

A man and a woman are shown in a close embrace. The man, on the left, has a beard and is wearing a white button-down shirt. The woman, on the right, has blonde hair and is wearing a white, off-the-shoulder, ribbed sweater. They are both looking upwards and smiling. In the background, there is a large, decorated Christmas tree with white and blue ornaments and warm white lights. The scene is set in a room with wood-paneled walls.

Living Deutsch

DAKOTA REBEL

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Going Deutsch
By Dakota Rebel

Going Deutsch

by

Dakota Rebel

As if going to a foreign country on my own wasn't scary enough...

It was supposed to be the trip of a lifetime, but after getting mugged before I even managed to check into my hotel, it's looking more like a total German nightmare.

With no money, no identification and barely a working knowledge of the language, I kind of have no other choice than to rely on the kindness of a stranger. A sweet, handsome stranger.

Now I'm staying in his house, eating his food, and letting him be my tour guide around Germany...and maybe kind of falling for him in the process.

Could this nightmare actually turn itself into a fairy tale?

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Going Deutsch

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Wanna hang out?

[NEWSLETTER](#) -

I know, every author in the world wants you on their newsletter. And I do, too. I send them every Sunday and they are mostly just funny little dives into my life. Plus, if you sign up I'll send you a totally free book.

[BOOKBUB](#) –

If you just want to know when I have a new book out, this would be the easiest way to get alerts.

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If you really, really like me and want to legit hang out with me, come on over to the Rebel Squad on Facebook. I'm in there way more often than I should be, but we have a really great time. Lots of dirty memes, sneak previews and cover reveals. Plus, when I want input on what to write next, or what to include in a book, that's where I go. So come on in! We'd love to have you.

Chapter One

~Hannah Montgomery~

I stood in the middle of the market, staring at the twinkling lights shining from every vendor stall, listening to the string quartet music wafting on the air, and for the first time since leaving the airport, I fully exhaled.

It was hard to believe I was really here. After years of dreaming about spending Christmas in Germany, I'd finally arrived.

And yes, there had been some bumps in the road. My sister bailing on the trip at the last minute so I had to come alone. The airline losing my luggage. The plane landing too late for me to find an open bank that could convert my American money into euros. The hotel not having my room ready, so I couldn't even check in.

But none of that mattered right now. Because right now, I was in a real German Christmas Market. And it was even more beautiful than I'd ever imagined it could be.

I walked slowly through the crowd, perusing the stalls and what they had to offer. I still didn't fully understand the conversion rate of money, so I was hesitant to pull out my credit card and start swiping. But the temptation grew more and more the further I made my way through the square.

As I turned a corner, the smell of freshly baked sweet bread hit me, and I knew that temptation was about to win out. Fresh, buttery Christmas stollen was piled high on a table in

front of me, and I silently prayed that they would take my Master Card.

“Akzeptieren Sie Kreditkarten?” I asked the vendor, using one of the five phrases I’d managed to memorize before hopping on a plane to travel halfway around the world.

“Ja,” the woman said happily, already bagging up a loaf of the sweet, candied fruit bread for me.

Suddenly I was pushed forward from behind, my hips crashing into the table in front of me, causing everything to shake.

I whipped my head around and saw a man running flat out away from me, not even bothering to look back and see if I was okay.

Rude.

“Are you alright?” the woman asked me kindly, reaching over the table to touch my arm.

“Oh, you speak English,” I said with a laugh. “Yes, I’m fine. How much?” I reached into my purse and blinked in confusion as my hand passed all the way through and stuck out the bottom.

I wrenched the bag around and stared down to see that the bottom had been cut out and everything that had been safely nestled inside was now gone.

“That man stole my stuff!” I yelled, turning to run after him, but instead, smacked my face into a very solid chest.

“My men have gone after him,” the chest said in a deep, somewhat gravelly voice. Okay, so the man attached to the

chest said it, but I was still staring a little too hard at the broad expanse of wool peacoat covered pecs to really focus my gaze any higher for a moment. “I am sorry we couldn’t get to you faster.”

I finally forced my gaze upward and felt my jaw slacken as I stared into the bluest eyes I’d ever seen.

“Do not worry,” the man said kindly, giving me a soft smile. “My men are very good. They will find the thief and return your things to you.”

“My things,” I repeated slowly, my brain starting to unfog as I remembered what had just happened. “My things!”

I tried to step around the man, but he placed his hands gently on my shoulders, urging me to stay where I was.

“I have to go!” I insisted, pulling away from his grip. “Oh my God. Oh my God.” I bent over, resting my hands on my thighs as I fought to suck air into my lungs. This wasn’t happening. It couldn’t be happening.

“If you give me your number,” the man said gently, bending over to talk softly into my ear as his hand made slow, calming circles over my back. “I can return your things to you when my men return.”

“My phone was in my purse,” I whispered, blinking back tears and trying desperately not to vomit on this man’s shoes. “With my ID, my passport, all my money and credit cards.”

And then, like a woman in one of those stupid Hallmark Christmas movies...I fainted into the strange man’s arms.

Chapter Two

~Hezekia Gruber~

I caught the hysterical American woman as she fell over, lowering both of us to the ground and resting her head on my leg as I brushed her hair out of her face.

“Shall I call ein krankenwagen Herr Gruber?” Essie asked in her broken English as she rushed out from her bakery stall to check on the fallen woman.

“Nein,” I said, shaking my head. “She doesn’t need a doctor. She needs a miracle.” I blew out a chuckle as I stared down at the beautiful woman still unconscious in my arms.

The only reason I’d even seen the thief rob her was because I’d been watching her already. She’d caught my attention the moment she stepped into the town square, and I’d followed at a respectable distance, practically entranced by her.

Had I been closer, I’d have been able to stop the man from stealing her things, but I’d been nervous to approach, unsure what I would even say to her.

Now look at us. Prone on the ground together, her possessions most likely gone forever, being comforted by a strange man who’d essentially stalked her across the entire market.

The woman’s eyes blinked open, and her brow furrowed as she stared up at me. Then, as she clearly started to remember what had happened, her eyes filled with tears and her lower lip began to tremble softly.

“It will be okay,” I promised her.

“No it won’t,” she said, her glistening eyes narrowing in anger. “My life was in that purse.” She scrambled to stand up and I moved to assist her, but she pulled away from me. “I have to fly back in three days, and I don’t even know how to get home without my passport.”

“Do you have copies you could take to the Embassy?” I asked, desperately trying to be helpful.

“I do,” she said, laughing bitterly. “They’re in my luggage. Which the airline lost. I can’t even check into my hotel. I have no money. I have—”

She started to hyperventilate, and I stepped forward again, placing a hand on her shoulder.

“You will come with me,” I insisted. “We’ll figure this out together.”

“I don’t even know you,” she said, shaking her head. “How do I know you’re not a serial killer?”

“Essie can vouch for me,” I offered, pointing to Essie who was smiling widely at us over the table, having returned to stand behind her stall.

“Herr Gruber is not a killer,” Essie said firmly. “He ist ein milliardär philanthrop.”

“He’s what?” the woman asked, shaking her head.

Thank God for Essie’s broken ass English. This poor woman had been through enough without having to deal with the fact that her rescuer-slash-stalker was a billionaire

philanthropist who was almost as famous as Queen Elizabeth had been throughout Europe.

“I’m a businessman,” I said firmly. “And I’m very active in this community. My family has lived here for generations and if you’d like character witnesses, I could find a few more for you.”

“This is fucking crazy,” the woman muttered. “Sorry. I just...I’m a little overwhelmed.”

“I would imagine,” I agreed. “What is your name?”

“Hannah,” she answered with a sigh. “Hannah Montgomery.”

“You are American, yes?” I clarified.

“Yes,” she said.

“Okay.” I clapped my hands and smiled at her. “We will take you to my home, where you can freshen up and maybe having something to eat. Then we’ll see about getting your luggage found, finding a replacement phone and getting you set to rights.”

“Why would you help me?” she asked cautiously.

“I like to help people,” I answered honestly. “It’s kind of what I do.”

“What’s your name?”

“Hezekiah Gruber,” I told her with a smile. “But you may call me, Hez.”

“Right,” she said, rolling her lower lip between her teeth. “Well, Hez...since you’re so keen to ride to my rescue, could I ask a specific favor?”

“Anything,” I promised her.

“Would you mind paying Essie for the loaf of stollen?”

“I would be happy to,” I said. “But you will have to share.”

“Then you’d better pay her for two loaves,” Hannah said. “I eat when I’m nervous.”

“I eat whenever the mood strikes me,” I responded, grinning at her before turning to Essie. “Six loaves on my account, please. And two jars of quince jelly.”

Essie bagged up my order and handed it to me, but when I tried to take the handles she held firm and gave me a steely stare.

“Herr Gruber,” Essie whispered. “Sei vorsichtig mit ihr.”

“I will,” I promised her. “No harm will come to Hannah in my care.”

Essie nodded as she released the goods into my hand, then turned and smiled at Hannah.

“You come to me if you need anything,” Essie told her. “Bread, jam, or an ear to listen to.”

“Thank you, Essie,” Hannah said. “For everything.”

My phone rang and I handed the bag to Hannah before stepping away to answer.

“Did you catch him?” I growled.

“No,” Simon answered from the other end. “He jumped the bridge and escaped down the footpath into the woods. We

have a description to the police, but I'm not sure we'll get anywhere with it."

"Yeah," I said, blowing out a sigh. "Tell them to watch for any papers coming on the market for a Hannah Montgomery. I'm sure the thief was after cash and just dumped the ID somewhere, but he may try to score with the passport, so best be on the look for it."

