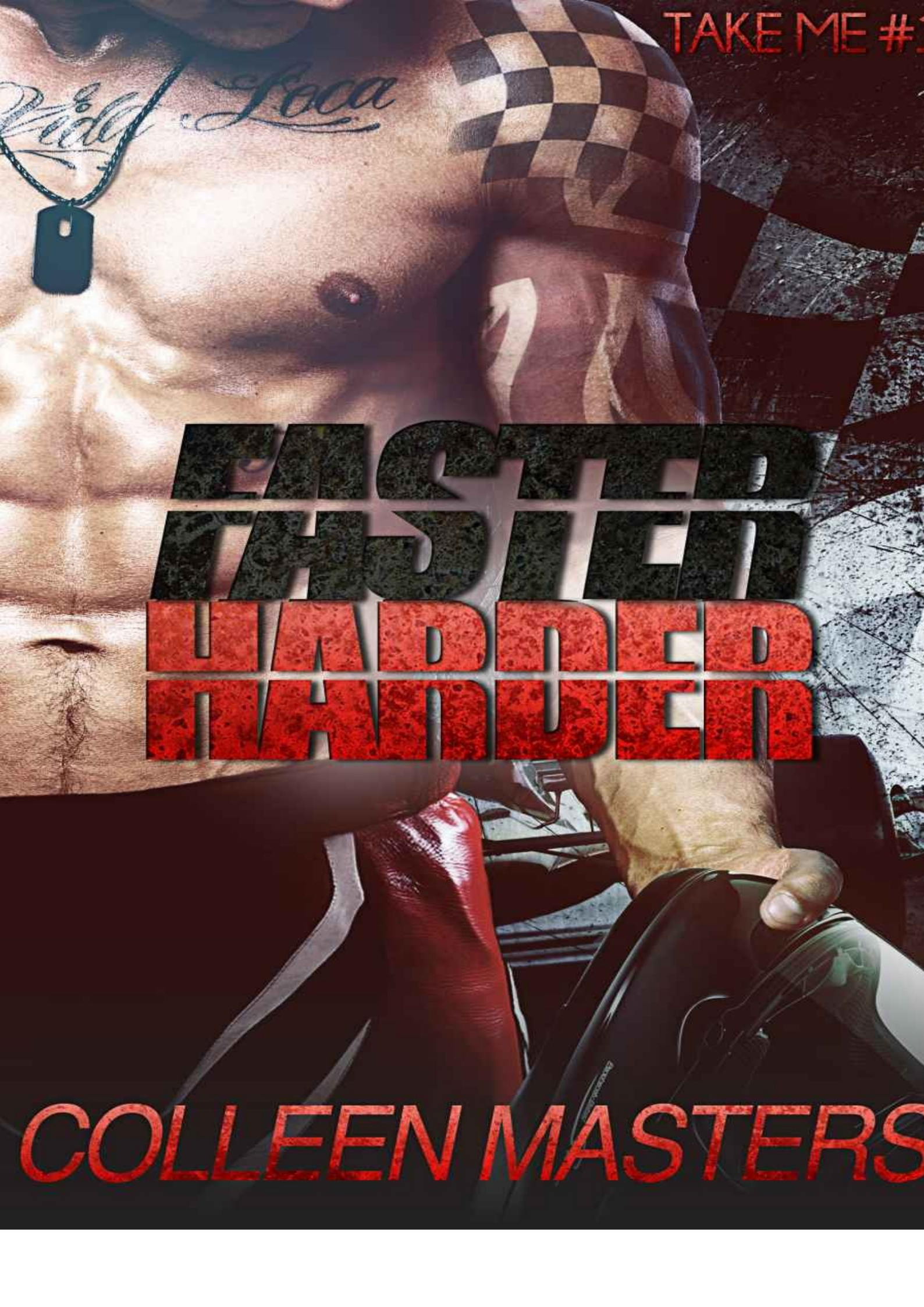


TAKE ME #1



**FASTEST
HARDEST
HARDEST**

COLLEEN MASTERS

FASTER HARDER

Take Me... #1



by Colleen Masters

A Hearts Collective Production

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Forward

Thank you all for reading, *Faster Harder* is the first in a series of books I've been so excited about writing for a long, long time - stay tuned for Book #3 *Faster Longer* due out in December!!

Faster Harder (Take Me... #1)

Faster Deeper (Take Me... #2) OUT NOW

Faster Longer (Take Me... #3) COMING DECEMBER 2013



Other Books by Hearts Collective:

Faster Deeper (Take Me...#2) by Colleen Masters

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Broken Strings by Brynn O'Connor

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Chapter One

In a Barcelona Bathroom



With my back pressed firmly against the plush bathroom wall, I cock an eyebrow at my tattooed companion.

“I’m guessing this is a pretty regular thing for you?” I ask.

His devilish grin stretches wider in response as he slides the bathroom door’s lock into place. Thank god for single stalls that are big enough for double capacity. I have a feeling that I won’t want anyone walking in on us and catching an eyeful of what we’re about to get up to.

“You seem pretty comfortable yourself, Siena,” my mystery man says in a sexy British accent, planting his hands on the wall just above my shoulders. He’s got me boxed in now, and the proximity of his firm, sculpted body to mine is making my temperature soar.

“Blame it on the tequila,” I laugh, tilting my head to the side.

His eyes drink in the sight of me, but still he keeps a few inches of space between us. I wish he would press himself up against me, pin me in place with those powerful hips. But I get the feeling that this man isn’t used to having to make the first move. It’s no wonder, either. With those sharp, impeccably balanced features and an ass you could bounce a quarter off of, he probably doesn’t have to work very hard to get most women crawling after him on their hands and knees.

Thing is, I’m not like most women. Or rather, not like most women this guy would go for. That much is clear.

“Aren’t you going to kiss me, Harrison?” I challenge him, forcing my eyes to stay locked evenly with his. The elegant bathroom stall is spinning rather dizzily around me. If I’d had one more drink back at the bar, I’d be asking for a ride home, rather than a kiss. But I know how to handle myself when it comes to booze. I’m perched on the line between tipsy and drunk, uninhibited and ready for the night to take a sexy turn.

