

Chapter 5

They may not have been the first girls in line but as the vehicles park under the canopy, Kristy, Missiey, Karen, Tanya, and Sandy realize that they will certainly get interaction from the guys as they board the boat. Every girl in line does a quick make-up, hair, and cleavage check as the door of the first SUV opens. Mass hysteria ensues. Fans are transported twenty years into the past. No matter how many shows, airport encounters, or cruises one attends: Every time is the first time! Fourteen year old screams emit from mid-thirty year old mouths. Husbands are erased. Children become fantasy. All responsibilities sink into the ocean under Carnival's new flagship, Serendipity, as the first New Kid emerges.

Of course Donnie leads in his robe and dark sunglasses. His mega-watt smile is enough to make any girl know that that particular smile is just for her and her alone. He waves at the crowd. He lifts his head to acknowledge the girls that were on their toes for a glimpse. He stops in front of Sandy, lowers his glasses, and looks her up and down. He slowly licks his lips.

“Oh this is gonna be a great fucking cruise,” Donnie says.

He slides his hand behind her head and grabs her ponytail to tug her head back, “Oh baby!” He says in his most seductive Back Rub voice, “Hmmm, strawberry shortcake.”

Sandy could only stand there in shock. She had dreamed of this moment since seeing him on a poster in K-Mart all those years ago. She lifts her fingers to touch her lips. Everyone and everything melts behind her.

Danny follows closely with his perfectly sculpted arms, deep dark tan that seems oiled already and a smile that goes on forever. Karen is the first to realize that his girls aren't behind him, but doesn't say anything because Danny is right in front of her. He's not flashing his pearly

whites at this moment but instead wears a devious grin. Reminiscent of the scene in Grease, they mouth “Hi!” to each other before he moves on.

“Please have a haircut!” Missiey prays under her breath, “Oh, Fuck Me!”

Jonathan emerges bright-eyed, clean shaven, and for once is lacking the pre-tour sumo hair. He’s working on his tan. A black muscle shirt under a pink button down that isn’t buttoned. He is the finest specimen of a man in Missiey’s eyes. He shakes hands and gives the girls the coveted Jonathan hug. He hugs Missiey a bit longer.

“I remember you,” Jonathan says.

“Really?” Missiey says with excitement.

“Of course, I do. You have my face on your arm and told Joe I was the only one that could possibly have that spot,” Jonathan said.

Missiey was in disbelief that Jonathan remembers her. Their meeting was almost a year ago in Cincinnati at her five star. He hugged her again, practically breaking her nose as he pulls her into his chest.

“So anything new?” Jonathan says looking at her other arm.

“Nothing yet, but I’m working on it, unless you want to design one for me,” Missiey says.

“Sure, what room are you in?” Jonathan asks.

“I’m not sure, Tanya and Sandy said it’s a surprise,” Missiey says.

“I’ll find you I promise,” Jonathan responds and moves inside.

Missiey stand in total amazement and confusion. *“Did he say he would find me? Is he going to design a tattoo for me? What the fuck just happened?”*

Joe hangs up his phone, pouts for a minute that he will not speak to Helen for three days, and proceeds to exit the SUV. Moments like these encourage him every day to continue his career. He sees many faces he recognizes from various activities. He sees so many faces he does not recognize which further his understanding that there are still so many fans left to meet. He instantly begins to dream of his next big adventure when he locks eyes with one he does not remember.

Kristy admires Joe. It is the first time she has been this close to him or any of them. Unlike the other four, Kristy has not met any of the guys. She was a New Kid virgin. That's not to say that she never saw them in concert, she's just never been this close. She has heard the horror stories of making a fool of yourself when in the presence of Joe and she made a pact with herself that she wouldn't do the same, but as soon as their eyes meet she starts to cry. Before she knows it arms envelope her. Subconsciously she knows they belong to Joe, but consciously she does not want to admit it for fear of crying harder in his arms.

Tanya waits for Jordan with baited breath. She has only been a Jordan girl for the last year. It happened on the last cruise. It is hard to tell when she realized how adorably fuckable Jordan really is in person. It could be when he was dancing like a nerd on Remix night or when he was showing his seductiveness to Robin Thicke's "Blurred Lines"; either way without knowing it, Jordan pulled her away from his brother. The Package Tour is what sealed her fate when Jordan performed his solo spot to Prince's "Kiss". The number of times Tanya wanted to rip his shirt off and guide his hand to the same place on her is too many to count.

Jordan steps out saving the best for last. He hits the send button, takes a deep breath, and immediately looks up. If his plan works, he will see her check her phone.

"Damn, why does everyone have to be attached to their phones," Jordan thinks.

He takes a deep breath to dissipate his disappointment. She's standing in front of him. His heart races. Somewhere in the swarm of women she's looking at him. The simple thought comforts him, but he begins to fear that he won't find her in the next four days. A familiar face before him brings him from his haze.

"Hey I remember you. Big long Master's degree right?" Jordan says.

"You remember?" Tanya furrows her eyebrows with a smile.

"Of course, you floored me. So do you have a doctorate yet?" Jordan asks.

"I applied to Harvard. I don't have the courage to open the letter," Tanya says.

"You have it with you?" Jordan asks.

She hands him the envelope. She wanted Joe to open it, but something tells her this is the right time. Jordan slides his finger under the flap and opens the letterhead.

"Congratulations!"

Tanya screams and forgets who she's with as she wraps her arms around his neck and kisses him. They both jump from each other as if they are teenagers being caught doing the naughty for the first time. Charlie pulls Jordan inside and another guard with Rose Tours stands in front of Tanya. In the midst of the confusion, the guys are whisked inside. After five seconds, it finally dawns on Tanya that for attacking Jordan the way she did they may not let her on the boat. Before anyone has any time to react to the rather brazen performance by Jordan and Tanya, a Carnival representative appears to open the gate.