



His Bella

Rosa Mink

His Bella

Rosa Mink

Copyright © Sept 2022 Rosa Mink

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the author. The only exception is by a reviewer, who may quote short excerpts in a review.

Cover designed by PosterMyWall

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Rosa Mink

Visit me on Facebook and Instagram, or email me at rosaminkwriting@gmail.com

Printed in the United States of America

Contents

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Chapter 1](#)

[Chapter 2](#)

[Chapter 3](#)

[Chapter 4](#)

[Chapter 5](#)

[Chapter 6](#)

[Chapter 7](#)

[Chapter 8](#)

[Chapter 9](#)

[Chapter 10](#)

[Chapter 11](#)

[Chapter 12](#)

[Chapter 13](#)

[Chapter 14](#)

[Chapter 15](#)

[THANKS](#)

Prologue

Okay, so she was hiding, Bella admitted to herself, but after two hours of her date and every other man in the place trying to paw at her all she wanted to do was slip away unnoticed, and so far, she'd managed to do it. After all, she wasn't the one to be the center of attention or remotely comfortably dressed thanks to her sister's decision to choose orange as her bridesmaids' dress color, a color that did absolutely nothing for her. She'd also gone with a style that looked fabulous on the rest of their sisters, with their tiny busts and short frames but on her slightly more feminine—all right, more than slightly—shape it simply pointed out yet again the differences between her and her three sisters.

The bride today was her twin, not identical by any means. Izzie, or Isabella as she wanted to be known as now, was barely five-five with their mother's dark hair, dark eyes, and olive colored skin thanks to their mother's Latin heritage, while she took after her great-grandmother from head to toe, if you added ten inches at least. Her skin was fair, her eyes blue-green, the color of the sea, her hair was platinum, naturally, and thick, able to hold any style until it was washed out. The biggest difference between her and her sisters was her height. Bella was just barely under six foot, standing at a breath's space between the three-fourth and six foot mark, but if her hair was piled on top of her head or had any volume she pushed over and towered above the rest of the family.

She leaned back against the wall and sighed before looking down and adjusting for the millionth time the deep v of her dress, she had half a roll of doubled sided tape stuck all along the edge, but she still felt like she was going to fall out of it. She could gladly kill Izzie for choosing the style, but she'd done it simply to annoy her, expecting her to complain and fight with her.

She hadn't given Izzie that satisfaction. In fact, she wasn't even speaking to her anymore.

She'd told Izzie her piece and Izzie had ignored her, insisting that she and David were in love, blissfully so, and that she wasn't going to listen to her jealous, insecure, promiscuous sister. After that, Bella hadn't bothered, if Izzie wanted to believe David was the one for her, and at a vastly immature twenty-one she highly doubted that her sister even remotely knew who the one really was, she'd let her make her own mistakes. After all, Izzie had never bothered to help her out so why should she help Izzie?

She wasn't bitter about the rift in her family, disappointed, yes but bitter, no. She'd lived with it all her life and it was natural now. She simply didn't have to let it control her anymore.

She'd always been tall for her age and the odd one out. Summer vacations were horrible because they were typically spent at the beach and while her sisters could slather on sunscreen and go play outside all day long, twenty minutes out in the sun left her red, blotchy, and burnt.

Then they'd turned thirteen and she'd shot up and parts of her shot out and suddenly she was the one being noticed annoying Izzie because she wasn't in the spotlight. It got to the point where Bella left the private school they attended, deferring the rest of her education to home schooling while she gained fame as a model, with her manager acting as parent, friend, and career organizer while Izzie excelled in school.

For a while Bella pushed herself in her modeling in order to get her parent's attentions, try and get them to see that she was worth their time. They never had, and she'd finally had to accept that to her parents, looks and modeling were wastes.

Her family regarded the mind as the only true measure of worth and though managing to get a healthy scholarship, they funded Izzie's whims for anything she wanted while refusing to help her with a single penny of her own school costs. Thankfully, she'd been smart enough to put her faith and money in her godfather and neighbor's financial company and she had managed to grow her portfolio and pay for every bit of

her undergraduate degree and her masters, though none of her family knew she'd already earned it.

Bella finished her high school requirements at sixteen and began taking courses online as she travelled, graduating with her degree two years ago before settling down and completing her master's in public relations two months prior. Her family went all out celebrating Izzie's graduation with her history degree and her engagement to David, but she hadn't gotten so much as a 'how's it going' regarding her own educational pursuits. After all, her ads were still coming out so obviously she'd given up her idea of obtaining a real education.

Honestly, she wouldn't even be here, let alone be in the wedding party, had her parents not been worried that it wouldn't look right; appearances were everything to them, despite their aversion to using physical appearances for anything. She'd give the party another ten minutes then slip out and back home to her cozy little apartment—all right, maybe it wasn't so little, but it was hers and only hers.

"Must be my lucky night," a deep voice with a thick accent sounded behind her and she closed her eyes hating that someone had discovered her hiding place, especially one who appeared to be as obnoxious as the ones she'd been hiding from. "I was wondering if you'd sign my centerfold..."

She turned around slowly, a grin crossing her face when the voice and the mocking tone became clearly American as he dropped the charade.

"Tyler," she said shaking her head as he wrapped her up in a huge hug.

"Good to see you Arabella..."

"Don't call me that," she stated with another grin. "I'm just Bella here."

"Well, just Bella..."

"Ha, ha, ha."

"If you don't wipe that frown off your face someone might think you're jealous that your non-model sister is getting married before you," he teased.

“Jealous would indicate that I want to get married,” she told him flatly, “which I don’t. Honestly, if Izzie, sorry Isabella, wants to ruin her life by marrying that—never mind.”

“That what? Come on Bella you can tell good old Tyler.”

“Old may be right, but good...?” she joked.

“You always do that you know.”

“What?”

“Make a joke when something serious is being discussed. Why do you think Izzie’s ruining her life marrying David?” Tyler asked her, staring her down until she spoke.

“Come on Ty, she’s twenty-one, she doesn’t know she’s going to love him forever. Hell, she doesn’t know what love is...none of them do. I tried to warn her, and she told me to stay out of it. She didn’t want my debauched morals disturbing her superior ones.”

“Ah yes, because you’re such a loose woman,” he said kissing her forehead.

“Naturally, after all I’m a model and use my body to earn money; I swear they think I’m a step *down* from a prostitute...”

“Well, in that dress,” he teased letting his eyes take in the amazing view of her body.

“Appearances can be deceiving, I’d think you’d know that better than anyone,” she stated sending an elbow into his ribs for the once over.

“I know that it goes for you, but I think my reputation is quite right.”

“Yeah, the hardnosed, arrogant, unwilling to accept mediocrity in anything, mean, loud, grumpy, bullheaded, *coglione*, who doesn’t answer to anyone.”

“And what part of that doesn’t fit?”

“All of it? At least when it comes to me—my own knight in shining armor,” she said before bursting out in laughter. “Can’t say that with a straight face, can I? But you are the

only one who's ever stood up for me, besides your father but he handled my money, so he sort of had to."

"So, what exactly is your issue with the darling David, other than him marrying your sister?"

"Doesn't matter, I told Izzie what I thought about him, and she looked down her snotty little virginal nose at me and said she was going to marry David. Move to London and I could go screw the next hundred men that came along because it wouldn't matter to her one bit anymore. She wasn't going to be associated with her low-life sister from the moment she married him."

"Wow, and you still came to the wedding, let alone stood up for her?" His brow rose as he stared her down again pulling the response from her.

"What can I say? I'm glutton for punishment, but at least there's one good thing that's coming from all of this...darling Mommy and Daddy are going to London along with the others for the entire fall and winter, which means I don't have to deal with them."

"I see...so why are you hiding your delectable self out here when the party's inside?" he said handing her his jacket, as the slight wind sent a shiver through her.

"I made the mistake of bringing a date, one I thought wouldn't take one look at me and decide I'd make the perfect dessert, but apparently, I was wrong. As it turns out he's not gay—bi is how he put it."

"Poor Bella, even when you think you can't get the guy you still do."

"Oh, shut up, I couldn't come here alone...speaking of coming here I thought you were in France at some meeting with an international client?"

"I was but when I heard that you *were* going to be a bridesmaid, I got on the first flight out here. Figured you could use some interference since all three of your sisters would be here along with your mom and dad. I got delayed a bit at Heathrow, but I did sneak in unnoticed about an hour ago."

“Do me a favor?” she asked as her father began another toast about his girls, excluding her yet again.

“Name it; you are a client after all,” he teased her, but it made her grin because she knew she was more than just that to him.

“Take me home?” she pleaded.

“You are home Bella.”

“My place in the city is home, it has been since I was fifteen and bought it, this is the upside down, inside out place I came from,” she said pulling a laugh from him.

“Won’t your date miss you?”

“Who cares,” she sighed.

“I parked around back and came in through the library like always,” he explained as he led her back into the house and slipped down the hallway as quietly as possible. “Need to get anything before you go?”

“You know me, I travel light,” she said waving her bag that contained her essentials, including more tape for her dress.

The drive into the city was surprisingly easy for a Saturday night and by the time they reached her place she was back to her normal self, all traces of self-pity had disappeared and her sunny smile had returned. Anyone looking at her now would think she was a stunning woman, not quite sure of her sexual self in a dress that was unsuited for her, but she wore with class. In short, she would be envied for her natural grace and undemanding acceptance of herself.

Bella slipped into her bedroom then changed out of the horrid dress into her yoga pants and oversized sweatshirt that hung from her bare shoulder telling Tyler that she still wasn’t wearing a bra.

“Now that the wedding’s over what are you up to?” he asked as she poured them both a glass of wine, settling onto the couch with her.

“I start a new job Monday actually.”

“A new campaign or another Angels ad?” he asked referring to her ongoing series of ads for the Angels perfume brand that had contracted her when she was fourteen.

“Neither,” she shrugged seemingly not wanting him to find out yet but he would, he always found out what she was doing with her career.

“Explain please.”

“I’m starting work in a PR office.”

“You graduated with your undergrad finally...and didn’t tell me?” he asked, upset and frustrated that she didn’t. He liked knowing what she was doing, far more than he should. “Why didn’t your parents say anything? They threw that bash for Izzie.”

“They don’t know, and it’s actually my masters—I’ve been here for the majority of the past two years, my shoots have been around the city mostly and if I needed to travel, I made sure that it would work with my classes.”

“That’s amazing Bella, but why not tell your parents? Rub their noses in the fact that you’ve managed to beat Izzie at getting your masters?”

“Honestly, I’m over it. I don’t know exactly when it happened, I guess not long after I told Izzie what I thought of David—but I simply don’t care anymore. They’re never going to change and accept me—I might as well not be related to them for all it matters. Why should I try and compete? I know what I’ve done and what I haven’t done and so what if I used the way I look to bring in money? I bought this place when I was fifteen, updated it to be worth twice what I paid for it. I graduated high school when I was sixteen while working as one of the highest paid runway and print models, and though I’ve given up runway I still bring in more for one shoot than most of the girls I work with dream about.”

“So why are you going into PR?” he asked hoping she truly meant being beyond her parents’ and sisters’ disapproval of her and would start living it as well. She hid far too much because of them and that wasn’t what he wanted for her.

“I’ve been doing my own for the last three years, anything that comes out, comes from me. Statements refuting the latest rumor they’ve cooped up, tidbits regarding the Angels line...that’s all me and I love it. I don’t want to live in the spotlight, I never really have actually, which is why this will work. I’m still contracted with Angels but most of the time you can’t even see my face which means no one should relate me to Arabella Angel.”

“Come on Bella you don’t really believe that do you?” he said with a laugh. He’d recognize her in an instant whether dressed up or down, and that was the truth. She drew people in and then kept them far, far away, which simply made her ease with him more appealing.

“It’s true. Trust me, we could go out to a club right now and I wouldn’t get in, even wearing the dress from the ads, because I don’t look like Arabella. Without all the makeup and perfect hairstyle, especially the tinted ends in my hair, no one recognizes me. All of the gimmicks, hats, and hairdos I wore on the runway kept anyone from really knowing who I was, then when the Angels ads started, they liked that air of mystery and used it.”

“They’re idiots then because you are Arabella.”

“Arabella’s mysterious anytime she’s seen, wherever she’s seen. She’s never with the same guy twice, and never wears the same thing twice. She’s never done a beauty ad to add to that mystery or so the masses claim. Really, it’s because I don’t want all of that attention on me daily. Don’t worry Ty, you’ll still get your new Angels Christmas photo for you to add to your collection,” she joked leaning towards him, her hand stroking his arm innocently.

“That’s good because you know I can’t live without it,” he replied getting up before he did something really stupid, like kiss her the way he wanted, longed to do, had for the longest time and wouldn’t, refused to risk losing her if it scared her. “You’ll be okay if I go? I think I’m a bit confused on the time and if I plan on showing my face in the office on Monday, I think I should get some sleep.”

“I’ve been on my own since I was thirteen and being shoved out in front of cameras...I’ll be fine. Thank you for bringing me home,” she said kissing his cheek. She watched as his long six foot five inches walked over to the elevator and pressed the down button.

“Behave Bella,” he said waving goodnight.

“Never do,” she laughed as he disappeared from sight. She wished he’d stayed longer, he was one of the only men alive she could relax around, but she could tell he was tired. He always got moody and pulled away when he was tired, exactly like he did just now.

“Congratulations Bella.”

“Congrats Bella...”

“Congratulations Bella, gotta say I thought you got the promotion based on your looks but that was the best thing I’ve ever read, you’ve got a way with words,” Darren said as she passed by him.

In the last four months she’d managed to build something great here, and somehow keep it from everyone important. Thanksgiving was right around the corner, and she was about to unveil the latest ad in the Angels series as well as celebrate her new promotion to junior VP and the amazing reception of her first fully authored news release.

“Thanks Darren, charming as ever,” she said rolling her eyes.

“I saw that,” Jessica whispered joining her as she walked to her new office. “By the way, the biggest most amazing bouquet of flowers just arrived for you.”

“Really?” she stated knowing who they were from without needing to read the card as she saw the gorgeous blooms that were standard from the group at Angels.

“For your promotion?” Jessica asked with a grin.

“No, my birthday,” she admitted.

“It’s your birthday?!”

“Say it a little louder why don’t you, I don’t think the staff on the first floor heard.”

“Sorry but how could you keep this to yourself? It’s your birthday Bella, you should be out celebrating, especially with your promotion this past week...uh oh. I’ll be at my desk if you need anything else,” she said hurrying out as several people came into the outer office.

The group walked into the president of public relations’ office and closed the door as Bella watched their movements through the open blinds. She was going through her email when her door opened and Grant, the president of the PR department came into it eyeing her intently.

“Bella...” he said with a huge sigh.

“Something wrong Grant?”

“Seems we have an issue about the confidentiality of our clients and the big man upstairs is livid. We need something to put out there, something that will not ruin the firm and not get me killed,” he said only half joking.

“Wow, that’s big. So, what can I do?”

“Think you can go and soothe the beast for a bit while we get the attorneys in the building and figure out something?”

“You think I can calm the great white jerk down until the attorneys get here so then he can’t kill anyone?” she asked with a grin.

“I hope so. He’s not likely to hurt a woman but I can’t say the same for any of the rest of us. You haven’t met Tyler yet, have you? Words of warning, his bark isn’t worse than his bite and if he picks up something large...duck.”

“I see, you’re sending me into a meeting with a potentially homicidal maniac—not trying to get rid of me around here already, are you?” she teased.

“Trying to keep the rest of us here from dying along with the company, you have a way of smoothing anything over; it’s one of the reasons why we chose you for the position. The

attorneys should be here within the hour so hopefully he can't tear too much skin off your nose before then."

"It's fine Grant, really. Is he expecting me?"

"He will be," Grant assured her as she gathered a few things and headed upstairs. At least she got her promotion before Tyler found out she was actually working for him, but it was her birthday and there was no way he'd kill her on her birthday.

Tyler's assistant, yet another new one, greeted her as she entered the outer office. Her panicked expression would have been comical had she not been aware of Tyler's gruff demeanor on a good day but when he was in a bad mood, he was worse than a raging bull.

"Excuse me Mr. Reed the new junior VP from the PR department is here," she said barely above a whisper as she opened the door to Tyler's office and stepped aside to let her in.

"Send them in and for God's sake speak up, I don't need to strain my hearing," he bellowed.

"Good luck," she whispered to her as Bella stepped into the office.

"Don't need it," Bella assured her. She walked inside and over to stand in front of his desk waiting for him to recognize her.

"Don't the people working in the PR department usually speak?" he asked looking up, surprise hitting him. "Sorry I thought you were the new junior VP...no...Bella!" he added when she simply stared at him in return, a slow smile forming on her lips.

"What?" she said continuing to grin as he came around and hugged her.

"This was the job you were talking about? Well, the one before this, but why? If you wanted to work here, you could have just asked Bella."

“I didn’t want the position simply for being your friend or your father’s goddaughter. I specifically used the name Bella Spencer because no one would relate it to Arabella Angel or Arabella Spencer Remsen. Now everyone downstairs will know that I got there on my own, there won’t be whispers behind my back saying that I got it because you made it happen. I earned this on my own merit, not because I’m a model or a pseudo-model now, and not because you gave it to me.”

“I have no doubt that you earned this, and I’m glad for you. You could have told me you were working here, and I wouldn’t have interfered, but why here? You’re a client Bella, isn’t it a bit off to also work here?”

“Arabella Angel is a client but here I’m not her. Besides, working here I know firsthand that it’s safe. Now we’ve got a bit of a problem it seems, the client list getting out?”

“Don’t remind me, why did Grant send you up? Ah... because you’re young and very attractive and...it’s your birthday. Happy birthday Bella,” he added kissing her cheek. “Why don’t I take you to dinner after we get this situation handled, unless you have other plans?”

“No other plans, and for not biting my head off for not telling you I’ll let you see the latest ad a bit early. My Christmas fabulousness and all...”

“I’d love to,” he said as a knock sounded on the door. “Ah time to get back to being a total ass.”

“Not a total, after all if I get you into the meeting and you’re not growling like a bear with a thorn in its paw then it’ll be another feather in my cap. Behave or no preview,” she added seeing him debate it still.

“Come in,” he stated as another knock sounded.

“Tyler,” Grant said, “I see you’ve met Bella. The attorneys are setting up in the conference room. We’re ready whenever you are.”

“Right behind you, right Bella?”

“Right Mr. Reed,” she said with a wink only he could see.

“Bella, I’m sure it will come out that we already know each other,” Tyler said stepping up beside her. “Bella is actually my father’s goddaughter. She wanted to make her own way in the world and went behind our backs to get a job here.”

“Sorry Grant, I just didn’t want anyone else thinking I got it because of family connections. But look on the bright side, you won’t have to worry about Tyler killing me at any point, I’m his father’s favorite out of all of us.”

“There’re more of you?” Grant asked appreciatively.

“Not exactly, my sisters take after our parents. I’m nearly an exact replica of my great-grandmother she was just a bit shorter than I am.”

“I’m surprised you’re not a model,” Grant stated and both Bella and Tyler couldn’t help but laugh. “What?”

“Bella is a model,” Tyler replied, and Grant’s brow lifted trying to place her she could tell.

“Tyler, that’s it,” she said getting an idea. “Not only am I an ace at PR but I’m also a client, who better to make the statement?”

“I thought you wanted to keep Arabella out of your work,” Tyler stated.

“I did but I think this will work. If the situation isn’t as bad as their actual financials or personal info getting out it might not be needed but it might also be just what we need.”

“Arabella?” Grant said looking at her closely. “As in Arabella Angel, the face of the Angels line...holy hell...”

“Yeah, now do you know why I’ve kept it in the past?”

“I do and I just have to say you’re amazing as a model and a PR rep. I agree that it might be needed but let’s see how much has gotten out before we go that far. If you want to keep your privacy and I’m assuming you do since you didn’t use it to get here, we’ll do everything we can to keep it that way,” Grant told her.

“Thanks,” she said smiling warmly. “Oh sorry...it’s my mother,” she added as her phone rang. She walked to the far corner of the room and answered the phone, her mother didn’t call often but when she did it meant something was up and she likely wouldn’t like it. Ten minutes later she hung up gritting her teeth, there was no way she was going to give her mother the satisfaction of finding out that she’d done something that could be considered right in their eyes.

“Change of plans...whatever we do, Arabella stays out of it,” she said curling her fingers around the phone until they turned white.

“Everything okay Bella?” Tyler asked knowing she was upset, very upset and he didn’t like that look on her face.

“Just peachy, Izzie’s pregnant and Mom and Dad have decided to move to London until after it’s born, and they naturally assumed I’d just drop everything and run over to make sure the house was taken care of. Like I don’t have a life of my own or that I would even care about that place...”

“Don’t worry Bella, I’ll make sure Arabella doesn’t come out before you’re ready,” Tyler assured her as he slid his hand onto hers.

“We should get going,” Grant said suddenly uncomfortable with the closeness between them Tyler could tell.

“Right behind you,” Tyler stated putting his arm around Bella and guided her to the conference room. He dropped it just before they entered the room and he hoped he could keep his promise to her. He loved Bella and he’d do anything to help her, show her that her family was the stupid ones. She deserved more than what they gave her and maybe one day she’d see that she was completely deserving of love.

Chapter 1

Five years later...

“Careful Bella the boss is in a bear of a mood,” Sandra, Tyler’s newest assistant, stated.

“With the latest estimates on the market I can fully understand it,” Bella told the young woman. “Go home to your husband Sandra, I’ll cover the grouch.”

“I can’t do that Bella; I mean it he’s in a horrible mood. He’s trashed his office twice today.”

“Don’t worry Sandra, I can handle it. I’m probably the only one who can,” she assured the almost frightened looking woman.

“I wouldn’t feel right leaving you alone with him. Bella, he’s—I don’t know...”

“Scary?” she offered. “Tyler and I go way back, we grew up together, he won’t lay a hand on me. Go home, put your feet up and enjoy a nice quiet evening with your husband. I’ve got something that’ll take Tyler’s mind off of business and get him in a better mood. All the arrangements for his parent’s fortieth wedding anniversary are now finalized.”

“You got them done already? But how? He asked me to look into how you were doing last week but we got so swamped...”

“I have excellent resources and it’s easy when you can throw around Tyler’s money and not have to worry about a budget; go on, I’ll settle him,” Bella added warmly, knowing just how Tyler in a mood was. He never turned them on her and that was something special she couldn’t give up, especially not with the way her work was going.

“Okay I’m out of here,” Sandra said with a huge grin. She paused at the door and added, “I have to admit I was intimidated when I took the job and then met you. I know you must hear it all the time, but you should be a model.”

“Thanks Sandra, it never hurts to hear it again, especially when I have to go face the grouch,” Bella stated walking to Tyler’s door.

“Goodnight,” Sandra said with a tiny wave.

She opened the door and walked in, tripping over a vase lying on the floor and nearly crashing into the table he’d shoved out of the way for him to pace back and forth. “Jesus Ty...”

“Sorry Bella,” he said grabbing her up before she hurt herself.

“What the hell is wrong with you? I swear coming in here make me think the market crashed instead of rebounding nicely today.”

“It’s not that...well part of it was but mostly it was something I discovered about you,” he admitted.

“Me? Don’t tell me the tabloids think Arabella Angel died tragically five years ago and the company’s been recycling old shots...”

“No, they know you’re breathing, speaking of Arabella, have you gotten the proofs from your shoot?” he added, a new light in his eyes that wasn’t entirely furious.

“Think you’ll find something interesting in them?” she asked with a teasing laugh. “Honestly Ty, if you want some photos of me all you have to do is ask.”

“Why ask when I have the real thing in front of me every day?” he inquired kissing her forehead. “Though I do wonder how they manage to make you look so delightful every year and not show all your face.”

“Magic,” she told him.

She had stopped modeling for anyone except Angels soon after she’d started working at Reed Financial, but she still managed to bring in a nice chunk of change from the contract with them, which now included a cosmetic line, handbags, shoes, clothing, and luggage. She was their sole model,

anytime there was a figure in the Angels commercials or ads it was her.

“So, what are you up here for?” he asked picking up the mess he’d made.

“To give you a present that will make your Friday sing—all the arrangements for your parent’s anniversary party are set. In two weeks, the entire ballroom will be transformed to look exactly as their wedding did forty years ago, I have a seamstress recreating her dress and the cleaners have pressed the tuxes. They won’t know what hit them when they come to have dinner with us.”

“Have I told you lately how amazing you are Bella?” he stated leaning back against his desk as he grinned at her.

“Not in the past twenty-four hours I think, but now it’s your turn, what did you find out about me?”

“Well, it’s not directly about you but it relates to you.”

“Just tell me Ty,” she told him when he stopped.

“Izzie and David are getting divorced and she’s moving back with the kids; she’ll be here just in time for the anniversary party,” he admitted.

“Surprised it lasted this long...but that’s what caused this mess?”

“That and the fact that your parents had the nerve to claim that you were an embarrassment to them, with you parading your form on those despicable billboards and trashy magazine ads...and that they had officially taken you out of their will.”

“Seriously?” she asked laughing.

“Bella the way they treat you is atrocious.”

“I’m sorry Tyler—it’s sweet that you worry about me so much still especially when it comes to them but I’m fine. I don’t need anything from them. I couldn’t care less that I’m no longer in their will. I’ve let it all go,” she said crossing the room to stand in front of him. He was her best friend and the only person she could fully trust and count on and she loved

that their relationship was solid, unlike the one she had with Brandon.

“I don’t know how. You are gorgeous, gracious, generous, and the greatest gift that ever happened to them and they tossed you away like you’re nothing,” he argued getting angry for her again and it made her happy to know he cared so deeply when her family didn’t care for her at all.

That difference was the only reason that she could easily do what she did in front of the cameras lately. Her passion for modeling was returning in ways she hadn’t expected. She’d thought it would go away as she got further and further entrenched into her position here, but it was doing the opposite and it confused her more than anything.

“Tyler, I have a wonderful life, a great job that I love, a boss who also happens to be my best friend, an exclusive contract with the biggest product line in the world, and a date that I’m late for...stop feeling sorry or angry for me, it’s not good for you,” she said kissing his cheek. “Two weeks Ty, I’ve already cleared your calendar for the two days before so you can relax before the party.”