My companion brushes a loose chestnut curl away from my forehead and cups my cheek in his firm hand. He’s teasing me, trying to draw me out...and it’s working. I can feel every fiber of my being calling out for his touch.

“You’re terrible,” I grin, running my fingers down along the hard panes of his chest, the rippled expanse of his abs.

“We’ll see about that,” he says, and presses his ripped body hard against mine.

His full lips find mine, and the taste of him is more intoxicating than any alcohol I’ve consumed tonight. I press my mouth against his, opening myself to him with abandon. He looses a hand, trailing his fingers along my bare thigh. A ripple of anticipation courses through my every nerve, and I bring

my teeth down lightly on his lower lip. He sucks in a breath and grabs my wrists, drawing them up over my head. We lock eyes mischievously for the briefest of moments before letting our lips lock again.

This is not exactly how I'd expected my night on the town to unfold. But I'm certainly not complaining...

I landed in Barcelona fewer than twelve hours ago with the rest of Team Ferrelli, the Formula One racing team that has been synonymous with "family" since the minute I was born. We're here for the Barcelona Grand Prix, the first of many races of the 2013 season.

And while we've certainly got plenty of work to do over the course of this weekend, the boss cut me some slack tonight so that I could see this gorgeous city—I guess it doesn't hurt that the boss happens to be my father.

Alfonso Lazio, my dear old dad, is an F1 racing legend and majority shareholder of Team Ferrelli. He's one of the most famous racers to have ever come out of Italy, as he'll be the first to tell you. Our family is a true racing dynasty—around the track, the name Lazio carries some weight. But after my father, I'm still not the most well-known of our clan, not by a long shot. My older brother Lorenzo, friends and family call him Enzo, is the real celebrity of our brood. Dad's been grooming him since before he could walk to be the next World Champion in our family line. And the way things have been going lately, that might just be the case.

Enzo's been working his way up through the Ferrelli ranks ever since he was a teenager. Though our dad is famous in his own right, Enzo still had to work hard to get where he is today. You don't get to be a champion by name dropping if you can't back your bragging up. Last year, Enzo finished 4th overall, an incredible feat for such a young racer. But this year, he's got his eyes on the big number one.

I visited Enzo's hotel suite before heading out earlier this evening, and sure enough, he was hard at work scrutinizing the Barcelona track.

"Sure you don't want to come with me, Enzo?" I ask, bouncing on the edge of his cushy king bed. "There's this amazing open air nightclub I want to check out."

"By yourself?" Enzo asks, his attention finally wrestled away from the track layout.

"Yeah right," I say, rolling my eyes, "As if dad would ever let me wander off without a chaperone. Charlie's going to take me."

Charlie Spano, son of the Ferrelli team manager Gus, has been tagging along after me since we were kids. We grew up around the race track together, as Gus was my dad's manager before Enzo's. We're both twenty-five, Charlie and I, and it's a pretty common assumption among the team that we'll eventually pair off and settle down. I love Charlie like a brother and always will, but there's no way in hell we're ever going to be a couple. Unfortunately, Charlie hasn't seemed to figure that out

just yet.

“He’ll keep a good eye on you,” Enzo says, turning back to his studies.

“Keep me from meeting anyone interesting, you mean?” I say.

“Exactly,” Enzo smiles.

“You realize that’s a total double standard, right?” I demand, “I’ve lost track of how many F1 groupies you’ve hooked up with over the years, but I can’t even go dancing with the locals without a watch dog?”

“What can I say?” Enzo sighs, “That’s life, Siena. I don’t make the rules.”

“No, that’s Dad’s domain,” I mutter.

Enzo’s dark brows furrow over his rich brown eyes. He hates it when I get annoyed with Dad’s way of running things. My brother and I are practically identical in so many ways. We both inherited my dad’s smooth olive skin, glossy brown hair, and sharp features. From my mother, we got our svelte statures and our whip-like wits. But one thing we’ve never shared is how we feel about our little family. That’s probably because our places within it have always been so different.

My brother has always been Dad’s golden boy, his pride and joy. That’s not to say that he and my mom don’t love me just as much, it’s just a different kind of love. They’ve always protected me, made sure I had every advantage, prepped me so that I could land a man one day and put everyone’s mind at ease.

I’ve always been the pretty daughter that looks nice and polished during my dad’s and brother’s photo ops. It’s nice to be cherished, but sometimes it feels like their expectations for me are insultingly low. I’m sure that deep down my dad respects my ability to lead my own life...but even I have to admit that I question his esteem every now and again.

“Have a good time tonight,” Enzo says, “You know I never party the night before a qualifier.”

“Wouldn’t want the Ferrelli crown prince to get bruised,” I wink.

“Oh, shut up,” Enzo says, shooing me out of his suite.

I skip out of his room and shut the door behind me. As I head toward my own room to get ready for my night on the town, I run smack into a solid wall of muscle. I take a step back and lock eyes with my dad. He and Charlie stand before me in the hotel hallway, my own personal security detail.

“There you are,” my dad says in his thick Italian accent, laying a heavy hand on my slender shoulder, “You had Charlie all worried.”

“I wasn’t worried,” Charlie mutters, “Just—”

“You two take it easy tonight,” Dad barrels on, “We’ve got a long day ahead of us tomorrow. Siena, Bella, we can’t have you looking hung over for the press.”

“I know dad,” I tell him, “Have to look camera ready, as ever.”

“We didn’t make you Enzo’s PR manager for nothing.”

I stifle a sigh—the man has a point. It is my job to keep myself together and sculpt the press that

Enzo gets during the Grand Prix season. That's my way of contributing to the team's success, and I'm damned proud of the work I do.

"Don't worry, Signore Lazio," Charlie says, sidling up next to me. "We'll be good."

"You'd better," my dad says, eyeing the pair of us suspiciously.

I have to fight to keep my eyes from rolling all the way back in my head. The last thing my dad needs to worry about is Charlie and I getting down and dirty.

In the quarter century that we've known each other, the friskiest we've ever gotten was during one very uneventful round of seven minutes in heaven, back when we were twelve. It's not an experience I'm looking to repeat anytime soon.

I set off toward my room and notice that Charlie has yet to leave my side.

"I was just going to get ready," I tell him, sliding my key card into the door.

"I'll keep you company," he says cheerfully, following me into my suite.

