

Chapter 5

Cranston's POV

We don't say much as we climb into a cab and take off. I have no idea what has gotten into me, but I can't tear myself away from Bree ever since I saw her at the restaurant, and I'm looking for any opportunity just to touch her, hold her, be near her.

It's been a few years since I've seen her, and she looks absolutely incredible.

I'm still surprised even at myself that I agreed to this crazy contract and then followed her around afterwards, not able to part ways with her just yet.

What she doesn't know, is that the best time of my life was when she was a part of it. When my parents were together, when my mom was always around, all the fun vacations we went on together.

Messing with Bree had always been fun too, she always over-reacted at rst, but usually would loosen up and come around.

I denitely remember the Hawaii trip she was talking about. It's been several years ago, but I had thought about that night countless times since then.

My dad hadn't even told me that Bree's family were going to be at the resort at the same time that we were.

I had ran into her parents rst. Her mom had been so sweet to me, always giving me hugs and keeping in touch. She even sent me care packages when I went to college.

My mom is amazing, but she would never think to do something like that, she would just put money in my account and y me out to see her.

Anyway, I ran into her parents and they begged me to get Bree out of her room so she could actually enjoy the trip. Apparently, she had just got accepted into her dream school that very day and they said she needed to celebrate.

I had talked to some locals at the bar earlier that day and knew about a party going on nearby.

I'll never forget knocking on Bree's door after not seeing her for at least three years and nearly falling over when I saw her.

She's not very tall, maybe around 5'4, but she's thin with curves, nice perky breasts, the perfectly round bottom, long lean legs, a at toned belly...she had been wearing a white two piece bikini and my younger self got a hard on right then and there.

Her dark auburn hair was pulled up into a sloppy bun with loose hairs falling out, kind of like they are today, and she crunched her nose up at me like she did today too.

I grin at the memory.

The little Bree Leely who was like my annoying little sister, all grown up. I instantly knew I wanted to end the night with her in my arms.

I took her to the party, kept by her side the entire time, making sure no other guy could make a move, and when she fell into my arms with a sexy grin and asked if I wanted to make out, I couldn't do it. She was too drunk.

So, instead, I pulled her tight into a hammock with me and held her all night while she slept.

The next day she insisted I get her home as quickly as possible, terried that her parents would be upset with her, having no idea that I was in contact with them the entire time.

And I hadn't seen her since until today, when I signed a contract to marry her in just two weeks time. She hasn't changed in the look department at all. Her body looks the same, maybe even a little thinner, probably because she doesn't take time to eat.

I look down at her and she's chewing on the thumbnail, just like she did when she was younger.

I smile and grab her hand, pulling it away and into my lap.

"I can't believe you still do that."

She grins guiltily at me.

I feel a little wave of pleasure that she hasn't moved her hand away.

"Where are we going anyway?" Her big green eyes look up into mine.

I resist the urge to touch her face.

"My friend owns an art studio and there is a new showcase tonight, told him I would swing by with a plus one."

She shakes her shoulders at me. "Oooh, so I'm your plus one?"

I grin and kiss the back of her hand, enjoying the blush that creeps up her cheeks. "Apparently, your going to be my plus one for the next twenty years."

"Five!" She holds her hand up, splaying her ngers wide. "Thanks to you! Good negotiating back there."

"Thank you." I smile at her.

I look out the window as the taxi pulls to a stop.

"Here we are." I reach into my pocket to grab cash, still holding onto Bree's hand, but she pulls it away, much to my disappointment.

"My turn, let me pay, you did the last one." She reaches into her purse but I'm already handing the driver the money and opening the taxi door.

"Oh please, Bree, what's mine is yours, remember?"

She throws her head back and laughs. I glance at her full rosy lips. I've thought about those lips a lot since Hawaii.

I reach my hand to hers and she takes it, struggling slightly to get out of the cab, and pulling down her tted black skirt and smoothing out her silky blue blouse the shows just the right amount of cleavage.

She looks up and catches me staring at her cleavage.

"Have I told you how great you look?"

She rolls her eyes and smiles she lets me keep her hand as I lead her into the studio, waving at people I know.

I can feel Bree instantly start to bring her guard up, holding back a little in her shyness.