"You got it, boss. Anything else?" Simon asked.

"No, just get back here. We're bringing Hannah back with us."

"Whatever you say."

Simon disconnected and I turned to find Hannah still standing by the table, a fistful of stollen in her hand, which she was biting into as if it were an apple.

"The thief has escaped," I told her, reaching into the bag and ripping off a chunk of bread for myself. "But my men have gotten a description to the police and hopefully we will be able to recover your things soon."

"Do you really believe that?" she asked skeptically.

"No," I admitted. "We must hope your luggage is recovered. But if not, I know people and we will find a way to get you what you need. In the meantime, let us head back to my home."

I offered her my arm, which she took, and we headed through the market together toward the parking lot.

"Thank you," she said after a few minutes. "For rescuing me."

“I don’t know,” I answered slowly. “I think that had I let you go after the thief, you probably would have caught him.”

“I was pretty angry,” she agreed with a laugh. “But I’m sure your *men* can run faster than me.” She stopped and turned to look up at me. “What did you mean by that, anyway? Who are your men?”

“They are,” I answered, motioning toward the three men leaning against the black town car that was parked in front of my limousine, which was running to warm up in wait for me to return..

“Who the hell are you?” she asked, turning a narrowed gaze up to me.

“Just a businessman,” I promised her, urging her to start walking again.

Simon ran forward and opened the door for us, and I motioned for Hannah to enter first, then paused to talk to Simon for a moment.

“Call ahead and have Moira ready the East Suite for Hannah,” I murmured. “Have clothes available in...I don’t know...every size? And have someone stock the kitchen. Hannah’s going to be starving once all of this really hits her.”

“Anything else?” Simon asked, raising an eyebrow at me.

“Yeah, clear my calendar for the rest of the week.”

“Hez, what are you doing?” Simon hissed.

“I’m not sure,” I admitted. “Just do it.”

“Whatever you say, brother.” Simon shook his head and stalked back to the town car as I climbed into the limo and shut the door.

I really didn't know what I was doing, but I knew that I wanted to have every single moment free to spend with Hannah while I could. There was something about this woman that was affecting me in a way I didn't understand. But I knew that whatever it was, I really liked it.

Chapter Three

~Hannah~

I think it must have been the shock of being robbed that allowed me to not only get into a stranger's car in a foreign country, but to let him take me to his house as if we were friends and that was a totally normal thing to do.

The longer we drove, the more worried I started to become. We'd left the city proper behind a while ago, and the limo was just following the town car through the winding, forest roads toward who the hell knew where.

"Maybe I should go try to check into my hotel again instead," I said after about twenty minutes of silence between me and Hez.

"I doubt they'll let you check in without identification," he reminded me.

Right. That was probably true. I also didn't have my credit card anymore. God, why hadn't they let me check in? Even if the room wasn't ready, I should have at least been able to start the process.

"When we get back to my place, we'll call whomever you need to back home. Did you leave copies of any of your documents with them?"

I had actually done that. It was one of the many precautions I'd read about online for what to do when traveling to a foreign country. But what no one prepared me for was the idea that I might lose my phone. And with it, the contact information for everyone I knew.

“I don’t know anyone’s phone number,” I admitted, heat flaming at my cheeks in my embarrassment.

“That’s a common issue in this age of technology. But I’m sure you’ll be able to reach someone online, yes? Social media or email?”

Thank God he was thinking clearly. If he hadn’t come along I’d probably still be running through the streets of the market, clutching my pearls and wailing. Maybe he wasn’t a bad guy after all.

“Right,” I agreed as the car came to a stop. “Thank you for helping me tonight.”

“It’s no trouble,” he assured me.

I turned to look out the window just as the car began moving again and noticed that we were passing between two huge wrought iron gates.

“Where are we?” I asked, turning back to look at Hez.

“My home,” he answered with a shrug.

Looking out the window once more, I almost fainted again as we approached a massive castle, complete with a fountain out front and turrets at the top.

“Who the hell are you?” I asked him again, my gaze still locked on the white stone monstrosity he claimed was his home.

“I told you,” he answered, a smirk pulling at his lips. “I’m a businessman.”

“Is that business drugs?” I asked sharply, turning a narrowed gaze toward him.

“No,” he said. “I deal with security.”

“Thanks for vaguing that up for me,” I said, rolling my eyes.

“I own several private security firms,” Hez explained. “We deal in personal protection, cyber security and private investigation. Basically, I am a good guy, Hannah. And while you are with me, no harm will come to you.”

“I feel like that’s something a serial killer would say,” I told him.

“Perhaps,” he agreed, nodding. “But you got into my car, so let’s have a little faith in each other.”

Ugh...he wasn’t wrong. I had gotten into his car, and now here we were, at his *castle*.

I jumped when my door opened and looked up to see one of Hez’s goons smiling down at me, waiting for me to climb out. What in the hell had I gotten myself into with these people?

“Are you getting out?” Hez teased as he opened his own door and stepped out into the cold, night air.

I huffed out a breath then heaved myself to my feet, stepping aside so the suit could shut the door again, then followed Hez up the stairs and into the great hall of his home.

And great it was. The ceiling rivaled most of the cathedral’s I’d visited in America. Beautiful painted scenery stretched forty feet overhead, depicted a rich forest scene.

“Are you hungry? Would you like to freshen up? Perhaps take a nap?” Hez offered, ushering me further inside.

“Actually, I really need a computer. I have to call the airline about my luggage, I need to try to get a replacement phone sent to me, I’ve got to cancel my credit cards and I need to get ahold of my sister, who has my extra copies of all my documents.” I forced myself to stop and look up at Hez again. “Thank you. For everything, truly. But I’m sure you can understand my urgency to get some of this nightmare fixed as quickly as possible.”

“Of course I do,” he assured me. “You can use the computer in my office.”

He led me through a massive sitting room, with plush looking sofas, mahogany bookshelves stuffed to the brim with leather bound books lining every shelf, a fireplace merrily crackling along one wall, and a grand piano tucked into a corner with a massive Christmas bouquet set atop it.

“Seriously dude,” I said as Hez led me through all that splendor without sparing it a second glance. “Who the hell are you?”

He didn’t bother responding, just turned down a hallway and pushed open a door before ushering me inside.

“Whoa.” I looked around in absolute shock as I struggled to focus on all that was going on in the room. One wall had about forty televisions mounted and running on mute, showing stock charts, different news stations from around the world, and one had an old episode of The Dick Van Dyke show running with what appeared to be Russian subtitles.

“You may use this computer over here,” Hez said, once again walking past the excess without seeming to notice it was

there. “Would you like me to stay with you, or shall I give you some privacy?”

“It doesn’t matter,” I answered with a shrug. “If you have things to do, I can find my way back to the hall.”

“Very well,” he said, pulling out the chair behind his desk for me. “Just yell if you need anything.”

He walked out, leaving me alone to figure out how to work the four monitors he had hooked up to the computer. Good lord...I barely knew how to use my MacBook.

It took me a little while to get just one monitor to do what I needed it to do, but once I did, I started trying to log in to my various sites. Unfortunately, much like phone numbers, I didn’t actually remember any of my passwords. And they all wanted to text security codes to me to reset them.

“Ugh!” I cried in frustration, banging my palms on the desk after three failed attempts to login to my email which then locked me out of my account completely.

“Is everything okay?” Hez asked, a smirk on his face as he stepped back into his office.

“No,” I answered, mortified as my voice wobbled.

“It’s okay,” he said, rushing over and resting a hand on my shoulder. “We’ll figure it out. Tell me what’s happening.”

So I explained that I had managed to lock myself out of most of my accounts, and he managed not to laugh out loud at me, but I could see the humor lines creasing his face around his mouth and his eyes.

“It’s not funny,” I insisted as tears filled my gaze. “What the hell am I going to do?”

Chapter Four

~Hez~

I felt bad for finding humor in Hannah's situation, but it was starting to feel like her entire trip was one giant comedy of errors, and it was hard not to see the humor in the situation.

"Right now," I said, reaching out and turning off the monitor. "You're going to come to the kitchen with me. We'll have a nice tea and get to know each other a little better. Then you'll go upstairs and take a nice hot bath, put on some warm pajamas and get some sleep. Things will look much better in the morning."

"I don't have pajamas," she reminded me as she got to her feet. "I don't have anything."

"We'll take care of all of that," I assured her, placing my hand on the small of her back and guiding her out of the room. "You're tired, you've had a stressful day, and none of this will be fixed tonight anyway."

"I am tired," she admitted. "It feels like it's two in the morning."

"Time zones are a bitch," I agreed gently.

"Your house is amazing," she said as we walked into the kitchen. Her voice was steadier than it had been and when I looked down at her I was pleased to see that the tears that had been forming were gone.

"Thank you," I said, getting her settled at the counter before stepping to the hob to prepare tea. "It's been in my

family for nine generations.”

“Wow,” she whispered. “I don’t think my actual *family* goes back that far.”

I chuckled as I turned back to look at her. She was smiling and I was suddenly reminded of why I’d been so fascinated with her in the first place.

When I’d seen her first enter the market, that smile had been on face, lighting it up prettier than the Christmas tree in Dortmund. She’d been in absolute awe of the place, in a way that only a first-time visitor could be.

“What?” she asked, her gaze narrowing as she stared at me.

“Nothing,” I lied, turning back to the kettle and pouring hot water into our mugs. “That was funny.”

“I’m actually quite a funny person,” she assured me. “When I’m not being robbed or stranded in a foreign country.”