Of course, I think to myself, tossing my purse onto the lush queen bed. My room leaves nothing to be desired, that's for sure. One of the perks of traveling around the world with an elite team like Ferrelli is that one never pines for the finer things.

"You can make yourself comfortable over there," I tell Charlie, nodding toward the sitting room, "I'm sure they've got all the channels of porn you could ever want."

"What do I need porn for?" Charlie says cavalierly. "That's for guys who can't get any in real life."

I shrug and go to fetch my makeup. Charlie makes a decent point for himself. By no means is my constant companion unattractive. He's got the slick, preppy, Ivy League thing down to a science. I've lost track of how many women have come scrambling to me after his number...Or how many evil eyes I've gotten from jealous admirers after being seen out and about with him.

Charlie and I were both born in Italy, but grew up in the United States. Our dads, Alfonso and Gus, have been best friends for decades. Charlie and I spent our school years in adjacent boy's and girl's private schools, our summers and vacations as neighbors in Italy, and our college years back in the states—him at Columbia, me at NYU.

I know that he's a catch by anyone's standards...I only wish that I was even slightly attracted to him physically. I suppose that if I don't actually fall in love with anyone by the time I'm sixty, I'll give Charlie another look. But until then, I'm keeping myself open to the possibility of finding someone that I'm actually crazy about.

Hey, a girl can dream. I haven't exactly had the best of luck where love is concerned. Maybe it's because the men of my family are so crazy macho, but I always find myself gravitating to the more beta male soft-spoken types. Not that there's anything wrong with that...it just hasn't left me all that satisfied. Sometimes I worry that I'll never be able to figure out what I really want in a guy.

"Never say never," I mutter to myself, grabbing my favorite slinky sapphire dress from the hotel

closet.

I slip into the bathroom with my dolling-up supplies, check the lock twice, and finally get down to business. It's such a relief to shuck off my prim travel outfit. I'm all for looking professional when I'm on the clock for Team Ferrelli, but there's only so much a girl can do with a pencil skirt and button-down. Tonight, I can finally let my hair down—literally.

Off come the skirt and top I've been locked into all day, down comes the pristine bun that's been keeping my locks in check. I let my eyes settle on my own reflection in the mirrored walls of the bathroom. There's nowhere to hide in a room like this, but I don't much mind.

Standing in my simple baby blue cotton panties and bra, I'm perfectly comfortable with what I see. I've never been stick skinny in my entire life, but my body is strong. My hips, breasts, and ass are full and firm, my legs toned from years of running for pleasure and competition.

My chocolate brown hair falls down my back in loose curls, brushing against my sharp shoulder blades. I know that I'm blessed to have escaped adolescence without any major body insecurities, and for that I'm grateful. But as many times as I hear people telling me how pretty I am, it never makes much a difference to me. This is the skin I've always lived in, after all. And I'm all about making sure that I have more to offer the world than a pretty face.

I slip into my blue shimmery dress, luxuriating in the feel of the fine fabric against my skin. This is by far my favorite item of clothing, and probably my nicest too. My family's always been well-off, but we're not very flashy. My parents are practical people, pragmatic until the end. Even Enzo's public persona is conservative, and F1 racers are not exactly known for their professionalism. All my life, I've had an image to uphold, and I've played my part very well. But still...it's nice to slip into a gorgeous dress and shake it out on the dance floor every once in a while.

Once my hair is arranged into an intentionally messy up-do and my eyes are sufficiently smoky, I step back out into the suite to fetch my escort for the evening. Charlie's jaw all but unhinges as I slip into the sitting room.

"How am I supposed to beat back the ruffians when you go out looking like that?" he demands.

"Who says it's your job to beat them back?" I smile, "Now let's go."

Chapter Two

House Music



We arrive at the club in a flurry of excitement and anticipation. Walking through the vibrant streets of Barcelona, it's impossible not to succumb to the city's infectious charm. Meandering through the surreal winding paths, arriving at the pulsing open-air club, I have the irrepressible feeling that tonight is going to be special. Significant. Possibly sexy.

Throbbing house music beckons us into the club, beating through our bodies the minute we step over the threshold. This place is packed with gorgeous, supple bodies, writhing and twirling in the halcyon light. I eye Charlie, amused by his baffled expression.

"Not exactly like your usual haunts, huh Chuck?" I ask.

"Not by a long shot," he replies, staring as a woman wearing pasties and a thong wanders past. "You sure you don't want to go somewhere more...subdued?"

"Hell no," I tell him, weaving through the stunning crowd, "This is exactly where I want to be tonight."

"Suit yourself," Charlie answers, holding my elbow as I settle into a plush booth. For some reason the gesture really irritates me. I know that my friend is here as something of a guardian, but he takes his job a little too seriously for my liking.

"Why don't you grab us a couple of drinks?" I suggest.

"Sure. White wine?"

"How about a margarita?" I say.

"Siena," Charlie says sternly, "You heard what your dad said. We have to take it easy tonight. We've got—"

"Whatever," I cut him off, "Wine's good."

Charlie makes his way across the crowded club, disappearing into the sea of attractive bodies. My eyes wander across the dance floor. Dozens of Spanish beauties spin and weave beneath the starry sky. Beyond them, Barcelona sprawls out in all its glory, igniting my imagination with possibilities. How can I be expected to sit quietly and sip my Pinot Blanc while the whole world spins madly on all around me?

A jolt of surprise surges through me as my wandering eyes meet another's. Far off across the dance floor, a man I've never seen before in my life has his eyes locked onto me. The intense intimacy of his gaze takes me totally off-guard. Those are bedroom eyes if I've ever seen them. And the face that houses them doesn't make it any easier for me to keep myself composed.

My admirer's features look like they've been carved out of stone. His razor sharp jaw line, full

lips, and aquiline nose are the picture of perfection. But it's his eyes that really snag me. They're the perfect sky blue, crystal clear and deep as the sea that stretches beyond Barcelona's shores. But it's the intent, straightforward nature of those gorgeous orbs that piques my interest. This is clearly a man who's well practiced in getting the things he sets his sights on. And right now, it would seem that his sights are set on me.

"Here you go," Charlie chirps, holding out a glass of wine. A twinge of annoyance crosses my watcher's face, and I have to swallow a chuckle.