“Be safe Bella,” Tyler said watching her walk out, hating that she had another date with the creep she’d been seeing.

In the last five years he’d learnt a lot about himself, the biggest being that it was impossible not to love Bella completely, and the next biggest that she would never feel the same way about him. He was her friend, the person she called if she needed to be picked up or if something happened or someone had hurt or scared her. He was her handy man, her plumber, her accountant, her sounding board and he loved every bit of it as much as he loved her and no matter what she said he’d never stop feeling angry for the way her parents treated her.

He flipped through the information she’d left him and grinned at the last page, it was the new holiday ad that would come out the day after Thanksgiving, and she’d signed it like all the ones before. “To my Ty, all the love in the world, Arabella.”

“If only that love were different,” he sighed slipping it into the locked drawer on his desk.

“Come on Bella,” Brandon stated trying to push his way into her place. “You know you want to...”

“No, I don’t Brandon, go home,” she said pulling away from him.

“I’m getting tired of this act Bella. One minute you’re burning hot in my arms and the next...I want you and I’m damned well going to have you...tonight.”

“Get out Brandon,” she shouted as the panic set in. She hated this feeling, hated the way it made her head fuzzy, hated the terror that filled her and refused to let go. “Now before I call security.”

“No, it’s been three months Bella, three months of you turning me on just to shut me down. You’re nothing but a cold bitch...”

“Then get out before this cold bitch decides to have you arrested for assault.”

“I haven’t touched you,” he said making a grab for her, “*yet.*”

Bella moved quickly grabbing the can of pepper spray she hid in the flower vase on the table inside the entryway and aimed it at his face. She raced to her bedroom and dialed the only number she could think of calling.

“Bella, what’s up?” Tyler said answering on the second ring.

“Ty, can you come over please?” she asked her voice wavering as Brandon started pounding on the locked door.

“Bella what’s that noise?”

“Brandon—he got mad and tried to grab me—Ty please.”

“I’ll be there in ten minutes Bella, call the security team and the cops,” he told her.

“I can’t the house phone’s in the living room, I locked myself in the bedroom and can’t get to it. I don’t want to hang up with you Ty. He’s scaring me; I think he’s going to break down the door.”

“Trip the alarm Bella, turn it on go outside onto your balcony and then open it but don’t put in your code. It’ll send the security team up immediately. I told you, you needed the panic key on that pad too.”

“Okay,” she said unlocking the balcony door and arming the security system. She shut the door, waited for it to become active, and then opened the door. Once the chirping stopped the red light began to flash indicating that the security team had been alerted. Brandon continued to pound away at the bedroom door, and she was worried that it’d give.

Less than a minute later she heard the head of the security department tell him to freeze and she whispered, “Thank God.”

“Bella, are they there?” Tyler asked running down the couple of blocks between their buildings. It wasn’t too late, and the sidewalks were still crowded but he managed to make it there in eight minutes a new record that he hoped to never have to break. He punched in the code to activate the elevator and stepped into her apartment holding up his hands as the security team turned towards him.

“Bella!” he shouted letting her know he was there. The bedroom door opened, and she raced towards him, throwing her arms around his neck as he pulled her up against him assuring himself that she was safe.

A few moments later the police arrived, took one look at her face and the mess Brandon had made and cuffed him.

“That bitch assaulted me,” he yelled.

“With pepper spray in her own home?” the officer asked.

“Crazy ass bitch, I wasted three months on that cold piece of ass...”

“Shut the hell up,” Tyler said his tone leaving no doubt that he would strangle the other if he so much as sneezed.

“Who are you?” the officer inquired.

“Tyler Reed, Bella called me because that creep tried to force himself on her.”

“That’s a lie, we were going at it, and she likes to play rough,” Brandon butted in.

“You son of a...” Tyler growled advancing towards the other man ready to beat his face in for that.

“Ty,” Bella said stopping him before the cops could. “I just want him out of here.”

“If you come anywhere near her again, you’ll pray the cops are there,” Tyler warned as the police led him out of the room. “Fred make sure the other members of the security team know he’s not welcome anywhere near the building again.”

“Of course, Mr. Reed,” the head of the security team stated.

“Can I ask your relationship to the victim?” the officer asked Tyler.

“I’m not a victim,” Bella said offended. “He scared me, and I just wanted him out.”

“He was attempting to break down the door Bella,” Tyler argued turning her, so she faced him. “What do you think he was going to do if he managed to do it?”

“I don’t want to think about it,” she stated. “You wouldn’t have let that happen.”

“I can’t always be here for you Bella.”

“You’ve never let me down before,” she replied.

“Uhummm,” the officer said clearing his throat. “I need to know how to write this up. There’s a big difference if this Brandon is your lover on the side and he’s your husband.”

“Tyler’s my best friend, my boss, and the one person I can rely on,” Bella said getting angry. “Brandon was my boyfriend but now he’s just another in a long line of jerks I’ve managed to date. Write up whatever you want, naturally you

assume the worst, but I will not allow you to stand in my home and make disparaging remarks about me. I'd like you to go."

"We need to ask a few more questions," the officer stated.

"No, get out," she said turning to the security members still present. "Make sure they find their way out please."

"Of course, Ms. Bella," the older one told her backing the officers out of the room.

"Are you okay, really?" Tyler asked once they were alone.

"No—I knew he wasn't the nicest guy in the world, but I never thought—but I should have. I should know better by now," she sighed walking over to stare out the living room window.

"Bella," he said pulling her back to him, wrapping his arms around her tiny waist and resting his chin on her shoulder. "You shouldn't have to know better. You deserve someone who will treasure you, someone who will make you smile, who will only make happy tears appear."

"He doesn't exist," she said flatly.

"Maybe you just haven't looked hard enough," he offered.

"It's doesn't matter because I'm done with dating. Don't laugh, I am. Part of what Brandon said is true...I am cold. I just can't do it."

"Do what?"

"Be intimate, not after..."

"Not after what Bella?" he said turning her to face him. The way she said it told him it was something huge, something he wasn't going to want to hear, but he had to, he had to know what was holding her inside herself still, what was keeping her from him.

"It really doesn't matter," Bella said trying to back away. She didn't want him to know about what happened to her.

“Yes, it does Bella; you’re not cold, you are the warmest person I know.”

“Until a man wants to get intimate and then I freeze,” she admitted to him.

“Why?”

“I don’t know,” she lied looking away from him so he wouldn’t realize she’d lied.

“Yes, you do Bella—oh Christ, when?”

“When what?”

“When were you—attacked, raped?” he questioned tilting her face upwards to look at him. The understanding, empathy in his eyes, unleashed it all and she couldn’t stop the words.

“I was fourteen...back from the job in Athens, there was a party at a club. I didn’t usually go to them, but the others insisted I stop by for a bit. It wasn’t as bad of a party as they normally threw so I hung out for a while; I wasn’t drinking alcohol, water that’s it but after a bit I started feeling woozy. I went to the bathroom, thinking it was too hot in the main part of the club but on my way there, someone grabbed me. It got fuzzy after that, like I wasn’t there as it happened but watching it instead like through a haze...” she said looking away again. She stepped backwards needing some space to finish. “When he was done, he laughed at me and that’s about all I can remember. I honestly don’t remember getting out of there but the next thing I was at the hospital and Mandy was there with me as they tried to figure out what had happened. I was drugged, a combination of several things they think had been put into my water to try and get me out of it easier since I wasn’t drinking alcohol.”

“Ah hell Bella, baby,” he whispered coming over and wrapping his arms around her. “Why didn’t you say anything?”

“I didn’t want them to know what happened. I didn’t want my parents to be able to say I told you so. Do you know what it’s like having your first time be like that? Not knowing

who it was...and then worrying if you could have caught something?" she asked as the tears began to flow.

"No and you should never have either. Did they find out who he was?" he questioned as she dipped her head.

She shook it not wanting it all to come out, "No and it's too late now, the hospital didn't document things when I first got there, thought I was just od'ing on something...and the cop that showed up just shrugged it off once the first doctor realized what happened. I'm sorry Tyler, I shouldn't have unloaded all this on you."

"I'm your best friend Bella, you should have told me a long time ago."

"So, the twenty-year-old away at college could come home and knock down doors looking for a...someone who took advantage of a situation?"

"A rapist Bella," Tyler said forcing her to accept it. "You were raped Bella, that's not your fault, you didn't ask for that to happen, and you can't blame yourself. You have to accept it and move on."

"I don't know if I can. Who's going to want me once they know? No one ever did without knowing it so why should now be any different?"

"Damn it Bella that's not true. I've always wanted you, wanted to know you, protect you. You were probably seven when I realized how special you were. Those huge, beautiful eyes of yours. That skin that bruises so easily. The amazing way your hair moves as you walked. The way you lit up a room when you walked into it. I was just a thirteen-year-old boy, but I knew you were going to become someone the world would fall in love with. Your parents have a hell of a lot to answer for, but you don't."

"Why do you always do that? Always make me feel special when I'm not? Even the Angels line sees it...why do you think they never reveal my entire face?"

"Because you'd blow `the mystery. It's what draws people to the ads, and you are special. So special Bella. You

graduated with a master's degree when you were twenty-one...I was twenty-five before I got mine. You had a financial portfolio and this apartment before you could legally drive, I was trying to figure out how to throw a perfect spiral. You can do things others can't and it's not because of your looks, which are breathtaking, you have this way that pulls people in and refuses to let them go."

"I don't see anything special. I pretend like I do but when I look in the mirror all I see is the rejected daughter who could never measure up."

"Then you're not looking properly," he stated taking her into the bedroom and standing her in front of the floor length mirror.

"What do you see?" he asked stepping behind her.

"A girl who's too tall, too thin in the waist with boobs and hips that are out of proportion, ankles that are fat, a nose that's turned up and hair that might as well be a sheet..."

"You're so wrong," he laughed knowing she wasn't being fully truthful. "Because I see a woman who's the perfect height for someone tall to kiss without killing his back. A waist that a man could wrap his hands around and hold onto forever. Breasts, well the less I think about your breasts the better and hips that curve perfectly to show off your gorgeous butt that stops traffic every day on the billboard for the Angels swimsuit line. Your ankles are so slender they're coltish. Your nose is perfect for kissing the tip of it and that hair drives men's fantasies Bella."

She closed her eyes and leaned back against him trying to see what he did but only finding the thirteen-year-old girl whose parents told her to go if she wanted but that she wouldn't be missed or welcomed back if she did.

"It's okay Bella," Tyler said with a sigh as she shook her head. "One of these days you'll see it all."

"I hope so because I don't know if I can live like this forever," she admitted giving him the slightest bit of hope.

“Ty—would you stay with me tonight? I know I shouldn’t ask but...”

“I’ll always stay with you Bella, you know that,” he said kissing her forehead. “Go change and I’ll lock up.”

He let his rage out silently as he checked over the apartment, fury at whoever hurt *his* Bella pounding through his veins, making him seethe. He grabbed the whiskey bottle she kept for him and downed a few drinks, attempting to cover the pain with it, hide it deep down where it wouldn’t hurt her. He’d never hurt her.

Ten minutes later he slipped into the bed beside her and pulled her against him. It was torture to hold her, but he wouldn’t let his own emotions get in the way of helping her. It didn’t matter if she didn’t love him, she didn’t have to, because he would always love her.

Chapter 2

“I can’t believe this place,” Tyler said looking around the finished room. “You are amazing Bella.”

“Thank you.” Bella grinned, believing it for once. So much had changed in the last two weeks. Telling Tyler about that night and finally letting go of the idea that it had been her fault had let something break free inside her and she was it seemed finally moving forward. It had also shined a new light on Tyler, one that she had been trying to ignore for quite some time.

That night as they had lain in her bed together, his words rolling through her mind, she had begun to wonder what would happen if she rolled over and gave into the urge to kiss him. Would he push her away or would he allow her to see if she could let someone touch her without freaking out? Would he stop her because he didn’t see her in that way, or would he let her discover that he wasn’t into her?

However, she hadn’t rolled over because she couldn’t risk losing the one person, she could always count on for anything. Tyler was her rock and if something happened to pull him away, she would crumble, and no amount of money would save her.

“Mom and Dad will be here at six-thirty which gives us about an hour to get dressed,” he said checking his watch.

“Then I’d better hurry...your tux is in the men’s suite, it’s the one with the green bag and your shoes are there, yes I found them,” she teased, knowing he’d purposely hid them, as they went upstairs.

At six twenty-five he knocked on the door and when she opened it his jaw dropped. “Wow...you look...Bella, we might just have a problem here...”

“What? Don’t tell me the dress is stained.”

“No, but I think all eyes will be on you instead of the bride.”

“No, they won’t. She’ll be the one standing up at the front of the room while I will be making sure everything runs smoothly in the back,” she assured him as they went down in the elevator. At exactly six-thirty the older couple appeared in the doorway of the hotel, and they hurried across the lobby to meet them.

“Oh Bella, you get more beautiful every time I see you,” Vivien stated kissing her cheeks.

“Thank you, Vivien, it’s not true, but thank you,” she said before Steven swept her up in a giant hug.

“How’s my son treating you at work these days?” he asked.

“Wonderfully, no one’s questioned my promotion to Grant’s position now that he’s retired. I guess two years as junior VP, and then three as VP left no doubts in their minds and I seem to have a certain knack for getting my boss to see reason—and not break all the vases in the building when he gets into a temper,” she said sending a teasing grin towards Tyler.

“Doesn’t hurt that my head of the PR department is a knockout and half the time the press can’t concentrate on what she’s saying because they’re trying to pick their tongues up off the ground,” Tyler added.

“The charmer as ever I see,” Vivien said taking her son’s arm, he offered. “Now what shall we have for dinner? Isn’t the dining room the other way?” she added as they steered the two towards the ballroom.

“We have a small surprise for you,” Bella answered stepping up beside Tyler when they reached the closed doors. “Alright, close your eyes...keep them closed...okay now open,” she said once they’d opened the doors and stepped aside.

The reactions on their faces were priceless and Bella couldn’t stop grinning.

“Steven, did you?” Vivien asked wiping away a tear as she glanced over at him.

“Not a thing,” he replied. “How on earth did you do this?”

“It was all Bella,” Tyler told them. “She managed to do this all in about a month—she wasn’t too enthused with my idea of just having a dinner party and this is what she came up with.”

“Well? What do you think?” she couldn’t help but ask.

“It’s absolutely the most amazing thing in the world,” Vivien told her.

“Well then, we should get upstairs so you two can change. Tyler can show you where your tux is Uncle Steven and I have a surprise for you,” she added pointing to Vivien.

“Change?” Steven said looking at their outfits again. “I guess we are a bit underdressed...”

“You are and the minister will be here in thirty minutes along with the guests,” Tyler agreed as they hurried them to the elevator.

Once they were in the women’s suite, she took Vivien to the bedroom and opened the closet to reveal the dresses, two in case she didn’t like the recreation of her wedding dress.

“Bella,” she gasped looking at the garment. “How? My original was destroyed in the fire...”

“The pictures that were saved helped and I have a few friends who are designers who were more than willing to help out.”

“You are the most amazing woman I’ve ever known Bella,” Vivien told her once she was dressed. “Don’t ever question that. I know your parents and even I haven’t always been on your side, and you didn’t deserve that. I am so glad you and Tyler are so close now...and I hope someday soon it’ll be your wedding we’re getting dressed for.”

“I don’t know about that...but I’m thankful for Tyler. He’s been the one thing I know will never change. No matter what is going on in the world outside he’s the one constant

that's kept me grounded. Now, shall we get you downstairs so I can make sure everyone's here for us to start?"

"Absolutely," she agreed.

Tyler met them outside the doors and kissed both their cheeks as he assured Bella that everyone was in attendance.

"Then I guess it's time for the bride to walk down the aisle," Bella grinned.

"Mom, since Granddad isn't here this time would you mind if I did the honors?" Tyler asked holding out his arm.

"I'd love nothing more...oh Bella the bouquet is perfect," Vivien said as she got ready to open the doors. "Wait, don't you have one?"

"For what?" Bella asked.

"So, you can be my maid of honor of course," she stated taking one of the smaller bouquets from the stand outside and shifting the other to cover the now missing one. "Shall we?"

"I was going to stay in the back..."

"That dress says look at me and I'd love nothing more than to have my beautiful goddaughter standing beside me and my son across from her," Vivien told her leaving her no room to argue.

"Okay," she agreed letting the hotel employee open the door for her. She walked up the aisle easily keeping her chin high in order to ignore her family who would be displeased that she was there let alone having such an impact on the event. When she reached the end Steven kissed her cheek before the music changed and Tyler and Vivien appeared in the doorway.

Steven's intake of breath made all the hassles over the dress worth it and as the ceremony went on, she found herself watching Tyler more than his parents and each time she looked up she caught his eyes on her. Her quick glance at her dress assured her that it hadn't fallen down. She relaxed as the minister finished the ceremony and Vivien and Steven walked down the aisle leaving her and Tyler to follow.

“Did you see my dad’s face when Mom appeared?” he whispered as they headed across the lobby to the larger ballroom which had been set up for the rest of the party.

“All the fuss over getting it right was so worth that and your mom apologized for not sticking up for me as I grew up...”

“You’re kidding? I knew she was mad that she hadn’t but for her to apologize...that must have taken more than just the evening and the dress to accomplish.”

“Things change, people change,” she shrugged. “But she did mention that she hoped the next wedding she got dressed for would be mine—and it sounded like she thought the groom would be you.”

“Interesting idea,” he said as the rest of the guests joined them. His father quieted everyone down as glasses of champagne were brought out and distributed amongst the guests.

“I would like to propose a toast to my beautiful bride of forty years,” Steven began, “you look as radiant tonight as you did in a dress so like that back then and to our son for everything, he’s done to make tonight happen which includes roping our goddaughter Bella into helping him plan the evening. When we arrived tonight for dinner with them, we never imagined we’d be renewing our vows and I certainly never thought I’d see my beautiful wife in this dress again. Thank you, Bella...you have made tonight an evening we will never forget.”

“To Bella,” Vivien added.

“Now shall we eat?” she said with a smile seeing her sisters’ displeasure at the toast.

“You did great,” Tyler said two hours later as they watched the others dance. “Although I’ve certainly detected an annoyance from your family...”

“What family? The only one I claim happens to be sitting at this table with me,” she stated with a grin that shone true.

“Then I’m honored to have you,” he teased kissing her hand and stirring up emotions inside her that she knew she shouldn’t act on. She couldn’t stop staring and it seemed neither could he.

“Dance with me?” he asked pulling her up.

“Of course,” she agreed moving into his arms easily. They’d danced together a million times before but each time their bodies touched sparks flew through her and she knew that no matter how much she tried to deny it, things between them had changed. At least on her part and now she was worried she’d do something crazy and lose her best friend.

Steven cut in and finished the dance before pulling her over for some more pictures which reminded her of the last present, she had arranged for them. She gave them the bag and watched as they pulled out the large box and opened the lid, moving the tissue paper aside to reveal the framed photo.

“How did you do this?” Tyler asked staring down at the picture.

“Calvin, my photographer from the Angels line, is a genius with restorations. I asked him if he could try and salvage some of the frames that were found and this is what he managed to come up with,” she admitted as several others began to come see the gift. “There’s also an album underneath that has the rest of the photos that were saved.”

“My sweet Bella,” Steven said hugging her. “Thank you...”

“I didn’t do much, honestly, besides you made sure everything I earned was properly looked after. I wouldn’t be where I am today without you,” she told him.

“There’s no need to put the blame onto Uncle Steven,” Jordanna snipped coming up behind them. “You managed to ruin your life all on your own.”

“Of course, I did,” she said lightly.

“Enough Jordanna,” Vivien stated. “I don’t want you fighting with your sister tonight. She went to a lot of trouble

planning all of this and she deserves respect for what she's accomplished not only tonight but also..."

"By being the only sister to not be divorced," Bella cut in not wanting them to know the truth; they didn't need or deserve it. "So sorry to hear about the latest catastrophe in the Remsen family, if you'll excuse me, I see a few people I'd much rather be talking to..."

"Bella," Tyler said making a dive for her hand, but she slipped away hoping he'd keep her success away from her so-called family.

She twisted through the crowd managing to find her way out into the lobby as her phone rang. "Hi Mandy, what's up?"

"Okay I know you're going to say no before I finish so I'm telling you up front to listen to me until I'm done, alright?"

"Okay," she stated hoping this wasn't another attempt to get her to reconsider the offer from the latest shoe god.

"Angels wants to put together a runway show for their new line. They want you to headline it, Bella. I know you don't do runway anymore, but this is the biggest coup possible. You will be front and center; it will re-launch your career."

"I don't want to re-launch my modeling career, for goodness' sake Mandy, I'm almost twenty-seven. I've been doing this for thirteen years; it's time I bow out."

"Why? You don't look twenty-six, your body is even more amazing than it was eight years ago when you left the runway, and your contract requires you to do it Bella. They want to schedule it for Christmas Eve, televised nationally, so they can reveal their Angel but if you don't want your face out there full force, they've agreed to make your outfits to disguise you still. Bella your contract is up after this year, if you don't do this Angels is likely to find a new face..."

"I've been their 'face', so to say, for twelve years Mandy maybe it's time for them to find someone new."

“You don’t mean that Bella. You are the line, and your last photos were absolutely amazing, it took them two weeks to choose which one they’d use before deciding to use two this year. They want to bring you out of hiding...let the world see that you’re more than an illusion, that their Angel is real.”

“I don’t know Mandy. I stopped doing runway because of the panic attacks. I don’t want to risk ruining their first full show. The quick changes, the crowds—it makes me worry that it’ll all come crashing back down on me,” she said already feeling the pressure beginning to build.

“Do you really think the reps at Angels will let that happen?” Mandy asked. “They adore you. They’re not going to want to replace you, and do you want to see someone else take your spot on the billboard in Times Square? Your photo’s hung in the same spot for nearly eleven years Bella what would it feel like to have someone else suddenly up there?”

“Horrible, look, let me think about this. I don’t know if it’s the right time to come back out.”

“We need an answer soon Bella, they’re already getting the ball rolling for the show, with or without you but if they put it out there that you’re returning to the runway...let’s just say it’ll be huge Bella.”

“How soon?” she asked.

“By the end of next week...your birthday is when the release is going to go out.”

“I’ll think about it Mandy,” she promised hanging up.

“Think about what?” Tyler asked startling her.

“Angels wants to do a runway show on Christmas Eve featuring me, a live televised show none the less...”

“What’s to think about Bella? You were the best up there...”

“Until it got to be too much, Ty I left the runway because every time I stepped up onto one, I began to panic. The crowd watching, the crowd backstage, all the hands helping me change...my last show was the worst. I felt like everything

was crashing in on me that the walls were caving in, and it took me two hours to make it out of my dressing room after it was over.”

“Does it have anything to do with what happened at the club?” he asked leading her to a quiet corner of the lobby.

“Yeah—I thought I saw him at a show once and after that every time I looked out into the crowd, I swear I saw him, or he’d be one of the crew members backstage...it got to be too much, and I stopped. Before that I loved being on the runway, it was the one place where I could be me, not be afraid to be different, but then it changed.”

“What if you saw him...really saw him, now?”

“I’d yell at him for taking something away from me that I could never get back—not my virginity but my security, my belief that things would be okay, I guess. I don’t know how it happened Ty, but after I told you...it doesn’t hurt as much, and I’m not scared all the time.”

“Then answer me this Bella, had you felt this way five years ago would you have walked away from your modeling career and became my PR goddess?” he asked gently.

“No,” she admitted truthfully to both of them. “There’s a reason I couldn’t let go of the Angels line.”

“Because you love it,” he stated. “I know you do Bella, it’s so clear in your photos, as comfortable as you are being my PR magician you belong in front of a camera.”

“But in front of a live audience...televised live...how do I know I won’t crumble into a little ball?”

“Because I’ll be there on the front row watching, ready to catch you if you stumble, and if you’re worried about the people backstage...demand that the only ones allowed near you are ones you feel comfortable with, Bella. Angels Brands will do anything to get you up on that runway, they’ll give in to any demand you ask for. But before you do it, think you can find me someone as great as you to head up my PR department?”

“You’re firing me?” she asked raising an eyebrow.

“I’m sure you’ll be too busy doing your first true passion to keep up with the demands at Reed Financial and I don’t even want to think about how crazy it would be once the public finds out you work there. Can you imagine the number of new clients we’ll get because they’ll be hoping to get a peek at you?”

“I suppose you’re right,” she sighed relaxing into his hug. “Paul Bryson...”

“Who’s Paul Bryson?” he asked confused.

“The person who should replace me. He may not be as pretty to look at, but he’ll get the job done, and I’ll always be available to help,” she promised him, suddenly looking forward to the upcoming holiday season.

“When are you going to tell Mandy you’re in?”

“I’ll tell her tomorrow and maybe have lunch with her and the Angels reps on Wednesday, unless you need me at the office.”

“I’m sure we can manage for a day or two without you,” he assured her. “How do I get in touch with this Paul Bryson?”

“I’ll set up a meeting for you for Tuesday. Your schedule was clear last time I checked.”

“I don’t know how you can keep track of mine as well as yours, but you really are a magician, it’s the only explanation to how you can organize things as well as you do,” he teased kissing her forehead. “Now shall we rejoin the party? I can’t guarantee that Dad hasn’t spilt the beans on what you’re currently doing.”

“I suppose we should,” she agreed letting him lead her back into the party.

They mingled for a bit and as the crowd began to depart, they had no more excuses to avoid her parents and sisters who were hanging onto Steven like leeches.

“Bella, I was wondering where you disappeared to,” Steven said detangling himself from Dorianna’s grasp.

“She had to take a call from Mandy,” Tyler explained.

“I’m surprised she still represents you Bella,” Izzie stated snootily. “After all you don’t get much coverage anymore.”

“That’s because she’s been...” Vivien began to answer but Tyler cut her off.

“Under an exclusive contract with Angels, they’ve paid her richly so she wouldn’t land another campaign and leave them,” he inserted.

“You would stick up for her, wouldn’t you,” Jordanna laughed.

“Enough,” Steven said as her parents snickered along with their attorney daughter.

“Tyler, I hope you can join us next weekend, we’re celebrating Izzie’s homecoming and her birthday,” her mother, Maria, stated.