“I would imagine that puts a damper on the funny,” I agreed, carrying our mugs over and sliding one to her before sitting across from her and cradling my own cup in my palms. “So, Hannah, what brings you to Germany?”

“Just the usual touristy stuff,” she answered with a shrug. “My sister was supposed to come with me, but she got a better offer and left me on my own.”

“Better than Christmas in Germany?” I scoffed.

“I know, right?” Hannah laughed, the sound light and melodious. “I’ve always dreamed of spending Christmas here. It just seems so magical.”

“Really?” I sipped my tea as I thought about that. I’d traveled all over the world, though I’d grown up in Germany. I’d never much thought about how the holidays might be more special here than other places. It was just...Christmas. It was what I’d always known.

“You don’t think so?” she asked, surprise clear in her tone.

“I mean, yes,” I said slowly. “Germany is my home. But when American children are small, they are threatened with Santa’s naughty list and a lump of coal. Here, we were tortured with warnings of Krampus, who would come steal us away in his sack and beat us with a stick if we misbehaved.”

“Exactly!” Hannah said, her eyes twinkling. “Magic.”

I let out a deep laugh, shocked by her enthusiasm over such a grisly mythology. This girl really was special. And I couldn’t help being secretly pleased that she would be stuck with me for at least another day. I had a feeling that she and I were going to get along quite well, now that her nervousness about me was seeming to fade.

Hannah tried to stifle a yawn, but I knew it was my cue to let her get to bed.

“Come with me,” I insisted. “I’ll get you settled in your rooms. I promise you that things will look brighter in the morning.”

She followed me to the stairs and across the house to the suite of rooms I’d requested be set up for her. When I opened the door I was pleased to see a fire already going in the

fireplace, the bed turned down and the lights blazing to welcome her.

“I hope this will be okay,” I told her, walking across the room and opening one of the drawers of the dresser beside the bed. “Each drawer should be stocked with different sizes for you, as no one on my staff would dare to ask or guess incorrectly.”

“That’s thoughtful,” Hannah said, her mouth ticking down into a small frown. “But entirely unnecessary.”

“You are a guest in my home,” I argued. “Your comfort is the height of necessity.” I walked around to the other side of the bed and opened the drawer in the nightstand for her. “If you need anything, just pick up this phone and dial one-one-one to reach my room.”

“Seriously?” She raised an eyebrow.

“It’s a big house,” I reminded her, closing the drawer again. “The en suite is through there. It should be fully stocked with toiletries for you as well.”

“This is a bit much,” Hannah admitted.

“Get some sleep,” I insisted. “Tomorrow we’ll see about getting things set to right.”

“Okay.” She sat down on the bed and stared down at her hands which were resting in her lap. “Thank you.”

“It is my pleasure,” I assured her. I walked over to her and lifted her chin with my finger, making her meet my gaze. “Anything you need, I’m down the hall.”

Before I could chicken out, I leaned down and pressed a soft kiss to her forehead.

When I pulled away again, Hannah was smiling up at me.

“Good night, Hannah,” I whispered, stepping away before I forgot myself completely and claimed her lips in a moment of weakness.

“Good night, Hez,” she answered.

I walked out and closed the door behind myself, leaning against the wall for a moment as I let out a long, slow breath.

God, she was incredible. And while I knew that I was going to have to help her recover or replace her things...I couldn't help thinking about ways I might be able to stall that in order to get extra time with her.

Chapter Five

~Hannah~

I woke the next morning to sun streaming through the gauzy curtains of my room and for just a moment, I forgot the nightmare of the evening before, and I smiled.

The bed was toasty warm, I felt as if I'd slept better than I had in forever, and I was waking up in Germany.

But then it all crashed down around me. I wasn't just *in* Germany, I was stranded in Germany with no passport, no money and mooching off the kindness of a handsome stranger.

I desperately wanted to believe that Hez was just a good guy. But what kind of man seriously brought home a woman he'd just met and offered her tea and a gorgeous room and... those kinds of things didn't happen.

And why was his English so damned good? He was clearly German. His house had been in his family for eons. And the people at the market certainly knew him.

Something was rotten in Hamburg, and I was going to get to the bottom of it...right after I found some clothes and some more stollen. Cause damn...Frankenmuth had nothing on authentic German sweet bread.

I climbed out of bed and rifled through the dresser, finding a pair of leggings and a tunic sweater in my size, along with under garments. As I stared at the clothes in my hand, I couldn't help wondering why the hell he had an assortment of women's clothes at the ready.

Did he often bring home strange women and give them their own room? Had I stumbled into some weird *Fifty Shades of Grey* scenario?

I tossed the clothes onto the bed and opened the bedside drawer, picking up the phone and dialing the number Hez had given me the night before.

“Good morning,” he said brightly, answering on the first ring as if he’d been waiting for my call.

“Get in here,” I barked before slamming the phone back into the cradle.

I crossed my arms over my chest and glared at the door, wanting my angry face to be the first thing he saw when he entered.

But after five minutes of waiting, I finally had to relax my arms and I sat on the edge of the bed, drumming my fingers on the mattress as I waited impatiently for him to show up.

Finally, another five minutes later, there was a soft knock on the door and Hez entered, one hand balancing a tray as he stepped inside.

“Did you sleep well?” he asked, walking over and putting the tray onto the table next to the bed.

“What is that?” I asked, staring down at the plates full of pastry as well as an assortment of beverages.

“Breakfast,” he answered, his tone implying that it should have been obvious.

“Okay, what the hell is going on here?” I asked, getting to my feet and regaining my annoyed stance. “What is all this?”

“Well, those are bear claws,” he said, pointedly ignoring my attitude as he motioned toward the food. “And there’s stollen with quince jam. Mini quiches. And I wasn’t sure what you’d like to drink so I have tea, coffee and a bottle of water. If you prefer juice, I can run and get you some.”

“Stop!” I said, reaching out and placing my hands on his chest. “Just stop. This is crazy.”

“What’s crazy?” he asked, raising any eyebrow but not moving to remove my hands from him.

“Why do you have women’s clothes categorized by size in the dresser? Why are you bringing me breakfast? You’ve already done more than most people would to help me. What do you want from me? Because I am not Anastasia Steele and I have no interest in your sex dungeon.”

“That’s a lot to process,” he said, his brow furrowing as he covered my hands with his own. “I don’t know who this Anastasia person is, but I can assure you that there is no dungeon...sex or otherwise. And I’m helping you because I can.” He squeezed my fingers gently. “And when I realized you would be staying with me, I had the housekeeper go out and buy basics that you might need so you would be comfortable until we could recover your luggage.”

“Yeah...I don’t understand that,” I admitted, pulling my hands free of his.

“Probably because you’re American,” he replied with a smirk. “Europeans try to be friendly and accommodating. Americans tend to look out only for themselves.”

Okay, so that was rude...and also true.

“I still don’t understand,” I said lamely.

“I don’t know if I can explain it to you any clearer,” Hez said softly. “I like you. I have the means to help you out of a terrible situation, and I’d like to do it. I don’t expect anything in return.”

“Yeah...still don’t understand,” I said with a laugh. “But thank you, I guess.”

“Your gratitude astounds me,” he teased. “Now, eat something and get dressed. We have a busy day ahead of us.”

Yeah, I guess we did. Trying to recover my entire life was going to be a giant pain in the ass. And I was actually grateful to have Hez’s help. Even if it was hard for me to trust it.

“Can you find your way downstairs?” Hez asked.

“I believe so,” I assured him. “Thank you. Truly. For everything.”

“It is of no consequence,” he said. “I’ll see you downstairs.”

He turned and headed out, leaving me alone with a tray full of food, a dresser full of clothes, and a heart full of worry.

The thing was, I really wanted to believe that he was a good man. Because I liked him, too. A lot. Not only was he incredibly handsome, and clearly rich as hell, but there was

just something about him that made want to feel comfortable in his presence.

As I sipped my coffee I let myself think about the situation objectively. Damsel in distress aside, Hez was exactly the kind of man I would want to get to know. He was smart and funny and had excellent taste in confections. He was exceedingly kind, appeared to be well liked in his community.

All in all...he was kind of perfect.

I'd come to Germany in search of magic and adventure, and it seemed I was being handed that on a silver platter. And it came with quince jam.

Maybe I should stop fighting against my good fortune, which granted had come at the cost of a metric ton of bad luck and start to see this situation as the blessing that it was.

What if Hezekiah Gruber had been put in my path for a reason? What if he was my Christmas magic that I'd been searching for?

Or, what if I was a giant moron who was searching for a fairy tale and was about to get the Grimm's version?

As I stood and went to take a shower I figured worrying wasn't going to do me any good. I was going to get whatever version I was going to get. And in the meantime, I may as well enjoy the ride.

Chapter Six

~Hez~

Sex dungeon?

Americans were so weird.

“How is my future sister-in-law settling in?” Simon asked when I walked into the kitchen to get myself coffee.

“Hush,” I hissed, looking behind me in case Hannah had decided to follow me down. Thankfully she was nowhere in sight. “Don’t say shit like that.”

“Dude, I’ve never seen you look at anyone the way you looked at her last night,” Simon teased. “Hell, I’ve never seen you look at anyone, full stop. I was starting to wonder if you were just asexual. Which would be cool with me, by the way.”

“I’m not asexual,” I assured him. “I’m busy. There’s a difference.”

“Yes,” Simon agreed solemnly. “Busy making the money instead of busy making the whoopie.”

“Oh my God,” I groaned. “You’re going to be a nightmare about this, aren’t you?”