"Thanks," I say, taking an eager sip. Charlie and I sit together in comfortable silence as the club moves around us. I lose track of my ardent admirer in the crowd, and feel a tug of regret. I'd never make the first move with a guy like that. I wouldn't even know where to begin.

"You OK Siena?" Charlie asks, "You seem kind of far-off."

"What?" I reply, "Oh...Yeah. Just thinking about the race, I guess."

"You don't need to worry about that," Charlie tells me, laying a friendly hand on mine, "Enzo's going to be great."

I pull my hand away as politely as possible. "I know," I say, "But I can't help but be a little nervous for him."

"I get it," Charlie says, sipping his wine, "It's not like F1 is the safest sport in the world. But Enzo's a careful driver. He knows his vehicle, he knows how to take smart risks on the track. You don't have to be scared for him."

"I'm not scared," I say, "I'm realistic. Accidents happen."

Before Charlie can respond, a smiling waiter appears at my side. I peer up at him questioningly, noting the frosted glass in his hand.

"For you," he tells me, holding out the glass, "From the gentleman at the bar."

I peer around the waiter and spot my handsome watchman. He's leaning against the bar, grinning like we're sharing the juiciest of secrets. His dark denim jeans are cut perfectly for his body, and he manages to make a plain black tee shirt look like the epitome of high fashion. Sleeves of tattoos stand out on his well-defined arms, intricate patterns and pictures that I wouldn't mind getting a closer look at. Muscles strain at the fabric of his clothing, stretching the material taut across his chest and shoulders. He runs a hand through his short dirty blonde hair as I stare at him unabashedly, giving me a devious little wink.

"She already has a drink," Charlie says curtly, crossing his arms over his polo-shirt clad chest. "Thanks anyway."

"With all due respect," the waiter replies in a delicious Spanish accent, "My friend over there suggested that the lady might prefer a real drink."

I bite my lip as a flush rises to Charlie's cheeks. He's one of my closest friends in the world, but it's still good for him to have his ego checked once in a while.

“Thank you,” I tell the waiter, taking the glass from his hands.

“You can’t drink that,” Charlie hisses as the man walks away, “It could be drugged, for all you know.”

I dismiss Charlie’s protestations and lock eyes with my tattooed benefactor. He raises his own glass to me, and I take a sip of my cocktail. The unmistakable taste of tequila entices my taste buds. How did this guy guess that I was jonesing for a margarita? I have to admit, I’m rather impressed.

“It’s not a good habit to get into, accepting drinks from strange men at bars,” Charlie says sullenly.

“He doesn’t look so strange to me,” I reply.

“Oh please,” Charlie laughs, “He’s so not your type.”

“Really?” I reply, “And what, exactly, do you think my type is?”

“Smart guys,” Charlie says, “The quiet, sensitive kind. Not tattooed bad boys with affinities for tequila.”

“Maybe that’s just the type of guy I’ve been settling for,” I say airily.

“Settling?” Charlie says, “That’s nice, Siena. Real nice.”

“What’s your problem?” I ask, “It’s not like I’m talking about you.”

“No...You never seem to be,” Charlie says, turning his gaze from me.

I take a long sip of my frosty drink. All I wanted was to enjoy a carefree night on the town in this beautiful city before the madness of this weekend starts. But instead, I’m stuck babysitting the hurt feelings of this guy who’s been carrying a torch for me for a quarter of a century? Not exactly my idea of a good time.

“You really don’t need to stay if you’re not into this scene,” I tell Charlie, “I can fend for myself, you know.”

“Is this the point in the evening where I’m supposed to take a hint?” he asks.

I swallow down a frustrated retort and let Charlie come to his own conclusions. He looks like the last kid to be picked for the kickball team, he stands and hurries away from me, his half-empty glass of wine collecting condensation on the table.

As Charlie makes his exit, I let my eyes wander back across the bar and dance floor, but my mystery man is nowhere to be found. A bubble of disappointment is just about to pop inside me when I feel a brush of fingertips against my arm.

“How’s the drink love?” says a rich baritone voice from over my shoulder. I turn to find my new tatted-up friend standing casually beside me. His words are cloaked in a delicious British accent, one of my personal weaknesses. If pressed, I don’t think I could come up with a more intriguing man with whom to spend an evening.

“Perfect,” I tell him, as he sits down beside me. “How’d you guess my drink?”

“I’m pretty good at reading people,” he says, grinning at me wickedly.

“How funny,” I tell him, “So am I.”

“Is that so?” he says, “Why don’t you give me a good read, then?”

“Gladly,” I say, taking a sip of my drink, “My read on you is...that you’re used to getting what you want, when you want it.”

“True,” he smiles.

“I also guess that you’re not very familiar with the word no?”

“I don’t have much experience with it, no,” he allows.

“And I imagine that you’ve been practicing that sexy smile in the mirror since you were fourteen years old?” I tease.

“Ten, actually,” he says, “I got a bit of a head start.”

“Should have guessed.”

“Why don’t you come and join me and my friends?” he asks me, offering me his hand.

“Alright,” I agree, cupping his fingers in mine. Little tendrils of sensation skate up my arm as he tightens his grasp. I can tell just from the way he holds my hand that this is a man who’s practiced in touching a woman’s body. But even though I’m dying to know what his touch feels like...elsewhere the fact that he’s so experienced almost makes me want to pull back a little. Make him work even harder than he’s used to.

My companion leads me across the dance floor, and I watch as every person he passes stops and stares. He’s absolutely magnetic, this one, irresistible to anyone in his path. And tonight, he’s chosen me to be at his side. For my part, I’m used to lingering in the background of photo ops for my famous family, so being at someone’s side for once is a nice change of pace.

Together, we approach a throng of four incredibly attractive people and come to a stop. Eight inquisitive eyes swing my way, and I do my best to smile gamely. There’s one other man in the group, a slightly burlier version of my new friend with a boyish grin and shaggy hair. The other three people in the group are all women around my own age.

“I’d like you all to meet my new acquaintance,” says my blue-eyed babe. He leans toward me and whispers in my ear, “This is rather embarrassing, but I’ve yet to ask your name...”

“I’m Siena,” I tell the group.