“I’m afraid I’ll have to miss it,” he informed her. “I’m taking Bella to Paris next weekend; I have a meeting with some clients, and it’s been a bit since Bella’s been. We already have reservations at Philippe’s and he’s looking forward to seeing Bella again.”

“You didn’t tell us that,” Vivien said with a warm smile at the two. “This wouldn’t be a precursor to something more would it?”

“I have no clue what you’re talking about Mother,” he stated. “Welcome home Izzie; Dori, Jordan, Maria, Jonathan—it’s always refreshing to see some things never change. Mom, Dad, happy anniversary, I’m going to take Bella home now. Your final anniversary present is the suite upstairs where you changed Mom, here are the keys.”

“You’re leaving?” Steven inquired sympathetically towards Bella.

“Lots to do with the upcoming holidays...the new ad will come out on Black Friday, so I need to check that it’s ready, and I have to get back with Mandy, let her know that I’m in for the fashion show for Angels’ new line. Plus, Tyler needs to

find a new PR president since I'm going to try my hand at modeling fulltime again," she told him quietly as they walked towards the door. "I miss it and Angels wants me to headline the show and make my grand entrance, I guess they feel that since this is my twelfth year being their Angel it's time I stop hiding."

"You seemed so determined to leave that behind, what's changed?"

"Me—I've decided to do my best to let go of the past which means letting go of the anger I feel towards them," she said motioning to her family with a nod, "accepting what happened wasn't my fault, and letting go of the insecurity...I know, how on earth could I feel insecure when I look like I do?"

"I would never wonder about the how's, thank you for everything Bella. I'm guessing but I'd say the Paris trip is a surprise to you?"

"Completely," she laughed. "Though I'm not going to argue, I do love Paris and it means I can check on my place there."

"Make sure my son behaves himself."

"Always do, at least when Bella's around," Tyler said cutting between them and helping her into her coat. "Enjoy the rest of your night Dad..."

"I will, you should think about marriage Tyler, you'd be surprised at the joy it can bring."

"Maybe someday, right now I've got to get Bella home so she can start working on finding her replacement and packing for the weekend."

"A trip to Paris?" she said as they sat in the back of a cab on their way to her building.

"There's no way I'm going to go to a blasted party for Izzie when it's your birthday too, besides, you love Paris and I do have some clients I should catch up with that live there."

“You won’t find me arguing though I think we should stay at my place; you know how much I hate hotels,” she said, and he gave her a little knowing grin.

“Deal,” he agreed pulling her closer, allowing her to rest her head on his shoulder. “Love you, Bella.”

“Love you too Ty,” she sighed as the depth of those feelings increased tenfold. She was in trouble. She’d fallen in love with her best friend and now she was worried she’d do something stupid and lose him because there was no way he could love her the same way...no way at all she was assured as he kissed her forehead and left leaving her feeling worse yet better than she had in years.

Chapter 3

“Bella, thank god you’re here...this place has been a madhouse all day,” Jessica said handing her the pile of messages that had come in. “Oh, and there’s a Paul Bryson in your office with Tyler.”

“Thanks Jess,” she told her assistant, “you should come in for this.”

She greeted Paul with her usual hug and kiss on the cheek as she waited for Jess to take a seat. “Jess, I’d like you to meet Paul Bryson, starting next week he’s going to be your new boss.”

“What?” Jessica said looking around the room with a worried expression.

“Bella is leaving the company, at least in an official capacity,” Tyler stated.

“Oh my god—are you two?” Jessica said as a grin formed.

“No...” Bella laughed. “The truth is my name isn’t Bella Spencer.”

“Huh?” Jessica said confused again.

“Officially I’m Arabella Spencer Remsen, but most people know me as Arabella Angel,” she said letting that linger as it dawned on her assistant what that meant.

“Holy hell, oh Jesus, you must have been laughing so hard...all the times we’ve said you should model...” Jessica said trying to hide her own laughter. “So why are you leaving now? I mean, you’ve only done the Angels’ line for a few years now...the fashion show? You’re doing the fashion show...”

“And heading back into the world that I completely love,” Bella explained. “Paul and I graduated together with our masters, and I know this place will be left in capable hands.”

“It just won’t be as pretty around here anymore,” he added. “Or young, it was surprising to find a model in our graduate classes but when that model is only twenty-one and graduating...it makes you take note of what her secrets are.”

“And Bella will still be available if something crops up that needs a more feminine touch,” Tyler stated. “Plus, she’s still a client.”

“Wow...I mean, wow,” Jessica said. “I have to say I sort of expected you to be leaving because you two were getting married. I know you say you’re just friends, but I don’t buy it, but this is so awesome.”

“Thanks, I think,” Bella said hugging the other woman. “Now, since tomorrow is officially a holiday you should head out. I’ll see you on Monday Jess.”

“Me too,” Paul stated. “So, you’re going to be popping in and out over the next few weeks still?” he asked once it was just the three of them left.

“I will be, though the entire week before the show is going to be insane. They’ve already changed the finale outfit about ten times, and we still have a month to go,” she laughed. “I’ll get my things cleared out before Monday.”

“No rush Bella,” Paul said smiling a bit too brightly at her for Tyler’s liking.

“She’s just moving them upstairs to mine for now,” he stated.

“Well then I’ll let you get on with it,” Paul said, “unless you need some help.”

“I can manage,” Bella told him sensing Tyler’s irritation. “Happy Thanksgiving Paul, we’ll see you Monday morning.”

“Monday,” he agreed before reluctantly leaving.

“He likes you,” Tyler said loading the boxes on the moving cart an hour later.

“He’s a friend Ty, of course he likes me.”

“He *likes* you, Bella. He’s ready to propose if you’d so much as bat your eyelashes in his direction.”

“Then it’s a good thing that I’m not going to do that, isn’t it?” she stated kissing his cheek. “Don’t worry I’m not about to do something as stupid as getting married. I think it’ll be enough to get back out there and model, though we might have a few issues...”

“What sort of issues?”

“Well back in the hay days of Arabella, she never went out with the same guy more than once, but as Jess indicated everyone knows we’re close...”

“So what?” he said shrugging.

“They’re going to wonder about the nature of our relationship, telling the public we’re just friends isn’t going to go over well if they see us together all the time,” she warned.

“What are you trying to say Bella? That I’m no longer needed or welcomed in your life?” he asked his eyes flashing angrily at her.

“No...god no, Ty. I’m just saying we’re likely to hear the question of whether we’re dating over and over. No matter how many times we say we’re just friends they’re not going to buy it,” she said pausing at the look that crossed his face, the anger making her heart flutter. “Ty, you’re my best friend and I love you, but I don’t want to cause issues with anyone who might be or is in your life, that’s it.”

“There’s no one in my life and no one on the horizon, Bella. I don’t care if people speculate that we’re more than what we are, we know where we stand—right?” he said looking down into her eyes.

“Right,” she said a bit too quickly. “I guess that’s it, thanks for helping...I can’t believe I’ve accumulated that much stuff.”

“Think of the hassle trying to move out of your apartment would be you’ve been based there for what...twelve years?”

“Do you know how many times I’ve had to clean out my closets because I don’t have any more room for the new items Angels sends?”

“Two, three times a year?”

“Pretty much,” she laughed lifting the collar on her coat to ward off the chill in the air. “It looks like it could snow already.”

“Don’t say that we’ve got an hour drive to Mom and Dad’s place,” he warned.

“Can’t we say something popped up and we can’t make it?” she pleaded not wanting to face her family for the entire day.

“Nope, it won’t be that bad, I’ll be there to protect you from the insanity,” he promised kissing her forehead as a cab stopped to pick them up.

“You might warn your mom to lock up the knives, I can’t promise to not use them,” she said only half kidding.

“Not very angelic there Bella,” he teased.

“Angelic is the last thing I feel when it comes to the Remsens. You have no idea how much I want to go to the airport right now, hop on a plane to Tahiti and lie on a shaded patio beside the beach for the weekend...”

“I’ll keep that in mind for your birthday next year,” he said wrapping his arm around her.

“You do that,” she laughed sending up a silent prayer to get her through the next few weeks with her sanity intact.

“Bella, you look brilliant darling,” Calvin stated snapping some frames as she got ready. The show was set to start in thirty minutes and though the scene outside her dressing area was chaotic she was calm. “I finally get to photograph that gorgeous face of yours...no don’t move that’s perfect...”

“Calvin, it’s a good thing you don’t use rolls of film much anymore,” she laughed, “you’d have burnt through ten

already.”

“But it would be worth it to capture your face perfectly just once,” he said moving to the doorway to get some shots of the other girls.

Five minutes before the show was to start, she walked out of her area and smiled at the other girls, most of them were eight to ten years younger than her but as Grace said yesterday at the final fitting, she didn’t look any older than they did, until you got to the eyes, and it was there that the difference could be seen. Her eyes held a mysterious air of knowing a deep dark secret the others could only hope to discover and it had been that way for years.

“Arabella, I cannot believe you are here,” Jasmine stated. “You do not look any different than the last time I saw you.”

“That’s not true Jasmine, I know for a fact I’ve got a few extra lines that weren’t there eight years ago,” she told her before turning to talk to the full group. “Okay everyone, let’s rock this...you’re representing the Angels Brand tonight. Smoldering looks are fine, but you better show some teeth, remember this is being televised so there will be more than five million people watching you.”

“Arabella’s right,” Charlie, the company’s president an amazing woman in her fifties, stated. “But you’re also representing Arabella. She’s our crowning angel and she is the one who chose you for this gig so do her proud or she’s likely not to hire you again.”

“Didn’t know you had so much pull in the industry still,” Elise, an upcoming superstar of seventeen, said.

“You’d be surprised how far Arabella’s influence reaches,” Charlie said sending her a pointed look. “Why did you want to become a model?” she added when Elise rolled her eyes.

“Because I wanted to be noticed,” she stated.

“Who influenced you?” Calvin inquired snapping a picture.

“Fine, Arabella did,” she sighed. “Okay smiles and flirty glances will be all you’ll see or hear from me for the rest of the night...”

“If only,” Jasmine whispered to Bella putting a smirking glint into her eyes as the host let them know they’d just gone live. The music began to play, pushing away any thoughts or fears, and after Jasmine left the stage, she waited on the edge as the host readied her introduction.

“Ladies and gentlemen, for the first time ever in person, please welcome Angels’ shining star, returning tonight to the runway, the one, the only, the unmatched beauty of our very own Arabella Angel...”

Bella released the breath she’d been holding and put a genuine smile on her face as she stepped out into the middle of the runway and paused. She blew a kiss at their host, a floundering movie star who hadn’t had a hit in three years, and then began her walk down to the end. At the end of the runway, she paused to pose for photos and the close-up from the camera. Just before she turned to go, she caught Tyler’s gaze, she flashed another smile, sent him a wink and then sashayed back up the runway. She turned to look back at the crowd once more sending them a wave before dashing down the side to go change.

“Arabella, that was magnificent, and that wink...you wouldn’t be hiding something about you and that spectacular piece of manliness you came with and who’s sitting down in the front row, would you?” Charlie asked rushing over as they went to commercial.

“That’s Tyler, my best friend,” she told her slipping the dress over her head and discarding the swimsuit top.

“If my best friend looked at me like that, he’d be more than a best friend,” Charlie stated.

“Tyler has an appreciation for Arabella’s figure just like ninety-nine percent of the male population. Gotta go...” she said as her cue came up on the music. The show went surprisingly well, only a few hiccups they easily covered, and as she changed into her final outfit a dress that could be

considered angelic if one decided to call it that, she let the hair and makeup people do a few touchups.

“Wow, you are breathtaking,” Jasmine said with envy.

“I agree,” Calvin said snapping photos.

“Richard hair down,” Charlie stated hurrying over as he secured the curls back into place.

“But it’ll lose the neckline,” Toby, the designer of it, argued.

“Not with Arabella’s hair,” Charlie assured him. “Hair down...it will blow them away Toby, trust me.”

Richard hurriedly took out the pins and began to flick pieces into place, but Bella shook her head and bent over so her hair fell down over her face. She ran her hands through it a couple times and then straightened up letting it settle around her shoulders and then flow down her back.

“Hopefully everyone’s taken their heart medication,” Richard laughed deeming it perfection.

Bella glanced in the mirror and had to agree that she did look amazing. The dress flowed perfectly against her body, caressing the curves and showing off her tiny waist before giving glimpses of her slender legs as she walked, the extra material trailing behind her giving her the aura of being an actual angel. She adjusted the top of the dress and flattened the straps that began in the middle of the bust and went over her shoulders before connecting to the back of the dress, well what was there of it anyway, underneath her arms. Double sided tape and a perfect fit left her comfortable in the white silk shot with silver threads and able to beam a huge smile as she made her final walk.

“Angels’ own Arabella Angel, ladies and gentlemen,” the host said as she appeared. The crowd began clapping wildly but from the moment she stepped onto the runway she only had eyes for Tyler. The intensity in his gaze almost caused her to stumble and she glanced away from him before finding herself drawn back to him.

The combination of her hair, complete with silver highlights weaved within it, and the dress made her eyes stand out even more but the look that entered them as she looked back at Tyler was a standout moment of the night and the photos that were captured in that instant were declared the best ever taken of her.

She turned to walk back to the front of the runway and halfway down she paused looking over her shoulder with the sole intent of giving them a final smile, but she found Tyler's gaze instantly and the crowd seeing the way her eyes light with something they couldn't explain had them on their feet before she could begin to move again. She reached the front of the runway and turned opening her arms and giving them a slight bow as the rest of the models filed onto the stage from both sides and began to walk down it, stopping at equal distances between each pair.

Charlie and Toby joined her on the stage, and she bestowed kisses on each before they sent her down the to the end of the runway and as she took another bow the fake snow began to rain down like confetti, creating a winter wonderland scene to take them back to the stage. She saw the two models closest to her reach the center of the runway and she turned to follow them.

She stopped in the center between Charlie and Toby who were beaming and blew kisses to the crowd as the other girls left the stage. Charlie and Toby followed them and with a final kiss and wave, a puff of white smoke appeared, and she slipped through the heavy drapes allowing Tristan, the head of her personal security team, to lift her down onto the floor where she was instantly swarmed.

By the time the media had left it was closing in on eight-thirty and she needed to change if she and Tyler were going to make it to Reed Financials' Christmas party at all.

"If you'll excuse me, I need to get changed...we've got a party to get to," she said grinning at Tyler who was hanging back giving her the spotlight.

“Where are you going?” Toby asked staying her hands that would have begun to undo the straps.

“Our company party,” Tyler answered stepping forward to reach her side.

“Toby this is Tyler Reed, my best friend and up until recently boss, as well as the only man who can put up with me long-term,” she said as he slipped his arm around her.

“It’s not an issue since I’ve watched her grow up and become an amazing, beautiful, and brilliant woman and have I mentioned she takes stunning photos?” Tyler joked.

“When does your party begin?” Toby inquired.

“About thirty minutes ago,” she admitted.

“Have Juliette touch up your makeup and take the dress, it’s not going to fit anyone other than you anyway,” Toby told her. “And you will certainly be the most stunning person in the room.”

“I think it’ll be a bit much for an office party even a Reed’s office party,” she said motioning to the dress she had planned on wearing.

“What do you say Tyler?” Charlie asked.

“It’s Bella’s choice but I certainly wouldn’t turn her away for wearing that dress, if it can actually be called that,” he stated.

“See Arabella why mess with perfection?” Toby urged.

“Fine I’ll wear it but that means you can’t leave my side, there’s no guarantee the boys at the party will keep their hands to themselves and it will be the first time I make an appearance as Arabella Angel and not just Bella Spencer,” she said turning to Tyler.

“I promise I won’t leave your side,” he said as Juliette made a few adjustments to her makeup. He took her cloak and draped it around her shoulders as she picked up the trail of the dress and ushered her into the waiting car.

“Ready for this?” he asked before opening the door for them to walk inside the ballroom.

“I guess so, after all, it’s the choice I made,” she said resting her head against his shoulder for a moment. “Smile Ty we’re gonna be on display.”

“Always am when I’m with you Bella, even if you’re wearing yoga pants and my old sweatshirt.”

The party had already begun but the instant they walked into the room a hush fell over the guests until Jessica walked over and hugged her. “Bella...you are absolutely stunning... the fashion show was today, wasn’t it?”

“Got over about an hour ago, we just came from there,” she answered before raising her voice enough to be heard. “Merry Christmas everyone, please enjoy the party, tonight we’re celebrating all of you for the fabulous work you provide all year long.”

“Bella’s right,” Tyler stated. “But while we’re celebrating, I’m sure all of you have noticed that our Bella is looking quite beautiful tonight. For those of you who haven’t guessed it yet, we have had a world class model amongst our mix for the past five years. It’s my honor to admit that she has also been a client of Reed Financial for over...well, she’ll hurt me if I tell you that one but tonight, she finally returned to her first love and if you turn the TV up there on, I’m sure you’ll catch sight of our gorgeous Arabella doing what she was born to do...”

“That’s not necessary, no one wants to watch TV at a party as grand as this one, so please enjoy yourselves and again, Merry Christmas,” she said grinning as Steven and Vivien came over to them.

“Don’t listen to Bella, she’s always been a bit shy when it comes to her success,” Steven stated as someone flipped on the TV, and they replayed bits of her walks focusing on her final stroll and the over the shoulder look she’d given them.

She laughed as the reporter went on and on about her and she began to ignore it as the evening went on until she caught

the slightest bit of the latest report.

Tonight, the fashion world crowned, or maybe we should say re-crowned a queen, Arabella Angel made a triumphant return to the runway today in the first ever fashion show for Angels which was televised live earlier this evening. Arabella showed that far from fading into the background as she focused solely on Angels' advertisements, she used the brilliancy she's discovered in front of the camera and brought her runway walk to a whole new level.

As many in the fashion industry remember Arabella excelled on the runway, being named the world's highest paid runway model when she was only sixteen and now ten years later, she is proving that sometimes age really does improve things. She stunned in her first walk down the runway wearing a gorgeous bikini, but it was her final piece that blew away the crowd. The gown, a custom piece by Angels' designer Toby Magnus, was a crowning glory that Arabella wore to perfection.

And no show would be complete without a moment that wows the crowd and this one had three, other than the return of Arabella. The first was seconds after she had made her first stroll down the runway in the masterpiece, but words can't even begin to describe this moment so prepare yourselves ladies and gentlemen for this sight...and now you see the dress and that gaze is enough to stop hearts, but it doesn't end there.

The next moment was on her second stroll in the same gown at the end of the show as she was joined by the other models who honestly paled in comparison and again watch for the moment, the bow and the snow falling turning her into the snow angel...and the last, a moment that certainly ended the show with a bang, or a puff of brilliant smoke as it may, as Arabella disappeared from the stage after a final kiss and a small wave to the adoring crowd.

What lies next for our darling Angel? From her own mouth she told us she is making a return to modeling after spending the last five years working in the public relations department of Reed Financial. Yes, you heard that correctly,

she was working like a regular Joe. Seems our beauty was also a brain graduating with her master's in public relations at twenty-one. Yes, a masters' degree at twenty-one but I think I speak for the majority of the male population when I say thank you Arabella for coming back and you made a hell of a reentrance to the fashion world.

“Pretty impressive Bella,” Tyler whispered putting his hand on the small of her back and sending sparks flying through her.

“Why thank you, I do try to please,” she grinned back.

“Then would you please dance with me so Talia would stop staring at me like she wants to eat me alive?”

“I'd love to but be warned twirls won't work so well in this dress.”

“No problem with that,” he said pulling her into his arms where she stayed for the rest of the party in one way or another.

“You're coming over tomorrow, correct?” Vivien asked, as they got ready to leave while the caterers began clearing away the party.

“We will be there Mom,” Tyler assured her. “It will be just the four of us, right?”

“Yes, after the fiasco that was Thanksgiving, I think the less we do as a combined family the better,” she told him.

“We'll see you then,” Bella said kissing them both. The car dropped them off at her place and she happily took off the shoes, gorgeous as they were, were not a thing to wear all night.

“Happy?” Tyler asked pulling her down on the couch beside him and letting her snuggle up against him.

“Blissfully,” she answered. “Thank you for coming to the show and dragging me to the party. I didn't expect the reception I got at either.”

“No regrets?”

“None, no fears either...I don’t know if I’m going to pursue runway again but I’m completely open to taking on more assignments. Walking away was the best thing I could have done five years ago...”

“Even if you didn’t cut all your ties to that world?” he teased.

“Angels was different. They’re not demanding, I knew who I’d be working with, so it was easy for me to stick with them but the rest of it...I guess I had gotten to a point where I was burnt out. I’d been doing it for eight years but now, now I know it’s what I want and it’s all thanks to you Tyler.”

“I didn’t do anything Bella, you’re the one who finally talked about the past, made the choice to let it go and move on,” he stated tilting her head so he could see her face. “You’re the one who made every single man in the world fall in love with you tonight with that smile and that look. It’s a good thing I don’t have a heart condition Bella because you slayed it tonight.”

“Keep complimenting me and it might go to my head,” she laughed trying to dissuade the emotions running through her.

“You deserve each and every one of them. When you turned to walk away in this dress, I thought I was going to keel over from the impact of the back of the dress or lack of it but when you looked back—damn Bella you brought everyone to their knees in that second.”

“It was planned to Ty, but I have to admit when I did it, I wasn’t anticipating the impact the sight of everyone watching would have on me. I was prepared to feel the panic I use to but this time I felt loved, and it didn’t hurt that you were there...egging me on.”

“Can you blame me when you look like this?” he grinned gently.

“You drew that out of me somehow, so any flack I get from it, any crazies who try and profess their love, it’s your fault,” she grinned back.

“Bella, you shouldn’t say things like that,” he whispered as their gazes connected and the feelings that had been coursing through her at the show returned full force. “And you really shouldn’t look at me like that...”

“Why?” she replied as he lowered his head towards hers.

“Because I’m liable to do this,” he stated covering her lips with his in a kiss that neither had anticipated but both had wanted.

The kiss lingered, slow and sensual, pulling them both to a place they wanted to stay but knew they couldn’t. Bella was the first to pull back, getting up and moving across the room as she tried to remind herself that this was Tyler, her friend and the one person she refused to lose.

“Bella—I,” he said standing up and coming after her.

“Ty, that shouldn’t have happened,” she said holding out her hands to ward him off. “You’re my best friend and I shouldn’t have...”

“You’re right,” he agreed reluctantly, praying that he hadn’t destroyed the relationship they had. He couldn’t imagine not having Bella in his life. “I’m sorry Bella—the combination of the show with the party—you looking so beautiful—I guess I forgot for a minute you’re my Bella.”

“It’s okay, that kiss was for Arabella,” she suggested. “Bella and Tyler are friends, right?” she added afraid he’d say no.

“Always,” he assured her stepping over her protests for distance between them and gathering her in his arms like he always did kissing her forehead. “I’ll be by around nine? It’ll put us at Mom and Dad’s about ten, ten-fifteen...”

“Sounds great,” she told him cheerfully. “Night Tyler...”

“Night Bella,” he replied.

She watched him leave and went over to the window, looking down at the street as he climbed into a cab and sped off. She caught sight of her reflection in the glass as she

turned off the lights and shook her head in disappointment at her weakness.

“He’s your best friend Bella, he doesn’t think of you that way and you stupidly kiss him? When are you ever going to start using your head? Friends...that’s it from here on out... just friends,” she lectured herself before heading to take a shower.

She needed to put some distance between them, physical distance...maybe she should accept the job Mandy had told her about, three weeks, five locations, and no Tyler. She sent Mandy a text saying she’d do it before slipping into her big empty bed wondering what Tyler would say if he knew how much she wanted him to be beside her. He’d probably laugh uncontrollably she decided as she slipped into a dream that showed her what her life would consist of if he found out about her feelings.

Chapter 4

Bella slipped her shades on, hiding behind the security of them as she neared the general area of the airport. Photographers would be waiting for her the moment she got there, and she didn't want them catching the bags under her eyes that no amount of makeup could completely cover. In the last six months she'd flown around the world twice, taken millions of photos, worn thousands of outfits, walked in dozens of shows, and now she was finally home.

She was ready to go curl up in her bed and sleep for the first full week of her two-week break she'd made Mandy schedule for her. The summer heat was seeping into the airport forcing the air conditioner to work overtime and she pulled her light lace cardigan around her shoulders to ward off the chill that ran down her back. She unwound her hair letting it provide additional protection from the photographers she could already see. When they spotted her, they raised their cameras and began snapping photos, she rolled her eyes behind the shades as she forced herself to look forward and not respond to their shouts.

Tyler heard the calls as he walked into the airport. He'd cancelled Bella's car, deciding to pick her up himself in order to spend some time with her. He'd seen her a handful of times as she popped in and out of places but despite needing her input a few times had barely managed to speak to her since New Year's when she had flown out to her shoot. He cut through the crowd and placed himself directly in her path waiting for her to notice him.

Bella's steps nearly faltered when she spotted the tall figure making its way through the crowd and as he moved into her path, she grinned, widening her steps eating up the distance between them. She sighed as he wrapped his arms around her and hugged tightly, lifting her off the ground and kissing her forehead as always.

"What are you doing here?" she asked once he'd put her back down on her feet.

“I figured the only way to get time with my Bella was to ambush you,” he said taking her bag and putting a protective arm around her shoulders. “I cancelled your car and told Mandy I’d pick you up—she seemed giddy about the prospect.”

“I’m sure she did, and she most likely also tipped off the photogs that I’d be arriving now,” Bella stated. “Don’t be surprised if our picture appears all over the tabloids tomorrow.”

“I’m sure I’ll manage,” he assured her as he handed her into the car and closed the door.

She turned to him pushing up the sunglasses so she could see him in the shaded car.

“Christ Bella, you look like you haven’t slept in a year,” he said reaching out and rubbing his thumb underneath her eye.

“Six months,” she teased leaning over and kissing his cheek. “Which is why I’m here so take me home James.”

“I’ll James you,” he mocked starting the car and pulling away. “So...how’s Chrysler?”

“Chrysler?” she asked confused.

“The male model you’ve been seen all over Europe with.”

“Oh, you mean Craig, the decisively *gay* male model who’s been using me to gain fame and fortune by showing up wherever I happen to be and butting his way into photos?” she countered explaining away the appearance of the other man.

“He doesn’t seem gay to me, especially not when his hands are all over you,” he replied flatly, holding onto his jealousy.