“Just call me Krampus,” he answered with a grin. “What’s on the docket today, boss?”

“We need to help Hannah get into her email account,” I said, sitting across from him and gripping my mug between my hands. “She locked herself out, so if you could call the cyber division of...whatever provider she uses, and get it

unlocked for her, we'll start there. But you don't have to be quick about it."

"Right. No problem. And what are you going to do?" Simon asked, raising an eyebrow at me.

"Everything I can to stall her," I admitted. "She came here to see Germany, and I'm going to be the one to show it to her."

"Be careful," Simon said gently. "She will go home eventually. I don't want to see you fall for this girl and end up with a broken heart."

"I'll be fine," I promised him.

The truth was, I couldn't help hoping that maybe she wouldn't go home. Maybe she'd fall for me, and we'd live happily ever after together. Which was stupid. I barely knew her, and I had no reason to think we were about to fall madly in love with each other.

Other than the fact that I was pretty sure I *was* already falling for her.

"Good morning Ms. Montgomery," Simon said brightly, causing me to turn to the door to see Hannah standing there.

"Good morning," she answered, giving him a small smile. "I'm so sorry, I didn't catch your name last night."

"Simon," my brother told her with a small nod.

"Simon?" Hannah tilted her head and stared at him for a moment, then looked over at me and grinned.

"Hez and Simon Gruber?"

"Yes," I confirmed, not sure what she found so amusing.

“Well, I’m very sorry about your other brother,” she said.

Simon and I exchanged a look of confusion before turning back to her again.

“Nakatomi Plaza? Christmas 1988?” Her eyes widened as she continued to look between us. “You guys have never seen Die Hard?”

“No,” I answered, shaking my head. “Simon?”

“Can’t say that I have,” Simon answered, clearly as confused as I was.

“Oh my gosh!” Hannah exclaimed. “It’s only the best Christmas movie of all time. We all need to watch it.”

“I’m sure that can be arranged,” I assured her. “Perhaps after dinner tonight.”

“Okay,” she agreed. “I mean, if I’m still here.”

“Where else would you be?” I asked her, my brow furrowing in confusion.

“My hotel,” she answered, her tone indicating that should have been obvious.

“Nonsense,” I scoffed, waving her answer away with my hand. “Even if we do manage to recover your things, I think you’ll be more comfortable here for the duration of your stay.”

“I don’t think—”

“Simon is going to help you get access to your email,” I interrupted, not wanting to give her time to argue. “If you

could give him your email address, he will be able to unlock it for you.”

“Okay,” she said slowly, narrowing her gaze at me. “But we aren’t done talking about this.”

“Of course not,” I agreed. “But we have much to do today, and we’d best get started.” I drained my coffee then stood and placed the mug in the sink. “Get your coat.”

“My coat? Where are we going?” she asked, surprise coloring her tone.

“Out,” I said firmly.

“No. No, no, no,” she insisted. “I have to call the airline, I need to get my phone replaced, I need to get ahold of my sister.”

“And we will do all of that,” I promised her. “From the car.”

“I don’t think that’s a good idea,” she argued.

“Look, you’re only here for a short time, yes?” I asked, raising an eyebrow at her.

“Yes,” she admitted. “Two more days.”

“And do you want to spend your entire trip indoors, trying to figure out how to get home, or do you want to actually see Hamburg?” I challenged.

“Don’t do that,” she complained, rolling her eyes at me.

“Do what?”

“Use logic to win an argument,” she said, huffing out a sigh.

“Shall we, then?” I asked, careful to keep my face calm and not smirk at her.

“I suppose I could go out for a while,” she agreed.

“If you write down your email address,” Simon said, handing Hannah a piece of paper and a pen. “I’ll have this part taken care of by time you return.”

“How exactly are you going to do that?” Hannah asked, scribbling her information down.

“I’m going to ask nicely,” Simon said, taking the paper back and walking away.

“German’s are so weird,” Hannah mumbled.

“Funny,” I told her as I led her toward the hall. “I was just thinking the same thing about Americans.”

Chapter Seven

~Hannah~

“I’m sorry,” I said into the phone, trying desperately not to start crying. Or screaming. “You did *what* with my luggage?”

“Your luggage was located and sent to Detroit Metro Airport, as requested,” the agent said cheerfully.

“No. Not as requested,” I argued. “I’m in Germany. My luggage was in route to Germany. Why the hell would you send it all the way back to Detroit when I’m here?”

“I’m very sorry,” the agent said, her voice still far too chipper. “Our records indicate that your belongings were to be forwarded to DTW when found.”

I closed my eyes and counted to ten before speaking again.

“And how do I get it routed back here to Germany?” I asked through clenched teeth.

“Oh, I’m sorry,” she said, clearly not remotely sorry. “We’re unable to redirect lost luggage once it has been located and returned.”

“*You* lost it!” I snapped. “So, there’s nothing that can be done?”

“Not at this point,” the woman said. “Is there anything else I can do for you today Ms. Montgomery?”

Several colorful responses came to mind, but I figured it wouldn’t be a good idea to insult the airline that I was due to

fly back within a couple days.

“No, I suppose that’s all I needed,” I said.

“Thank you for choosing our airline,” she said, voice still full of sunshine and rainbows. “If you’ll stay on the line, we’d appreciate your feedback to a brief survey.”

“I don’t think you want me to do that,” I snapped, then hung up on her.

“More bad news?” Hez asked cautiously.

“They sent my luggage back to Detroit,” I informed him with a sigh. “So now, I have no way to get my stuff and no way to get a new phone.”

That had been another disastrous phone call where I’d been informed that the phone company could only expedite replacement phones to the address on file, and that to pick one up at a local store, I’d need photo ID.

“It’s all going to work out,” Hez promised me, though there was no way he could possibly know that. “Let’s just try to enjoy the day and when we get home we’ll see if Simon had any luck accessing your email.”

I knew he was right. There was nothing I could do about the luggage or the phone. I just had to hope that my sister could send me the copies of my passport and driver’s license and that the US Embassy would accept them to issue me a new passport, so I’d be able to fly home.

In the meantime, I may as well do what I’d come to Germany to do in the first place. And, I had the added bonus of having a handsome, German tour guide to show me the best

parts of Hamburg. Plus, I got to ride in a limousine. So there were definitely some silver linings to be seen if I let myself.

“So, where are we going?” I asked, forcing myself to relax back against the buttery leather seats.

“I thought we’d walk around *Planten un Blomen*. Maybe do some ice-skating and visit the tropical gardens,” he suggested. “Then lunch at a café, maybe a couple museums and dinner at *Haerlin* tonight.”

“Wow,” I said, staring at him. “That all sounds amazing.” And kind of romantic, not that I’d admit that to him out loud. “I mean, except the ice-skating part. I don’t know how to do that.”

“It’s easy,” he assured me, giving me a wide smile that made laugh lines appear around his bright blue eyes. “I’ll teach you.”

“Or,” I suggested hopefully. “We could just...not.”

“That is always an option,” he agreed, his smile slipping as he leaned forward and took my hand in his. “Hannah, I promise you that we will figure this out. For today, can you try to relax and have fun?”

“I will try,” I promised him, oddly comforted by his assurance. “Because I do want to have fun while I’m here. I’m just scared.”

“I know.” He squeezed my fingers gently. “But I will take care of everything.”

“I still don’t understand why you’re being so nice to me,” I admitted, twisting my hand to thread my fingers through his. “But I’m very glad I met you.”

“Yeah, the limo has that effect on people,” he teased, giving me a small wink that made me laugh.

I really hoped that Hez was as sweet as he seemed. So far, he hadn't really given me cause to doubt that he was. But it was hard not to expect a different shoe to drop at any moment.

If nothing else, this trip was supposed to be a once in a lifetime adventure, and I couldn't deny that so far it certainly had been that.

When we arrived at the park, Hez took my hand in his, the movement so casual it felt as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Our fingers thread together once more as he led me to the tropical gardens.

Once inside, I'd expected him to release me, but he didn't. And we strolled around, hand in hand, admiring the flora and fauna that seemed to magically flourish in the greenhouse, considering the frigid temperatures outdoors.

“So,” Hez said after a while. “You've met my family, you know what I do and where I live, but I really know nothing about you.”

“There's not much to tell,” I admitted with a shrug. “I do data entry for an insurance company in Detroit. I have a younger sister who is flighty but incredible. And my first international trip has been...interesting.”

“This is your first time out of the USA?” he asked, his tone colored with surprise.

“Yeah,” I said. “And let me tell you, I love Germany, but I'm not impressed with the overall experience.”

“I’m sorry you feel that way,” he said sadly. “We’ll have to see what we can do to change your opinion.”

“I didn’t mean you,” I said, pulling him to a stop and pausing until he looked at me. “You’ve been incredible. I don’t know what I would have done if you hadn’t found me. I just meant the mugging and the luggage fiasco.”

“I know that,” he assured me with a small smile. “I just meant that it was unfortunate that you’ve had such bad luck with your very first trip abroad. I love to travel, I’ve done it my entire life. And I hope that this experience will not keep you from trying again in the future.” He squeezed my hand gently. “Should you decide to return to Germany in the future, you will have access to my home...and my company should you wish it.”

“Yeah, you might need to come to me,” I said with a laugh.

I sucked in a breath as I realized what I’d just implied. Why the hell would he be interested in visiting with me? I was just some girl he was helping...wasn’t I?

“I would like that very much,” he admitted.

We started walking again, I stared around at the plants some more, but my mind was racing. Why had I said that? Did I want him to come see me after I went home? Were we becoming friends? Or was it possible that this could turn into something more?