“Pleasure to meet you Siena,” my companion says, “I’m Harrison.”

“Typical,” says one of the women, a petite red head. “Harrison’s not very good with day-to-day matters, like names and places and deadlines...”

“That’s Sara,” Harrison says, “Getting on my case about things is a hobby of hers.”

“I’m Cora,” offers another of the women, a lanky brunette with freckles across her nose. She lays her hand on the husky man’s arm. “This raggedy bloke is Andy, my husband.”

“Who’re you calling raggedy?” he exclaims, throwing an arm around Cora’s shoulders.

The last of the women offers her slender hand to me with a smile. “I’m Shelby,” she says, tossing her blonde curls back over her shoulder.

“Nice to meet you all,” I say, shaking Shelby’s hand. “I’m guessing by your accents that you’re a British?”

“On the nose,” Andy grins.

“And you sound rather American,” Cora remarks, “We had you pegged for a local.”

“Well, I’m Italian American,” I tell her.

“Ah. Makes sense,” Shelby says, “That’s why you’re not puking up piña coladas in the bathroom. You’re only *slightly* American.”

I raise an eyebrow at the British beauty. Italy may have been the place I was born, but I’m still an American too. I can’t say that I appreciate her brand of humor much.

“Well, it was really nice to meet you all,” I say politely, “Maybe I’ll see you around...”

Harrison catches my arm as I turn to make my exit. “Aren’t you going to stay and grace us with your presence?” he asks.

“I should probably find my friend,” I tell him.

“But you’re in need of another drink,” he insists, “And I’m in need of your company.”

Harrison stays by my side as I step away from the group. He’s persistent, this one. I can’t say that I’m not a little flattered by his attention, but I’m really not the one night stand kind of girl. Surely, that’s what this gorgeous playboy has in mind.

“Come on. One more drink,” he says. It’s a statement, rather than a question.

“I could use one,” I allow, permitting Harrison to steer me toward the bar.

The bartender has another round ready for us by the time we sit down. I settle onto my barstool and take a sip of my refreshing drink.

“What are you, some kind of a regular around here?” I ask Harrison.

“We got in yesterday,” he tells me, “I guess I already made an impression.”

“What brings you to Barcelona?” I ask.

“Work,” he tells me with a knowing smile.

“Me too,” I say, letting my eyes linger on his wonderfully stubbly jaw. God, how I love a little stubble on a man. “What kind of work do you do?”

“I work for a Formula One racing team,” he tells me.

“I should have guessed!” I exclaim, “I do, too. We’re here for the Grand Prix this weekend.”

“Small world,” Harrison smiles, “So what are you, some kind of racing superstar?”

“Hardly,” I grin, “I’m guessing you’re not either. I’d know if you were.”

“That hurts, darling,” he says, clutching his hard stomach as if stabbed.

“I’m just saying,” I tell him, laying a comforting hand on his shoulder. “I’m sure you’re a superstar at...whatever it is you do. Pit crew?”

“Something like that,” he tells me. “But enough shop talk, yeah? Why don’t you come dance with me?”

“Oh...I don’t know,” I demure, sipping my margarita, “I was planning on taking it pretty easy tonight.”

“I can go easy, if you’d like,” he says, “I can go just about any way you like.”

“Oh god,” I laugh, “Please spare me the game-spitting.”

“Fair enough,” he says, “If you dance with me, I promise not to utter one more pickup line for the rest of the night.”

“Cross your heart?”

“Hope to die.”

I take one last sip of my drink and place it back down on the bar. “Fine then,” I say to Harrison, “One dance won’t kill me, I’m sure.”

He threads his fingers through mine and draws me out into the pulsing, swaying crowd. The tightly-packed bodies part before him, and soon we’re engulfed in the teeming sea of beautiful people. Two drinks in, I’m starting to feel pleasantly fuzzy, just loose enough to see what this guy is all about.

The crowd closes in around us as the starry sky whirls overhead. Harrison turns to face me, placing his strong hands on my hips. I let my hands fall on his broad shoulders, swaying to the quick, lively music pulsing through the courtyard. The air is warm, but a cool breeze of the sea feels delightful against my heated skin. I peer up into Harrison’s intense eyes, those blue discs that have held me so entranced all night. There’s the smallest sliver of air between our gyrating bodies, just enough to keep the other guessing.

“You look pretty pensive for a lady in the middle of the dance floor,” Harrison says above the music.

“Just trying to figure you out, Harrison,” I say, tucking a strand of loose hair behind my ear. “There’s something about you that seems so...familiar.”

“That so?” he laughs, “I promise, there’s not much about me to figure out. I live fast, go hard, and will probably die young.”

“How optimistic,” I say sarcastically.

“Nothing wrong with going out early if you’ve made the most of your time,” Harrison says, “I try and live every day at the highest speed I can.”

“Don’t you miss a lot, moving that fast?” I ask.

“Maybe,” Harrison shrugs, “But anything I’ve missed probably wasn’t worth having in the first place.”

“Guess you’ll never know, huh?”

“Are you trying to tell me I move too fast to have you, Siena?” he asks, his breath warm against my neck.

My pulse picks up the pace through my veins as Harrison pulls me against him. All at once, I’m at a loss for any words I may have once known. This complete stranger has me tongue-tied and

stumbling. And I have a feeling he hasn't even gotten started yet.

"However fast you move," I tell him finally, "I'm sure I can keep up."

"And that has yet to be seen?" he asks.

"That's right," I tell him, letting my hands clasp lightly behind his neck. In heels, I'm about five foot eight—but he's still got a good five inches on me. I'm so used to being at eye level with the guy I date, this is a nice change. Not that this is a date, or that Harrison and I would ever date per se...God even my thoughts are flustered.

"I get the feeling that I'm not the type of man you usually spend time with," Harrison says, letting his hands slip around the small of my back.

Jesus, can he read my mind now?

"What makes you say that?" I ask.

"I can just tell this isn't the game you usually play," he says, "You're too present, too honest, to be going through the motions."

"Is that what you're doing, going through the motions?" I ask.

"Not at all," he says, "You're not the kind of woman I usually spend time with either."

It's a good thing that we're dancing in the half-light, because I'm sure that I'm blushing up a storm. Why do I feel so satisfied in knowing that I'm somehow different from the women that Harrison usually pursues?