I lean back and wrap my arm around her waist, stopping a passing server and handing Bree a champagne ute before grabbing one for myself, holding it out to clink glasses as we walk.

If we are supposed to keep quiet the fact that we are marrying as part of some weird deal to gain ownership of a huge company, it seems only reasonable that we should look like a true couple. I smile down at Bree as she looks around the packed art studio with wide eyes.

"What do you think, my lovely ancé?"

She gives me an eye roll and lifts her shoulder. "It's nice. Not quite my scene, but I like some of the art."

I guide her through the new displays, keeping my arm around her waist, keeping champagne in her hand, and making sure I include her every time I stop to say hi to someone.

She gradually seems to loosen up, joining in on conversations.

"Well, hey Cranston." I drop my arm from Bree's waist as I turn to the familiar voice. Oh s**t. It's Veronica.

"Heeey. How have you been? Long time no see."

She gives a fake laugh. "No fuck."

Oh yikes. I glance apprehensively at Bree. To my dismay, she's watching closely, her eyes narrowed, the champagne ute almost to her lips, frozen.

Veronica whips her head around me, her long swishy pony-tail on top of her head snapping, to look at Bree and raises her eyebrows.

"Who is this?"

Bree's eyes go wide and she takes a sip of her champagne, and to my surprise, there is a smile on her lips as she lowers the glass.

This bristles Veronica, who glares at her.

"Veronica, this, is Bree. My ancé."

Veronica's eyes go wide and her entire body freezes in shock.

"Hi, so nice to meet you Vanessa." Bree holds out her hand with a smile.

I nearly choke on my swig of champagne.

I look at Bree and she gives me a tiny wink.

My ancé is amazing.

"Fiancé?" Veronica looks at me. "Since when?"

"Oh, just today!" Bree says easily and takes a sip of her champagne.

Veronica's eyes go to Bree's left hand that's holding the glass and she smirks.

"I'd love to see the ring."

Oh, f**k.

Bree giggles.

"Oh, I can't wait to see it too!" She shoves playfully into my side and I wrap my arm around her.

"He just did it without even a ring, we go and pick one out tomorrow, at Tiffany's!"

Ha. She thinks she's upsetting me, but I'd buy her three rings from Tiffany's right now.

Veronica makes her weird duck face with her lips pursed together and her nose scrunched up.

"Huh. Never thought I'd see the day that Cranston Whittington proposed. I guess we'll see if the wedding actually goes through."

Bree doesn't say anything, just smiles vaguely as she sips her wine.

Veronica gives me one last hateful look and turns around, nearly hitting me in the face with her ponytail, before she walks away.

Bree laughs.

"You were brilliant!" I give her shoulders a squeeze.

"Uh huh." She says and takes another sip. "I wonder how many times we'd run into angry exes if we went out every night."

"Ahhh..." I make a face. Not a fun topic.

"We could always stay in." I suggest, giving her a grin.

She rolls her eyes and looks down at her watch. "I really should be heading in soon."

"Oh! Um, sure. Let me introduce you to my friend, the owner, and then we can go."

She looks at me in surprise. "You don't have to leave, I'm just heading home. You stay, have fun. I just have an early day at the oce tomorrow."

I can't help feeling a little disappointed at the fact that she not only doesn't want me to leave with her, she's surprised at the fact that I suggested it.

I look down at her hand as she pushes at her hair out of her face.

"Oh, we should go to Tiffany's tomorrow, we need to get you that ring."

She laughs. "No way! You aren't wasting your money on a ring. That's ridiculous."

That stings too.

"It's not a waste, the least you should get out of your rst marriage is an over-priced ring that pays for the down-payment for your next home." I smile at her and lead her towards the door. I can text my friend later, I don't want Bree to leave without me.

I take her empty glass and place it on a passing server's tray and go outside to hail a cab.

"Seriously, Cranston! Stay! You didn't even see our friend. I'm just going straight home, there's no need to come with me."

I ignore all this and open the cab door for her, sliding in beside her and ignoring her protests.

"Where to?"

She sighs and gives the taxi her address, which I notice is only two blocks from my place. Crazy how we could live so close and never run into each other. Well, now that I think about it, I've known where she works for a long time, I really could have stopped by to see her at any point. I just never wanted to go into the damn building if I could help it.