“Trust me, he’s gay, he just hasn’t come out because he does so well with mixed company shoots. Besides he’s about twenty years old much too young for this old girl,” she teased.

“If you’re old what does that make me?”

“Ancient,” she suggested leaning back into the comfort of the leather seat letting the heat soothe her weary body into contentment. She closed her eyes basking in it and when she reopened them, she was in her bed with the covers tucked around her and the moon shining in through the open windows.

She stretched as she sat up relieved to find herself still half dressed. A low murmuring caught her ear, and she made her way to the living room, propping her hip against the doorjamb when she spied Tyler watching the news.

“Well, hey there gorgeous,” he said catching sight of her. “Hope you don’t mind I stuck around.”

“Not at all,” she replied. “I’m guessing you also carried me up from the car and put me to bed?”

“You were out cold—speaking of cold, aren’t you a bit cool in that?”

“Oh, relax Ty,” she laughed. “I’m more covered than I am in the billboard photo hanging in Times Square.”

“But you’re not sleepy eyed with hair that says you just got out of bed on the billboard,” he said growing uncomfortable with his body’s fast reaction to her.

“Seriously what’s your problem? I wear less than this on the beach and at the pool,” she threw out at him wondering if this was left over from Christmas.

“Seriously Bella you have to ask?” he retorted. “I’m trying to be a gentleman here and you’re parading in very little, when we’re in your apartment alone.”

“What do you think I’m going to do? Jump you? Relax Ty, I swear if I knew going back to modeling would make you act like this, I’d never have done it,” she sighed flopping down onto the couch across from him and pulling the throw up over her lap.

He pushed a hand through his hair and crossed the room to crouch down in front of her. “No, I’m sorry Bella—you caught me off guard. The news station was showing footage

of us from the airport and then pictures of you and that joker. Then there you were fresh from bed...”

“Ty, I get it, there’s going to try and sexualize anything I do; I just don’t want it to affect us. You’re my best friend and I don’t want to lose that or you.”

“You won’t. Why don’t we start over?” he suggested. “Did you have a good nap?”

“It was bliss,” she grinned. “I’d forgotten what it was like to really sleep.”

“That’s what happens when you stay away for six months,” he teased. “Now are you hungry, tired?”

“Starved,” she admitted, “the last thing I had to eat was early this morning...late last night here actually.”

“It’s only ten-fifteen, we can head out and get something if you want...no?” he said as she shook her head. “Order in?”

“Actually...I’d love an omelet,” she said fluttering her eyelashes at him.

“I pick you up from the airport, carry you to bed, let you sleep even though I haven’t heard from you or talked to you in months, and now you want me to cook for you?”

“You make the best omelets,” she offered with a giant smile.

“I’m guessing you had Janet stock the fridge?” he said already moving to the kitchen.

“Yup,” she laughed following him.

He began getting the ingredients from the fridge, looking for a pan and her knives to dice up the vegetables as he suggested, “Why don’t you hop into the shower? I know you’re dying to after your flight and nap. I’ll have your omelet ready when you’re done.”

“You’re the best Ty,” she said kissing his cheek before dashing down the hallway to her bedroom. She turned on the water, adjusting the temperature, and checked out her reflection in the mirror. Alright she did look like she’d just

gotten out of bed, which wasn't shocking since she had, but she just couldn't quite understand his reaction to her or her reaction to his reaction.

"Don't mess this up Bella," she warned herself again as she reopened her bedroom door and headed back to the kitchen her wet hair gathered up in a bun on top of her head in time to see Tyler transfer the omelet onto a plate.

"Feeling better?" he asked relaxing against the counter when he saw she was fully covered in her yoga pants and tank top.

"Much," she answered sitting down at the counter where he'd put her plate and digging in before he could walk around and join her.

"Mmm," she sighed closing her eyes. "This is heaven. No one can make an omelet like you. I swear I'm going to be jealous of the woman who finally catches you because she'll get to have these all the time."

"Who says I'll make them for her?" he stated taking a sip of his water to dislodge the bit of food that had gotten caught at her mention of him marrying someone else.

"Oh, I'm sure she'd just love knowing that you'd come over here and make one for me but not her," she laughed. "I can see the headline now, 'Arabella Angel steals another woman's breakfast' or something worse..."

"I suppose she could go on a talk show claiming, 'my husband only cooks for home wrecking supermodel,'" he added.

"Ah yes, that's Arabella, home wrecker extraordinaire," she agreed happily. "I've missed you."

"I missed you too Bella—want to tell me why you stayed away, didn't bother to call me, talk to me about anything outside of Reed Financial?"

"Because I was homesick and I knew if I came back, I wouldn't want to leave. I also knew if I forced myself to stay away until I got past it, I'd be able to come and go as needed," she said hedging on a half-truth.

“Well next time you decide to run off for six months you better take my calls or else I’m likely to come and find you, wherever you’re trying to hide, and drag you back here to hang out with me.”

“Can’t get any decent dates for your business functions?” she teased.

“Not a one, the last date thought a balance sheet was an apparatus that gymnasts used,” he stated somehow with a straight face.

“No...way...” she said between giggles. “Where do you meet these women, Ty? Boobs-R-Us?”

“Boobs-n-Things,” he rebutted causing her to laugh even more. She’d been right to take the next two weeks off, she’d be able to rest up before the Angels’ shoot and attend the company picnic with Tyler but mostly she’d be able to indulge in her need to see him.

Summer is officially here and so is the latest Angels’ swimsuit ad featuring the delightful Arabella Angel in full crowning glory but it’s not just her ad that’s hitting the internet. In the last month there has been more than one photo crop up of Arabella and Chrysler looking quite intimate but in the last five days it’s not Chrysler who’s been entertaining the Angels’ Angel.

Arabella was seen being greeted by none other than the president of Reed Financial, Tyler Reed at JFK this past Monday, a greeting those present said was more than the friendly ‘hi ya’ that would be expected of ‘just friends’ Arabella Angel and Tyler Reed. Might a new love triangle be growing, especially as Chrysler was seen getting off a plane yesterday before going to the opening of Hobbyist, where we caught video of Arabella and Tyler looking quite intimate?

Only time will tell which man Arabella chooses the twenty-year-old male model with abs girls dream of or the thirty-three-year-old financial genius who is an old family friend. Sources close to Arabella say she’s nowhere near to

making a choice as the two continue to compete, now in person, for her affection. We say may the best man win, because we're guaranteed to win no matter who that may be.

"I see you've seen it," Bella sighed slipping into Tyler's office Friday afternoon as the bit from last night replayed. "I'm so sorry Tyler. Especially since Craig is being such an ass and is determined to play this out."

"Bella, it's fine," he stated. "You'd be surprised at the number of new clients we're getting because of the publicity being attached to you has brought us. Come on Bella that was a joke," he added seeing the look that crossed her face. "Honey, it really is fine. I'm just worried that this jerk won't take no for an answer."

"He's not the first person to latch onto me in hopes of getting their fifteen minutes and turning it into more but he's the first I can't do anything about without becoming the bad guy."

"How's that?"

"Normally I'd expose them, prove that they have a girlfriend already, that they're trying to land a movie or a record deal, but exposing Craig means outing him and if I do that, then all the drama gets heaped on my door for being a bitch."

"Not necessarily," he said as an idea formed. "What if you made it clear that you have chosen?"

"And how would I do that?" she asked.

"You let it slip that we're more than 'just friends' and that we have been for some time," he suggested.

"Then the media will want to know what I've been doing with Craig."

"Call him out; let it be known that he's been trying to use you for his own career or that he's been trying to break us up, but it won't work and that you want nothing to do with him."

"That could work, except..."

"Except what Bella?"

“How do we deal with the constant questioning from not only the media but also your parents about the future? We do this and no one will ever accept that we can go from relationship, fake as it might be, back to friendship. Let alone that anyone you or I date will be comfortable with our closeness after it.”

“We’ll deal with that when it happens, but it would keep you from outing him and keep other suitors away, at least partially,” he offered.

“Let’s see how the next week goes,” she suggested. “He has shoots planned in town and if he tries anything then we’ll go with it.”

“Alright,” he agreed, “now what do you want to do tonight?”

“There’s the fundraiser for the children’s hospital tonight, I got a last-minute invitation which is why I’m here, well the second reason.”

“Good thing I have a clean suit at home then, what are you wearing?”

“A dress Toby designed for me, it’s a dark grey so no matter what color shirt you wear we’ll be good,” she told him and at seven-fifteen when he picked her up, she found she was quite right.

“Wow, it’s not the showstopper the other one was but still,” he said giving her a twirl and admiring the halter style and the dark grey crushed looking fabric that left her back bare to the waist.

“You should see the one he’s designing for the heart gala, it’s red of course, but well you’ll see,” she teased taking the wrap that went with the dress and slipping her arm into his. “You look good too.”

“Thank you, this gorgeous creature I know picked out the suit, the shirt, and the tie the last time I let her take me shopping because she was tired of seeing the same suits day in and day out.”

“Well, whoever she was, she has fabulous taste.” Bella laughed letting the smile remain on her face for the majority of the evening.

“Bella, it’s been ages since I’ve seen you,” a man a few inches taller than her five-eleven frame stated as they circulated around the room again.

“Dr. Harris...Evan,” she corrected herself before he could. “I didn’t know you were going to be here tonight.”

“The hospital and the shelter recently partnered together,” he answered. “It is so good to see you.”

“And you,” she said smiling gently at him before she caught Tyler’s questioning gaze. “Evan, this is Tyler Reed, Tyler, Evan is the director of the New Hope Shelter.”

“The rape and abuse crisis center for teens?” Tyler questioned as his gaze softened as he looked at her.

“Yes, we provide care to teens in difficult situations and now the hospital and the doctors are willing to offer their services to those who come and go,” Evan stated. “But none of it would have been possible without Bella.”

“What?” Tyler said looking between them.

“Evan was one of the doctors in the ER when I was brought in,” she told him softly. “Nine years ago, I met a girl who’d went through something like I had. Unfortunately, she didn’t have anyone to help her like I did or the money to get medical care. She and her parents were illegal immigrants, and she couldn’t go to the doctor or the police without worrying someone would turn them in...”

“You wanted to help,” Tyler finished for her.

“Yeah, Evan was the only doctor I felt comfortable talking to and together we came up with the teen shelter. A place that they can go no matter their situation or background and find someone to talk to. It was right before you took over my accounts...but it’s one of the two programs I regularly fund.”

“The other’s a clinic for anorexia, isn’t it?” he questioned as worry gripped him.

“Don’t worry I’ve never starved myself,” she said, smiling softly at him as the worry shone through his gaze. “But I know plenty who have. One of the girls, Veronica, that I worked with all the time, we were always booked together for runways and photo shoots...she died three days after she turned seventeen because she refused to admit she had a problem.”

“A lot of girls can’t,” Evan agreed, “not until it’s too late or something terrible happens.”

“Which is why the clinics are so important,” Bella stated.

“You’re amazing,” Tyler whispered against her temple as he gently pressed his lips to it before surveying the crowd that had grown quiet. “Don’t look now but we’ve got company...”

“Hmm?” she sounded glancing up. “Honestly?”

“You’re a popular woman Bella,” Evan stated.

“Unfortunately. You know what? We’ve been here long enough,” she said turning to Tyler. “Why don’t we slip out before he can cause a scene?”

“It’s your call,” he told her as she said good-bye to Evan. He began to ease them through the crowd almost managing to get them out before they were stopped by the Chief of Staff for some photos. They were nearly finished when Craig descended upon them, and she felt her jaw tighten in annoyance as he butted his way between her and Tyler for the last photo.

“Sorry mate,” he said in his annoying Australian accent. “She looks much better on my arm, don’t you agree?” he added to the gathering crowd.

“Actually, I don’t,” Tyler said calmly.

“Back off,” she whispered to Craig.

“Did you invite both men tonight, Arabella?” a reporter asked more than ready to spin the charity event into tabloid fodder.

“She invites me everywhere,” Craig said flashing them a smile.

“Back off, *Chrysler*,” she repeated wrenching her arm out of his grasp and walking over to Tyler.

“Seems to me like she’s a bit miffed at you Chrysler,” another reporter stated with amusement.

“I’m afraid I was a bit rude earlier when she asked me to attend, and I refused stupidly which had her going to her second choice,” he said sending a glance towards Tyler.

“Ignore them,” Bella said as Tyler’s spine straightened.

“He’s not going to stop,” he warned and to accentuate his point Craig reached out, took Bella’s hand and kissed it as he pulled her towards him. He was ready to punch the man, but Bella was faster and pushed at Craig’s shoulders as she stomped on his foot.

“I’m sorry,” she said sending an apologetic smile towards the reporters before turning back to Craig with her eyes flashing fury. “I’ve tried to be polite, let you slide because I know how desperate you are to become a household name, but this is ridiculous. I am tired of you intruding on my relationship. For the final time, leave me alone.”

“Women,” he said grinning at the flashing cameras. “Arabella you don’t mean that, remember our wonderful times in Europe? We don’t want to lose what we have.”

“What you have is an untouched face,” Tyler stated the threat behind it clear.

“Why would you want this oaf when you could have me?” he tried one final time.

“Because I love this oaf, as you called him,” Bella said praying their ploy would work though it wasn’t a ploy saying she was in love with Tyler. “For clarity ladies and gentlemen, *Chrysler* and I have never been anywhere near having a relationship or anything remotely resembling a sordid affair. Now if you will excuse me, I would like to enjoy the rest of the evening with my real date, we are here to help raise funds for the children’s hospital, not your profile Chrysler.”

“Mr. Reed, what are your feelings for Arabella?” a reporter asked quickly before they could move away.

“The same as they always have been,” he stated placing his arm around her.

“Do you believe that she and Chrysler were not engaged in an affair?” another asked.

“I trust Bella completely and I know without a doubt she would not have an affair with anyone,” he answered.

“Arabella, how long have you and Mr. Reed been an item...and do you have any plans for the future of the relationship?”

“I don’t remember a time when Ty wasn’t in my life,” she said vaguely. “Our relationship is private and always has been. Any plans we may or may not have are also private.”

“Mr. Reed, do you have anything you’d like to add?” the reporter asked.

“Nothing except to say that every word Bella said is true. Our relationship is just that, our relationship and though I have to accept that the public will be in her life, when it comes to our life together, we would appreciate the privacy every couple deserves to be offered to us,” he answered, and she could have kissed him for the brilliancy behind the statement.

“Arabella will your relationship with Mr. Reed interfere with your career?”

“Tyler and I have a firm relationship that neither distance nor other people will disrupt. He is my biggest fan and best friend, the perfect combination for the craziness that is life. Thank you,” she added turning into Tyler and letting him shield her from the flashes that commenced as the reporters tried to get a final glimpse of them.

“That was impressive,” Tyler said once they were hidden from the majority of the guest list in a little alcove.

“Five years as a PR rep helps you learn a trick or two,” she stated. “Hope you don’t mind I went to Plan B without

letting you know but you were right, he wasn't going to give up. Now if he tries to cut in on us the public will dislike him."

"And Arabella Angel will be safe from his evil clutches," he laughed slipping his arms around her waist.

"Now we'll just have to convince your parents not to begin planning a wedding," she sighed resting her arms on his shoulders and twining her fingers together.

"That might be trickier than getting out of Craig's sights. Although..."

"What?" she asked lifting her chin slight to look into his eyes as he paused.

"We could always tell them the truth."

"Yeah, I'm sure that would go over so well. I guess we'll find out tomorrow what they think, won't we?"

"We will," he agreed and as they arrived at the event the next day, he knew they were in for it the instant he spotted his mother.

"I knew it," Vivien said slipping up beside them and hugging Bella. "I knew you and Tyler were more than just friends."

"Vivien," Bella warned with a grin.

"Sneaky as always," Steven added hugging her tightly. "Now why did we have to read about it in the paper?" he asked Tyler.

"Sorry Dad, we wanted it to be between us a bit longer, but that Australian idiot had other ideas."

"Well, I'm thrilled," Vivien stated hugging her son. "I can't tell you how long I've waited to plan your wedding."

"Slow down Mom," Tyler laughed. "Bella's busy working, regaining her career, a wedding can wait."

"Of course, it can't, I want grandchildren, preferably after the wedding; you're not getting any younger Tyler," she replied.

“Hopefully one day you’ll have some grandchildren but neither Bella nor myself are at that point yet.”

“We’ll see,” Vivien stated with a new grin, kissing them both. “Enjoy the day darlings.”

Bella watched her go uneasily, “Why do I get a bad feeling about this?”

“Because it’s my mother,” he stated slipping his arms around her aware they were being watched by all in attendance.

“Let’s hope she doesn’t do anything crazy today,” she replied leaning into him.

“You mean like you telling a dozen reporters that you love me?” he teased brushing her hair out of her face as the wind whipped it around.

“I’d rather have you draped all over me than Craig. I know where you’ve been and that you’d never leave me stranded on the side of the road, never use me to better your position. You kept my secret for five years Ty. There were plenty of times when you could have used me to keep clients or bolster the client list, but you didn’t, and that is why I know that no matter what this will work out.”

“You do have a way with words Bella dear,” he stated before a group of employees and their families interrupted them.

Chapter 5

“Bella?” Tyler shouted walking into her apartment.

“Ty? What are you doing here?” she asked peeking around the corner of the kitchen as she finished mixing up the muffins.

“I take it you haven’t seen the paper, have you?” he said walking over and kissing her forehead.

“No, it’s Sunday Ty, I’ve barely gotten back into town, and I have a week’s worth of papers on my coffee table.”

“How was the shoot?”

“Great, I think the ads will come out amazing. In fact, I’ve been offered a contract with another line, but I have to make sure it won’t conflict with Angels. So, what’s the fire about the paper? Don’t tell me they’re still trying to make up stories about us? What is it this time, that we’re not as solid as we’ve been claiming, and that Craig really did come between us?” she joked. “Come on Ty, it’s been six weeks, it’ll blow over soon enough.”

“Yeah, I wouldn’t guarantee that,” Tyler said unfolding the paper he was carrying showing her the picture that had been taken at her Angels shoot when he’d stopped by to see her.

“Alright, I agree it’s a bit much, but it’ll really sell our story...holy hell,” she gasped as he unfolded the rest of the paper to reveal the headline below the photo. “Who...how...I didn’t...”

“Oh, I know that,” he said setting it down onto the counter. “It says right on top that Mr. and Mrs. Steven Reed are happy to announce the engagement of their son Tyler to Miss Arabella Spencer Remsen better known worldwide as Arabella Angel.”

“Why?” she cried glancing at the article and seeing that he’d just told her the entire first line by memory. “What does she expect will happen?”

“Exactly what that announcement indicates, I knew she had a gleam in her eyes that day. I just didn’t think she’d do something like this...”

“What do we do?”

“Either admit that we aren’t, weren’t ever a couple or...” he said catching her gaze.

“You don’t mean we let her get away with this and get married,” she stated as her eyes widened in surprise. “Ty, no...we can’t.”

“Look just hear me out...I’ve had about three hours more than you have to think about it and I was just as angry as you are but then I started thinking about it more and Bella, we can make it work.”

“Please explain how this could possibly work without ruining what makes us so special,” she said hopping up onto the countertop after putting the muffins into the oven.

“Because we’ll still be us,” he told her walking over. He put his hands on either side of her body on the countertop and kissed her forehead again. “We’ll just be married. Tell me you don’t see that we could do this. We’re always together anyway. We can move in together; I honestly don’t care where I sleep as long as there’s a bed.”

“But you want kids someday which means...” she said looking over his shoulder because the idea of them doing what that would require made her pulse race.

“That we’ll need to be intimate, yeah I know Bella,” he stated softly titling her head to look at him. “Honey, I promise nothing will happen that you don’t want, ever, but we could do this. I love you; you love me. You are my best friend which is a hell of a lot more than most couples have. If we don’t do this, we’re going to face a huge backlash by not only the public but also with my parents.”

“Ty...I don’t want us to end up hating each other,” she sighed as a tear slipped down her cheek at the thought of that happening.

“There is no way that would ever happen, come on Bella, we’re practically married already other than living together and the official paperwork.”

“And sex...”

“Bella, Bella, Bella,” he teased trying to make her smile. “I’m confident we won’t have any problems when it happens, honey, and that won’t be until you’re ready.”

“Okay...” she said several minutes later, releasing the breath she’d been holding as Tyler gave her a soft, gentle, warm look of honesty that had her nearly shaking with wonder. “You’re right if we try and deny this it’ll only send the press after us trying to crucify us.”

“I know this isn’t what you really want but I promise to be the best husband you’ll ever have; now, what do you say we go pay a visit to my mother who has a ton to explain?”

“Can it wait until the muffins are finished? I don’t feel like having my apartment burnt down because I left the oven on...” she laughed hopping off the counter as the timer dinged.

“Okay plus you might think about putting on some pants that cover more of your delectable legs than what you’ve got on right now.”

“We’ll see...” she teased bending over to take the muffins out. She put them on the counter and smacked his hand as he tried to take one. She kissed his cheek as she passed him by and when she returned fifteen minutes later dressed in a summer dress from the Angels line that suited her perfectly and a pair of wedge sandals, she was happy to see that none of the muffins were missing.

“Will this do?” she inquired giving a little spin.

“It’ll do,” he agreed with a smile. “I called the car service they should be here in about ten minutes.”

“You’re not driving?”

“We’ve got a bit of a crowd outside; I figured it’d be safer to go directly to the car and not a cab to my place to pick up

mine. Stupidly when I came over, I didn't think about a bazillion other people seeing the paper and showing up."

"Well then I guess we have time to decide if the muffins stay or go," she said as she headed over to the window to see the crowd below.

"Go, we can munch on them on the way up...and you know how much I love your muffins," he added grabbing her playfully and then for the benefit of the crowd, who could potentially see them, leaned in for a kiss as he pulled the blind shut.

"Masterful," she laughed as they closed before his lips could touch hers.

"I try," he stated. "Now about these muffins, they're not the same as the ones you made for me on New Year's Day, are they?"

"Oh, you mean when you passed out on my couch destroying any hope of me sleeping in because no matter what you're always up by six a.m.?"

"Yeah, those ones."

"Yes, they're the same ones, is that a problem?"

"Not at all," he said as she placed the last one on the plate and covered them. Once they reached the door of the lobby the photographers and reporters swarmed forcing the security team into action and she couldn't help but feel thankful that Tyler was with her, his arm wrapped protectively around her as the other shielded her from the cameras clicking off pictures. He helped her into the car, and they sped away giving her time to relax before facing his parents.

"Tyler, I know you and Bella must be upset but please remember she is your mother," Steven said the moment they got out of the car and began walking up the sidewalk.

"Did you know about this?" Tyler asked heading into the sunroom where his mom was sure to be this early in the morning.

“Not until I opened the paper and saw it, Bella, honey I’m sorry, Vivien should never have done this...”

“It’s alright Uncle Steven,” she said putting her hand on his arm and giving it a gentle squeeze. “I was a bit mad at first, but Ty and I talked about it, and we’ll deal with it.”

“Mother what the hell possessed you?” Tyler asked as they entered the room. “Do you know what you’ve done? Not only to me, but also to Bella and everyone else? There are photographers outside my building, outside Bella’s building, outside the gate here...”

“Tyler, you and Bella have been together for five years, oh I know you’ve both dated other people in there but you both know that this is the right thing for you,” she scoffed.

“That’s our call not yours but now thanks to your announcement we have no choice but to go through with it,” he stated.

“Look me in the eyes and tell me that you don’t want to marry Bella,” Vivien said standing up. “If you do that then I’ll go out there and tell them that I put the story in the paper because I want you to marry her but you two haven’t made a decision yet.”

“You should have waited,” Tyler told her.

“She should have,” Steven agreed, “but since she hasn’t, what are you two planning on doing?”

“There’s only one thing to do,” Bella stated with a shrug and a frown.

“Bella no honey we want you to marry Tyler,” Vivien said as her face crumpled.

“Then it’s a good thing she’d already said yes,” Tyler said as he moved behind Bella and put his arms around her. “You jumped the gun a bit there, Mom but I suppose it’s for the best, though you could have waited until I had the ring bought.”

“You proposed *without* a ring?” Vivien cried in horror.

“It wasn’t planned,” he assured her, “it just seemed like the right thing to do in the moment.”

“When?” Steven asked.

“Last week, the night before I took her to the airport,” he fibbed having worked it out in the car. “It was a gorgeous evening, we were sitting on the terrace, the wind was blowing, and Bella’s favorite song came on...”

“I thought he was joking when he suddenly stopped in the middle of it and said, ‘Marry me’ but he wasn’t. It might not have been a movie worthy proposal, but I think it was perfect for us.”

“But you didn’t have a ring...did you pick one out?” Vivien asked.

“Not yet, I’d planned on seeing some jewelers this week since Bella’s home and I figured she should have some say in what she wears.”

“I don’t think a jeweler is going to be necessary,” Steven said walking out of the room. He returned a few minutes later carrying a small box. He put it down on the table in front of Tyler and told him, “It was your grandmother’s.”

“I remember this ring,” he stated opening the top and staring down at it.

“Shouldn’t you show it to Bella?” Vivien said gently.

“I should,” he agreed. “If you don’t like it, we can still pick out something else but...” he said turning it to face her.

Her mouth fell open and she felt her breath catch in her throat, it was stunning.

“I think your dad’s right,” she said with a smile.

“See how it fits,” Vivien suggested.

“Mom had delicate hands like you Bella,” Steven told her as Tyler slipped the ring onto her finger grinning at the perfect fit.

“Guess you can’t mess with fate,” Tyler whispered to her as he kissed the ring and her hand.

“Alright then we need to get down to planning. We’ll need to pick a date, a location, a cake, a caterer, colors, a

dress,” Vivien began to list, and they both jumped in to stop her.

“Mom slow down...”

“Vivien, we’ll have plenty of time...”

“I agree with the kids,” Steven said, “if you want to plan an engagement party that’s fine but why don’t we let them choose the wedding date.”

“Of course,” she agreed.

“Well, I can tell you right now that I do have one thing to cross off the wedding list,” Bella stated.

“What’s that?” Tyler inquired.

“My dress designer,” she grinned. “Toby has already made me sketches of what he thinks I should wear, and I have it on good authority that he will do anything to make me the most beautiful bride ever.”