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I’d actually like to see him again. I couldn’t pretend that we were going to fall madly in love. We lived across an ocean from

each other. There was long distance, and then there was intercontinental. It would be foolish to consider that we could have anything romantic between us.

But for the first time in my life...I realized that I wished we could.

I'd never given much thought to dating. At twenty-five I figured I had the rest of my life to think about finding a man and settling down. High School and college had been all about studying and saving every penny I could to live out this dream of Christmas in Germany.

But now that I'd achieved that, it was time to start planning a new dream. A new goal. And maybe I was finally ready to start thinking about romance and love and the rest of my future.

I looked over at Hez and couldn't help wishing that things were different. That we'd met under better circumstances. Like him living anywhere near me. Because he was someone I actually could see myself spending the rest of my life with.

Stop it, I chided myself. I barely knew this man. I had no right to start thinking like that. Letting myself believe that Hez and I could have some kind of future together was only going to set myself up for heartbreak. And that was one thing I definitely didn't need to experience in Germany.

I promised myself that I would let myself enjoy the day, but that was all. No thoughts of the future. And absolutely no falling in love.

“No, no, no,” I squealed, clinging to Hez as tightly as I could. “Don’t let go.”

“You’ll be fine,” he insisted, chuckling as he tried to pry my gloved fingers from their death grip on his arms. “Just relax your body and go.”

“I don’t want to go,” I whined, even as I slackened my grip and allowed some space between our bodies.

I wasn’t even sure how I’d allowed him to talk me into getting on the ice with him, but now that we were there, I regretted it just as much as I thought I would.

“Okay,” he said softly, backing away but clasping my hands in his. “Now just push off with one foot and let the blade glide.”

One minute I thought I was doing what he said, and the next we were laying on the ice, my body on top of his as people around us laughed on their way past.

“That was good,” he lied. “But next time, just push with one foot.”

“No next time,” I pleaded as I shoved myself off of him and struggled to kneel on the ice.

“We can go,” he said, deftly getting to his feet and offering me his hands once more to help pull me to my feet.

I stumbled into him, and he held me firmly, managing to keep us both upright this time.

For a moment, we stood there, practically embracing our gazes locked on one another...and then it began to softly snow.

I blinked up toward the sky, watching fat, white flakes float down around us, and it was like a scene out of a movie. I was in Germany, in the arms of a handsome man, skating in the snow at Christmas time. Okay, so skating was a stretch... but still.

Hez reached up and brushed a lock of hair from my face, his head tilting to the side as he raked his gaze over me. Honestly, I'd thought he was going to kiss me, and right there in the ultimate winter wonderland fantasy-scape, I would have let him.

But then I slipped again, and we went crashing to the ice once more and the moment was broken.

"Can we go?" I asked him.

"Of course," he agreed, smiling at me as he once again got gracefully to his feet and pulled me awkwardly to mine.

We'd spent far longer at the park than I'd expected and by time we returned our skates and made our way back to the car, the snow was coming down harder and it was beginning to grow dark.

"Shall we get dinner?" Hez asked as he opened the car door for me and allowed me to slide into the warmth.

"I could eat," I admitted. "But I'd like to change first. My pants are wet from the ice."

He climbed in after me and shut the door before turning to face me.

"I'd wanted to take you somewhere nice, but if you prefer we could order in and stay at the house," he offered.

“That would be great, actually,” I admitted. “I’d like to see if Simon was able to unlock my email. And then we could watch Die Hard together.”

It amazed me that he and his brother had never seen it. I’d thought my Hans Gruber joke was hilarious and had been slightly disappointed it had fallen so flat with the men.

“As you wish,” Hez said, then leaned forward toward the open partition. “Nik, take us home please.”

The word *home* made something knot painfully in my throat, and to my horror I felt my eyes fill with tears. I turned quickly toward the window, so Hez wouldn’t see as I forced myself to calm the hell down.

I wanted to go home. Of course I did. My family was there and my friends and my job and my life. But deep down, I was starting to feel like I was already home. Like Germany was doing everything in it’s power to keep me there.

“Scheisse,” Hez hissed violently, causing me to turn and look at him in surprise.

“Is everything okay?” I asked, my brow furrowing as I noticed the agitated look on his face.

“Fine,” he said, shaking his head. “You know how to swear in German?”

“Sort of.” I laughed softly. “I only know a little German. A few swear words, do you take credit cards, where is the toilet, thank you, I’m sorry and excuse me.”

“Sounds like you have all your bases covered,” he teased. “And here I worked to become fluent in multiple

languages when I could have used your short cut and saved myself a lot of hassle.”

“Clearly I’m a pro at international travel,” I joked, but my humor died as a thought occurred to me. I grabbed Hez’s arm and looked at his watch then groaned when I saw it was after six in the evening. “Is the embassy going to be open tomorrow?”

“I don’t think so,” he said, his expression telling me he realized the same thing I did. “They’re not usually open on Sundays. And Monday is Christmas Eve...”

“And Tuesday is Christmas,” I finished, leaning back in my seat and blowing out a heavy sigh. “I’m going to be stuck here.”

“Not necessarily,” he offered. “Let’s take things one piece at a time, okay? Simon was able to get access to your email, so you can reach out and see if someone can send you copies of your documents. Just focus on that for now, okay? And when that’s done, we’ll figure out next the next step.”

He was so calm and reasoned, that it forced me to chill out a little. He was right. If I couldn’t get my sister to answer me, then there was no point worrying about the embassy hours anyway, because I’d have nothing to take them.

One thing at time.

First, food. Then email. Then movie.

I could do this.

Chapter Eight

~Hez~

The mature, gentlemanly thing to do would have been to tell her that the text I'd received that had upset me so much had been from my brother, telling me that the police had recovered her documents.

But then I would have had to explain to her why I'd been so upset by it. Also, I was worried that she would want to check in to her hotel and leave me. And I wasn't ready to let her go yet.

I knew I'd have to tell her eventually. I couldn't actually allow her to miss her flight and remain stranded in Germany through Christmas. She no doubt wanted to return to her family, and she'd never forgive me if I lied to her.

So I would tell her...tomorrow. In time to take her to the airport and watch her walk out of my life forever.

I just wanted one more night with her.

I texted Simon to let him know that we would be sharing the good news with Hannah in the morning, and that he was to ensure there was food ready for our return, and to make himself scarce.

The police will be dropping her things by the house, was the text I received back from him. *And you're a fucking idiot.*

That was fair. I was a fucking idiot.

When we arrived back at the house, Moira, my housekeeper, was waiting by the door to take our coats.

“In der küche ist das abendessen fertig,” she said. “Soll ich dienen?”

“Nein,” I assured her. “Wir können das schaffen. Danke.”

Moira smiled and walked off to put our things away.

“What was that?” Hannah asked, a bemused smile on her face. “All I caught was the thanks.”

“She said dinner was ready,” I explained, motioning for Hannah to follow me to the kitchen. “And I assured her that we can serve ourselves.”

“Holy moly!” Hannah exclaimed as she took in the spread that had been laid out for us. “Who else is coming?”

“It’s just us,” I assured her.

“There’s enough food here for an army,” she said with a laugh, shaking her head.

“Or two very hungry ice skaters,” I teased. “Shall we watch your movie while we eat or is that too uncouth?”

“I’m fine eating in front of a television,” she answered. “We Americans are quite the uncouth breed.”

“Thank goodness for small favors,” I told her, grinning as I handed her a plate.

Moira had gone a little overboard, but since I so rarely entertained guests, she was probably happy to have an opportunity to feed someone other than Simon and myself.

“Should I open a bottle of wine as well?” I suggested as she picked sausages and cheeses and fruit from the platters on the table.

“That would be lovely,” she agreed.

So we gathered our food and our drinks and headed into the living room, where I queued up the movie while Hannah settled in on the sofa.

We ate and drank our way through the first bottle of wine while I tried desperately to understand this Die Hard movie she seemed to love so much.

“I don’t understand why this is a Christmas movie,” I said finally, turning away from John McLane pulling glass out of the bottom of his feet. “It seems to just be an action movie that happens to take place at Christmas.”

“Well, that’s a common argument,” Hannah explained. “However, there are two deciding factors as to what makes a Christmas movie a Christmas movie. One, would the movie have worked at any other time of year. And the answer for Die Hard, is no. If your brother had chosen a different night, there wouldn’t have been hostages available, because there wouldn’t have been a party going on.”

“You’re not going to let the Gruber thing go, are you?” I asked, rolling my eyes.

“No,” she answered. “And two, is the soundtrack Christmas music, or is it just regular cinematic music. And this soundtrack is Christmas music. Therefore, Die Hard is a Christmas movie.”

“I feel as if you’ve made this litmus test up,” I told her.

“Maybe,” she said. “But I’m still right.”

“Whatever you say,” I told her, grinning at her before leaning back against the seat and draping my arm behind her

on the sofa. “Are we done with the bloody feet?”

“Yes,” she promised. And then she leaned against me, resting her head against my chest as she tucked her feet underneath her. “Do you mind?”

“I do not,” I promised her.

My heart was hammering in my chest, and I prayed she wouldn't notice as I dropped my hand to rest gently on her shoulder. God, it felt so damned right to have her there in my arms and I never, ever wanted the moment to end.

“Herr Gruber,” Moira said softly from the doorway. “Die Polizei ist hier.”

Verdammt.

“Excuse me,” I said to Hannah, regretfully untangling myself from her to go to the door.