I frown and look down at Bree. Her eyes are closed, her head resting against the seat.

I wrap my arm around her and pull her against me so her head rests on my shoulder, enjoying the way she feels against my body.

It seems like the taxi ride is too short as we pull up to her building, a modest old brick building.

Bree's head is still laying on my shoulder, her eyes closed. I pay the taxi and try not to wake Bree as we slide out, but it's impossible.

Her eyes jerk open and she looks around. "Oh! Good." She lets me pull her out of the taxi and pulls her skirt down again." She gives me a small smile. "Uh, thanks for taking me out tonight. I'll see you in two weeks."

She takes an uneasy step. Whoops, she may have had a little too much to drink, she's not used to drinking as much as I am.

I grab her around the waist and wave the taxi driver away.

"No, I'm ne. Seriously." Her last word is slurred slightly and I roll my eyes upward. She's not going to be too happy with me if she wakes up hungover for the second time in a row we have hung out in the past ten years.

"Give it a rest Bree, of course I am going to walk you to your door and make sure you get home safely."

She grabs the shirt around my waist as she looks up at me, her eyes slightly glossy.

"Huh. Never thought of you as a walk a girl to her front door type."

"Well, nice to know I can still surprise you, it's a good thing to take note of, who knows how I might surprise you in the future."

Bree snorts. "Nothing good, I'm sure."

Ouch! I choose to ignore this as we pass a doorman inside who looks concerned.

"Uh, Bree, which apartment are you?" I try to ask quietly, worried the doorman is going to come over, thinking I'm doing something inappropriate.

"6F!" Bree's voice is loud and the 'F' comes out thick. Oh god.

The doorman comes around his platform and makes his way over to us as we walk to the elevator.

"Good evening, everything okay here Ms. Leely?"

"Oh, yes! Hi Mr. Donsk! This is my ancé, Cranston Whittington-thin." Mr. Donsk, looks at me and back to Bree.

"Are you sure you are okay, Ms. Leely."

"Just celebrating our engagement!" Bree wraps both her arms around me and stands on her tip toes to plant a kiss on my cheek.

Mr. Donsk nods to himself and walks back to his stand, watching us get into the elevator.

I lead Bree into the elevator and press number 6, trying not to think about how her body feels against mine as she still has her arms wrapped around me and the brief soft touch of her lips on my cheek.

The elevator door opens and I look left and right, but Bree steps to the right, almost making me fall over.

"This way!"

I walk her two doors down and help her dig through her purse for her keys, then open the door for her.

She's fading fast. It's like she hit a wall after the taxi ride.

I walk in her apartment and shut the door behind me, turning to see Bree kicking off her heels, making them y across the room and into a wall.

Oh jeez!

I take a quick look around and smile to myself. It looks like Bree. It's cute. Small. Simple. Slightly messy. A laptop sitting on the coffee table, a dirty wine glass beside it. A couple dirty dishes in the sink, trash can over-owing, a basket of laundry on the kitchen table, but otherwise, clean, barely lived in.

"Ugh!" I look over and Bree is trying to pull off her shirt, a button caught in her hair with the top over her head, her at belly and big perky breasts in a push up bra exposed.

I swallow and move towards her, resisting the urge to touch certain exposed areas.

"Stay still Bree, I'll help you."

She still giggles as I try to nd the button with her hair looped around it, bumping her chest into me multiple times. I nally nd the button and free it from her now wild looking hair, and help her discard it.

"Oh my god!" She huffs and ops onto the couch.

I stie a grin, and a yawn. I haven't slept in ages and it's starting to catch up to me, even though it's only about 9:30. Oh, wow. That's way earlier than I had even thought.

I sit on the couch beside Bree who looks over at me.

"Are we really going to get married in a month?"

"Yup. That's the plan."

"Maybe we should have s*x then, it's been a long time."

I laugh. She's going to die when I tell her she said that to me tomorrow.

"You know Bree, I think that's a great idea, and I do think we will at some point soon, just not tonight."

"Oh." She snuggles up against me and I put my arm around her so she can rest her head on my shoulder. "Bummer." She sighs and closes her eyes.

I kiss her on the forehead and close my eyes too. This is going to be fun.