“Not too hard there,” Tyler stated happily.

They agreed to stay for lunch and were about to sit down when the doorbell rang.

“Who could that possibly be?” Vivien wondered aloud. A few moments later her question was answered as Bella’s parents and Izzie were shown in by the housekeeper. Mrs. Franks sent Bella an apologetic look as she shook her head at the intruders.

“Maria, Jonathan, Izzie,” Vivien said standing up. “This is a surprise.”

“So was this,” Maria stated tossing the paper down onto the table. “What in God’s name possessed you two to back up this ridiculous notion of Tyler marrying Bella?”

“It’s not a notion Maria,” Tyler replied. “Bella and I *are* getting married and if you’re not behind us then I suggest you leave right now.”

“Why?” Jonathan asked his eyes full of scorn as he looked past him to Bella. “Why do you always insist on hurting our family?”

“Good lord Jonathan,” Steven stated angrily. “She is part of your family whether or not you accept it. She is your *daughter* and you’ve treated her like an outcast from the day she was born and don’t bother denying it, I’ve seen the way you look at her, the insults you throw at her...my god man, she is your *daughter*.”

“She’s nothing but a whore,” Maria retorted. “Using her body to seduce men, make money—why don’t you tell them the truth Bella? Tell them how you landed your contracts or how many men you’ve been with. Or that you had an abortion when you were fourteen...”

“Get out,” Tyler yelled at them. “If you *ever* speak to Bella that way again you won’t have to worry about her reputation because you’ll be faced with mine and don’t think I can’t pull strings at the university and get Jonathan or Jordanna fired.”

“Ty calm down,” Bella said unfazed. “Let them say whatever they want, it can’t hurt me anymore because I know the truth, the *whole* truth about what happened and I’m not the only one am I, Izzie?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” she scoffed sneering at her.

“No?” she said raising an eyebrow. “Well then it must have been my other twin who set me up to get raped when I was fourteen.”

“What!” Steven shouted as Vivien gasped in horror.

“Bella what do you mean?” Tyler asked turning her to face him. “I thought you couldn’t remember most of what happened.”

“You knew?” Steven inquired looking at his son.

“Bella and I don’t keep secrets,” he replied, “at least not usually.”

“No, we don’t,” she agreed, “but I knew if I told you what I found out about a month ago you’d be furious.”

“And leave you, oh poor Bella, can’t keep a man in your life can you,” Izzie laughed.

“Izzie how is David—oh that’s right he left you,” she stated evenly. “But there is another man in your life isn’t there? Someone who’s been around for quite some time, what happened Izzie did David get tired of paying him to keep your secrets quiet?”

“Bella what is going on?” Tyler asked as Izzie’s face turned white.

“I really think you should ask my sister, she’s the one who convinced David and *Xavier* to go to the club that night, having found out where I’d be thanks to the wonderful paparazzi. Should I go on Izzie, or would you like to do the honors?” she said glancing over at the girl. “No, being shy Iz? That’s okay, I’d be more than happy to finish. See my *sister* was miffed that I was gaining attention all over the world while she only had the attention of dear Mom and Dad, and the kids at school weren’t fawning all over her genius so she decided to get at me.”

“You’re nothing but a lying little slut,” Izzie cut in.

“Shut up,” Tyler said turning his anger onto her. “Bella what did she do?”

“She knew I’d recognize David but *Xavier* was new to school so they had him spike my drink, but they didn’t realize it would take a bit longer to work since I wasn’t drinking alcohol. They kept adding more until I was out of it. By then *Xavier* had regretted the decision and tried to help me to the bathroom and get my friends but Izzie convinced him that he’d get in more trouble doing that than by leaving me, which he did.”

“So, *Xavier* wasn’t...” Tyler led her.

“No, but he was the face I remembered,” she told him. “Izzie and David paid him to keep him quiet but once they couldn’t keep a leash on him, he began to regret not telling me, so he came to a show to tell me. He knew I recognized

him. He saw the fear and panic that crossed my face and decided to disappear again.”

“How do you know this?” Steven asked.

“Because I followed him after I saw him and Izzie arguing,” she answered. “I knocked on his door and when he saw me, he told me *everything*. Including that he wasn’t the person who raped me.”

“Did he know who did?” Tyler asked caressing her cheek.

“Yeah,” she answered closing her eyes to hold back the tears. “And I think you do too,” she added opening them and finding his gaze. He read the answer in them and slammed his fist on the top of the table.

“I’ll kill him,” Tyler stated wrapping his arms around her and letting her bury her head in his chest. “I swear to god I’ll kill him.”

“Who?” Vivien inquired moving over to support Bella.

“Get out,” Tyler seethed turning on Izzie. “Get the *hell* out of here and if you *ever, EVER*, come anywhere near Bella again your children will grow up without any parents.”

“Tyler,” Steven said stopping his movement across the room.

“You disgusting piece of trash,” he continued on ignoring his father in his rising fury, “you put your sister’s life in danger, let David rape her, and then *marry* him? Did you honestly think it would never come out or is that why you moved him to London after Bella warned you that he wasn’t who you thought he was? Were you worried that she’d figured out that he was behind her terror?”

“She was too stupid to figure it out,” Izzie laughed. “The entire time David and I laughed behind her back at the little slut and that she’d been so horrible at it. Every time we made love, we’d laugh at her pathetic attempts that night. She’d never have figured it out and we had a roll when I told David that Bella had warned me that he wasn’t a nice guy, that he’d

tried to force himself on one of her friends at a party. There was no force involved.”

“Sweet Jesus,” Vivien whispered stroking Bella’s back. “Oh, Bella, why didn’t you tell any of us?”

“Because she knew she deserved it,” Izzie stated.

“Mrs. Franks,” Steven shouted moving between Tyler and Izzie fully. Mrs. Franks appeared immediately, and he told her, “Show the Remsens out, they’re no longer welcome in our home.”

“Now Steven,” Jonathan said, “don’t be hasty, you’re our children’s godfather.”

“Not anymore,” he replied. “None of you blinked an eye as Bella told us what happened. I’d guess you already knew, didn’t you? You *knew* that your daughter had set the other up to be raped and did nothing about it. You allowed her to marry the man who hurt Bella and forced her to attend it to rub it in, didn’t you?”

“Come along Jonathan,” Maria stated, “obviously they no longer share our views regarding Bella’s faults. Don’t come crying to us when she destroys your lives...”

“By the way *Maria*,” Bella said as they reached the door, “I never had an abortion, thanks to Xavier I got to the hospital where they provided me with all the medication needed to ensure that didn’t happen.”

Maria turned on her heel and left muttering something under her breath she couldn’t make out. Vivien released her as Tyler reached her side and gathered her closely to him as Steven took his wife in his arms.

“I’m sorry,” Bella said shakily. “I should have told you before but...”

“But admitting that your sister did that to you was worse than anything you’d been through?” he offered.

“Yeah...knowing that they all knew...I just needed some time to process it.”

“Honey I’m not mad at you,” Tyler assured her, “I’m mad as hell at your parents, your sister, and especially at that piece of crap David. What they did to you...”

“I guess we just need to put it away from us. I know I’ve said it again and again but this time I mean it Ty. They are not my family. You—your mom and dad, Mrs. Franks, Mandy, Charlie, Jess and Toby, that’s the family I choose. I don’t need anyone else,” she stated. “I just need you.”

“I’m not going anywhere,” he replied kissing her forehead.

“And neither are we,” Steven stated giving her a hug of his own. “Sweet Bella, is this why you were so determined to get the New Hope Shelter funding?”

“The what?” Vivien questioned.

“The New Hope Shelter,” Tyler stated. “It’s the rape and abuse center for teens—Bella funded it.”

“Because of what happened to you,” Vivien said understanding. “You continuously surprise me with your generosity and your heart Bella, they never deserved you.”

“And they’ll never have me,” she added, “now why don’t we enjoy some of Mrs. Franks’ amazing food?”

“I agree,” Steven grinned pressing a kiss on the top of her head.

Chapter 6

Bella stared at her reflection in the mirror as her stomach flipped over for the hundredth time that day. Behind her, her bridesmaids were picking up their bouquets and Jessica lifted her veil off of the hanger and carried it over for Richard to slip into her hair. She watched as he expertly inserted it and then adjusted the ends of it to lie flat. So much had happened in the last four months, and now, three days before her twenty-eighth birthday, she was standing in a wedding dress about to walk up the aisle and marry Tyler. The man she loved but hadn't kissed since Christmas last year, and the thought of what could happen to them was enough to send her running away in fear.

“Bella...Bella...oh Bella,” Charlie said interrupting her thoughts. “Goodness hun, you were a million miles away...”

“Sorry, last minute jitters I guess,” she stated. “Did you need something?”

“Just to tell you it's time,” Mandy, the woman who'd been a mother to her for the last fifteen years, answered smiling fully at her. “Bella, you look stunning...”

“Thanks to Toby,” Bella smiled warmly. “Where is Toby? He was supposed to check the dress one last time before we start.”

“Never fear Bella-be, I'm right here. Your soon to be had an issue with his jacket that needed some attention,” he stated walking into the dressing room of the huge cathedral she and Tyler had settled on knowing the guest list would be massive.

“Bella, we're ready when you are,” the wedding planner Brittany said poking her head into the room.

“We'd better hurry then,” Charlie said kissing her cheek.

“I'm so glad you decided to continue working,” Mandy told her. “I've never seen you so happy or so inspired when you get in front of a camera...and Tyler is and always has been the perfect choice for you, I'm glad you finally saw it.”

“Mandy, Charlie I swear if you make me cry...” she warned with genuine affection for both women.

“We’re off,” Mandy said squeezing her hand.

Her bridesmaids made their way into the vestibule and waited their turn as the head usher led Vivien down the aisle to her seat. Bella watched them take their turns and then stepped out of the dressing room as the doors closed. She took the arm Steven offered not sure if she’d be able to make it had he not been there to lean on.

“My son is a very lucky man,” he said kissing her cheek as Toby adjusted the back of the dress.

“I’m the lucky one,” she stated honestly, “lucky that you and Ty have always been there for me and that you’ve all supported me no matter what.”

“We’ll always be here for you,” he replied as the doors opened and the music changed. The aisle was longer than any runway she’d ever traipsed down, but it seemed like the shortest walk of her life as her gaze caught Tyler’s the instant she stepped over the threshold and into the chapel.

His reaction told her that her dress choice was approved, but it was the look in his eyes as she walked up the aisle that soothed away the fears and butterflies telling her to run. It wasn’t the look he usually wore when he saw her in full Arabella mode but so much like the one, he’d give her whenever she appeared for a dinner party mixed with something she couldn’t place. He stepped forward as she and his father neared and took her hand as she kissed Steven’s cheek.

“You look—there aren’t words for it, Bella,” he whispered as they stepped up in front of the priest. She grinned her reply as the priest welcomed everyone.

The first part of the ceremony flew by without her hearing a word but as the priest asked if there were any objections the possibility of someone ruining their ceremony crashed in on her. She held her breath for the moments of

silence that followed until he went on and felt Tyler's supportive gaze on her as she relaxed.

"Do you Tyler Matthew Reed take Arabella Spencer Remsen to be your lawfully wedded wife, to love and to cherish, till death do you part?" the priest asked.

"I do," Tyler replied clearly with a smile.

"And do you, Arabella Spencer Remsen, take Tyler Matthew Reed to be your lawfully wedded husband, to love and to cherish, till death do you part?"

"I do," she stated with enough strength to be heard in the back of the chapel but with a musical lilt that sent smiles through the crowd gathered.

"Arabella and Tyler have prepared their own vows for today, Tyler..."

"Bella, I promise to support you in everything you do, stand beside you through every storm, and love you forever. I have never broken a promise to you and am certainly not going to start with these. You have been the only woman I could never let go, no matter how many times I swore I should, I couldn't because without you my life isn't the same. You are the joy that fills my day and the peace that gets me through the night. I love you Bella, always have, and always will. No matter how much you try you're stuck with me, and I can gladly say that I have my own angel..."

Bella laughed ducking her head to control the tears that his words brought to her. What she wouldn't give to have them be true.

"Arabella..." the priest said as their guests quieted.

"Ty...for the longest time I had no idea what a home was but with you I never have to wonder. You have been my rock, my landing place, my shoulder to cry on, my best friend for as long as I can remember and you are the one thing that kept me grounded in this crazy world, and in my fears, I denied what everyone else could see...that we were meant to be together and that I love you more than I ever imagined I could love someone. I didn't want to push our relationship because I was

so afraid of losing you, but I now know that will never happen,” she paused to catch her breath before continuing on with the absolute truth.

“You have managed to do what no one else could, convince me that love was worth taking a risk. When I left the world of modeling because it had become something foreign to me and started working in your PR department you never told me I couldn’t do it and when the time came, and I rediscovered my passion you never tried to stand in my way of returning to that world. You didn’t caution me but let me go even with the risk that I could crash and because of that I knew I could take the biggest leap I possibly could and admit my true feelings for you. I love you with all my heart Ty, and I promise that no matter where I am, if we’re together or apart, you will always be right beside me. You’ve sheltered my heart from the storms that cropped up and have shown me what a family is, what a real home is, and I can never thank you enough for that. I promise you will always get the first photo from the Angels’ Christmas shoot until they get tired of me, and even then, I’ll make sure your Christmas card has a surprise inside it.”

Their guests laughed at her statement and as Tyler reached out and placed a kiss on her forehead, they heard several sighs of envy. The priest smiled sure the two he was marrying would be one of the lasting couples.

“Marriage is a special blessing to all who choose to enter it,” he stated. “I would encourage all in attendance who have shared in getting Arabella and Tyler here today as well as those who wish to reconfirm their own vows to take the hands of the special person in your life as we bless their union. The rings...”

“Tyler, repeat after me,” he said nodding at them, “with this ring, I thee wed.”

Tyler picked up the wedding band and slipped it onto her finger stating, “With this ring, I thee wed.”

“Arabella, repeat after me,” the priest said, “with this ring, I thee wed.”

Bella took the ring and repeated his line with a bright smile, “With this ring, I thee wed.”

She locked gazes with Tyler as the priest began to speak again saying a prayer and missed most of his last line, “I now pronounce you man and wife; you may now kiss your bride.”

Bella couldn't look away as panic filled her, and Tyler caught off guard by the reaction that hearing that created stood rooted to his spot as the moments trickled by without them moving.

“Oh, for Pete's sake, kiss her already,” Casey, the best man and friend of them both, stated with a laugh that swept through the chapel.

Bella was finally able to blink, and it spurred Tyler into moving. He closed the space between them and kissed her gently, briefly, much to the dismay of their guests.

“Aw come on man that cannot be all you've got,” Casey tossed out.

“You just married the gorgeous Arabella Angel, Tyler; I think you can do a bit better than that,” one of the guests called out from somewhere in the church.

Tyler shot her a veiled glance asking for permission and she grinned telling him, “Kiss me Ty...”

He slipped one arm around her waist, the other behind her neck, and lowered his mouth to hers again. The kiss started out as a ploy to placate their guests, but it didn't stay that way.

Bella slipped her hands up his arms and let them rest on his shoulders as it deepened, sending applause throughout the chapel, and shivers down her spine.

He pulled her as close to him as possible without crushing her dress and lost himself in the kiss, knowing it could be the only one she allowed him for quite some time.

The applause and cheers faded but the kiss continued and soon Casey was trying to interrupt them, but it wasn't until Steven called out to them that they reluctantly parted. Bella turned her face away from the crowd and lowered her head as

she tried to regain her composure allowing the blush that had flashed into her cheeks to disappear. When she looked back up, she saw the smallest bit of her lipstick on his lips and she reached up to wipe it off; he thanked her with a kiss on the forehead that had their guests cheering again, knowing the reason behind that gesture now—or so they thought.

The priest motioned for them to turn towards their guests and as they did, he stated, “Ladies and gentlemen may I present Mr. and *Mrs.* Tyler Reed...”

Bella took her bouquet back from Jessica and they made their way down the aisle towards a future she wasn’t sure she was ready for, not if that kiss was anything to go by.

“So how are you feeling Mrs. Reed?” Jessica asked hours later as they got a moment alone.

“I don’t know...happy, tired—exhausted really, excited, wired...” Bella replied.

“Well, I’d say we now know why you and Tyler never go in for PDA,” she teased as guests began to tap on their champagne glasses for her and Tyler to bestow them with another kiss.

“Oh hush,” she said dipping her head to hide the traces of the blush that she knew was attacking her. She looked up and found Tyler watching her from across the room. When he began to cross over to her, she found herself standing up and going to meet him. She stopped just out of arms’ reach and grinned up at him. “Hi...”

“Hi,” he replied tilting her head up and dropping a gentle kiss on her lips. “Doing okay?” he added quietly as he pulled her into his arms as the music began to play again.

“Never better,” she sighed resting her head on his shoulder.

“We should start thinking about getting to the airport,” he told her glancing at his watch.

“Airport?” she said pulling back slightly to look at him. “I didn’t know we were leaving tonight.”

“It’s part of the surprise,” he stated, “unless you’d rather we just go home? It’s a private flight so we can reschedule it if you don’t feel like flying tonight.”

“No, I just didn’t bring anything to change into and I’m guessing you didn’t bring the carry-on bags here with you.”

“Why bother changing?” he teased. “You look beautiful in that dress. You took my breath away today, Bella.”

“Ty, you’re going to turn my head with all this flattery,” she smiled.

“Good, you deserve a bit of flattery Bella. Look at my... our parents, you put those smiles there.”

“Where are we going?” she asked wanting to get onto a different subject.

“That’s a surprise,” he said kissing her forehead. “But we really should get going...don’t worry about the guests they’ll have just as much fun without us.”

“Okay...but you’d better have packed wisely for me.”

“Trust me,” he stated nodding to the musicians who had just finished their song.

“Excuse me ladies and gentlemen but our bride and groom have asked me to let you know that they will be leaving shortly,” their leader said. “If the single ladies wouldn’t mind joining the bride on the dance floor for the bouquet toss then you won’t find the lovely planner over here sicced on you.”

Bella laughed knowing he was right, and Jessica brought her the tossing bouquet, her real one was safely packed away in the cooler to be arranged and taken to the reception area of the shelter in the morning. She turned around and gave the flowers a light toss turning just in time to see three of her friends fight for it.

When Tyler knelt in front of her to take off the garter, she felt her stomach dip in anticipation of his touch on her bare legs. The feel of his hands on them brought a blush to her cheeks which had their guests laughing and then nearly

swooning when he leaned forward and kissed her forehead again as he held up his prize.

They were showered with balloons and bubbles as they left the reception, and she was glad to see Tyler had hired extra security as flashes went off as they exited the hotel and headed to the waiting car. The driver opened the door and before Tyler could help her in, she turned into him with a smile.

“One kiss for them?” she said nodding towards the photographers and the guests who had filled the doorway of the hotel.

“Why not,” he stated wrapping his arms around her waist. She draped her arms over his shoulders and settled into the kiss, making sure to keep it slightly more PG than the one at the church had been. They parted laughing as the photographers cried for one more and Tyler indulged them by pressing his lips against her forehead as she closed her eyes and smiled happily.

They made their way to the airport and were whisked through the security checkpoint to the waiting plane without incident. She waited for him to tell her where they were going but he remained tight-lipped.

“Close your eyes,” he told her once they’d been in the air for a few hours. “We still have a ways to go.”

She relaxed against him and managed to sleep for a bit as they flew on. She woke as Tyler fastened her seat belt and she glanced out, surprised to discover the darkness outside.

“How long were we up there?” she said when they landed, and he’d helped her down the stairs.

“Well, it takes about thirteen hours to get here,” he stated dropping a kiss on her forehead.

“And where’s here?”

“Tahiti,” he answered as the car pulled up.

“It’s like one or two in the morning here...” she said glancing at his watch.

“Perfect time to arrive, fewer people to see the beautiful Arabella Angel arrive the fewer photographers we’ll have to deal with.”

“You’re brilliant,” she laughed sliding into the car.

“So why Tahiti?” she added a bit later as they reached the resort and were being shown to their room.

“You don’t remember, do you?”

“Remember what? You didn’t...” she stated as it dawned on her. “Last year I joked that I wanted to spend Thanksgiving in Tahiti; you’re much too good to me at times Tyler Reed.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Reed,” he teased.

“You do realize though that it’s highly unlikely that I’ll be able to go back to sleep after having such a lovely pillow on the plane to rest on.”

“Really? Because I could have sworn, I just saw another yawn,” he told her as he loosened his tie the rest of the way and tossed it aside.

“Alright maybe, *maybe*, it was one, but we have one slight problem...two actually.”

“What’s that?” he asked undoing the first few buttons on his dress shirt.

“One, I have no idea where my night clothes are in the piles of bags that have arrived and two, I think I’m going to be trapped in this dress unless you can give me some help with the buttons...”

“Well one is easily solved because I put your favorite nightshirt on the top of your normal carry-on bag, and I’m sure we can manage a few buttons.”

“I wouldn’t be so sure,” she laughed pulling her hair over her shoulder to reveal the length of the back of the gown and the row of tiny buttons.

“Good lord,” he whistled staring at them before he began to undo them one by one.

Bella felt the dress begin to loosen as he went on and on and the feel of his warm hands against her skin sent a tingle down her back and another down to her core. She felt his hands still as she held her breath and prayed for him to finish quickly. She let out her breath in a rush as she felt his hand stroke the bareness of her back.

His hands moved down to the next button and released it letting the dress slip a fraction lower as she held up the front. Two more buttons were released, and his hands stroked up and down her back sending sparks through her until she could barely breathe. He let a hand slip inside the waist of her dress and moved it around until he flattened it against her stomach and pulled her back against him.

“Bella,” he whispered raising his other hand to her bare arm and running it up and down it as he lowered his lips to the side of her neck.

“Ty...” she gasped as something inside her turned over and she didn’t know how to handle it.

“Tell me to stop Bella and I will.”

“I don’t know what I want Ty,” she said looking over her shoulder at him. The look in his eyes had her turning around, letting go of the dress, and wrapping her arms around his neck as it slipped to the floor.

Tyler groaned covering her mouth with his and lifting her out of the pile that was the dress. He set her down bit by bit memorizing the feel of her against him in case she changed her mind. He went slowly, not wanting to scare her, not wanting it to end.

Bella was drowning in emotions, and she didn’t want it to stop not even when he lifted her and carried her to the bed. His hands caressing her found their way to her breasts and waited, trying to gauge her response.

“Don’t stop,” she whispered pulling him down towards her and undoing the rest of the buttons on his shirt, pushing it aside to touch him. She leaned forward and pressed kisses

along his chest and he stopped her long enough to discard his shirt and lay down beside her letting her take the lead.

She kissed him, let her hands explore his chest until she didn't know what to do, where to go with her actions. She pulled back and looked at him, "Ty..."

"It's okay honey," he stated fearing she was pulling away. "I promised nothing would happen you didn't want."

"No Ty, it isn't that..." she told him. "I just...I don't know what I'm doing here. I've never..."

"Never...never went this far?" he questioned caressing her face.

"Yeah...Ty please don't laugh," she said pushing at his shoulder as he grinned.

"I'm not Bella. I swear, I'm not laughing at you. Come here," he told her pulling her up against him. "Bella, you are the most amazing woman I've ever met, and I don't want you to ever think I'm taking this for granted. I know this isn't easy for you and if you want me to stop..."

"I don't," she assured him, "I just don't know how to do this...where to go."

"Close your eyes Bella," he told her. When she hesitated, he added, "Trust me honey."

He kissed her forehead as she did and then stood up discarding his clothes. He pulled back the covers and slipped in telling her, "You can open your eyes now...come slide in with me."

She noticed his pants lying on the chair next to the bed and she froze.

"Bella, trust me," he said. "Anytime you want to stop we will. I will never do anything you don't want. Just lay down with me..."

She nodded and slid in beside him, letting out the breath she held as she wrapped her arms around his shoulders and kissed him. She didn't even notice when his hands began to move lower until they rested on her hips, slipping under the

band of her underwear and pulling them down slowly, giving her time to stop him. She lifted her hips allowing him to remove them, no longer afraid simply ready for what lie ahead.

Chapter 7

“Morning gorgeous,” Tyler said as her eyes fluttered open.

“Morning...or should I say afternoon?” Bella asked catching sight of the sun high in the sky through the open curtains.

“I wouldn’t know I’ve been watching my beautiful wife sleep.”

“Ty...stop looking at me like that,” she said blushing as he slipped his arms around her.

“Like what? Like you’re the most amazing woman in the world? Like you and I just spent the most wonderful night, early morning—whatever, together? Like I want to do it again and again but know I shouldn’t push?” he stated brushing light kisses across her face.

“Ty...” she giggled self-consciously.

“Should I apologize for last night?” he asked seriously.

“No, I just...I don’t know...this is new for me. It may not be the first time we woke up together but it’s the first time like this and...” she said with a shrug.

“You don’t know how to act, it’s okay Bella,” he stated sweetly, gathering her up beside him and brushing her hair down her back. “It’s a bit new for me too...but what do you say we forget about how we should or shouldn’t feel and get some lunch? We have an entire week before we have to face anyone outside of here that should give us enough time to figure this all out.”

“Alright...Ty, could you get my robe?” she said as a blush crawled up her neck.

“Bella, there’s nothing to be shy about. I’m not the first person to ever see you naked.”

“No but none of them have ever done what we did last night with me,” she said as her cheeks flamed.

“What am I going to do with you my sweet, sweet Bella?” he teased kissing her lightly before sliding out of the bed laughing when she quickly averted her eyes. He grabbed one of the bags and riffled through it until he came out with the short silk robe; he handed it to her and then went to call room service.

Bella took her things into the bathroom and slipped into the shower, after she dried off, she slipped into one of the bikinis that had been packed and put on her favorite cover-up over it. When she returned to the main room it was to find Ty had unpacked their bags and picked her dress up off the floor putting it into the garment bag that Toby had sent with them. She spied the cart of fresh fruit and salad and her stomach growled in appreciation.

Tyler turned and stared as he let the note drop to the table.

“That bikini doesn’t do you justice Bella,” he stated pulling her into his arms and kissing her lips. “That’s better...”

“Mmm,” she murmured. “What’s that?” she added nodding towards the piece of paper he’d held.

“Dad called to warn us that someone had leaked footage of the wedding...what?” he said as she grinned.

