

Chapter 11

Survive You

“Donnie stayed true to tradition,” Sandy says.

“What do you mean?” Missiey asks.

“He fired Jared from announcing,” Sandy says.

“At least they tried to make it lively, but you gotta admit Win, Lose, or Draw kinda sucked,” Kristy says.

“Yep, I don’t think that was their best choice,” Karen says.

“They should have done that game show with the celebrities. Oh, that one that Jane Lynch did in her living room,” Tanya says.

“Well, what are we going to do now?” Missiey asks.

“According to the itinerary, Group A gets their game show at ten, so we are open now until the Deck Party,” Kristy says.

“Let’s go back to the room, get ready for Retro Prom Night, then head to dinner in the main dining hall,” Tanya says.

The girls get back to their room. None of them mention the hour that Sandy and Karen went missing. Tanya plugs in the curling iron and lays out all their makeup. Kristy pulls out all their dresses from the closet. Sandy unloads the shoe bag. Karen gets the accessories ready and Missiey sets the vibe with the music. They decided to do prom through the ages with a red theme.

Sandy’s dress is strapless, crushed black velvet with satin red roses and a black silk ribbon that ties at the waist. The sweetheart neckline accentuates her cleavage which is sure to make Donnie go crazy. Tanya puts her cosmetology skills to the test as she sets Sandy’s hair in a 50’s style up do. Karen works on her make-up and decides to go with smoky eyes and pouty red lips. Missiey helps place a single strand of pearls on her neck and tear-drop earring on her newly pierced ears. Kristy ties the ribbon and snaps it into place.

Kristy’s dress is bright red organza knee-length dress with silk ribbon woven throughout in horizontal stripes. The neckline is reminiscent of a 60’s debutant. Tanya pulls up Kristy’s blonde tresses in a simple bun. Karen works on her make-up and decides to go with fleshy tones. Missiey places a red ruby choker style necklace and small ruby earrings. Sandy makes sure that Kristy is fluffed and ready to go with the many layers.

Tanya’s dress is baby doll tomato-red silk chiffon over a satin silk overlay with a sweetheart neckline, over a gathered horizontal ruched bust. The center of the neckline features a long fabric sash, which cinches the midline of her cleavage. The flowing gathered skirt falls effortlessly from the empire waist and flares when she spins. She decides to go with soft wide curls that fall upon her shoulders. Karen settles on a subdued 70’s look for Tanya’s makeup. Missiey decides to jazz it up with a tiered diamond necklace and tiered diamond drop earrings. Kristy makes sure that all her pleats are perfect.

Karen’s dress is a true representation of 80’s, blood red, sequined, and off the shoulder with puffy sleeves. The hem lands mid-thigh. Tanya teases and fluffs her hair to give that special mid-80’s look and tops it off with a much coveted banana clip. Karen does her own make-up and true to style it’s over-the-top. Missiey clasps the various levels of layers of large ruby colored pearls. Karen finished the look off with petite white lace wrist gloves.

Missiey's dress is a form fitting, calf length, silk lace print. Around the bust is a white-lace applique. Tanya puts Missiey's hair into an elegant up-do. Karen makes her makeup soft. Missiey opted out of the clunky choker that came with the dress going instead with a white lace cameo.



As a surprise and with comfort in mind, Sandy pulls out five small shoe boxes. "Here ladies, I thought about being on our feet all night. Just don't lose them," Sandy says.

They each open their box and inside are a pair of literal ruby-red slippers with cushioned insoles. Just as they begin to jam to "Looking Like Danger" a loud bang on the door startles them. Sandy opens it. Confetti, streamers, balloons, and sounds of horns float into the room.

"Congratulations! Your room has been chosen to be our guests for this evening," Donnie pokes his head through the balloons.

One by one each New Kid walks in as the remaining balloons escort them.

"For the next hour and a half, ladies, you will be the only girl on the boat. After that, you'll be our dates for the remix prom night," Joe says as he takes Kristy's hand and places a corsage on her wrist.

"You look amazing!" Jonathan says, as he takes Missiey's hand, kisses it gently, and slides the delicate flowers on her wrist.

Based on clothing, Donnie, Jordan, and Danny choose to pin the flowers to the dresses of their dates.

"How did you know which girl goes with which guy," Kristy asks Joe.

"If we gave away all our secrets, there would be nothing to look forward to," Joe says.

Kristy blushes, "*God those eyes are so amazing,*" she thinks.

"Shall we," Joe extends his elbow to her.

"Such a gentleman," Kristy says.

Kristy glides with Joe through the corridors of the boat with Victor following close behind. He leads her into a private club area. Light music is playing. The picture window gives a view of the last remaining rays of sunlight that surrounds them. A single candle-lit table for two waits for them in the center of the room under a slowly spinning mirror ball.

"I wanted our dinner on the deck under the real stars, but Jordan won that toss. I hope you don't mind," Joe says.

"Of course I don't mind," Kristy says as she lowers herself into the chair that Joe pulls out.