"And what kind of a woman do you think I am?" I ask Harrison, cocking my head ever-so-slightly to the side.

"I think that you're driven," he says, "And smart as hell, and incredibly smitten with me."

I'm about to retort when the tempo of the music picks up once again. An energetic beat blasts through the club, and I'm suddenly feeling a little out of my league.

"I'm just going to take a second—" I begin.

"Good idea," Harrison says, leading the way off the floor, "I could use another drink."

He escorts me back to the bar, where his posse has already gathered. We meld into the group, and in an instant I'm furnished with another margarita. And even though I know that I need to be awake at six in the morning, even though I've never met these people in my life, even though Harrison is giving me fuck-me eyes like I've never seen before, I have no desire to leave. I haven't felt this reckless, this alive, in years. Maybe even ever.

"You're a bad influence," I tell Harrison, threading my arm through his.

"You love it," he winks.

"Are you here for the Grand Prix too?" Sara asks me, leaning around Harrison to get a better look at me.

"I am," I tell her, "I do PR for one of the drivers."

"Oh, who?" Shelby exclaims, "We're all big fans of F1."

“Enzo Lazio, team Ferrelli,” I reply, “Ever heard of him?”

A collective gasp goes up among the three women, and even the men look at me in awe. I guess they’ve heard of my brother, alright.

“You work for Enzo Lazio?” Cora breathes, “He’s so...*fine*.”

“Hey!” Andy protests.

“Even you’d have to admit you think so too,” Cora tells him.

“That’s true...” Andy sighs, “He’s a dreamboat.”

“What’s he like in real life?” Sara asks, sounding like a little girl at a sleepover.

“He’s the best,” I smile, thinking of my big brother.

I decide to keep the fact that I’m a Lazio as well to myself. These people are obviously F1 buffs, I don’t want them treating me any differently because they know my last name.

“I’m so incredibly jealous,” Shelby pouts, “I wish I got to work for a team like Ferrelli. We’re all stuck slogging away for McClain.”

“What do you mean slogging?” Harrison says defensively, “We came in third overall during last year’s season.”

“Third is a long way from first,” Shelby says pointedly, “Which is, I believe, where Ferrelli placed?”

“That’s right,” I grin, “Three world champion teams in the last ten years. Not too shabby.”

“I’ll say,” Shelby sighs, “How did you get an awesome job like that? You can’t be older than twenty-three.”

“I’m twenty-five,” I correct her. I can’t help but be a bit annoyed with Shelby’s lack of tact and none too subtle competitive streak.

“See? You’re still a baby!” she cries dramatically.

“Leave off, Shell,” Harrison says, “We’ve got a fine team of our own, don’t we?”

“What do you all do for McClain?” I ask.

“I’m just a pit wife,” Cora sighs, “Sara and Shelby are on the social media and marketing team. And Harrison—”

“Good lord, these go down smooth!” Harrison says, polishing off the last of his tequila. “Nothing like Barcelona, am I right?”

“You know what we need?” Sara says mischievously, “A round of shots.”

A cry of agreement goes up through the party. Harrison turns toward me, his eyebrows raised in challenge.

“You game, Miss Siena?” he asks.

“Hell yes,” I say, “Bring it on.”

The bartender quickly supplies us with a round of shots, and Andy raises his glass.

“To the Grand Prix,” he says, “And the grand old shit show that is Formula One!”

“I’ll drink to that!” Harrison shouts.

We knock back our shots, and I’m amazed at how fine the liquor is. This is the kind of stuff that goes down like silk, so that you don’t even know until you’re stumbling into bed just how drunk you’ve gotten.

“I love this music,” I exclaim, swaying in time on my barstool.

“The Spanish know how to stack a playlist,” Harrison says, “Fancy another turn?”

“Are you asking me to dance?” I say, charmed by his accent despite myself.

“Absolutely,” he replies.

“Then yes,” I say, hopping down from my perch.

The colors and lights that sear through my range of vision begin to melt together as the tequila courses through my system. I see Cora and Andy make their way onto the dance floor, while Sara and Shelby are eagerly snatched up by a couple of Norse-looking guys and drawn out to bust a move. But as soon as Harrison and I are on our own again, it’s only him that I have eyes for. How can it be possible to feel so alone, so private, while dancing in a sea of people?

I spin around and press my back against Harrison’s firm chest. His hands fall to my waist, lingering there as I grind my hips against him. I raise my hands into the hair, closing my eyes and savoring the feel of Harrison’s body against mine. The music is too loud for us to hear each other, but I feel like we’re communicating all the same. I turn to face him, draping my arms over his shoulders. His face is mere inches from mine, those full, firm lips within kissing distance at last. I move my hips deliberately, enticingly, as Harrison’s hands slide ever further down along my body. I haven’t felt this free with any other man I’ve danced with, not ever.

“I’m in love with the way you move,” Harrison growls, close to my ear. “I wouldn’t have expected it from you.”

“There’s a lot about me that you couldn’t guess from looking,” I reply, locking my eyes with his, “I’m sure I could say the same about you.”

“You may be right,” he says, “But I guess you’ll just have to find out for yourself.”

“How might I do that?”

“Stick around,” he smiles, “I might just surprise you. And even if I don’t, I can guarantee that you’ll have a hell of a time.”

He presses his hips back against mine, and I gasp as I feel a sudden, throbbing urge fire up in the very core of me. As crazy as it may be to admit, I want this man. The question is...will I let myself have him?

We dance through the next two songs, not speaking a word. Our bodies do plenty of talking on their own. I’m losing myself to the pulsing music, the intoxicating feel of Harrison’s body, the incredible energy of Barcelona after dark. I can’t bring myself to care about tomorrow—all I can do is live for this single moment in time.

“Buy me another shot?” I ask Harrison, as the music fades for the briefest of moments.

“Why sure,” he says, and I lead the way back to the bar.

The bartender spots us coming and produces a pair of shots. “Here you are Mr. Davies,” the man says warmly.

“Davies...” I mutter, “Harrison Davies. Your name sounds familiar.”

“No reason why it should,” Harrison tells me, “Unless you’ve been vacationing in Birmingham of late.”

“Can’t say I’ve had the pleasure.”