“It’s okay, it was Calvin’s videographer and Mandy...it was on purpose Ty. It was the best way we could control what came out and not have people try and rake in money for pictures that weren’t official. There’s already a statement that’ll be released in the morning that says the footage did come from us and that while it was released a bit early, we don’t care.”

“That way no one can put out bad pictures or try and alter your dress?”

“You got it. Calvin was going to go through the photos he took and put them up for us to view. I’d say he’s already gotten through them by now if you want to check after we eat.”

“You want to look through wedding pictures today?” he asked amused. “Don’t you ever take a break?”

“Not if you want to keep five steps ahead of the press,” she stated with a smile.

“Alright, after we eat,” he said and an hour later had to agree that going through the photos was a great idea. “These are fantastic.”

“What do you expect? Calvin knows me and wouldn’t let me down...whoa...”

“What?” he said peaking at the screen and reading the message that Mandy had just sent her. “They want to pay *how* much?”

“Five million...for five exclusive photos,” she stated. “What do you think?”

“I think they’re nuts but it’s your choice Bella. I trust your decisions.”

“What I’m thinking is we say yes, let them have five photos as well as the one we chose to release to the media but have them donate the money to the shelter and clinic I support?” she suggested.

“I think the directors of the two facilities are going to love you more than they ever have with million-dollar donations...”

“Then you don’t mind if I go back through these and shoot Mandy an answer?”

“Not at all,” he assured her.

She clicked through the photos and chose five that gave the best portrayal of their ceremony and reception without going too personal. Several of the photos revealed more than she wanted the world to see, including Tyler. She was about to close the computer when the alert she had set up to let her know if a new story had been posted about her went off. She clicked on the link and found herself watching the reporter from the celebrity news line talk about the wedding.

If you haven't seen the footage or heard about it by now you must be living under a rock...early yesterday afternoon Arabella Angel married long-time beau Tyler Reed in a ceremony that guests described as beautiful, touching, and true. Arabella wore a gown designed by Angels' master designer Toby Magnus that left all speechless, including the groom many said. This is the first marriage for both and from the looks of it the ceremony was nothing short of perfection.

But was it really? Arabella was walked down the aisle by Steven Reed, father of the groom and Arabella's godfather, and the front row typically reserved for family was filled with Charlotte Greggs, Angels' creator; Mandy Hollis, Arabella's manager; and Toby Magnus. Her family was noticeably absent from the entire affair and sources say they were not invited. It's not the first time she's come under fire for the lack of support from them, most notably seen when she took the stage headlining her first Fashion Week at fourteen, but we wonder if something more happened.

But back to the ceremony, the bride and groom seemed to both be in a state of ecstasy as they vowed till death do they part...and most importantly we finally got to see the couple display true affection for one another. The two have come under fire for what many deemed to be forced or faked displays, but it seems that the couple simply didn't want to find themselves in the tabloids for excessive PDA. One attendee we spoke with said they had two kisses at the end of the ceremony, the first nothing more than a fleeting peck, and after some heckling they proceeded to let their guards down and gave their guests a peek into the true nature of their relationship and it seems that these two are far from being coldblooded.

Another guest described their kiss as hot enough to finish off the ice caps in less than a minute, and in case you don't believe us we have proof. Additional footage was released that we are bringing directly to you...

Bella watched as the priest announced them man and wife and their kiss, followed by the second kiss and she felt a blush steal its way up.

“You released this part?” Tyler asked, his arms lipping around her.

“No...this isn't from the videographer. The clarity isn't the same. This was from someone's cell phone I'd say,” she told him as the reporter came back onto the screen.

I don't know about anyone else, but I think the bride actually blushes at the end of that kiss...and the forehead kiss—it obviously means more than we ever gave them credit for. Congratulations Arabella and Tyler, might the sound of pitter-pattering little feet be in the cards soon? You know us, as soon as we know you will.

“Did she really just suggest we're already expecting or that we'll come back pregnant?” Tyler laughed and Bella gasped. “What—Bella I was kidding.”

“No...last night...we didn't...I'm not...” she stopped and took a deep breath in order to get what she needed to say out. “Ty, I'm not on birth control.”

“Of course, you're not,” he stated trying to hide his smile. “And I didn't bring any because I wasn't anticipating... is it...”

“Yeah, it's entirely likely that I could...” she said reading his mind. “So, what do we do?”

“One of three things, I can go into town and pick up some and hope that nothing happens from last night. We can wait until we're home and continue this aspect of our relationship. Or we take our chances and leave it up to fate,” he answered putting his vote behind the last.

“You wouldn't mind if something happened?”

“The idea of having a child with you is something I look forward to, especially after last night; I don't think there's any rush but if I'm being honest the idea of putting a wall up between us...any sort of wall between us is the last thing I want.”

“You *don't* want to use protection?” she asked feeling strangely okay with the idea.

“It’s not my choice Bella. You’re the one who has to make this decision. You’re the one with the career that could be affected by a pregnancy.”

“Not necessarily,” she told him. “Angels wants to start a maternity line.”

“What are you saying Bella?”

“I’m saying that whatever happens happens...and I’m okay with that. In fact,” she added with a grin as she slipped the cover-up off, “I think it’s the only thing that makes sense with us.”

“Bella,” he groaned drinking in the sight of her in only the tiny bikini. She turned to walk back into the bedroom reaching behind her back and untying the top as she glanced over her shoulder at him. She didn’t have to say a word because he was instantly behind her closing the door and picking her up, groaning in agony as she wrapped her legs around his waist and kissed him.

“Any regrets?” Tyler asked as they made their way through the airport a week later.

“Only that we had to leave,” she said tilting her head back to receive the kiss she knew he was angling for. “But we have Thanksgiving and Black Friday this week so I suppose I can’t complain too much.”

“At least we’ve already found somewhere new to live and don’t have to deal with all of that,” he said as they slipped past a group of photographers unnoticed. “Sad about selling your place?”

“Are you kidding?” she laughed. “I can’t wait to get my hands on redoing the new place...plus it doesn’t hurt that I made a killing on it thanks to my upgrades.”

“And I’m not going back to the office until after the holiday so I can be free labor if you want anything moved again.”

“You’re not going in at all? What have I done?” she teased with a laugh. “If you don’t watch out, you’re going to become a sloth like me.”

“Says the woman who spent at least an hour each day going through her bookings,” he rebutted before he pulled her into his arms and kissed her in the middle of the walkway not caring who saw or took photos.

She snuggled into his side and walked on slipping her shades down when the photographers noticed them and began taking pictures. The entire way home she stayed there and after the doorman put their bags down inside, she found herself swept up in his arms and carried to the bedroom.

“What do you say we extend our honeymoon for a couple more days?” he whispered kissing his way down her neck as he began to remove her clothing slowly piece by piece.

“I think I could be talked into it,” she sighed happily.

It was Thursday before they surfaced and as they dressed to head to his parents’ place, he surprised her with a jewelry box.

“What’s this?” she asked fastening a clip to hold her hair back.

“A late birthday present, I didn’t want to risk it getting lost while we were on our trip and then we got a bit distracted when we got back...open it,” he said watching her closely.

She lifted the lid and gasped at the beauty within the simplicity of the necklace. The stone shone brightly in the light, and he lifted it out fastening it around her neck then slipped his arms around her as they turned to the mirror.

“It’s beautiful Ty,” she smiled turning her head to kiss his cheek, “thank you.”

“You’re welcome, and now we should get as far from the bed as we can, or we’ll never make it to Mom and Dad’s.”

“Are you saying you can’t resist me?” she teased.

“Not one bit, never could,” he replied helping her with her coat. “Thank you, Bella,” he added as she turned to go.

“For what?”

“Agreeing to this—marrying me—trusting me.”

“I always have Ty...I just didn’t know it would be this easy. Do you remember last Christmas?” she asked.

“The fashion show, party at work...of course.”

“After the party...when you took me home...”

“And scared the hell out of you by kissing you?” he stated.

“I scared myself Ty. I couldn’t trust myself that night. It confused me because I felt something in that kiss that I never had before and then I told myself that we couldn’t because it would ruin what we had...”

“And now?”

“Now I know we’ll be good no matter what but...”

“But what Bella?”

“I want you to promise me that if something changes—if you find someone else or if this turns to something that will break what we have, that you’ll tell me. I don’t want you to think that you have to stay with me forever Ty. If you fall in love I don’t want to stand in the way,” she stated shaking slightly.

“Don’t worry Bella, that’s not going to happen,” he promised her. He’d never fall for someone the way he had for her, never love someone the way he loved her, but if she knew that she’d feel horrible because she didn’t feel the same and he wasn’t going to lose her. “The same goes for you. If you fall in love with someone, especially now that you know you’re not remotely close to being that cold person you thought, I want you to tell me.”

“Okay,” she told him kissing his cheek. “Now let’s go before your parents think we’re still in bed...”

Dinner was wonderful as always, they agreed sitting in the living room of his parents’ house as the clock ticked past

nine. Bella was curled up beside him, her bare feet peeking out from the light throw Tyler had grabbed from the closet.

“You two certainly seem relaxed,” Vivien grinned widely.

“Would you like a thank you now or later Mom?” Tyler queried.

“Ignore him, he’s always moody after getting his stomach stuffed Vivien,” Bella laughed.

“Bella, I’d love for you to call me Mom,” she stated, hurriedly adding, “but it’s your choice. You’ve made me the happiest woman in the world...well as happy as I can be without grandchildren but...what?”

Vivien stopped seeing the look that passed between the two before asking, “Bella, are you?”

“No...at least I don’t think so,” she stated knowing she was due to start her period any day and the cramps she normally felt were beginning to appear.

“But you’re trying?” she inquired.

“Not that it’s any of your business Mom,” Tyler stated, “but we’re not trying but we’re also not not trying.”

“What Ty’s trying to say is we’re letting the universe decide for us, Mom,” Bella said with a smile surprised at how easily calling her mom had been.

“That should keep her satisfied until Christmas at least,” Steven stated. “Now where did you get that necklace?”

“A birthday present from Ty,” she answered.

“I knew the moment I saw it that it was the perfect match to her eyes and couldn’t leave without picking it up.”

“You did well son, perhaps you can help me with your mother’s Christmas gift?”

“I’m sure Bella would be much better at helping with that. I got lucky with the necklace unlike her Christmas gift last year...”

“What did he get you?” Vivien asked curiously.

“A PDA,” she answered.

“I figured she’d need something to keep all of her bookings in,” he explained.

“Hopefully you do better this year,” Vivien stated with a pointed look.

“I don’t need anything else,” Bella stated happily. “But if you’re looking for someone to help you shop, I happen to be quite good at it and I’d love to give you hand...Dad.”

“Now you’ve done it,” Tyler whispered as Steven looked away and coughed to cover up the affect that had on him. “If you’re not careful you’ll make him cry Bella.”

“You mean like you did when she started walking down the aisle?” Steven asked humorously.

“Alright, that’s enough,” Bella laughed. “We should probably head back to town. I’d rather not get stuck midway in what’s sure to be a snowstorm tonight.”

“She’s right Tyler, so unless you’d like to spend the night...thought so,” he laughed as Tyler jumped up and pulled Bella to her feet.

“Mom, Dad, lovely to see you but I’m taking Bella home, not sure how long I’ll be able to keep her to myself so I should enjoy the rest of this weekend.”

“Goodnight,” Bella said kissing and hugging them. “Ty’s right, the fashion show preparations are underway and it’s going to get crazy. Dad...give me a call and we’ll set up some time to go shopping. Mom...thank you for pushing we might not be here if you hadn’t.”

“You’re welcome, Bella dear,” Vivien told her. “Just be happy, that’s all we want.”

“Then you should be pleased because I’ve never been happier,” she replied knowing it was the truth and praying she could keep it that way.

Chapter 8

“Everything okay Bella?” Charlie asked two days before Christmas as she stood letting Toby make the final adjustments on her dress. “You seem to have lost a bit of your sparkle today.”

“Sorry Charlie...” she said giving her a grin. “I guess I’m just tired. Between the preparations for the show, planning the Christmas party for Reed Financial and my other gigs I’m a bit worn down...”

“You’re sure it doesn’t have something to do with a little pink box I found in your dressing room?” she inquired with a smile. “Bella, if you’re pregnant...”

“I’m not,” she rushed in with. “It’s not that sort of box Charlie.”

“Bella I’ve had four kids I think I know a home pregnancy test when I see one.”

“Alright, it is one but it’s honestly *not* for me. Don’t laugh Toby, you’re likely to stick me and blood stains aren’t easy to get out remember...it *really* isn’t for me. I promise the moment I find out I’m pregnant I will let you know; I know you’re eager to get me fat so I can go ahead and model the maternity line you want to start...but it’s a friend’s.”

“How many times have we heard the ‘it’s not mine’ line before Charlie?” Toby teased.

“What’s not Bella’s?” Jessica asked hurrying in with the last of the preparations for the Christmas party.

“A little pink box in her dressing area,” Charlie stated.

Jessica blushed bright red and began to shuffle through the papers she held.

“Well, well, well, I guess it’s not, is it?” Charlie laughed. “We’ll have to keep hoping.”

“Are we done?” Bella asked looking down at the unmoving Toby.

“Yeah...all done babe,” he said standing up. “So, the test is yours?” he added looking at Jessica.

“It might be,” she said defensively, and Bella immediately knew the answer to the unasked question she’d had the last week after Jessica had told her she was late.

“Jess, I would love a cup of hot cocoa how about you? Yeah...Toby could you please,” she said drawing the please out, “run down to the corner and get us some? I would but I’ll get mauled especially in this masterpiece and it still needs pressed.”

“Uh sure,” he stated hurrying out.

“Okay, would you like to tell me how you could *not* tell me the guy you slept with, multiple times, after my wedding was Toby?” Bella asked once he was out of earshot. “Jess...”

“Bella, you didn’t tell *me* for five years that you were actually Arabella Angel...I didn’t think it would happen again, but it did and now...”

“And now you think you’re pregnant and because you left the test in my bag he knows,” Bella told her. “Take the test Jess, please, find out one way or another and then figure out how to deal with it okay?”

“When did you become so bossy?” Jessica asked grumpily.

“When two of my best friends decided to sleep together and hide it from me,” she stated handing the dress to the woman waiting to complete the alterations.

“Fine...where’s a bathroom?” Jessica asked.

“Third door down on the right.”

Bella watched her friend stalk off and she hurriedly pulled on her clothes wrapping the scarf around her neck as she checked her messages. Tyler had sent her updates about his meeting throughout the afternoon, and she hoped the last one meant it had ended well. She was grinning from ear to ear when Jessica returned her eyes shining with unshed tears as she nodded.

“Jess it’ll be fine, I promise,” she told her with a hug. “Hey, why don’t you come over for dinner? You can help me figure out what to do with the kitchen and then we can talk without anyone overhearing...”

“I can’t Bella, I can’t believe I let this happen. I can’t afford to raise a baby on my own,” Jessica cried sinking down onto the chair in the room.

“Jess you’re not alone in this. Even if you and Toby decide not to go anywhere with the relationship, he’ll be a great dad. Plus, he makes a bundle with me showing off his clothes,” she teased trying to get her to smile. “It’ll all work out.”

“How can it? He’s seeing someone else...”

“He is?” Toby asked stepping into the doorway holding out the hot cocoa he’d just returned with. “That’s news to me. Bella, love...”

“I’m off, my husband wants to celebrate his fabulous new deal,” she said hugging Jessica then kissing Toby on the cheek warning him, “I will stop wearing your designs if you hurt her.”

“Won’t happen love,” he told her, and she felt reassured that they’d work it out somehow.

She waited inside as the doorman hailed a cab for her trying to avoid the photographers who’d been following her for weeks. They’d shown up when she and Steven had been out shopping last week and the headlines had made her laugh until she cried by their absurdity. There were more waiting outside their building, and she sighed waiting for the doorman of the apartment complex to open the door for her. Maybe Tyler was right...maybe she should give in and start letting Tristan do his full job. The intrusion into her life she could handle but lately the photographs had begun to get a bit pushy, one physically blocking her way as she had tried to get through the airport for the last-minute shoot she’d been contacted and begged to do.

She changed into a simple dress, perfect for wherever Tyler decided to take her for dinner and walked over to the wall of windows that looked out at the skyline of the city and let the tension ease out of her body. She was booked from now until the middle of February but after that she had a week free, a week she hoped to spend with Tyler, maybe she should have Haley, his latest assistant block the week out that way she could convince him to go away from the craziness here and simply relax with her.

“Well, if it isn’t my gorgeous wife,” Tyler said slipping his arms around her waist and pulling her back against him. “Good day?”

“Great...for me at least,” she told him.

“Jess?” he asked knowing the two women had been talking non-stop the last week.

“Yeah, look you have to swear that you won’t say anything, not even to Jess but, she’s pregnant...and Toby’s the father,” she told him.

“Wow, that’s an interesting match. Are you okay with it?”

“What? Because I’m not pregnant? Ty, I’m okay it’s not like we’ve been working at getting pregnant, if it’s meant to be it will be...”

“I meant more that your designer is going to be with your best friend all the time now but I’m guessing Mom’s been hinting about us starting a family again, hasn’t she?”

“And Charlie, and Toby, at least before he found out he was going to be a father, and the stupid photographers constantly ask...I’m sorry,” she sighed. “I’ve got so many jobs booked that I’m barely going to see you in the next seven to eight weeks and I don’t want to think about everyone pushing us to have a baby. I want to hear about the brilliancy that is my husband and this new deal...so come on, tell me.”

“On the way to the restaurant,” he said kissing her. The kiss lingered growing deeper, and she wrapped her arms around his neck as her head swam.

She pulled back with a smile whispering, “Still want to go to the restaurant?”

“No,” he growled picking her up and carrying her to the couch. He sat down and she stretched out against him, forcing him back until they were lying side by side.

“Bella...” he warned as her hands slipped inside his shirt.

“Kiss me Ty,” she whispered into his ear, and he happily complied.

“Arabella over here...Arabella to your left...one more...” the photographers shouted as she strolled down the red carpet smiling though she didn’t feel like it in the least. Tyler was late for an event she hadn’t wanted to come to in the first place, but she hadn’t been able to get out of it. Her tiny cameo in the film that was opening had mandated it and so instead of being home tonight for the first time since Christmas she was freezing in a creation Toby had outdone himself on and her husband was nowhere in sight.

“Arabella, where’s that darling man of yours?” one of the reporters from the television tabloid shows asked with a glint in her eyes that Bella knew meant trouble.

“Chained to his desk,” she stated with a wink that convinced everyone she was lying.

“Are the rumors true that your designer is expecting a child with a friend?” another asked.

“You’d have to ask Toby about that, but I can tell you his designs are like children to him, each has a special name...”

“Arabella, word around town has your marriage on the rocks, any comment?” another television snoop asked shoving a microphone in her face.

“The only rocks in our marriage are on my fingers and around my neck,” she returned pulling laughs from fans behind them.

She continued down the carpet, stopping to take a few photos with the leading man, who she had worked with for the scene where she played a model who he had a thing for. They'd gotten along well, really well, forming a friendship easily despite her normal guardedness.

"No date tonight?" he asked between flashes.

"Must have gotten held up, he's been working non-stop since the contracts were signed and they took over the other firm," she answered. "What about your latest floozy?"

"Figured it'd look better if I didn't bring anyone," he admitted. "More fitting for the story I think."

"Let me guess, she ran away when she found out you weren't going to throw away millions of dollars on useless things for her?"

"You got it..." he laughed. "I'll have them save you a seat with me. Two in case your husband shows."

"Thanks," she said waving to him as he was led away. She allowed the photographers a few more pictures as she checked one last time for Tyler. She blew a kiss to a few fans that were screaming her name and waved before heading inside.

"Ms. Angel?" someone said as she checked her phone and sent Tyler a text to see where he was.

"Yes," she answered looking up. "Kelsey, right?"

"Yes," she said stunned. "Sorry, most people don't remember it...Mr. Truman was hoping you would join him with Quinn and Denise for a few photos."

"Of course," she said following the assistant, "and it's Bella."

"Mr. Truman," Kelsey said when he'd finished an interview.

"Ah Arabella...Quinn, Denise, look who's here. Thanks Kayla," he stated taking her arm and walking away from the girl.

“Nice to see you again,” Quinn said with a wink only she could see, “it’s been what...ten minutes?”

“Something like that,” she laughed.

“Alone tonight?” Denise asked looking around the room as hundreds of people mingled.

“Tyler was held up at the office. I barely had time to stop in at home and change after getting off the plane,” she told her as they posed for photos.

“Thank you, Arabella,” Mr. Truman stated. “If you want to make a movie, give me a call, a photo can only capture so much. A video camera can tell the whole story...where’s Kendra?”

“If you mean Kelsey she’s over by the woman with the huge hat,” Bella told him.

“He’s still an ass but he’s a great director,” Denise stated as he moved off. “I have to go do some interviews, you’re joining us for the after-party, aren’t you?”

“Honestly if I make it through the film without falling asleep, I’ll be doing good. I’ve been awake for nearly forty hours and that’s without the time difference between here and the UK. The only thing I feel like doing is going home and crashing in my own bed.”

“You flew in from Heathrow today?” Quinn asked. “I thought they’d gotten snowed in.”

“We did I was coming back from a shoot in Italy when we were forced to land because of the weather. What they didn’t tell us was it was only going to get worse. I wouldn’t even be here if I hadn’t used some of my pull to get on the first flight out.”

“And then when you show your husband decides to work?”

“I’m sure it’s nothing. Tyler’s a machine when it comes to work, unless there’s someone to turn the switch off, he’d go on until he breaks,” she told him. “Don’t feel like you have to

talk to me. I know there must be plenty of other women here you can flirt with so stop babysitting and go on.”

“Trying to get rid of me?”

“You guessed it.”

“Don’t run off, stay and see the great job you did because Ben’s right you were amazing,” he told her kissing her cheek as he walked away.

She made her way around the theater talking here and there to people she knew, smiling for photographers until she found Kelsey wiping away traces of tears in the corner.

“Everything okay?”

“Ms....Bella, sorry, I just...”

“Can’t stand working for someone who can’t remember your name and treats you like he owns you?” she asked sympathetically.

“Yeah...I’m good at what I do, and I love working with the people I get to work with, but I can’t do it anymore. He’s demanding, rude, arrogant, and so focused on himself that he can’t see that his actions hurt everyone else.”

“So, what are you going to do?” Bella asked.

“I don’t know, go back to St. Louis and get a regular job I suppose because if I up and leave he’ll make sure I never work for anyone in the industry because he’ll know my name then.”

“What if you left your job to work for someone else?” she inquired with a smile.

“Then it wouldn’t be so bad, but the studio hired me, no one else knows who I am.”

“I do and the past few months have shown me that although I can handle my own press work my scheduling is getting out of control. I have people calling my agent, calling me, calling my house and I can’t keep them all straight I’m afraid. It might not be the same as working on a movie set but I do get to go to plenty of beautiful locations all around the world and have you ever seen Fashion Week up close?”

“Are you serious?” Kelsey asked as her jaw dropped open. “You’d hire *me* as your assistant?”

“I’ve seen you can handle yourself under pressure and be discrete and most importantly, you’re not some annoying ninny with a stick up their...well you’re great,” Bella laughed. “I’d be lucky to have you. It would mean being based out of here, but I know this great apartment that’s available and the owner’s a very close personal friend of mine.”

“They are?”

“Mhmm, it’s my husband Tyler’s place. When we got married, we bought a new loft with three times the space, I sold my old apartment to Elise Daniels, but we decided to keep Tyler’s for overflow of friends who came into town but after letting a few stay there we realized most of our friends are better suited to staying in hotels. It’s about five blocks from our new place so you could walk over most days and New York City does happen to be a great place to live.”

“I couldn’t afford anything like that,” Kelsey admitted.

“It’s part of the job though, watching the apartment,” Bella stated easily. “We’ve had some people attempt to sneak into the place—don’t worry the security is top notch but if they know someone’s living there then they won’t bother anymore. So really, you’d be doing me a favor by staying there, at least then we won’t get woken up in the middle of the night or interrupted if you know what I mean.”

“I do,” Kelsey laughed, “and if you’re serious about the offer I’d love to. I can start tomorrow if you want.”

“I’m supposed to have the week off and so can you. I’m sure you’ll need to get your things packed up and shipped out here so don’t worry about it. Here’s my direct number, I’ll leave your name at the front desk of the apartment building, and they’ll get you in if I’m not there. I’ll also leave the numbers for my agent Mandy and Charlie the head of the Angels line so if anything pops up, you’ll know how to get in touch with me,” she told her as Quinn headed over to escort her into the theater.

“Still no husband?” he asked.

“Unfortunately, no, but I’d like you to meet my new assistant, Kelsey.”

“You’re leaving the studio?” he said turning to her. “Good for you.”

“Thanks,” she told him, “but I’ve still got work to do tonight so you two enjoy yourselves. If I see Tyler, I’ll send him your way.”

“Thanks Kelsey,” Bella said taking the arm Quinn offered. The movie was surprisingly good, and she couldn’t believe that she was actually the person on the screen for the few scenes that she was up there. Her phone buzzed and she checked the new story that had popped up. Her stomach flopped as she stared at the photo of Tyler with some unknown brunette draped all over him and as she scanned the story, she got angry, angry enough to agree to go to the after-party when Quinn asked.

She was nearly ready to drop but she pushed through trying to keep her mind off of the picture and the fact that Tyler had stood her up and went to dinner with another woman.

“Thanks for dropping me off,” she said as Tristan headed over to the car to open the door for her. “I don’t think I could have lasted long enough for the car to get there. I’m sorry if I dragged you away Quinn, oh don’t get out...there’re still photographers out here.”

“All the more reason why I should make sure you get home safely,” he stated.

“I think I’d trust Tristan slightly more on that front. He’s used to handling them and not charming them. Goodnight Quinn, congrats on the movie,” she said kissing his cheek.

“Goodnight Bella,” he replied waiting until they got into the building before having the car take off.

Bella entered the key code for the elevator and leaned back against the wall as it began to rise. She sighed as the doors opened and she felt the welcoming warmth of the

fireplace. She slipped off her shoes and took down her hair as she made her way to the couch. It was quiet except for the crackling of the wood as it burnt, and it began to lull her to sleep.