As expected, the police had arrived to return Hannah's documents. I thanked them and blew out a sigh before walking back to the living room, where Hannah was curled up in my vacated spot, still watching the movie.

“I have some incredible news,” I told her, forcing myself to sound happy. “That was the police.”

“Sounds great,” she said, her brow furrowing as she stared at me. But then her gaze traveled down to my hands which were clutching her passport and wallet. “Oh my God! Is that my stuff?”

She jumped to her feet and ran to me, grabbing the items out of my hand before throwing her arms around my

neck and hugging me tightly, her entire body shaking as she sniffed against my shoulder.

“They didn’t recover your phone, unfortunately, but it seems the thief dropped everything in the woods in his haste to escape my men. I apologize that my guys weren’t the ones to find it.”

She pulled away from me and opened the wallet, her gaze scanning over the contents before she clutched everything to her chest and wept.

“I just can’t believe it, it’s all here” she said. “Thank you. Thank you so much.”

“It was nothing to do with me,” I assured her. “But I’m glad you’re so pleased.”

“Of course I’m pleased,” she said, laughing. “I can go home now.”

“Or you could stay.”

Hannah stared at me, blinking rapidly.

We’d had a perfect day, and I truly believed that it could be first of a lifetime of perfect days. I hadn’t meant to upset her, but I was a take charge kind of guy. When I found something I wanted, a car, a company, Hannah...it wasn’t in my nature to hesitate.

And Hannah was the only woman I’d ever wanted. Hell, today had been my first date...if I was even allowed to call it that. My brother teased me about my lack of interest in women, but the truth was that I think I’d been waiting for Hannah my entire life. And now that she was here...it was impossible to accept that she’d be leaving.

“What do you mean?” she asked finally.

“I mean, delay your trip home,” I admitted. “Stay in Germany for Christmas. Stay with me.”

“Hez...” I didn’t have to know her well to understand that she was trying to find a way to let me down gently.

“I’m sorry,” I said quickly. “That was selfish of me. Please, forget I said anything.”

“No,” she said quickly. “I’m flattered, really, that you would want to spend Christmas with me. But...Hez...I have to go home.”

“I know,” I assured her. “I don’t know what I was thinking.” I smiled and shook my head. “Please forget I said anything. Let’s go finish the movie.”

We settled back onto the sofa together, and I was pleased when she moved back up against me, resting her head on my shoulder and allowing me to lay my arm around her.

I knew I’d scared her, and that hadn’t been my intention. But the thought of her leaving left a pit in my stomach and an ache in my heart. It hadn’t been fair for me to ask her that. But I’d have regretted it forever if I hadn’t at least tried.

The movie continued, but I was too lost in despair at the realization that I was running out of time with her to pay attention. And when the credits started rolling I realized that Hannah was softly snoring.

She’d fallen asleep in my arms.

Unwilling to move and wake her, I grabbed the remote and started playing the second Die Hard movie. Then I played

the third...which was far superior to the first two.

Once the fourth one began to play as well, the clock ticking ever closer toward dawn, I finally closed my eyes and allowed myself to drift off as well, the warmth and softness of the woman beside me a cold comfort to the fact that I might never experience this much happiness again as long as I lived.

Chapter Nine

~Hannah~

You can't fall in love with a man you've known for just a couple days.

That was my first thought when I woke up, and I lay there, staring at the coffee table in front of me, trying to find a convincing argument to support that fact.

When Hez had asked me to stay, I'd desperately wanted to say yes, but I couldn't have explained why. We'd known each other for such a short amount of time, there was no logical explanation as to why I wanted to stay with him.

It was entirely possible that my feelings for him were just the combination of stress, jet lag, the scenery, and the fact that Hez had literally rescued me. Like a bastardized Stockholm syndrome.

My head and my heart didn't know what they wanted. Yes, I loved Germany. But that didn't mean I could abandon my life back home and live out some fairy tale here with Hez...did it?

I was so confused. But I had to go home. There was no way out of that. I had a job and a family and a non-refundable international airline ticket. I had to go.

So why didn't I want to?

It finally occurred to me that I was still lying on the sofa. Still laying on Hez's chest, actually. The steady rise and fall of his breathing an odd comfort as I fully came awake.

What if I did stay? What if I just let this fairy tale play out however it was going to play out? It had to mean something that I'd met this man when I'd needed him most.

Didn't it?

Hez shifted under me, and I sat up, smoothing my hair out of my face and straightening my clothes that had shifted as we'd slept bunched up together on the sofa.

"I'm sorry I fell asleep so hard," I told him, hoping I sound casual and breezy.

"I fell asleep as well," he said, chuckling softly. "I think it must have been the wine."

"I think it was the jet lag for me," I said.

"Well, what shall we do today?" Hez asked brightly. "It's your last day in Germany, is there anything in particular you'd hoped to do while you were here?"

Apparently he was eager to ignore the conversation we'd had the night before, and I was happy to let it go. I didn't want my last day here to be uncomfortable in any way, so if he could forget it, then I could, too.

"I have to go to the airport tonight to check in," I admitted. "My flight out is early tomorrow. But I'm yours until then. What do you think we should do before I leave?"

I probably imagined his gaze darkening as he stared at me. Some kind of Freudian thing because my own mind went straight to something I'd never even experienced before. Hell, I'd never even kissed a guy before, so I certainly hadn't meant to allude to anything...carnal.

Though once the thought popped into my head, it was difficult to force it away. And had he grabbed me and kissed me in that moment, I'd have happily given him everything. It was one German experience I'd never thought to consider, but it would certainly be memorable.

“Well,” he said thoughtfully. “As it is Sunday, our options are limited. But perhaps I could make a few calls and arrange some private tours of a few places.”

“You don't have to go to any trouble,” I said quickly. “Honestly.”

“It's no trouble,” he insisted. “We can go to the miniature museum.”

“Really?” I asked hopefully, my mood lightening considerably. “I love miniatures. I collect them, actually.”

“It's actually more of a model train museum. But it is small,” he said, clapping his hand and pushing himself to his feet.

“That's still cool,” I assured him. “I'd love to see it.”

“We'll get ourselves around, find somewhere to have breakfast, then hit the museum.”

The fact that he was able to be so breezy himself gave me a little pause, but maybe he was faking it as well and we'd both spend the day being overly polite and nonchalant with each other.

That was bound to make the day super fun.

After about an hour of watching miniature trains move through fake mountains and woods, listening to our guide who kept slipping into German in the middle of sentences, and Hez keeping six feet between us at all times, I finally snapped.

“Are we going to talk about what happened last night?” I blurted out, a little louder than I meant to.

Both Hez and the museum curator turned wide eyes toward me, and I felt heat creep up my cheeks in embarrassment.

“Kris, would you excuse us please?” Hez asked, turning back to the curator.

“You cannot be alone with ‘ze trains,” Kris replied, crossing his arms over his chest and glaring at Hez. “You ‘ave asked me to open and now you ask me to leave?”

“You’re right,” Hez agreed, raising his hands defensively. “Thank you very much for giving us the private tour. We will leave and let you get on with your Sunday.”

Hez took my arm and steered me back through the museum, with Kris hot on our heels as if we would dare to touch his trains on our way out the door.

“Well now you’ve done it,” Hez muttered. “Kris probably won’t let me come back.”

I knew he was teasing me, but I was still so embarrassed about shouting at him that I just kept my head down and walked quickly until we exited and reached the sidewalk.

“So,” Hez said brightly, grinning when I finally looked up at him again. “You were saying?”

“How can you just pretend like that conversation last night didn’t even happen?” I asked him.

“Because I thought you wanted me to,” he said. “You didn’t bring it up, and I already felt bad for making you uncomfortable, so I thought we were going to just forget about it.”

“I don’t want to forget about it,” I admitted.

“Okay,” he said. “So let’s talk about it.”

“Well, I don’t want to do that, either.”

“Hannah, baby, you’ve got to work with me here,” he pleaded, clearly trying not to laugh at me.

“I want to stay.” God, I hadn’t meant to say that out loud. And the way Hez’s face lit up when I did just about broke my heart. “But I can’t. You know that I can’t.”

“I don’t know that,” he insisted, stepping forward and taking my hands in his. “I can buy you a new ticket home any time you want to go.”

“It’s not just about me,” I said. “I have family waiting for me. I have a job. I have a cactus.”

“What’s his name?”

“Derek.” I blinked. “How did you know it had a name?”

“You seem like the kind of girl who names her plants,” he said with a grin. “Which is crazy that I know that. Because even though I just met you it feels like...”

“Like we’ve known each other forever?” I suggested.

“Yes!” He squeezed my hands and stepped even closer, the heat from his body radiating over mine. “It’s crazy, but Hannah, this is something. And I know you feel it, too.”

“I do,” I admitted. “How could I not? You show up out of nowhere and literally rescue me from the streets of Germany. Everything conspired to bring you into my life. I’m not the kind of girl who believes in signs—”

“Yes you are,” he interrupted.

“Okay fine! Yes, I am.” I blew out a sigh. “Stop doing that.”

“Doing what?” he asked, his face lowering toward mine.

“Being adorable,” I whispered.

He paused, as if to give me time to push him away, but I couldn’t. I was transfixed by him, the scent of his aftershave, the warmth of his skin, the feel of his lips brushing over mine.

And then he kissed me. Like a big, romantic movie scene kiss right there in the middle of the snowy streets in Hamburg. His mouth moved firmly but gently over mine, his tongue slowly sliding along the seam of my lips until I parted them for him and suddenly his flavor exploded across my taste buds, and I whimpered as my body seemed to catch fire beneath my clothes.

