

Chapter 3: Karaoke

Quinn's POV

Brianna, Tanner, and I were all busy getting ready for the bar tonight. They sang along loudly to the music blasting in the living room while I nished putting my makeup on in the bathroom.

"How late are we staying out!" I bellowed over the rumbling of music.

"What?" Brianna yelled back, turning the music down to a low thump.

"How late are we staying out tonight?" I echoed again.

"Until the club closes!" she bellowed back. "Drink some coffee if you need to!" A night out until 2 am after working a twelve-hour shift would be fun.

"You can sleep when you're dead!" Tanner yelled. "Hurry up! It's almost 9:30!"

"I'm coming!" I hollered back. The effort I put into my appearance tonight reected my enthusiasm for going out. I had worn a pair of relaxed jeans, a crop tank top, and white sneakers, calling it good enough. However, I had washed my hair when we got home, so it now fell in beach waves around my face.

"Tonight's gonna be great," I told my reection in the mirror. "You will have a good time!" After borrowing some of Brianna's positive armations, I headed out of the bathroom and into the living room to let them know I was ready. Brianna was dancing in the kitchen, glass of wine in hand, while Tanner sat on our couch, scrolling on his phone.

"Look at you!" Brianna sang as she continued to dance around the kitchen. "You look hot!"

"Thanks, Brie," I responded, taking the glass of wine she handed me.

"Are we ready to go then?" Tanner asked, standing up from the couch.

"Yeah, just give us a second," Brie answered, draining the last of her wine into her mouth. "Chug that fast; we have to get there early and scope this place out."

"Where exactly are we going?" I asked, taking the wine glass she handed me.

"This brand-new karaoke bar and club opened a few months ago. If it sucks, we can go somewhere else, but I've heard good things about this place," Brie told me, skipping the glass and drinking straight from the open bottle of wine.

"Sounds good to me." I drained half my glass of wine and set the rest on the counter. "I'm ready when you guys are. Who's driving?"

"I thought we'd just call a car or something. That way, we don't need a designated driver," Brianna said, taking one last swig of wine before replacing the cork and putting it back in the fridge.

"Already called one!" Tanner said, looking up from his phone. "He's three minutes away. Let's go wait at the corner." Brie and I grabbed our purses before following Tanner out the door. They both looked nice for the occasion. Brie was sporting a pair of wide-legged fake leather pants with a matching sleeveless crop top. She even paired the look with heels, which I considered bold. Her long black hair swayed behind her as she clicked down the sidewalk, falling in perfect ringlets of curls.

Brie always went for bold looks, so her red lipstick was paired with a natural smokey eye, which made her green eyes stand out. Tanner wore jeans, a gray t-shirt, and an open black button-down shirt. He had perfectly styled his short brown hair, using more hairspray than mine. When we reached the corner, he checked his phone to see where our car was. After about a minute, a black sedan came and stopped right in front of us. Piling in the back, the driver conrmed Tanner was the right person before heading towards the bar.

"Remember, if a guy is hanging on you, and you don't want him, give me a look, and I'll come and save you," Brie reminded me, taking the lipstick from her purse to reapply. She and I had a code look we used to get out of unwanted attention. Usually, that meant pretending we were together as a couple until we could escape the situation. It only took about fteen minutes for us to get to the club. Despite how early it was, a line was already coming out the door.

"Da*n, this place is busy already," I noted, getting out of the car.

"I know, it's gonna be great," Brie said excitedly. We joined the end of the line and waited for our turn for the ID check.

"How long does the karaoke go until?" I asked Brie while we waited.

"It goes until eleven, and then the DJ takes over. We have a little over an hour."

"You gonna sing?" Tanner asked, nudging me with his arm.

"I'll have to have a few drinks before that happens," I laughed.

"We can make that happen," Brie said, handing her ID to the bouncer. Once he thoroughly looked over all three of our IDs, we went inside the club. It was enormous, with a stage on the far side where karaoke was already underway. There were 2 bars, one to our right up a ramp and some steps, and the other at the far end near the stage. The railing separating the upper bar from the main oor had a couple of tables full of people. The entire room was loud from people talking and singing from the stage. I swear I felt the oor vibrate under my shoes.

"Let's get a drink!" Brie yelled, taking me by the hand and leading us to the closest bar. Brie shoved through the crowd as I clung on for dear life. Once we got to the bar, she immediately had the bartender's attention, to the annoyance of many other people waiting.

"Two vodka sodas, and...." She trailed off, turning to Tanner.

