smile, apparently she liked it when my father called her that, or maybe she had just gotten so used to it that it would be strange if he didn't call her that.

"Go on, don't worry, Sarah is in good hands."

"I doubt it." My father said to himself, but I heard him.

"I'll be waiting for you at the table with your mother, don't take too long. I have an important announcement to make in a few minutes. I love you."

He kissed my forehead, as he had done since I could remember, and left, not before saying goodbye to my friend and her companion.

"I know your father is very strict, but I'm sure deep down in his heart, he likes me." She said after letting go of the brunette's arm and hooking onto mine.

Of course, my father liked her, it was just that he didn't agree with how liberal and wild Abby was. "Now, setting aside the topic of grumpy Doinel, it's time for you to greet the man who should be married to you right now." She said, and I gave her a discreet look while digging my nails into her arm for the nonsense she had just said.

"Ouch, no violence."

"Abby, for God's sake, stop saying so much nonsense."

The deep, calm, and profound voice of the man made me look at him. For a moment, I thought he would agree with Abby's craziness, so I was relieved to know that I wasn't the only sensible one.

"Long time no see, Sarah, look at you, all grown up." The brunette said, his brown eyes glistening as he approached me to envelop me in a hug as a greeting. I closed my eyes and smiled at the comfort of his arms. I had missed him.

"Not just a woman, but a woman who is perfect for you." We separated at the same time upon hearing Abby's nonsensical remark. Both of us gave her a stern look, and she shrugged.

"I'll be quiet for a few minutes, but don't think I'll give up."

"It's nice to see you after so many years, Paul. You've become quite the hunk. You didn't look like this the last time I saw you." I greeted him amiably, trying to ignore my friend who kept intertwining her ngers to make the shape of a heart.

She was going to drive me crazy. When would she understand that I didn't like her brother that way and I never would? I mean, he was a very elegant, attractive, tall man with a manly face, successful and focused, but my tastes were different, even if those tastes ended up being torture for me.

"Nothing I can't achieve by exercising. Did you come back to stay? I hope so, because that way we can work together for a long time." He suddenly changed the subject, and I didn't quite understand what he meant by working together.

I knew well that his parents are partners in my father's company. But working together? I didn't think so.

"Well, yes, I'm staying, I don't plan on going anywhere, why do you say that..." I was about to ask him about the work topic, but my father arrived at the scene, interrupting anything that was about to come out of my mouth.

"Excuse my interruption, but it's been enough, I need to make an announcement with Sarah." my father took my hand and made me walk, distancing me from the Dubois siblings and the conversation with Paul.

"How rude, Mr. Doinel."

My father shot Abby a sharp glance, who seemed frustrated by the interruption, although she was thankful that my father was rescuing me, otherwise I would end up engaged to Paul thanks to his sister.

"What announcement are you going to make? Are you going to tell the media that I'm your daughter?"

My father gave me a half-smile as we walked among people chatting animatedly with champagne glasses in hand.

"Something much better." A shiver ran down my spine and it was impossible not to feel nervous about the smile that wouldn't disappear from my father's face.

Okay, he wasn't going to say that I was his daughter, the Doinel heiress, but that didn't change the fact that he would present me to high society, I didn't know for what reason. I just hoped that the idea my father had in mind didn't end up affecting the family.

Breathe, it's okay, there are no paparazzi. I can trust my father.

We both went up on stage, interrupting the melodious live piano piece, I stayed behind my father, hidden where no one could see me, and he began his speech about friendship, family, and how important everyone gathered there was, until he touched on the topic of his company, from when his parents founded it, to when he took charge with his wife.

I already knew the story by heart, so I stopped paying attention to what he was saying and focused on the dizziness I was feeling at that moment.

Baby, I don't know you yet, but don't do this to mom right now, I need to be focused.

When I managed to stabilize myself and dispel the dizziness that almost made me fall, I heard my father's words, which left me dumbfounded.

"That's why I'm pleased to introduce you to the new vice president of Doinel, Sarah Petit."

My body froze and I had to repeat those words over and over again to analyze them.

Did I hear correctly? Was my father making me the vice president? A supposed unknown person to the public eye with a high executive position, in the most prestigious fashion company in the world.

Vice president, me?

The sound of applause made me react and I was forced to join my father's side so as not to offend him.

I looked at the people staring at us, some surprised, others confused, and others with neutral expressions, as if it were an irrelevant matter, and nally I saw the smiling Dubois siblings next to their parents, Paul's genuine smile made me realize what he meant by working together for a long time.

Seeing my mother's excitement was enough to make me feel worthy of such a position.

Of course, I could be the vice president, that was why I studied, to take the reins of the company when he decided to take a break from business.

I stood by his side, while he gave a brief introduction of myself and mentioned that such an important position was waiting for someone as capable as me, nally admitting that he had taken me by surprise with the last-minute announcement.

After introducing myself and giving a few words of gratitude, we got off the stage and the guests began to congratulate me as if they had known me all their lives, I smiled cordially at everyone, until I nally reached my mother, who gave me an effusive hug and told me how proud she was of me.

"From a devoted wife to vice president of a renowned company, that's my friend!" Abby didn't fall behind in congratulating me, and in a very humorous way, which was just like her. She hugged me without any delicacy.

"Congratulations, Sari." Paul saved me from Abby's roughness and enveloped me in his warm and strong arms for the second time, I reciprocated without erasing the genuine smile on my face, while inhaling his masculine scent.

"So, are you back to stay? Because we will make a great team at Doinel." he asked, breaking our hug, but keeping his hand on my waist, waiting for my response with his eyes xed on my face.

I delicately placed my hand on his shoulder before answering.

"I have no doubt about that, Paul. And yes, I came back to stay, I have no intention of leaving the place I should have never left." I replied condently and more determined than ever.

This was my place and it always would be. I was far away from the Lancasters, far enough to never hear from them again in my life.