“Well, I’m sure we’ll get to know each other plenty, if you’ll be around for the championship,” he says, “You will be around for the championship this year, won’t you?”

“Sure will,” I say, raising my shot glass, “To new friends?”

“Indeed,” he says.

We gulp down our shots and slam them back onto the bar. I’m hovering right on the perfect line of tipsiness. The world around me is loose and full of color, but I’m still completely in control. I swing my gaze toward my handsome companion, drinking in his perfectly balanced features, those strong, sculpted muscles. What if this is the only time we’ll run into each other during the entire season? What if this is the only night I’ll ever get to spend in his dashing company?

He may be a bit more red-blooded than the men I usually go for, but I’m starting to think that might not be such a terrible thing. What’s the worst that I could happen if I actually went for him tonight? I’ve never let myself chase down a guy I’ve actually been attracted to, and I’ve never felt more drawn to anyone than this Harrison Davies. Come what may, I make my decision. It’s time to throw caution to the wind, for once in my life. It’s time to have a spot of fun.

Without saying a word, I lower myself onto the ground and take Harrison’s hand in mine. He looks at me, happily surprised.

“Back to the dance floor?” he asks.

“Not quite,” I reply, tugging him down off his bar stool.

“Are you trying to kill me with suspense, Miss Siena?” he asks.

“Something like that,” I say, and head off into the throbbing crowd. I have no idea where I’m going, or what I even have in mind. All I know is that I want to get this man alone as soon as humanly possible.

Harrison catches my drift and draws up beside me, weaving through the crowd. His hand makes its way to the small of my back, then slides lightly over the swell of my ass. My heart slams against my ribcage at that slightest touch, my body straining with want of his hands all over me.

We duck around a corner and all but sprint down a dimly lit hallway. The corridor is lined with heavy doors, two dozen at least. Harrison chooses one at random, and the door swings open into the hallway. A small, posh bathroom stall is revealed there, and I dart inside, pulling Harrison along

behind me. He presses my shoulders up against the plush wall, and I have to fight to keep from purring with contentment.

“I’m guessing this is a pretty regular thing for you?” I ask.

He locks the door behind us. “You seem pretty comfortable yourself, Siena,”

“Blame it on the tequila,” I say, every cell in my body calling out for him. “Aren’t you going to kiss me, Harrison?”

He’s so close to me now, his powerful body pressed up against mine. I can feel that unmistakable bulge in the front of his jeans, and know that it’s all for me. He’s teasing me, drawing me out until I beg him to kiss me.

“You’re terrible,” I tell him.

“We’ll see about that.”

Finally, our mouths meet. I savor the touch of his lips like the first sip of water after forty days in the desert. Kissing him, I feel like I’ve finally found something I hadn’t realized I’d been missing until now. But now that I’ve felt it...I don’t know how I’ll ever do without again.

Harrison slides his tongue lightly against mine, his fingers running through my fallen curls. I push myself up to meet him, wrapping my strong arms around his waists. He pins me back against the wall, his hands working their way down my body. I gasp as his thumbs brush lightly over my hard nipples, amazed at the sensation he sends searing through me with every glancing touch. I hook my ankles behind him, knowing full well how little fabric separates his pulsing desire from mine.

I let my lips travel down to his scruffy neck, planting kisses as they go. Harrison moans, the sound low in his throat. It sends vibrations through my whole body and his strong hands cup my breasts. I have the wild thought to slip out of my dress, have him right then and there—

“Hello?” someone shouts through the door. A pounding knock startles me down from my perch. “Somebody in there?”

I choke back a giggle, feeling like a high schooler caught making out under the bleachers. Harrison grins down at me and straightens his clothes as best he can. Of course, nothing’s going to hide the impressive rise in his pants anytime soon...

He pushes open the door, and a harried-looking club employee nearly tumbles into us. With a sigh, the young man asks us to make way for other patrons. We skirt around him, stumbling over each other as we make our way back to the dance floor.

A persistent vibration catches me off guard. Is that the music pulsing through me? Or my stifled desire for Harrison?

“I think you’re ringing,” he informs me, gesturing to the clutch I’m amazed to find myself still in possession of.

I dig out my cell phone and squint at the screen. Crap. It’s Charlie calling. I roll my eyes at Harrison and take the call.

“Yeah, what’s up?” I demand.

“I’m outside,” Charlie answers coolly, “Come on. The car’s waiting.”

“I’m not ready to leave yet,” I tell him.

“Siena, it’s nearly two in the morning,” he informs me.

“What?!” I exclaim. How the hell did that much time go by? I need to be awake and ready to go in four hours time.

“Yeah. Exactly. So could you please get your ass out here?” Charlie says, and hangs up the phone.

“Shit. Harrison—”

“Is your coach about to turn into a pumpkin?” he asks.

“Something like that,” I say.

“Go on then,” he tells me, “Get home safe.”

I can’t help but feel a little let down. “You’re not going to try and convince me to stay?”

“Oh, don’t worry. This won’t be the last you see of me,” he says.

Before I can reply, he’s pressed his lips against mine once again. I run my fingers through his dirty blonde locks, wishing I could stay for just a moment longer. But duty calls, and I have to be on my way. I untangle myself from Harrison’s embrace and hurry toward the exit. Stepping out into the warm night, I can finally feel just how drunk I’ve become. Charlie’s not going to be thrilled to see me like this, I’m sure.

I spot one of our team cars idling at the curb and make my way over, fighting to keep any hint of stumble from my gait. I pull open the door and slide in—sure enough, Charlie is waiting for me with arms crossed. He tells the driver that we’re all set, and we start along in chilly silence.

“I’m not going to sit here and lecture you—” he begins.

“Good,” I say.

“But you might want to remember why exactly you’re in Barcelona in the first place. We’re all here to make sure that Enzo kills in the Grand Prix. That’s it. So if you think that making him worry about his baby sister getting roofied is helpful—”

“Don’t play that card, Charlie. It’s getting old.”

“It’s your responsibility to keep your shit together during Grand Prix weekends. You know that. The whole Ferrelli image is based on composure, and professionalism—”

“I’m pretty sure no one’s keeping as close an eye on me as you are, Charlie,” I sigh, “Everyone’s got their eyes locked on Enzo.”