“Finally home?” Tyler said coming into the room. “Bella, I’m sorry about the premiere...”

“Work got in the way?” she asked.

“We had a last-minute snag with a few clients, so Penelope and I took them out. I didn’t think it would take as long as it did.”

“Penelope?” she inquired.

“The lead financier from Hartman, you’ll have to meet her now that you’re home. So how was it?” he asked pulling her onto his lap and rubbing her shoulders.

“Mmm,” she sighed, her anger fading as his hands began to work magic with her body. She turned into him kissing him until there was nothing for them to do but go to bed.

The next morning, she slept late, well into the afternoon, and when she awoke it was to find two hot stories floating around about them. Complete with photos taken at the premiere of her and Quinn and the photo from the blog of Tyler and Penelope. She glanced out the window and saw dozens of photographers and reporters obviously wanting a statement now that the reports were out there.

She dialed Tyler’s cell, but he didn’t answer so she tried his office and he finally answered, in the background she heard the light laughter of a female voice.

“Bella, how’s my girl?” he asked. “Sleep well?”

“That depends, are we on speakerphone right now?” she inquired.

“Not anymore,” he said picking up the receiver and nodding to Penelope to go. “So how did you sleep?”

“Great...too bad I had to wake up to the craziness that is our life.”

“You’ve seen the reports?”

“I saw the photo of you and Penelope last night. I just didn’t want to argue about it, not when we haven’t seen each other in almost a month. How long are you going to be at the office?”

“Well, I was going to stay until six but if my wife had other ideas...”

“Like spending the rest of the afternoon in bed followed by a romantic evening that will hopefully put a stop to the ridiculousness of the stories in the news,” she flirted.

“Now that’s an offer I can’t refuse,” he told her in his deep timber that sent shivers down her spine even through the phone.

“How soon can you get here?” she teased. “I was just wondering because I’m planning on slipping into the tub and letting the hot water wash over me, until every inch is nice and pink...Ty? Oh Ty...” she sung until her cell beeped showing her Tyler had hung up. She knew he’d hung up in order to come home and join her and she was very happy about it.

Chapter 9

“Bella, we’ve got a slight problem,” Mandy stated the moment she picked up the phone.

“A slight problem? What the parental organization want my picture removed again?” she asked with a grin towards Kelsey. “It happens every year Mandy, the day after or the day of the new photo’s revealing they come out full blast.”

“Turn on the TV Bella,” Mandy told her, and she nodded to Kelsey who flipped it on finding the news channel.

Arabella Angel’s dirty little secret revealed? That’s what sources are saying. The Angels’ Brand spokeswoman has been seen visiting a rehab facility faithfully the last six weeks and rumor has it she’s battling to win against the eating disorder that sent her into hiding for five years.

Hints of marital problems have been surfacing since early February when our Angel’s husband was seen cavorting with a brunette, we later discovered was one of his newest associates at Reed Financials, but that’s not where the discord ends. The same night Arabella was seen getting very cozy to movie star Quinn Ross after the premier of ‘Rice, Ribbons, and Rats’ where Arabella made her screen debut to a rounding success.

No official comment has come from Arabella’s camp, but could this be the last we see of our fashion queen?

The camera showed a shot of her newest swimsuit ad that was hanging in Times Square, and she shook her head.

“Where do they get this garbage...and no official word? Try they haven’t contacted me.”

“How do you want to handle this?” Mandy asked. “It’s your clinic Bella.”

“I have the Angels’ lingerie shoot in what...a week? Contact Renee and see if she and the network are willing to pay for an exclusive behind the scenes type of interview. The fee will be donated to the clinic, and I’ll make sure it kills the whole eating disorder issue.”

“Bella are you sure? It would mean a camera crew there and they could discover you started the clinic as well as the shelter. Maybe it’s time to do the life story that Kristine and Lillian have been requesting from you.”

“No, I don’t want that out there. See if they’re willing and we’ll go from there,” Bella instructed before hanging up, frustrated with the nosy reporters.

“Bella, are you okay?” Kelsey asked hearing the sigh she released. “Maybe you need to schedule a few weeks off? You’ve been flying back and forth so you can visit Jessica and to go to the clinic to see Rebecca and you’re exhausted.”

“The more I can get done during the summer the easier the rest of the year will be. I promise once Rebecca’s out of the clinic it’ll be fine...I just wish she’d listen to someone. Plus, Jess is due in a few months, and I can’t wait. Toby has been going overboard on the maternity line idea and they’re driving me nuts.”

“Speaking of maternity...I um...that is I...”

“You saw the test in the bathroom? I’m not...I thought I was, but I guess it’s just all the traveling, my body can’t keep up with the timeline. It’s actually a good thing. I’m busy as I can be and Tyler’s never home, a baby would be wonderful but not right now.”

“Is everything okay with you and Tyler? The last few weeks the two of you have barely spoken.”

“But that should end since we have the company picnic this weekend and I’m home until after the lingerie shoot. Don’t worry Kelsey, and thanks for all your work this last month, I told you it’d be crazy, and you wouldn’t know if you’re coming or going...speaking of which go on there’s nothing left to do today.”

“And Tyler should be home soon?” Kelsey added lifting an eyebrow.

“He should be...”

“He should be what?” Tyler asked coming into the room. His eyes travelled over Bella, and he relaxed. She looked tired

but not nearly as exhausted as she had the last time, he'd seen her.

"You should be home soon," Kelsey said heading for the door as the room began to shrink because of their pull. "I'll see you later Bella...goodnight, Tyler."

"Goodnight, Kelsey," he replied as he closed the distance between him and Bella and pulled her into his arms.

"You're home a bit earlier than I expected," she stated.

"Don't tell me you were planning on having a quickie with Quinn before I showed up?" he teased running his hands up and down her back.

"You saw the latest report? Arabella Angel's dirty little secret..."

"And if I were a regular Joe Schmo, I might be worried, but you forget Bella...I'm often the one who feeds you."

"Which would you rather do right now...feed me...or..." she left the rest of the line hanging as she moved towards their bedroom. She slipped off the tank top and let it drop onto the floor.

"Definitely or," he stated catching up to her. "Always the or..." he added kissing the side of her neck making her smile as his hands moved up her stomach until they covered her breasts.

"Show me," she teased.

"Don't worry Bella, I will," he promised as he turned her in his arms and caught her lips with his.

"You two look completely perky today," Vivien stated as they moved across the lawn at the picnic. "I take it that report didn't cause any issues?"

"Never Mom," Bella said kissing her cheek.

"There's my girl," Steven boomed happily as he hugged her tightly. "You two are the last to show."

“We were distracted this morning,” Tyler admitted dropping a kiss onto her forehead.

“Making a grandchild for us perhaps?” Vivien teased and Bella couldn’t help but blush.

“Mother, stop it,” Tyler laughed.

“I won’t stop until I know you two are pregnant and happy,” she returned.

“Well, we’re half of that...it should count for something,” he stated as a small group headed their way.

“Tyler, great get together and this must be the beautiful wife we’ve heard so much about,” a man a few years older than him said holding out his hand to her.

“Heath, everyone in the world knows Arabella Angel,” a younger man beside him stated. “You’ll have to forgive my brother when he sees a beautiful woman his brain stops functioning...James Cooper and my brother Heath.”

“From the Hartman group,” she said sending them polite smiles. She was aware of the third person of the party, the small brunette who was sizing her up now that they’d finally met in person. “A pleasure to meet you and please it’s simply Bella here.”

“And this is Penelope, our cousin,” James stated gauging her response to the woman.

“I’ve heard so much about you,” Bella told her completely relaxed. “It’s a shame every time we tried to meet something popped up.”

“Yes, but I’m sure you know how hard Tyler works to stay on top,” she replied a bit frostily, and Bella knew she was after more than just a business relationship with him. “You must hate it when he can’t attend one of your functions because of work.”

“Actually, I’d much rather stay home than go to any of those events,” Bella answered her. “There’s nothing better than curling up in his old sweatshirt.”

“You still have that thing?” Vivien asked with a smile.

“It’s got to be fifteen years old by now?” Steven added.

“Try seventeen, Dad,” Tyler stated.

“It’s still in one piece?” Vivien said surprised.

“The edges have frayed a bit, but it fits just as well now as it did when she stole it.”

“I didn’t steal it...if you remember I was up near Hartford, and you came and crashed my shoot.”

“I did, and then I forced you to come have pizza with me.”

“Forgetting that not everyone was as easy going about who I am as you were.”

“You didn’t mention any of this before,” Steven said worried now that he knew what had happened to her.

“I made him promise not to,” Bella stated. “I knew you’d worry if you found out I’d spent the weekend up at the school without Mandy.”

“Of course, we would have. You were fifteen and I can clearly remember how the minds of college students work,” he argued.

“I promise nothing happened to her,” Tyler said calmly. “They knew if they so much as looked at her crossly I’d beat them to a pulp.”

“You two have known each other forever, haven’t you?” James inquired. “That wasn’t made up for the papers.”

“How long have you been together?” Heath added.

“Feels like he’s always been the one,” Bella answered knowing he’d agree, and it would annoy Penelope. “He’s been my best friend since I was thirteen, a bit odd since he was nineteen, but somehow it worked. I think we both knew where it would eventually lead which is why we purposely stayed apart for as long as we did.”

“It’s impossible to resist Bella. If I had my way, I would have put my ring on her finger the day she turned eighteen, but I knew I had to share her with the world.”

“And in the meantime, he turned into an absolute bear as all of his assistants will tell you,” Bella teased.

“Then why did it take you so long to finally marry her?” Vivien inquired.

“We were comfortable with the status of our relationship...plus I had to convince her I was serious.”

“Mom...I think you know why,” Bella added secure within Tyler’s arms and with his parents to not say anything more.

“Of course...well just think about making that second part of my request happen soon, will you?” she said kissing her cheek. “We should mingle. We’ll see you later Bella, Tyler. Enjoy yourselves.”

“Don’t worry Mom, we will,” Tyler said as his hand crept lower on Bella’s hip. “How long do you think we have to stay?” he whispered in her ear making her grin.

“Behave...I have plenty of people I want to say hi to.” She took a step backwards from him and lifted her head dropping a kiss on his cheek. “Don’t get yourself pulled into too many work discussions today please.”

“Only if you promise we can head out of town later, I can have tickets to Paris waiting within the hour,” he said seriously kissing her forehead.

“Mmm, sounds like heaven but I have the photo shoot on Tuesday and Ben Truman keeps calling. He’s coming into town on Thursday, and I figured if I sit down with him then it’ll stop.”

“Is he trying to convince you to move to LA again?”

“I don’t know...we’ll see I guess.”

“The only place you’re moving is into that house we were looking at...”

“We’ll see about the house. We’ve barely gotten the apartment remodeled; I don’t know if we’d have time to do a whole house.”

“We’ll make the time. Now that the merger and reorganization is complete, we should have more time together...as long as you’re in town at least.”

“Are you asking me to slow down Tyler?” she stated moving back into his arms and wrapping her arms around his neck. She didn’t care if the Coopers were watching; the look in his eyes told her he’d forgotten the other woman was even around already and she loved that.

“Would you if I did?”

“Only one way to find out Tyler...”

“Then I’m asking Bella. You’ve been working non-stop for over a year and a half, and I miss you. My assistants are leaving left and right again...”

She laughed knowing it was true. “Well, then I guess if people want me, they’ll have to come here to get me. I have a couple things already booked but once September rolls around I should be free, at least until the Holiday ads need to be shot.”

“And maybe we could work on that other project?” he said giving her a serious gaze that made her heart flutter.

“I think I could be agreeable to that...” she grinned as his lips settled on hers.

She was breathless when they parted and the whooping and hollering from the crowd told her they’d been causing a scene. Her cheeks tinted with pink, and she lowered her head against his chest until he tipped her chin back up to meet his gaze.

“I love you Bella...”

“I love you too Ty,” she sighed as he kissed her forehead.

“Go on...there are a million people out there who want to talk to you,” he said.

She nodded and slowly turned. She caught the look on Penelope’s face and a satisfied smirk tried to make its way onto her lips. The other woman might want her husband, but she didn’t have him.

She found herself watching Tyler throughout the afternoon and more than once she found Penelope's hand on his arm, lingering for far too long.

"It appears she didn't get the message earlier," Paul said following her gaze.

"Hmm..."

"Don't think I don't know what's going on. The press coverage of it is everywhere."

"Tyler would never cheat on me."

"Certainly not with her, but she's trying her best, isn't she?"

"She is," Bella agreed. "Okay, so I might have thought they were getting too close but Ty's oblivious to her."

"Much to her dismay...and what about you and the dashing Quinn Ross?"

"Quinn is a friend, nothing more. I don't have time to cheat on my husband and I am not inclined to either. I simply don't like people purposely trying to get between us."

"So, what are you going to do with her?"

"Let her hang herself. The more I'm around the more desperate she'll get and then Tyler will realize it. You know better than to underestimate me and she'll figure that out soon enough."

"This isn't a press release Bella," he warned.

"No, it's my life and I've had enough people try and mess with it. Paul, I didn't get to the top of the industry as a teenage simply on my looks, that's only part of the world. It doesn't matter how beautiful you are, how good you look in the clothes, how well you can walk the runway, or how well you take photos. If you can't win over the client and the public, you don't make it. I may look like I'm an angel but deep down I'm ruthless when it comes to what I want."

"You and ruthless don't begin to enter the same sentence Bella, determined definitely but you have too much heart to be

ruthless. After all a woman who opens an eating disorder clinic after her friend dies and has been stopping by each week to check on a girl, she's taken under her wing can't be called ruthless."

"How do you know about the clinic?"

"They sent a thank you letter to you at the office. I got it since it was addressed to the PR department with your name, they put it in my basket."

"And you were curious as to why we'd donated the money to them. How hard was it to find the info?"

"Nearly impossible but I sort of discerned it by putting this and that together. The staff knows you, but they weren't talking, other than to say you're an amazing woman and supporter of the place."

"Okay, so the clinic is mine but if word of that gets out they'll certainly think I have an eating disorder."

"With your own private clinic to turn to at any moment. So how are you going to refute this claim?"

"I've invited Renee to come to my shoot next week, we're doing the new lingerie line. They'll get to see the truth of what goes into the day and that I'm constantly snacking to keep my energy up."

"You're not worried they'll think it's all for show?"

"All they have to do is ask the crew and they'll know that I've had the same caterer at all of my shoots for the last...eight years. Now if there was someone who could get my husband to stop by the shoot..."

"You think that's wise?" Paul chuckled. "You wearing sexy lingerie...you're fully dressed and yet that kiss was enough to ignite the grills. If he comes to the shoot the cameras might catch something a bit X-rated."

"I promise to be on my best behavior, besides we're not into voyeurism. Look if he's not busy you could casually mention the shoot...if he is, it's fine."

“I’ll see what I can do but, in the meantime, what are you going to do about Penelope?”

“Make her stew, I mean gosh, look at the time, it’s getting so late.”

“It’s barely two...oh...got it,” he said at her pointed stare.

“Bye Paul,” she stated making her way across the lawn towards Tyler and the still hanging on Penelope.

“Ty...” she called out softly tilting her head slightly as she smiled.

He caught her eyes and she saw the desire flash through them.

“It was great seeing everyone,” he said making his excuse.

“Tyler, I was hoping you could look over the Drake’s file,” Penelope said trying to regain his attention.

“Next week,” he answered without looking at her as he closed the distance between them. “Hi...” he said sliding his arms around her waist.

“Mmm...hi...” she sighed resting her forehead against his chin.

“Talk to everyone you wanted to?”

“Mhmm...what do you say we head home? I can barely keep my eyes open,” she said lowering her lashes for effect.

“Everyone will know exactly why we’re leaving,” he cautioned.

“So...if the press asks anyone here how we interacted today they’ll just grin and say we left early.”

“Eight hours early...”

“And when there are photos of us turning up at the apartment and we’re not seen from again for the rest of the day everyone will know precisely what we’ve been up to. Unless of course you’re not *up* for it...”

He pulled her snugly against him letting her feel exactly how up for it he was, and she smiled.

“Let’s go,” he said sending a wave to his parents who smiled happily back. “They don’t seem too heartbroken about it.”

“Of course, not...they want that grandchild...”

“What about you Bella?” he asked as they slid into the back of the car. He told the driver they were going home then slid the partition up to block them from his view. “Do you want to give it a real try?”

“A part of me says no but it’s just because we’ve both been so busy. I don’t want our child to grow up not knowing us.”

“You would never let that happen and neither would I. I know we’ve had some issues making time for each other but that’s over now. I promise Bella.”

“I do too...I just...are you sure this is what you want? This marriage to last?”

“You don’t?” he asked taken aback at the idea that she was unhappy. “Bella...there isn’t any truth to the rumors of you and Quinn are there?”

“How can you even ask that? Jesus Ty...do you really think I’d let you make love to me if I was sleeping around with Quinn?”

“I’m sorry...Bella, I am...why don’t we table the baby idea for a bit longer? If it happens it happens and if not, we’ll worry about it later...”

“Fine,” she sighed. She slid away from him needing some space. How could he think she could cheat on him?

They rode in silence, but she allowed him to slip his arm around her as they hit the sidewalk and the photographers pressed in towards them. She walked to the bedroom and changed out of her dress determined to take a bath to restore her mood. She twisted her hair up and clipped it in place as she filled the tub. She lit the vanilla and lavender candles that

sat on the ledge beside the tub and then slid in, letting the warm water ease the tension from her body.

Her eyes were closed when she felt a slight breeze of cool air. She refused to open them while she listened as he walked across the room towards her. He didn't make a sound, but she knew the moment he was there beside her.

Without opening her eyes, she lifted her hand and found his cheek. She caressed it lightly and sighed when he pressed a kiss onto her wrist.

“Bella, I'm sorry I was being a...”

“*Coglione?*” she teased opening her eyes.

“Yeah, I just didn't know what to think when you asked if I didn't want the marriage to continue. Can you forgive me?”

“Don't I always Ty?”

“I need to hear it, Bella. I need to know you're in this with me.”

She sent him another smile and guided his face to hers giving him a light kiss. “I forgive you Ty and if you want to know if I'm in this...why don't you join me in here and find out.”

He shed his clothes and stepped in behind her pulling her tightly against him as he kissed her neck. Her hands found his thighs and she sank her fingers into the hard muscles. His hands started their own journey over her body and any lingering coolness melted away.

She turned to face him, and her heart stilled. His eyes still showed a pile of guilt, and she knew she'd overreacted.

“Ty,” she whispered leaning forward to kiss him. “I'm not going anywhere.”

“You deserve the moon, Bella.”

“I prefer the stars,” she teased as she sank down onto his hardness.

“That I can give you,” he stated before his mouth crushed hers and their breathing turned into one. He took her to the

stars and back twice before they left the bathroom and spent the rest of the day in the bedroom.

Chapter 10

“Ty, it’s starting,” Bella called out to him as she flipped on the TV.

“I still can’t believe you let them come to the shoot, especially that shoot,” he stated putting the takeout on the living room table and joining her on the floor.

“It shut her up about me being anorexic. One look at the food and she laughed the rumors off, though I must say you showing up was pretty terrific. I think she also knows where we stand on that issue too.”

“You’re not upset I stopped in?”

“I asked Paul to remind you of the shoot hoping you’d come and well...” she said with a laugh.

“That’d I’d trip over my tongue when I saw you in those outfits? Mission accomplished but Paul didn’t say a word to me. I cleared out of the office well before then. What did Ben Truman want? You didn’t say when you came home.”

“Later,” she promised still thinking about the offer.

The entertainment news program came on and they both settled back against the couch to watch.

Welcome back ladies and gentlemen and do we have a treat for you today. Tonight’s episode has been hijacked by one fabulous woman we all know and love...Arabella Angel. I had the opportunity to get a behind the scenes look at her latest photo shoot for the Angels brand and for those of you with weak hearts...beware.

Arabella was back in action on Tuesday completing both a series of print ads as well as a TV commercial for the new line from Angels Lingerie. Yes folks, lingerie and let me tell you it was hot.

Arabella’s stunning photos don’t begin to compare to the woman in the flesh and airbrushing...not for this girl. Furthermore, reports that she suffers from an eating disorder

can be put to rest under the false column. We arrived just in time to see the caterers set up a feast for the crew and Ms. Angel and it was evident that it was not for our benefit. A quick word with the caterer confirmed that they've been the exclusive provider for Angels' shoots for the last eight years.

Also put to rest...any idea that there's friction in Arabella's marriage to Tyler Reed, well, negative friction at least. The gorgeous and rich husband of our favorite Angel arrived just before lunchtime and if the set was hot before it literally boiled after his arrival. Their smoldering looks for one another left this reporter flustered and that is hard to do.

Now I know what you're all thinking, set up, set up, set up...but their affection increased once the cameras were turned off. A couple as beautiful as Arabella and Tyler should never be referred to as cute but it is about all that fit for the way they interacted throughout lunch. Several times during the afternoon, the mood turned sultry but before anyone had to yell cut, Arabella would catch her husband's eye and laughter would chase away the prying feelings those in attendance were having.

I was able to sit down with Arabella and Tyler after the shoot and ask them a few questions...it's coming up after the break so don't touch that remote.

"So far so good," Tyler said as he twirled a noodle between his chopsticks and offered it to her.

"Mmm...I don't think they'll try to edit our answers to make us look bad. They know if they do, we'll never talk to them again."

"You are absolutely gorgeous on the TV you know..."

"Later I promise; it's not bad but I want us to talk about it without interruptions, okay?"

"Okay...she's back," he said nodding to the screen.

Welcome back...I know I promised you an in-person interview with Arabella and Tyler but before we get to that we wanted to show you a little of what we saw at the shoot,

specifically what we saw when Arabella and Tyler weren't aware the cameras were on them.

“Uh...Bella...”

“Let's just see what it is,” she suggested as the screen changed to reveal footage of her as the photographer finished and she moved away from the set. She remembered what had happened and she flushed.

The footage continued as she made her way over to Ty and his arms snaked around her waist. He kissed her and then the screen changed to show her in the final outfit and Ty sliding her robe up her arms. She turned her head, and he dropped a kiss onto her forehead. The screen changed again, and she sucked in a deep breath as she watched Tyler slip his hand inside her untied robe as they teased each other behind the set of white drapes that had been set up for the commercial. She swatted his hand when it travelled down to her butt, and he grinned down at her.

She shook her head as she smiled and slid her arms around his neck. His hands slid back inside her robe and pulled her tightly against him as his mouth lowered to hers and then thankfully the screen went back to Renee who was smiling.

I told you it was hot and that doesn't count what was left on the editing room floor...these two slip from sweet romantic to burning intensity and back so easily most would be dizzy and that's just the beginning of it. Now, on to that interview segment...and a little word of warning if you're waiting to use the bathroom or drinking a glass of water don't...we'll take another quick break and be right back.

“I think that was my favorite outfit from that day,” Tyler said pulling her onto his lap as they pushed the coffee table away.

“I guess it's a good thing I get to bring them all home then, isn't it?”

“You mean because of what we did to that one in your dressing room?” he teased as she blushed.

“Behave Tyler Reed or I won’t show you what Toby made for me,” she teased him.

“I should be jealous that he gets to see you with so few clothes on as much as he does.”

“But you’re not because you know he’s in love with Jess and you have me.”

“Yes, I do...should we watch this now or record it for later?” he asked, his eyes full of heat that made her shiver.

“As tempting as that sounds the sooner we watch it the sooner we can get to those other things and stay there all night.”

“Too smart that’s what you are Bella.”

“I know, aren’t you lucky?”

He whispered his agreement in her ear making her laugh and her body flame at the same time.

And now it’s time...finally, for that interview.

Bella focused on the screen as the image changed to show her and Tyler sitting across from Renee, and she began to speak.

“Alright, I wanted to say thank you for allowing us to join you today and for the chance to sit down with the two of you. I along with half the globe have a million questions for you so shall we get started? I think one of the things America, and the rest of the world, wants to know is how did you two get together?”

“Tyler and I have been friends forever. His parents are my godparents and he’s always been there.”

“But we know you haven’t had a committed relationship for that long. Tyler’s past relationships are well documented as are most of yours until you stepped away from the spotlight but even after that we’ve heard from people you did date. So how did you move from dating other people to married and do you have an open relationship?”

“As I said, Tyler’s been my friend forever. He’s the one person I could always count on, and we were both a little skeptical of taking that final step in case it didn’t work out.”

“We loved each other but weren’t ready to settle down I suppose you could say, but sometimes things happen that you’re not prepared for, and you have to adjust your way of thinking. I think that’s what happened with Bella and me.”

“Does that mean the rumor that you were expecting on your wedding day were true?”

“No...a couple months before I made my reappearance at the Angels’ Fashion Show, I had been seeing someone. He attacked me and the only thought I had was I need Ty...he is my calmness and voice of reason and thanks to his level thinking the situation was resolved quickly.”

“When you say attacked...” Renee said, her eyes widening in shock.

“No, I locked myself in my bedroom and called Ty from my cell. He showed up a few minutes after the security team did and in that instant, I knew things had changed.”

“We both stopped running from the truth that night. Bella might think I was levelheaded but hearing the panic in her voice made me realize that I couldn’t lose her.”

“That sounds like a no to the open relationship then?” Renee said looking between them.

“A complete and absolute no,” she agreed. “Tyler and I are in this together a hundred percent.”

“So, questions that arise regarding Quinn Ross or Penelope Cooper don’t pull at the marriage?”

“No. I think Bella and I both knew that one day we’d give in and get married we just weren’t sure when that would be, but we knew it would be forever.”

“Tyler’s right...we have a wonderful relationship that goes much deeper than the type that start out with the physical aspects. We have a strong foundation that’s rooted in our friendship, we knew the flaws the other had and the strengths

we bring to the table, and it makes everything else that much more special.”

“When did the decision to marry come up or when did you propose?”

“I think we first thought of marriage after the Chrysler debacle. His interference in our relationship didn’t sit well and we wanted others to know it wouldn’t work. I wanted the world to know that for me there was only Tyler.”

“We’d talked about it after the gala that night and it seemed like the perfect thing, but I wanted to plan out the proposal, so I waited a few weeks one, for Bella to get back in town and two, to find a ring. It didn’t turn out like I’d thought it would though,” he said with a chuckle.

“Don’t blame me,” she returned with a grin up at him. “You’re the one who just blurted it out not me.”