"So Kristy, tell me about you. We really didn't get a chance to talk earlier," Joe says.

Kristy blushes again.

"I'm from upstate New York," Kristy says.

"Married? Children?" Joe asks.

"I'm engaged, No children yet," Kristy says.

“So tell me about him,” Joe says with a smile as the waiter pours them each a glass of wine.

“His name is Martin. He’s actually from Bristol, England. He moved to the states when he was sixteen and moved to New York to do his residency,” Kristy says.

“Wow, we both fell in love with a foreigner. Helen is packing as we speak to move to Boston,” Joe says.

“So things are serious?” Kristy asks.

“Yes, they are. I didn’t think or even feel like I would be able to love again after Barrett. I was surprised by how easy it was to fall for Helen. I can’t wait to spend the rest of my life with her,” Joe says beaming with pride.

Kristy notices his smile gets bigger the more he talks about Helen. It’s one reason why she has like him over the years. He easily shows how much he cares by his actions.

“I felt the same way when they first love of my life chose his career over me, but it wasn’t like I could really fight what he wanted to do,” Kristy says.

“And what was that?” Joe asks.

“He became a Doctor-without-Borders for an orphanage in Africa,” Kristy says.

“Oh, and you vowed to never love again,” Joe says with a questioning tone.

“No, I just vowed not to love another doctor,” Kristy smiles.

“So naturally you fell for another doctor,” Joe laughs.

“Yep, I thank god every day for a dead squirrel and a broken ankle,” Kristy says.

“I thank god for a crystal award a fan gave me for “Meet Joe Mac” which led me to Barrett and then to Helen,” Joe says, “Have the two of you set the date yet?”

“Next weekend!” Kristy says.

“Wow, and you aren’t going crazy? How’d you get away?” Joe asks.

“My fiancé told me to consider this as my bachelorette party. Not to worry about anything and to enjoy myself and my family is completely insane about everything so he wanted me to get away so I wouldn’t go insane too,” Kristy says.

“You aren’t worried that you’ll only have a few days before the wedding when we get back,” Joe says.

“No, not really, I have complete faith in Martin. He’ll be able to handle everything,” Kristy says.

“Well, in that case, I will do everything in my power to help you have the best weekend until your honeymoon that you have ever had in your life. May I have this dance?” Joe says as he rises from his chair and extends his hand.

Kristy takes his hand and Joe leads her to the center of the dance floor. He spins her and pulls her close. She places her head on his shoulder and closes her eyes. She can’t believe that she is slow dancing with Joe McIntyre. She leans back to look into his eyes. There is slight tug in her heart that she hasn’t felt since the day she met Martin. It is exciting. It is new. It is completely dangerous as she feels her heart begin to race.

Meanwhile, Jonathan leads Missiey to a private dining area that is located on a balcony overlooking the front of the boat. White Christmas lights line the banisters.

“*My god, he is so insanely hot!*” Missiey thinks to herself.

“Is this your first cruise?” Jonathan asks as he leads her to the front of the boat.

“Yes, my friends Sandy and Tanya got me and the other girls on the boat. It’s Kristy’s bachelorette party,” Missiey says as she looks out over the last remnants of the sunset.

“Well, we will have to make sure she has one hell of a party won’t we,” Jonathan says as he steps in behind her.

The air off the water is slightly chilly and Missiey begins to rub her arms. Jonathan politely wraps his tuxedo jacket around her shoulders.

“It can get a bit nippy out here,” Jonathan says.

“I didn’t believe it, but I guess so,” Missiey says.

“So I notice that you have a wedding ring; he must be one lucky guy,” Jonathan says.

“Actually, I have four lucky guys,” Missiey says. She smiles when she sees the momentary judgment on Jonathan’s face, “I have a husband and three boys.”

“Oh! Well that’s a good thing,” Jonathan says.

“I’ve known Luke since high school. We married a few weeks after graduation in 1994. But it was 10 years before we had our first son, Tyler. Two years later, we had Zak. He was a Christmas present and we got a surprise eleven months later when Jon arrived.”

“Really, those are beautiful names,” Jonathan says, “So you are about to celebrate twenty years?”

“Yep, it will be nineteen on June fifth,” Missiey says.

“So your hubby didn’t have a problem naming your youngest Jon,” Jonathan says.

“Nope, he supports me in my obsession; though he only knows that the two of you share a name not a birthday,” Missiey says.

“Wow, so you have me on your arm, you gave your son my name, and we happen to share a birthday,” Jonathan says.

“Yeah,” Missiey smiles, “Luke often says that if I ever got the chance to run away with you I should take it.”

“Really, maybe by the end of the weekend, I will ask you to run away with me,” Jonathan says.

“I may have to take you up on that offer,” Missiey says.

“Would you want to leave your boys behind?” Jonathan says.

