

Chapter 3

Time has all but stopped again; it is taking forever for your letter to be called. You just want this to be over with. You wait in line impatiently, tapping your foot. You are irritated. Maybe he was in a bad mood. Maybe his back was still hurting. Maybe... Oh, hell, you wish he'd just get over it, whatever it was. Then you realize you should probably do the same.

"Oh my gosh, this is it! Eeeeeee!" How ironic that you would wind up stuck in a group with squealy-girl. You glance at Raven out of the corner of your eye. You can tell she is slightly annoyed, but you know inside she is still basking in the memory of Donnie kissing her on the cheek. As if on cue, she raises her hand to her cheek. You smile.

Finally, it is your group's turn. Raven turns to you and smiles. "I can't believe this is actually happening," she says. "All of this is just so amazing."

You realize it's true. You can't believe it, either. You are suddenly thankful that you even had a moment to question. How can you be in a bad mood? Danny called you beautiful. Joe kind of flirted with you. Jordan said you and he had a date, whether he was winner or not.

You return her smile with a renewed sense of excitement. There is no nervousness, just pure excitement. You can't stop smiling now. At that moment you step under the tent, around the curtain.

Everyone is instructed to place their gifts on the table first. Raven had reluctantly agreed to give Jon the story Missiey wrote, and she makes her way over to the table along with everyone else.

The first person you see is Jon. You can't wait to get one of his famous hugs. He sees you walking towards him and opens his arms, his smile is nearly as wide as they are. You tell him thank you, and he squeezes you tighter before he releases you.

Next is Danny. He called me beautiful, you think to yourself. You feel yourself blush a little. He smiles. You smile, too, and then you are in his arms. They engulf you, surround you. This is not a half-assed hug. This is a full-frontal-Danny hug. His arms linger around you and it is you that pulls away.

You glance up and catch Jordan's eye. Something shifts inside you. You realize he has been watching you.

He sees you are the only one without a gift. He looks at you with a playful grin. "What? Nothing to give?"

Your breath catches when you hear his voice. You suddenly feel surprisingly bold. Maybe it's the alcohol; you can taste the lingering sweetness in your mouth and you catch yourself studying his lips as you imagine how sweet his kiss would taste. Maybe it's the summer heat; you feel slightly light-headed. Maybe it's the electricity you feel between you as he takes a half step closer. He stops in mid-stride and his expression suddenly turns serious.

He feels it, too. There is an undeniable current, almost tangible. A split second later, he grins again, this time flirtatiously. You meet his gaze. Surprisingly bold. You let go of your inhibitions, your questions. You take the next half a step, closing the gap between you. You slide your left arm up and around his neck placing your right hand gently on his chest. Before you realize, before you can stop yourself, you look him up and down slowly as you say, "Maybe what I have to give doesn't belong on the gift table. Maybe it's something much more personal." You give a sly half smile. "Are you interested?"

You notice him looking you up and down as you speak, and now he pulls you closer. "Hmm," he says more to himself. Your bodies are now touching, your faces just inches apart. The current is stronger. The room is gone. You can no longer see or hear anything else; only Jordan and the strange electric hum in your ears. From the hungry expression on his face, you know he feels the same. You know. Your eyes are locked, staring intensely at one another. His voice is husky when he answers you. "I am definitely interested."

He opens his mouth to speak again when someone suddenly yells, "Photo op!" You are jolted out of your trance. Everything happens so fast. You can barely process the girls scrambling to find "their man". One is coming straight at you. You know your moment is about to end.

But Jordan is faster. He wraps his arm tighter around your waist and pulls you to his side. He's not letting you go.

The pictures are a blur in your mind. You briefly wonder if Raven made it to Donnie. In the next instant, security is rushing you all out the tent. You are pried away from Jordan. He grabs your hand, holding onto it, as he pushes something into it with his other. "I wasn't kidding about our date," he says as you are prodded out the other side of the tent.

You look down at the piece of paper Jordan slipped into your hand. It is a business card. For a hotel. With a room number. And Jordan's personal handwriting. "Meet me here after the show."