For just a moment, I allowed myself to be swept away by the torrent of emotions wracking my heart and my mind. This was what I’d been waiting for all these years. This was why there could never have been anyone else for me. Hez was mine and I was his.

I just didn’t know how that was going to work.

When we finally broke apart I felt tears pricking at my eyes and lowered my gaze, not wanting him to see them.

“Hey,” he whispered, tilting my chin up with his finger. “It will work itself out.”

“Will it?” I challenged with a watery laugh.

“Yes,” he assured me. “I am very rich and you are very smart. Together, we can do anything.”

“That sounds very convincing,” I told him. “But I have to go to the airport now. And later I will get on a plane to America and then time will pass, and you’ll vaguely recall the girl that crashed on your couch this one time.”

“That is not going to happen,” he said firmly. “Yes, I will take you to the airport, because I understand you need to be with your family for Christmas. But this is not the end of our story, Hannah. It is only the beginning.”

God, how I wanted to believe that. And I believed that he believed it. But I also believed that it wouldn’t be enough.

Wanting didn’t make things happen.

Chapter Ten

~Hez~

“Call me when you land,” I insisted, pressing my card into Hannah’s hand as we stood outside the airport together.

“Well, I don’t have a phone,” she reminded me. I pulled mine out of my pocket and handed it to her, but she just laughed and pushed it back at me. “I can’t call you if I have your phone.”

Right.

“Okay, well the moment you get your phone replaced, call me. I will come see you as soon as I am able,” I promised her.

She nodded as she blew out a sigh. “I have to go.”

“I know.” I reached out and pulled her into my arms, hugging her tightly.

I desperately wanted to kiss her again, but I was afraid that if I did, I wouldn’t be able to let her go. So instead I forced myself to release her and leaned forward to press my lips against her forehead.

“Have a safe flight,” I whispered, my voice too hoarse to manage much volume.

“I don’t have much control over that,” she teased. “But I’ll do my best.”

We both hesitated a moment, but then she gave me one last, sad smile, and turned, heading inside and leaving me alone on the sidewalk.

Neither of us had actually said goodbye, and I clung to that as I rode back to the house. Because it wasn't goodbye. It was just a temporary separation. We would be together again.

We may have only had a few days together, but they'd been the best days of my life. And I knew without a doubt that before too long, we'd be spending every single day for the rest of our lives together. So there was no need for goodbyes anyway.

"I can't believe you let her go," Simon said, pouring a healthy measure of whiskey into a rocks glass before sliding it over to me.

"What was I going to do?" I asked, glaring at my brother as I lifted the glass to my lips and took a long swallow.

"Stop her," he replied, as if the answer should have been obvious.

"She wanted to go," I reminded him.

"No, she *had* to go," he corrected me. "There is a difference."

He was right, there was a difference. And I knew she had to go. But that didn't mean I had to like it.

How could everything have changed so quickly? Without Hannah there, my house felt empty. So did my chest.

"To be honest," Simon said thoughtfully. "I kind of expected you to just get a ticket and go home with her."

"I tried," I admitted with a humorless laugh. "The flight was full."

“God, you’re in idiot.” Simon rolled his eyes. “Are you the richest man in Germany or aren’t you?”

He was right. I was an idiot.

“Have the jet ready in twenty minutes,” I said. “Find me a flight path and a terminal at DTW, and for fuck’s sake make sure we land before she does.”

I had no idea if this was the most romantic thing ever, or if it was some Sting level stalker shit, but either way, I couldn’t wait to see the look on Hannah’s face when she landed and found me waiting for her.

Unfortunately, Hannah’s flight was delayed and even by time we cleared customs, it was going to be another hour before she landed, then probably an additional hour for her to get through customs as well.

“Here’s what we’re going to do,” I told Simon as we got into the car he’d ordered for us. “You’re going to get into her email and find her address. Then you’re going to drop me off where I’ll be waiting when she gets home, and you’ll go to the hotel.”

“You’re going to sit outside her house in the cold for two hours?” Simon asked, though he was already pulling out his laptop. “Damn, you really do love this girl.”

“What was your first clue?” I snapped. “Okay, fine. We’ll go to the hotel together, then I’ll head to her place in time to be there when she shows up.”

“What if she goes to her family’s place instead?” he challenged, his fingers flying over his keyboard. “It’s

Christmas now.”

“What the hell time is it here?” I asked.

“They’re six hours behind,” Simon mumbled, his gaze locked on his screen.

“Right,” I agreed, looking out the window. “It’s like the middle of the night. She’ll go home first.” I leaned over and read the information on Simon’s laptop. “Oh, and she lives in an apartment. So yeah...” I slid forward in my seat to talk to the driver. “We need to add a stop if that’s alright.”

“I’m hired for the week, sir,” the driver answered with a shrug. “I’ll take you anywhere you’d like.”

I gave him the address and sat back, rolling my neck to look at my brother.

“When are you going to find a girl?” I asked him.

“Don’t fucking start with me,” Simon growled. “At the moment, I’m still trying to help you get your girl.”

That was fair. I’d waited a long time for the right woman to come along, so if my brother wanted to do the same, I’d support that.

We pulled up in front of a modest brick apartment building and I opened the door before the car had even come to a complete stop. I jumped out then leaned down to talk to Simon once more.

“Keep your phone on,” I told him. “If this goes badly, you’ll need to come back and pick me up.”

“It’s going to be great,” he assured me. “You flew four thousand miles to see her on Christmas. It really doesn’t get

more romantic than that.”

“He’s right, sir,” the driver chimed in. “That’s some Hallmark stuff right there.”

“Give this man a huge tip,” I told Simon before shutting the door and strolling up the sidewalk.

When I reached the door I was worried that I wouldn’t be able to get into the building, since it had a buzzer system in place. But when I tried the door, it opened, and I let out a sigh of relief as I stepped in out of the cold.

Now I just had to wait for Hannah to come home and hope she was happy to see me.

Two and a half hours later, I heard the door open downstairs and stared down the hall, praying that it was her coming home. When she turned the corner into the hallway, her head was down and she was fussing with her keys, not paying attention to what was in front of her.

When she finally looked up, she stopped dead in her tracks, her eyes going wide and filling with tears.

“What the fuck are you doing here?” she asked.

“I realized I forgot to give you your Christmas present before you left,” I admitted, getting to my feet and stepping toward her.

“You didn’t have to get me anything,” she said, her voice wobbly, though a grin spread over her beautiful face.

“To be fair, it’s not much.” I shrugged. “It’s just me, really.”

Before she could respond, I snaked my arm around her waist and pulled her into my chest, my mouth crashing over hers.

Our first kiss had been slow and tender and perfect. But I hadn't flown around the world for slow. I loved her. And I needed her. And from the way her body was responding to mine, she needed me as well.

Chapter Eleven

~Hannah~

Hez took my keys from me and unlocked my apartment door, pushing it open and allowing me to enter first, but following close behind.

I flicked on the light and dropped my recovered suitcase to the floor, then turned to stare at him.

It was almost impossible to believe that he'd flown all the way to Detroit for me. On Christmas.

"How did you even get here?" I asked him, blinking my tears away.

"Well, it seems that I kind of forgot I have a jet," he admitted.

"You forgot you have a jet," I repeated, shaking my head, though honestly I wasn't surprised. He seemed like the kind of guy who would forget massively important details like that.

"In my defense," he said. "It belongs to my company. It's not my personal jet. And I almost never use it."

"Uh-huh."

"Can we focus on something other than the jet?" he asked. "Like the fact that I'm here."

"Yeah. No. Totally focused on the fact that you're here," I promised him. "Like, blown the fuck away that you're here."

“But happy?” he asked, raising an eyebrow as if he actually doubted I would be.

“Very happy,” I agreed. “How long are you staying?”

“As long as you want me here,” he said. “I never should have let you leave without me. I was so stuck on you staying in Germany with me, that I didn’t even realize I could just come to America with you.”

My heart was so full I was afraid it might actually burst. When I’d walked into that airport in Germany I’d been convinced I was never going to see Hez again. So to find him sitting on the floor outside my door...it felt like an honest to God fairy tale ending.

“So,” he said. “Can I meet Derek?”

“Later,” I said. “It’s late. He’s sleeping.”

“Oh.” Hez nodded solemnly. “Well, what else could we do?”

I threw myself into his arms and our lips met in a kiss so violently passionate that our teeth actually clacked against one another.

Hez whisked me into his arms, his mouth still feasting at mine as he carried me straight into my bedroom, only breaking apart from me when he literally threw me onto the mattress where I landed so hard I actually bounced a few times before settling back against the pillows.

There were a million things I wanted to say to him. About how sorry I was that I’d just left. About how I felt about him. About how truly happy I was that he’d come after me. But then I realized none of that actually mattered. There was

no more need to talk. He'd flown halfway around the world to find me. If that wasn't love...then I didn't know what was.

Our hands tore at each other's clothes, shirts and shoes and pants discarded to the floor without any hesitancy until he was completely naked before me, and I was only in my bra and panties.

"I suppose now would be an awkward time to admit I've never actually done this before," Hez admitted.

"No more awkward than me admitting the same," I assured him. "I think it's rather romantic, don't you? Like we were meant to find each other?"

"I was always meant to find you," he promised me, climbing onto the bed over me and placing a soft kiss against my lips.

My body was a bundle of nerves, all on edge, and as his hips parted my thighs and I felt the pressure of his cock against my clit, even through my panties, that small contact sent me writhing over the edge. The tight coil that had built in my stomach unleashed a torrent of curses from my mouth as I screamed my release into the room.