"Whatever your cheapest beer is," he told them. The bartender nodded and began making our drinks.

"The key is to make eye contact and nod," Brie declared as she pulled cash out of her purse. "Also, pay in cash and tip well." The guy handed us our drinks, and she gave him the money, telling him to keep the change. We took our drinks and went to stand in the central area, with everyone watching the two girls on stage singing.

"Holy sh*t, this drink is strong," I noted after my rst sip.

"Good, we won't have to get as many," Brie said, taking a long sip from her straw.

"These girls aren't bad," Tanner commented, watching the two girls on stage. He wasn't wrong, although they sang a song I'd never heard before. Once they were done, a few more people came onto the stage, singing and enjoying themselves. As we stood there watching a group of three women and nishing our drinks, someone tapped me on the shoulder. I turned and saw a guy standing there, with another man beside him.

"Hey, I'm Shane."

"Hi, I'm Quinn," I told him, shaking the hand he had extended towards me.

"Do you guys come here a lot?" He asked as his friend began to chat up Brie, who ipped her hair and smiled.

"No, this is our rst time here. What about you?" I asked.

"We've come here a few times; it's pretty great," he said with a dazzling pearly white smile.

"That's awesome," I told him. Unsure of how to continue this conversation. One thing I was terrible at was irting. I only had a boyfriend for a few years in college because he was one of Brie's friends, so we just happened to hang out a lot.

"Do you need another drink?" he asked.

"Sure, I'll come with you." If there was one thing my grandmother had taught me, it was always to watch them make your drinks, especially if someone else was buying them for you.

"I'll get a jack and coke," he said to the bartender. "And a..." he turned to look at me.

"Vodka soda," I yelled over the music.

"So, are those your friends?" He gestures towards Tanner and Brianna, leaning on the bar.

"Yeah, Brianna and I live together, and we're all ER nurses," I said, setting my now empty glass on the bar.

"Da*n," Shane said, looking impressed. "So, you can take care of me if I drink too much tonight?"

"That's only if I decide you're worth saving," I added cheekily, impressed I had come up with the line so quickly. The bartender handed us our drinks, and we returned to meet Brie and Tanner. Shane was hot. His black hair shone in the lights, and his green eyes held the hint of a smile when he leaned in to talk to me. I could make out his muscles in his white T-shirt, which was stretched across his chest.

"Are you gonna go up there?" Brie asked, coming close so I could hear her.

"You sing?" Shane questioned.

"A little, but not in front of people!" I declared, slightly annoyed, that Brianna would say anything in front of someone we didn't know.

"Come on, I wanna hear what you got!" Shane yelled excitedly.

"Yeah, come on!" Brie whined, looking at me with big, sad, please eyes.

"Oh, ne!" I declared, handing my drink to her rmly. "God, I'm not drunk enough for this." Brie cheered loudly, jumping up and down as I walked towards the stage and the guy writing down people's names and their song selections. Glancing at the list of songs, I found one I knew like the back of my hand and that I didn't think I was terrible at. I told him what song I wanted and waited for the three people on stage to nish their song. Once they got off the stage, giggling with delight at what they had done, anxiety lled me.

Gulping hard, I went up the stairs and to the microphone. Looking out at all the people in front of me, I thought I might vomit. The music started; I opened my mouth and, thankfully, began to sing. To my surprise, people seemed to be enjoying what I was doing. I never thought I had a fantastic voice, but I thought I could carry a tune slightly. Brie began cheering loudly when I got to the chorus, supporting me as she had done the entire time I'd known her. I nished to a rousing round of applause and all but ran off the stage in embarrassment.

"You were so good!" Brie yelled, handing me my drink back.

"Da*n, I've never heard you sing like that," Tanner smiled.

"You should do it again," Shane said with a wink.

"Let me nish my drink rst," I said, sipping from the straw. Many other people came up on the stage; some were good, and others were already so drunk they didn't seem to know which end of the microphone to sing into, but in a fun way. We enjoyed watching them sing and dancing while enjoying our drinks.

"Alright, you're done with your drink," Shane reminded me. "Time for round two."

"I don't know," I said.

"Last call for karaoke before our DJ comes on," someone announced from the stage.

"Come one, I'll go up there with you!" Brie said excitedly.

"But I..."

"Let's go! We'll be right back, boys!" she grabbed my hand and dragged me toward the stage. I let her pick the song this time since she seemed very excited. Following her onto the stage, we each took a stance in front of a microphone before the music started blasting away.