

Chapter 7

"Rain cats and dogs," I mumbled at the dark sky. The bastard wrecked my career and still had the nerve to send an invite.

I bumped into someone around the corner. He balanced my grocery bags before they could fall to the ground.

"Thank you," I said. "I'm so sorry."

"It happens," he replied coolly. "I'm glad your stu isn't damaged."

As I took the bags from him, I thought I saw his eyes icker to my wrist, just for a moment. He looked back at me, his gray eyes scrutinizing, seemingly lost in thought. Then the look was gone. He smiled and held out his hand.

"I'm Harry."

"Anastasia," I said, shaking his hand.

"It's a beautiful name," he murmured, still holding my hand, still smiling. His grip was firm, almost forceful. "Perfect for a beautiful woman. Do you know what it means?"

I shook my head.

"It means resurrection."

How ironic!

I glanced away. "I should get going."

He stepped aside, and I walked past him.

"Anastasia?" Harry called me suddenly from behind. "I get the feeling I will see you very soon."

His smile was cryptic—the kind that turned blood cold. I walked away from him as fast as I could.

Why am I suddenly encountering so many cynical men?

My phone started pinging nonstop. All messages from Angie, who was bent on dragging me to the party. I read them with a permanent frown as I begrudgingly entered our apartment building. There was no fighting against Angie.

So, I swallowed my pride and went to the so-called party with her.

My mood was vinegar—sharp, lingering, and uninvited.

"Who organizes a business party in a club?" I snorted while looking around.

"Cool people," Angie replied, nudging me. "As much as they are obnoxious and despicable, I'm grateful to the brothers for not organizing a boring come-in, talk business and dine your way out kind of party."

Angie turned my stool so I was facing her.

"We are here, no? You look stunning tonight. Loosen up and have fun."

I had a prickly feeling every ve seconds down my bare back. I was itching to let my hair loose from my high ponytail.

"Here." Angie took the drinks from the bartender. "It's nonalcoholic."

"Hello, sexy!" Nat whistled while coming to us. "I'm glad you decided to listen."

"She's ready to bolt any moment. Watch her," Angie said. I glowered.

"You are not wasting this, Ana." Nat pointed to me as a whole. "Go dance with someone. Get a boyfriend. Enough of the solo era. Look at Angie. She's on her breakup number eighteen."

Angie opened her mouth to counter.

"I'm not saying follow her footsteps, but get one man at the least."

"I will do that once you do that," I said sweetly. "I don't need a boyfriend in my life."

"Why so gloomy, Ana?" Nat scolded lightly. "You shot down every guy who dared approach you in university—and you're still doing it."

They knew why and still asked. I was tired of repeating.

"You look killer tonight, Nat." I gestured to her.

They knew I was dodging the topic, but they didn't push it further.

"I have to keep up with the standards." Nat gestured around. "Are we just sitting?"

"I'm ne where I am." I made a face. "I don't want to run into *unnecessary* people."

I surveyed the club for any signs of Cain Black. I knew his brothers were here, but hadn't spotted the eldest.

Nat and Angie went to the dance oor, leaving me to nurse my drink at the bar.

I smiled seeing them enjoy themselves and I grinned when I noticed a handsome man approach Nat and steal her away.

I couldn't see his face, but if Nat went willingly, he was a gentleman. Now, if it had been Angie...

I admired the interior once more. From ceiling to corner, everything screamed luxury. Nat told us that their sister was the owner of this club. She redid the whole place within three days. It screamed extravagance. But I didn't see her at the party, either.

"At least, they are not turning o the lights." I was relieved at the thought.

My eyes unconsciously went toward the VIP area and met cold turquoise.

He was a walking thirst trap.

Black slacks, button-down open to mid-chest, sleeves rolled—Cain was built to make women drool.

A woman hugged him from behind. I looked away when she grabbed his face and kissed him full on the mouth.

I was becoming very conscious of his eyes drilling holes in my back.

"You have company, damn it," I muttered spitefully. "Stop throwing daggers at others during your fornication."

"Hey!" I looked to my right unwillingly.

"I'm Miles." *Not this.* "You look like you'd rather be anywhere else."

My drink left a bitter taste in my mouth at the end, but it felt good.

"Give me another." The bartender took my glass to re ll. I looked at the guy again. "Yes?"

"You want to dance?" he was persistent.

I scooted away when he hovered over me. "Back o ," I grunted. "Get out of my face. I'm not interested."

He didn't get the signal. Instead, he grabbed my thigh.

"Such a hottie like you shouldn't be just sitting," he grinned.

Breathe in. Breathe out.

Don't lose it. Stay calm.

Oh hell no—he's going to get a piece of it.

A shadow sliced between us. I knew who it was before I looked up. My wrist tingled slightly.

Cain.

"She has company."

The guy, Miles, was gone before I could blink.

"I had it handled," I tried to say rmly—but the words sounded jumbled.

I was becoming highly ustered by his presence in my personal space. I was ready to throw punches with that guy, but I was shrinking under his presence.

I grabbed my glass and nished my drink. It tasted sweeter than the previous one. I felt a bit funny.

Air. I needed air.

I mumbled a thank you and slipped away before he could stop me, heading up the stairs toward the rooftop.

Finally. Alone.

I breathed in the cold air and yanked my hair loose, rubbing my aching scalp. I felt queasy and the world wouldn't stop spinning.

Then I heard footsteps behind me, followed by a dark chuckle.

"Let's continue where we left o , shall we?"