“Not me,” Charlie says quietly, “I’m just trying to look out for you.”

“I know, Charlie,” I say, “But please, for once, just give it a rest.”

We ride along for a spell, not saying a word. But Charlie’s curiosity gets the better of him in no time. “So, who was your new friend?” he asks.

“Just some British guy,” I say lightly, “There were a bunch of people from McClain at the bar.”

“McClain?” Charlie cries, “As in, the best F1 team out of Britain in a decade?”

“The very same.”

“You were fraternizing with McClain?”

“I was talking with some of the team’s staff, yes,” I say hotly, “Just a couple of pit guys and marketing girls. It’s not like I threw my panties at their star driver or anything.”

“Don’t even joke,” Charlie mutters, “You know who their guy is, right? Maxwell Naughton. Best senior driver on their roster.”

“And?” I prompt.

“And, he’s one of the only guys racing this weekend that’s favored to beat your brother.”

“Well, good for him,” I say, “We’ll see how tomorrow goes. I’m sure Enzo will kick his tea-drinking ass right off the track.”

“Atta girl,” Charlie smiles, “There’s the Siena I love.”

I ignore his use of the “I” word and look out over the city as it races by my window. If Charlie had any idea what I’d actually gotten up to tonight, I’m sure he’d have already thrown me out into traffic. All the men on the Ferrelli team are super exclusive. They don’t speak with other teams, let alone drink with them. They’re all very cordial to the competition, but that’s as far as they go. Not that I figure I’ve made some huge faux-pas tonight. After all, it’s not like Harrison’s a well known member of Team McClain. No, this will be my dirty little secret with Mr. Davies, that’s for sure.

At long last, we reach our hotel. I mutter goodnight to Charlie and head up to my room. Once safely inside, I pour myself into bed, a huge smile plastered across my face. Tonight was the most fun I’ve had...ever, I think. I fall asleep in no time, not bothering to take off my sapphire dress first. And as I slip beyond the waking world, my mind’s eye is full of nothing but Harrison. I only hope that I see him again, the sooner the better.

Chapter Three

Qualifying



“Siena...Siena?” says an inquisitive voice from somewhere far, far away.

I’m pulled out of a deep, blissful sleep. As I drift up from my delicious dreaming, my body begins to protest. A dull throbbing begins between my ears, and I can already feel a heavy fog settling in around my brain.

“Siena, you have to wake up,” the voice pleads.

I feel small hands shaking my shoulders, and finally wrench my eyes open. In the dim morning light, I make out the shape of a tiny body perched on the edge of my bed. Bright green eyes peer at me in the semi-darkness, and I struggle to sit up.

“What is it, Bex?” I groan at my companion. Bex Bishop, my best friend from undergrad and Tea Ferrelli’s social media consultant, looks down at me in concern.

“I just got in from the airport,” she tells me, “What the hell happened to you?”

“Went to this club last night,” I tell her.

“Jesus Siena,” she sighs, “You should know by now never to go clubbing without me. I’m the expert, remember?”

This is true. Bex and I met freshman year at NYU, and hit it off from the start. She grew up in the city—her parents raised her in a gorgeous brownstone in the West Village. Bex always knew about the cool clubs, secret shows, and most legit dealers when we were feeling particularly adventurous.

Charlie may be my family-appointed watch dog, but Bex is really the one who’s always had my back. I was thrilled when Ferrelli decided to hire her on, after my recommendation. Traveling around the world with my family and best friend is a total dream come true. This impending hangover, on the other hand? Not so much.

“What time is it?” I ask, swinging my legs over the edge of the bed.

“Five thirty,” she replies.

“Shittttttt,” I moan, propelling myself toward the bathroom.

“Did you fall asleep in that?” Bex says incredulously, “Siena...Are you still wearing makeup? What the hell are you, and what have you done with my best friend?”

“It was...quite an evening,” I tell her, hurrying to turn on the shower.

“Didn’t Charlie keep an eye on you like always?”

“He did. Until someone else swooped in,” I say.

“Spill. Immediately,” Bex demands, scurrying into the bathroom behind me.

My best friend is a slight pixie of a thing, but her will is pure steel. Her conviction is totally

unshakable, as is her loyalty. She's the closest thing I've ever had to a sister. Hell, sometimes I feel closer to her than I do to my actual family, not that I'd ever admit that out loud.

"I met someone," I tell her, stepping out of my dress. After living as roommates for more than five years, Bex and I are no longer at all shy about stripping down in each others' presence.

"Go on," she says, gathering her blonde curls into a messy bun. How she manages to look put together after a re-deye is totally beyond me.

"His name's Harrison," I tell her, "He's one of McClain's pit guys, I think."

"Ooh, how star-crossed," Bex gushes. "McClain...That means he's British?"

"Oh yeah. Accent and all."

"Oh my god. I'm dying," Bex squeals, "What happened? Did you guys...you know?"

"No!" I exclaim, stepping into the shower. "No, of course not."

"Well, why of course not?" she presses, "You're allowed to have a fling or two in your life, my dear Siena. You're a grown woman, after all."

"I know, I know," I say, shivering with delight as the hot water cascades down my body.

"What was he like?" Bex asks, "Your usual type?"

"What type is that?"

"Twerpy as hell."

"Thanks a lot, Bex."

"I only speak the truth," she sniffs.

"No, actually, Harrison's not anything like that," I tell her, "He's all...rugged and shit."

"Rugged?"

"Tatted-up, and muscular. The most amazing eyes you've ever seen—"

"Whoa, Siena!" Bex says, "Are you gushing a little right now?"

"I don't gush, Bex."

"I've never known you to gush, but you're coming every close right now, my friend. He must have really been something."

"He was...something," I say, letting my memory wander back to the feel of him against me.

"Maybe I'll see him around the track."

"You didn't get a number?!"

"There wasn't time—"

"Siena, you infuriating woman," Bex groans, "How the hell are you going to send him scantily clad pictures of your fine self if you don't have a damn phone number?"

"You are absolutely incorrigible, you know that?"

"I know," Bex says, "It's one of my best qualities."

She skips out of the room so I can pull myself together as best I can. Maybe if I refuse to acknowledge my hangover, it will just leave me alone? I let my hair dry in its natural waves and thro

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