"Damn," Hez said with a grin.

Heat rose up my cheeks in embarrassment at how easily he had made me come.

"Hey," he said, placing a soft kiss on the tip of my nose. "Baby, it's okay. There are going to be a lot more where that came from."

I didn't doubt that at all, but it didn't make it any less humiliating.

Apparently, Hez felt the best way to relieve my self-consciousness was to get me riled up again. His hand slid between our bodies, and his fingers delved inside my panties, parting my lips and rubbing hard circles over my clit.

My back bowed at his touch, pressing my breasts against his chest. A scream caught in my throat, and his tongue sliding into my mouth turned the sound into a moan that rumbled through my chest. Over and over, his digits worked at my soaked slit while his tongue mimicked the movements inside my mouth. I could feel the heat rising in my body, the electric pulse of orgasm growing closer and closer to shattering. Just as the pressure seemed ready to break, he removed his hand and pulled back to look at me.

“Hey,” I complained, my voice taut with frustration.

“What?” he asked, a slow smile spreading across his lips. “Just a minute ago, you were embarrassed about coming. Now, you’re so greedy you expect me to make you come again?”

“For fuck’s sake, Hez,” I said as I flung my arm over my eyes in exasperation. “Why in the hell did you stop?”

“Because I want you to come when I go down on you,” he whispered against my ear, before reaching behind my back and unhooking my bra. I lifted my arms so he could pull it free and discard it, then watched as he stared at my chest, his tongue darting out to wet his lips. “You are so fucking beautiful Hannah.”

I shuddered at his words, the movement turning into a full-body shiver as he kissed his way down my body. He paused to suck first one then the other nipple between his

teeth. His fingers pinched each in turn then alternated, rolling one nub between his thumb and finger while the other tip was being nibbled, switching back and forth until I thought I would scream in frustration.

His gaze flicked up to me, and he smiled around my breast before finally releasing my sensitive nipples and continuing his descent.

His thumbs hooked into my panties and slid them down my legs, discarding them before he shifted his body to rest between my thighs. He smiled up at me and winked before lowering his mouth to my aching core.

Stars exploded behind my eyelids as my head fell back against the pillows, my body unable to control any muscle functions as he lapped at my slit. His tongue swirled my clit, laving it slowly before he pulled it between his lips. As his finger penetrated my channel, release found me again.

My fingers curled into the bedding as I cried out his name and struggled to keep from bucking against his face. Sparks shot through every nerve ending as wave upon wave of pleasure washed over me.

Hez continued to work my clit and pump his finger inside of me, adding a second when my body finally stopped writhing beneath him.

“I want you,” I said, the words coming out as more of a sob. “Please, Hez.”

Though I had asked him to move, I still felt hollow at the loss of his fingers inside me. Knowing they would soon be

replaced with Hez's shaft wasn't enough to keep me from sighing at the emptiness that suddenly overtook me.

He climbed back up my body, positioning himself between my legs. His weight was already a familiar comfort, and I knew that I would ache for it every second of my life that he wasn't on top of me.

"God, you're so beautiful," he said as he moved to trail hot kisses across my throat and neck. "I could make you do that for the rest of our lives and be completely happy."

His words made my throat clench. Before I could ask him if he really meant that, if he had actually thought about the rest of our lives the way I had, he tilted his hips and pushed his full length inside me in one smooth, firm motion. My nails dug into his shoulders at the immediate fullness that racked my body and he felt so good inside of me that any pain I had expected never came.

Once again, I found myself in a humiliating position with him as tears pricked at my eyes then fell down my cheeks. I was too far gone to have any emotional control at this point. It was so confusing to feel this way about a man I'd only just met.

"Hannah," he said, his voice rough against my ear. "It's all right. What can I do?"

"Just move," I pleaded, my voice hoarse. "Please, Hez."

And he did.

Over and over, he struck that spot deep inside of me, hard and fast, until I felt a pressure building inside me that was completely different than the first two orgasms he'd given me.

It was as if a giant ball of fire gathered in a place that had never even felt heat. Part of me was afraid I may actually blow apart when the dam inside my body finally broke.

Every muscle in my body tensed, and it felt as if I didn't even know what to do with the pleasure I was feeling.

“Just let go,” Hez grunted as he looked down at me.
“Baby, you have to let go.”

I could see the strain in his face as he struggled to hold back his own pleasure long enough for me to experience mine again. But it was all so new I just didn't know how. Finally, Hez moved one of his hands and pressed his fingers against my clit, just pulsing against me until my body couldn't take the combined assault and everything went black.

I heard myself crying out Hez's name, felt him dig his nails into my hip as he too screamed and his shaft started to spasm inside of me. But within seconds of my body dropping back to the mattress and the pressure of Hez falling on top of me, silence took over the darkness.

Chapter Twelve

~Hez~

“Hannah?” I shifted off of her and gathered her into my arms, my heart thundering in my chest as I stared at her limp body. “Baby? Are you okay?”

“Sorry,” she murmured, finally blinking her eyes open. “I think I might have fainted.”

“Do you do that a lot?” I asked her.

“Well, as that’s the first time I’ve ever had sex before, I can’t really say for sure,” she admitted.

“No.” I chuckled softly as I hugged her tightly to my chest. “I just meant fainting in general. You did it the first night we met, too.”

“Oh, right,” she said, giggling lightly. “God, that seems like it was forever ago.”

“I know what you mean,” I agreed.

“How long are you really staying?” she asked, shifting to lay back down on the bed, but staying pressed up against me.

“For as long as you can stand me,” I promised her. “I can work from anywhere, so I could get an apartment nearby.”

“You could just stay here,” she said before stifling a yawn.

“We can talk about it in the morning,” I told her. “You’ve had a busy few days, full of stress and travel. You

need to get some sleep.”

“Are you staying?” she asked, her eyes already drifting closed.

“Wild horses couldn’t drag me out of here tonight,” I promised her, leaning down to press a soft kiss against her lips.

“I have a confession to make,” Hannah said softly, her voice so sleepy I wasn’t completely sure she was really awake anymore.

“What’s that?” I asked.

“There is one more German phrase I know,” she whispered. “Ich liebe dich.”

“I love you, too,” I promised her, my heart so full I feared it might actually burst in my chest. “Get some sleep. We start the rest of our lives together tomorrow.”

“Happy Christmas, Hez.”

“Happy Christmas, Hannah.”

Epilogue

~Hannah~

Eight years later...

“Hans, hold Daddy’s hand,” I insisted as my son raced toward the pier, eager to see the ducks that were happily splashing in the water below.

“I’ve got him,” Hez promised as he ran after Hans, both of them laughing and making quacking sounds as they went.

I trudged along behind them, far too pregnant to be bothered rushing anywhere. But that was fine, as usual, I knew that Hez would take care of everything.

It was hard to believe that I’d had eight years of him taking care of me. Sometimes it felt as if we’d just met at that market in Hamburg just moments earlier. And other times, it seemed as if I’d known and loved this man all my life.

Being married to Hez was always an adventure. We’d spent years traveling around the world together. And I was thrilled that it had continued after our son was born.

Hans had gotten to experience things I never could have dreamed of as a child, and I was so grateful to my husband for giving us the kind of life we got to lead together.

I dropped onto a bench and let out a long sigh of relief to finally be off my feet. It felt as if we’d walked ten miles already, though I knew it hadn’t really been that much.

“How are my favorite girls?” Hez asked as he sat down next to me, placing his hand over my belly before leaning in to

kiss me softly.

“Tired and hungry,” I admitted.

“We’ve got some bread,” Hez offered, reaching into his pocket and pulling out a roll he’d snagged from lunch earlier.

“Daddy, that’s for the ducks,” Hans said firmly, pulling it out of his father’s hand and turning to drop pieces of it into the water.

“Don’t worry darling,” I assured Hans with a giggle. “I’m not quite hungry enough to eat food your father pulled out of his pocket.”

“Plus, you’re not a duck,” Hans reminded me.

“Well spotted,” I teased him.

“You do waddle like one, though,” Hans mused as he shredded the rest of the bread and let it drift down to the water below.

“Okay!” Hez said, clapping his hands and valiantly trying not to laugh as he stood up and snagged Hans’s arm. “Let’s head back home, shall we. Mommy needs to get some rest and you’ve got homework to finish up.”

“He’s not wrong,” I said as I hoisted myself to my feet again and grinned up at my husband. “I do waddle.”

“You’re graceful and beautiful and wonderful,” Hez insisted, leaning over to kiss my cheek. “And yeah, you waddle a little.”

I rolled my eyes but let out a laugh. Damn, I loved these boys so much. And I knew I would love my daughter just as much.

I never would have imagined that I'd ever be as happy as I was now. But I was so grateful every single day that I'd been robbed in that market eight years earlier. Because that incident set off the most incredible chain of events that led to the life I had now.

And I wouldn't trade a moment of it for anything.

Are you checking me out?

Well...maybe you should. [Head over to my website](#) to get your hands on two [totally free romance books](#), see what other cool stuff I've written, or just find me on like every single social media network...including MySpace. Yeah, I'm bringing it back.

About the Author

Dakota believes that love is love and it happens in a flash. Whether it starts with action and adventure and adrenaline...or with just a glance across a crowded room. Happily ever after is never far away.

She lives in Detroit, Michigan with her favorite boys in the world. You'll never find her far from a cup of coffee that's going cold as she's distracted with shiny objects in her line of sight.

**Dakota loves to talk to her readers and
can be found at www.dakotarebel.net**