“I might not mind to leave the older two, they are terror on legs; but, I won’t be able to leave my sweetie pie Jonathan,” Missiey says, “Although, he is starting to turn out just like his brothers. Luke doesn’t help me with anything. I’ve been a stay at home mom and he goes to work 16 hours a day. So he doesn’t know what it’s like to be home all day with all of them. We had to start homeschooling them because Tyler and Zak got suspended so often. The counselors said it was because they were lacking a stable father figure. Of course, this has caused serious issues in our marriage...”

Missiey takes a momentary breath as Jonathan spins her to face him. She relishes in the fact that he wipes a tear from her cheek and traces her jawline with his thumb. She leans into his touch. It’s so soft and so sincere. It’s as if he really means to touch her that way. It’s something she hasn’t felt since before Jonathan was born. She had forgotten this feeling. She likes this feeling. She welcomes his lips as they meet hers. She wraps her arms around his neck as he envelops her face with his hands. She feels his coat slide to the floor as their tongues mingle and twist together. She twists her neck to allow more access. She moans slightly as he places gentle kisses along her collarbone.

“Oh if he goes any lower I might not be able to stop. Oh God, please go lower,” Missiey thinks to herself as he lines kisses along the top of her dress and winds his way back up the other side. She moans again as Jonathan spins her to face the ocean and lines the back of her neck with

kisses. She feels a slight tug as the eye hook is loosened. She moans as she feels the zipper release.

“Let me take your pain away,” Jonathan whispers in her ear.

She shudders with exciting chills. She turns to face him. Her dress falls to the floor.

“It looks like you are over dressed,” Missiey says as she tugs at his belt.

Together they slide down perfectly on the available blanket that is laid out for a picnic beneath the stars.

Tanya does her best to not react to the fact that Jordan is wearing his powder blue suit from the previous cruise.

“Thank god he’s not wearing the glasses or dancing like a nerd,” she thinks to herself.

“He has a girlfriend,” she tries to convince herself.

“She’s not here. What happens on the boat...” she thinks.

“Seriously, you are going to hell because what happens on the boat naturally gets posted to YouTube within 24 hours. Besides you aren’t ready...” she shakes her head.

“If you aren’t ready then why...”

“Because he’s safe and you still love Jack,” she stares up at the stars.

“Earth to Tanya,” Jordan says.

Tanya refocuses her attention, “Where is everyone?”

“We decided to have separate dates,” Jordan says, “Where were you?”

“Have you lost your mind or was I abducted by aliens?” Tanya says as she steps to the banister.

“You weren’t abducted but you seem a million miles away,” Jordan says.

She is only slightly embarrassed that he caught her thinking about him. She was caught off guard when she thought of another, and she was only slightly surprised that she also thought of Jack.

It happened almost a year ago. It would be exactly a year on the last day of the cruise. They were happy. It was the happiest she had allowed herself to be since she split with her husband in 1997. Sandy always said she was afraid of commitment, but Jack took that fear away from her. She knew that in every fiber of her being from her toenails to the ends of her hair that Jack would never do anything to hurt her and it was for this very reason that she fell so madly and deeply in love with the State Trooper that had pulled her over for a broken tail light.

Everything was going at breakneck speed. Jack surprised her with a ten acre plot of land in the country with a hundred year old house that he refurbished himself. He paid to have her mother’s four-bedroom mobile home that cost a pretty penny to an acre corner of their property. He didn’t mind that Sandy was part of the packaged deal and he became almost as giddy as she did when she found out that she had landed a spot of the cruise. That cruise had been one of the best weekends of her life, but when she returned her world was flipped upside down.

She knew something was wrong when she pulled into the driveway after the long ride home. There were so many cars and police uniforms surrounding her mother and aunt. Jack’s family was in from Pennsylvania. Her knuckles were white against the steering wheel. Her heart began to pound so hard that she felt it was going to come out of her chest and then it began to tighten like someone was squeezing all the life from her. She didn’t want to get out of the car to face the reality. She knew her legs would be Jell-O. Jack’s partner pulled her from the car. She didn’t hear him say I’m sorry, but the last thing she heard for days was Sandy scream, “Oh my

god, you're bleeding." She doesn't remember the funeral for both of them. She doesn't remember putting a ring on him. She doesn't remember the day the bulldozers came to tear down the hundred year old house. It was almost five months later that she began to live again.

"Earth to Tanya again," Jordan says.

She feels Jordan spin her around, "Oh why are you crying?"

"It's nothing," Tanya says as she begins to wipe away the tears.

"It has to be something if you are crying," Jordan says.

Tanya begins to tell him everything she had been through in the last year.

"Tanya, wake up. I have to go the next game show," Jordan says kissing her forehead.

"When did I go to sleep?"

"Somewhere between tearing down the house and finding out that Sandy had a butt load of money," Jordan says, "Maybe we can finish this later tonight," he smiles.

"Yeah maybe," Tanya says.

He leads her to the private area for VIP's only where she reconnects with Kristy.

"Where's Missiey, Karen, and Sandy?" Tanya says.

"Most likely doing exactly what we aren't doing?" Kristy laughs.

"They better not mess up their hair!" Tanya laughs with her and really for the first time since Jack's death and her miscarriage...she breaths.