“Without the ring...hey I’m only human and you were so beautiful.”

“Ty...” she sighed at the way he looked at her, especially since she was in Arabella mode and not just Bella.

“You proposed without a ring? Did you pick it out together afterwards?” Renee asked.

“Yes, I will admit that I proposed without a ring and without any idea that I was going to in that moment.”

“But it was perfect...it was us, there was no stage set or production about it, it was just Bella and Ty hanging out, listening to music on my balcony.”

“Dancing to your favorite song,” Tyler added taking her hand and kissing it.

“And the ring is perfect...”

“Yes, the ring,” Renee said as the camera zoomed in on it. “It seems old fashioned; did you have it designed to suit your tastes?”

“It is old fashioned, because it belonged to Ty’s grandmother. We went by to visit his parents after the

announcement came out and when they found out we still hadn't chosen a ring Steven offered it."

"It fit perfectly, and we decided it was perfect for us and since then we've let fate play its hand."

"It does seem to suit Arabella perfectly...now how about letting us in on the real Arabella and Tyler? Tell us something America doesn't know about you."

"The list would be a mile long," Bella laughed.

"I can tell America something they don't know about Bella...not only is she beautiful outside and in, but she's also a genius who managed to graduate from high school at sixteen, graduated college while travelling the world at nineteen and obtained her masters at twenty-one all while working as the number one model in the world."

"We knew part of that but what else?" Renee asked.

"I lived in the same apartment from the day I bought it when I was fifteen until I got married," Bella offered something easy.

"Bella has a fabulous memory she can look at my schedule for the week and remember it word for word."

"He's a terrible gift giver most of the time...he bought me a PDA for Christmas even though he knows I don't use one. I love using a physical appointment book, writing down the meeting, photo shoot or travel arrangements in it keeps it in my mind longer than if I type it and then if things change, I just mark through it."

"I think I made up for it with your birthday present..." Tyler argued.

"Okay so the necklace was gorgeous and so was our honeymoon, so I'll take that one back."

"Speaking of honeymoons...where did you go?" Renee asked and Bella gave Tyler a little nod okaying it when he looked at her before answering.

"Tahiti. I took Bella to Paris for her birthday the year before to celebrate away from the family and as we were on

our way to meet them for Thanksgiving, she joked that she'd rather be in Tahiti. I said I'd have to remember it for the next year..."

"And he did remember, we were married a few days before my birthday, and it wasn't until we landed that he told me where we were. I had been the one to forget and it made it that much sweeter."

"Any plans for your anniversary or birthday this year...or for additions to the family?"

"We haven't decided on what we're going to do for our anniversary," she said knowing what she hoped it consisted of though, time spent in bed with Tyler.

"But we've both cleared our schedule because I made a promise a long time ago that I would never miss Bella's birthday. As for expanding our family, my mother would be ecstatic if we could confirm that bit but we're taking things slow."

"We've both been swamped with work but we're cutting back, taking more time for us, and who knows, maybe after the holidays we'll be singing a different tune."

"So, no plans as of right now? In that case, we'll simply have to fill our time with some more questions. What is your favorite meal?" Renee asked her.

"Easy, Ty's omelets. I use to joke that I would be jealous of the woman he married because he'd be cooking them for her."

"But I told her she's the only one I cook them for," he stated catching her eye and they began to laugh.

"Inside joke I take it?" Renee said smiling their way.

"Let's just say we came up with some clever headlines to cover the situation if word got out something like that happened..."

"I think my favorite was, 'my husband only cooks for model' or something like that," Bella said sending him a grin.

“Little did she know at that time she’d without a doubt be both women,” Tyler replied, his eyes showing that he had and never doubted it, making her heart race wildly.

“If we came over to your place, what would we find Arabella lounging in?” Renee asked pulling their attention back towards her as a small flush stole up Bella’s chest.

“Yoga pants or shorts and a tank top unless it’s cold.”

“And then it’s my old high school football sweatshirt, and if anyone wonders why men’s clothes are made bulky it’s so they look as amazing on women as they do. When the shirt looks like it’s just going to fall off the shoulder...that’s when men’s clothes look the best.”

“What’s one of the craziest situations you’ve ever been in?” Renee asked fanning herself a bit at the way Tyler looked at Bella again. There was no hiding the heat in that gaze.

“Hands down the way I found out Bella had gone behind my back and gotten a job at the company. She’d just been promoted to junior VP, and we had a situation come up. I was in a horrible mood, and it didn’t help to find out that they were sending her up.”

“They thought that since I was female, he’d been less likely to throw something at me if I said something he didn’t like,” Bella teased.

“When she got to my office, I was looking through some files and heard her walk up to the desk, but she didn’t say a word. That’s when I looked up and it wasn’t the junior VP but my Bella...”

“I quickly became the go to girl for bearing bad news. Employees would come and beg me to go with them or tell him myself because I was the only person he didn’t bellow at,” Bella mused, and Tyler kissed her temple softly.

“Leading to more than one rumor that we were secretly seeing each other...”

“What was so secret about it? You lived ten blocks from me, and we were always together.”

“Yes, but they didn’t know we had a past at that point,” Tyler replied, and she couldn’t argue that bit.

“Okay,” Renee said laughing, “what is a typical weekend like at your house?”

“Two years ago, I would have answered we spend most Saturday mornings at the office and then would go out to dinner before spending Sundays lazing around but now...a typical weekend that we’re both in the same city at the same time is rare. When we are though, Ty and I usually catch up on what’s been going on and maybe go out to dinner.”

“Let’s be honest,” Tyler said looking straight at her, the heat even higher than before making her body shiver with need. “When we have an entire weekend with no work, no family drama, and nothing to do, we spend ninety-nine percent of it in bed and the other one percent we’re usually in the kitchen. And now I’ve made her blush...”

“Speaking of blushes, over the course of your relationship, the one you lived out in front of the cameras at least you came under attack about your habit of kissing her on the forehead, and I’ve seen you two demonstrate this multiple times throughout the day. What is the significance behind it or is there one at all?”

“For the most part I like sparing Bella her blushes, at least when we’re in public. It’s habit for us and it keeps me in check. We’re private people and like to keep the intimacies of our relationship private.”

“As for me, I love it. It lets me know he loves me and that he’s right there feeling what I am. We’re so comfortable with each other that we lose track of where we are and who we’re with and it keeps us from becoming front page news,” Bella added.

“I could go on asking you questions all day, but I can tell the two of you are anxious to get out of here and I’m sure no one will have to ask why. So, I’ll leave you with this question. What comes next for you as individuals and as a couple?”

“Work, work, and more work...”

“Tyler’s right. We both have busy schedules and though we’re committed to them we’re more committed to each other and our marriage. Other than that, the world’s a big place and we have our entire lives to enjoy it.”

“Very nicely put,” Renee stated.

“She’s a natural wordsmith and I’m incredibly lucky to call her mine,” Tyler returned, his eyes glowing with the truth of it.

Well, there you have it. I had a wonderful day with Arabella Angel and her gorgeous hunk of a husband, and I wish them well. Until tomorrow folks...keep your eyes on our website for the latest news and updates.

“Got to say that’s not nearly as bad as I was expecting,” Bella said laughing as Tyler kissed her.

“Mmm...seeing you blush like that makes me want to see it in person...”

“Didn’t you want to hear about Ben’s offer?”

“Maybe later,” he stated sliding his hands underneath her top. She didn’t feel like arguing and gladly allowed him to drive her crazy.

“Good morning beautiful. What do you say to a nice hot omelet?”

“Mmm, now what did I do to deserve this type of a wakeup call?” Bella asked bringing the sheet up with her as she sat up seeing the tray in his hands.

“I figured it’d be a good time to have that talk and maybe I just like pampering my girl?”

“I love being pampered and I love your omelets. So, you really want to hear about the offer?”

“Absolutely,” he stated sliding onto the bed beside her.

“Okay, well you remember that tiny little scene I was in. Well...”

“Come on Bella, you’ve never been one to play games so what’s going on?” Tyler asked brushing a soft kiss to her lips.

“The writer saw the finished product and loved it, loved my part with Quinn’s character and devised an entire story out of it. They want me for the role.”

“For an entire movie? How long would you be away?”

“I wouldn’t be. They knew I turned them down for smaller roles because I didn’t want to be away for that long, so they reworked it and it’s going to take place in New York which means I’d have to be here for at least four months they estimate. It’s not a guarantee but they’re inviting Quinn and some others for a screen test.”

“So, you’d be here for at least four months...straight?” Tyler questioned, his eyes blazing as he looked down at her, making her body flush hotly.

“Yup and the studio’s already green lit the project and are preparing for filming. If they decide to use me, they can work around my shoots for the Angels’ new Holiday ad and they could even use the runway show in the film if they needed some extra footage. They’re already casting the other roles and if I’m not in it they’ll cast it with someone else.”

“You’ll get it. They wrote the role for you Bella and if it means you get to stay here with me for four months, I’ll gladly put up with Quinn Ross.”

“Do you know how amazing you are Tyler Reed?”

“Not nearly as amazing as you Arabella Remsen.”

“Arabella Spencer Reed but I love it when you just call me your Bella,” she said putting the tray on the bedside table and sliding her arms around his neck. “Especially when you’re not wearing anything.”

“I should go into the office.”

“You should, but you can always go later,” she stated with a grin dropping the sheet.

“Mmm...much later,” he agreed before rolling her onto her back. “Much, *much* later...”

Chapter 11

Bella stared down at her phone, another message from Tyler saying he had to work late, the fourth this week.

“So much for slowing down huh,” she told her reflection as she checked her makeup.

She really couldn't say too much though, she hadn't exactly dropped everything either, but their anniversary was in two days, and she'd made sure that they hadn't scheduled any scenes for Monday for her. She wanted to celebrate with him, they'd made it a year without losing the connection that made them so special and she wanted to spend time with just him.

The movie was moving along well, they'd started shooting it at the beginning of September and despite her hesitations, she was having a blast. Quinn was a big part of that, and the media was continuing to make a huge deal of it taking pictures of them on set and claiming that they were real instead of simply part of the script.

A knock on the door told her they were ready for her, and she hurried out to the set hoping to get the scene finished and pray that Tyler would manage to get home. Despite all of her assurances that nothing was happening, she still worried that Penelope would do something drastic, and she'd be left with a broken heart.

They finished the last scene for the day, and she graciously accepted the cup of tea from Kelsey. She'd quickly discovered how much of a godsend she was when they'd started the movie and without her, she never would have been able to get everything done. She kept her schedule straight; her fittings and shoots were carefully arranged around the filming schedule.

Since Jessica and Toby's little boy had been born, he'd been determined to get the maternity and baby lines out, something she was secretly amused by except for all of the hints being thrown her way about having one and the questions as to why they weren't. It was a conversation she

hated having, no one could understand that they were happy being as they were and the one or two remarks from Vivien inquiring if there were something wrong that wasn't allowing it to happen had sent her straight into a laughing fit. She was turning twenty-nine, was the most sought-after model and talent, beating out girls half her age and she was content the way they were. The idea of actually having a baby...it scared her really and she knew that was one of the reasons it wasn't happening.

She changed, sending Kelsey home, and headed towards the waiting car but a voice calling out to her stopped her.

"Tyler's working late again, isn't he?" Quinn asked with a slight smile.

"He is. I swear his version of slowing down and mine are two entirely different things," she replied wrapping her scarf around her neck to ward off the slight chill in the air.

"So, you're on your own and I'm on my own...don't ask," he grinned when she raised an eyebrow to inquire about his latest fling. "Want to show me part of the real New York I haven't seen?"

"Love to," she agreed allowing him to escort her towards the car. She knew how to lose the photographers and instructed the driver to head towards her place. When they were a couple blocks away, she asked for him to pull over and they got out.

"Where are we going?" Quinn asked looking around.

"The best way to see New York is on foot," she said with a grin. "All the photographers think we're heading to my place, so they didn't bother to follow as we took the long way home. By the time they realize we're not going there we'll be downtown."

"Too smart for your own good sometimes, aren't you?" he joked as they headed out.

She had a great time hanging out with him, he wasn't overbearing like some people she'd met, and he didn't constantly update his whereabouts, so they managed to avoid

the photographers out and about. It was nearly eight before they stopped into a small café and sat down to eat. It was one of her favorite places, but she hadn't been to it in over a year because of work. They sat around talking, lingering over coffee and tea, and she felt the tension from the week drain away.

“There’s the smile we’ve been missing,” Quinn stated.

“Hmm?”

“You’ve been looking a bit off lately and I won’t ask the biggest question because I have a feeling, you’d smack me upside the head, so I’ll go on to the next subject...Penelope?”

“However, would you have guessed?” she drawled in a fake southern accent as she laughed. “The woman simply doesn’t get the hint. We had that business dinner last weekend with some investors, and she was draped all over him again. Touching his arm, standing too close, whispering in his ear... she’s lucky the only thing I did was get Ty to take me home early.”

“Do I get the feeling the claws are about to come out?”

“Very possibly and it’s not that I’m jealous because I know Ty, he would never sleep with her, but she just won’t give up. I don’t want my entire life story out there and she’s likely to uncover it if she doesn’t back off,” she sighed.

“What story would that be Bella?” he asked gently. “The one where your parents...your biological parents can’t stand what you do or that your sisters are bitches, or is it something else you’re hiding?”

“Why would you think that?” she asked shading her eyes as she peered at him over her teacup.

“Come on Bella, there’s a reason why you insist on visiting the clinic every week. Why you tensed the first time we tried to shoot the love scene. What’s the real story Bella?”

“Nothing that I’ll discuss around here, too many ears even if they aren’t really paying attention to us.”

“Then let’s take a walk,” he suggested holding out his hand to her.

She hesitated for a moment, should she tell him the truth or a version of it? The look in his eyes had her putting her hand in his as he helped her up and into her coat. They walked silently for a bit until they came to a place near Times Square where she could see her billboard, the new Christmas ad would be put up in its place in a few weeks and she stared at it. The differences in it and the first one she’d stood in this spot staring at for hours were noticeable, at least to her.

“Bella, what’s going through your head right now?”

“See that spot up there,” she said nodding towards her picture. “I was sixteen when the first one went up, Black Friday for the kickoff to the Christmas season. I’m the only person whose picture has ever been up there since.”

“Almost thirteen years, right?” he questioned.

“Yeah...I’ve been with the Angels brand since I was fourteen. I contracted with them just before my life went to hell. I’d barely been on the scene for a year, but I was in high demand. I had bookings all over the world and the Remsens... they were horrible. When I say they’re not my family I’m not kidding around, Quinn.”

“I’ve heard rumors that they don’t approve of your modeling.”

“The day I told them I’d landed a spot at the top modeling agency in the city they said if I walked out the door to live a life like that, I wasn’t welcome back under their roof. I spent two years living here and there while I worked, usually crashing with other models or at Mandy’s; I was independent by then...had control over my finances and asked Steven to look out for my money because what the hell did I know about it when I was thirteen?”

“You were smart enough to turn to someone who could help.”

“Steven was a bit hesitant to do it at first, but I think Ty is the one who really pushed for him to help. He was nineteen

when I started out and he made sure that no one messed with me whenever I was out with him. We kept things quiet regarding our history because I was thirteen when I started modeling and he was nineteen and...”

“A thirteen-year-old hanging out with a nineteen-year-old seems a bit odd?” Quinn offered.

“Completely; I bought my apartment when I was fifteen, finished my high school equivalency when I was sixteen, college when I was nineteen and then settled down here for the two years while I did my masters.”

“I know all of that Bella, but why do you visit the clinic every week? I’ve seen you eat, there’s no way you can be anorexic.”

“I’m not. I’m not bulimic either and I’ve never been either. The clinic’s mine. I opened it after a friend of mine, Veronica, died of anorexia. She refused to admit she needed help and the reason I’ve been visiting it since this summer is because I’m trying to keep the same thing from happening to Rebecca. She can have an amazing career if she’d just listen to someone. She’s been in and out twice now and I’m afraid if she doesn’t listen this time, she won’t have another chance.”

“Wow...why not just tell the world that? Why keep it to yourself that you’re trying to help someone else?”

“Because then they’d be looking at the other things I donate to and wondering why I do it. Why I donated the second half of the money we got for the wedding photos to the New Hope Shelter,” she said hesitantly glancing around to make sure no one was eavesdropping on the conversation.

“New Hope...that’s...a...”

“Rape and Abuse crisis center for teens; it’s also mine too,” she admitted glancing away.

“You were...”

“When I was fourteen,” she said quietly with a nod. “I’d come back from a shoot and the girls wanted me to join them at a club. I wasn’t drinking or doing drugs, but someone

slipped a mixture of stuff into my water and...I blacked out. When I came to, I was in the hospital with Mandy.”

“Jesus Bella, did they find the guy?” he asked stepping closer towards her as a tear slipped from the corner of her eye.

“The police didn’t...but I found out the truth last year and believe me it’s worse than the actual violation.”

“How could anything be worse than that? Bella, honey, what is it?” Quinn asked brushing the hair being blown into her face away from her eyes.

“My twin sister, and believe me she’s no longer my sister, was mad that I’d been getting so much attention. It was early summer, so she didn’t have a curfew and she convinced her boyfriend and another friend to take me down.”

“Holy hell...”

“Yeah, she knew I’d recognize David, but Xavier started after I’d left. They didn’t think it would take quiet as long as it did to get me out of it, but I wasn’t drinking so they kept adding more to my glass. I could remember Xavier but that was it and then I didn’t want to remember anything about it. It’s why I left the runway...modeling.”

“But that was seven years later Bella?”

“I saw Xavier once; I was about eighteen and he came to one of my shows. I recognized him and he disappeared.”

“Wait...so you’ve seen him since then?”

“That’s where the story really gets twisted,” she said with a humorless laugh. “Xavier wasn’t the one who raped me. He’d wanted to help me because he realized how wrong Izzie had been about me. He was trying to get me to the bathroom and find my friends, but Izzie and David convinced him he’d get in more trouble by helping than by simply leaving me there. He didn’t know that they’d gone through with the plan until I confronted him last year.”

“So, the entire time you were thinking it was him, scared that he was coming back after you, and that’s why you stopped modeling?”

“I started having panic attacks whenever I went to do a runway show. I’d see him everywhere...in the crowd, in the crew, in the photographers, and it was too much. I eventually left the rest of the world behind only sticking with Angels because I knew I could trust the people there. I was hiding the truth from everyone including Ty.”

“What was his reaction when you told him?”

“Horried...it was when we realized things between us had changed. I’d been seeing someone, and he’d wanted more than what I was offering.”

“The attack you’d talked about in that interview?” Quinn questioned.

“Yeah, it was before I’d uncovered the entire truth and it sent me reeling. After I told Ty, it was like this weight had lifted and I wasn’t scared anymore. That’s why I agreed to do the runway show for Angels and then fell in love with it all over again, and Ty even more than what I already did. His support through those first few months showed me how much I could love him and start to love myself.”

“I can’t even imagine what you’ve went through, Bella. How did you find out the truth about what your sister did?”

“Before I started working for Ty, just after I’d graduated with my masters, Izzie and David got married. A few friends had seen him from their engagement photo and told me what type of guy he really was and when I told Iz, she didn’t care. She said she wasn’t going to listen to her promiscuous sister who paraded around town naked.”

“Obviously they don’t have a clue about who you really are.”

“They don’t, never have actually. Right before I made my return Izzie and David divorced and she returned to town from London. Last year, just before the engagement announcement came out, I saw Izzie and Xavier arguing. I don’t know why I did it, but I followed him home and went up and rang his bell. I wanted to know why he’d done it and how he knew Izzie.”

“He told you and you believed him?” Quinn asked cautiously.

“At first, I didn’t because I didn’t want to think that my own sister could possibly hate me that much but the more, I thought about it, put two and two together, I knew he was telling me the truth. David was the one who raped me and then my sister marries him. How utterly insane is that?” she asked trying to block the emotions that were threatening her.

“Have you confronted her and David?” he asked pulling her into a hug.

“Iz and the parents showed up at Tyler’s parents place demanding that they admit that the engagement was a lie, and I couldn’t stop myself from tossing it out there when Maria claimed I’d had an abortion when I was fourteen. They all knew, Iz of course because she was there when it happened, but Maria and Jonathan...and Ty went ballistic. I think it’s why David hasn’t come back from London to see the kids... yeah, they had two kids.”

“Good lord, no wonder you didn’t like Chrysler hanging around.”

“He was a leech and not being truthful at all; believe me he was no more into me than Oliver is,” she said with a light smile as she mentioned the makeup artist from their film.

“He’s...”

“Oh yeah, and if I’d outed him, I’d have come off looking like a bitch and it did help his career, the image of a determined admirer got him plenty of exposure. For me though it’s always been Ty,” she said with a sigh, shaking her head at him.

“Bella, what does that mean?”

“It means that until I’d told Ty the truth, I’d never let anyone close enough to really touch me. I’d had dates over the years and wasn’t completely clueless as to the whole mechanics of it but whenever someone would try to take it to the next step I’d shut down. I was called a tease and a cold-blooded bitch enough that I let that persona stand out when I

would go out with someone new. It was safer than risking the panic that attacked me whenever it happened.”

“Are you saying that Tyler’s the only person...”

“Yeah, the first time we were together...let’s just say it was perfect then awkward and then perfect again.”

“Wow, but it explains why you were so hesitant to shoot that scene. Don’t worry Bella, I won’t say anything,” Quinn assured her, and she smiled lightly back at him.

“I know you won’t. I know too much about you to risk it,” she teased accepting another hug before they started to walk again.

“I’ll admit when we first met, I thought about trying to seduce you away from Tyler, but I quickly realized how much you love him. So, Miss Bella, the question is why are you hanging out with me while he’s busy working most likely with Penelope and not barging into his office and convincing him to go home with you?”

“Because I don’t want to appear jealous,” she said, and his brow rose slightly. “I’m not of her but the business is another story. He works hard and I’m just trying to give him some space. Though if he forgets that it’s our anniversary as well as my birthday this coming week, I will probably strangle the man.”

“He’d be stupid to forget the best day of his life,” Quinn said as they hailed a cab.

When they pulled up in front of her building, they noticed the slew of photographers and she sighed.

“I’ll see you Tuesday,” she stated kissing his cheek before she slid out, allowing Tristan to lead her inside the building. The apartment was dark, and she sighed again as she headed to the bedroom to change. She was curled up on the bed when he finally came in after one and she feigned sleep not wanting to know what he’d been up to with Penelope.

The next morning, she woke up early and found Tyler sleeping soundly. She walked over to the bathroom, tripping over his jacket and shirt from last night and stifled a curse of

annoyance. The man never bothered to pick up his clothes. She tossed the jacket onto the chair with his pants and was about to do the same to his shirt when she noticed the smudge on the collar.

She lifted the shirt and sniffed, nearly gagging on the heavy aroma of designer perfume. She tossed the shirt back down onto the floor and went in to take a bath. She wasn't going to let her mind think things she knew weren't true. Ty wouldn't cheat on her not with Penelope.

She got out as the water started to cool and wrapped a huge towel around her as she made her way back into the bedroom. Ty met her at the door and the look in his eyes told her he wanted her but the instant his arms went around her she could smell the lingering effects of the perfume on his skin, and she slipped away from him and went to the closet.

"Bella, what's wrong baby?" he asked coming over towards her and pulling her back into his arms resting his chin on her shoulder as she continued to sort through the clothes in the closet. "You're upset that I didn't make it home on time last night, aren't you?"

"No, Ty I'm not."

"Then what's with the freeze out?" he questioned running his hands down her arms.

"I'm simply not in the mood for anything right now. I have to run out to meet up with Toby and Charlie to discuss the new fashion show. Change the sheets won't you," she tacked on as she pulled out an ensemble and headed back to the bathroom.

"The cleaners just did yesterday, Bella."

"I know but they, and you, stink," she informed him as she closed the door and turned the lock. She sighed as she dressed wishing that they'd never heard of Penelope Cooper and the Hartman group.

Tyler stared at the closed door shaking his head. *Maybe she was pregnant after all*, he mused before he bent over to

pick up his shirt and caught the whiff of the perfume that clung to it.

“Aw hell,” he said letting out a string of curses as he sniffed his skin and sighed. He smelled horrible; no wonder she was in such a snit. He walked over to the bed and stripped the sheets off; he wasn’t going to make her madder by keeping them on it. He tossed his suit into the dry-cleaning bag ready to go out for Monday and waited for her to finish getting dressed.

He’d messed up last night and let Penelope get too close, for his comfort and now it seemed Bella’s, but he wasn’t going to let it stew. Nothing had happened and he hoped from now on Penelope understood that it wasn’t going to ever happen.

The door opened and she walked out, her face expressionless but as always gorgeous. He wanted to tell her the truth that he loved her more than anything in the world, but right now she wouldn’t begin to believe him. He crossed the room to her and pulled her towards him again.

“Bella...”

“I don’t want to hear it, Ty; just go take a shower and get her disgusting perfume off your skin.”

“Bella nothing happened I swear. I would never hurt you like that.”

“I really hope that’s true Ty but right now all I can smell is her on you and it’s making me sick. Go take a shower alright?”

“Alright Bella but nothing did or will happen with Penelope; the woman doesn’t begin to compare to you baby.”

“Let’s hope so,” she stated walking out of the bedroom and out of the apartment.

The meeting with Charlie and Toby went well, they were all in alignment on the who’s and what’s for the show and she fell in love with Toby’s designs for her. She gave them a smile as she gathered her things together and headed for the door. Her head swam a bit, and she regretted skipping breakfast.

“You okay Bella-be?” Toby asked watching her closely.

“Yeah, I slept late and skipped breakfast. You all know how I get when I don’t eat,” she joked with a smile.

“You should have said something, hun,” Charlie stated shaking her head at her. “We could have ordered something for you.”

“It’s fine; I’m going to grab something when I get home.”

“With Tyler?” Toby asked with a quirk of his brow.

“What’s that supposed to mean?” she countered noting the interest in both their faces.

“We’ve seen some of the photos of you and Quinn recently. Bella, there’s nothing going on with him is there?” Charlie inquired. “We don’t want to see you get hurt and he’s the type that’ll sweep you off your feet and then leave you hanging in mid-air.”

“Quinn is a friend. That’s it. I love Tyler and despite some little brunette’s best attempts he still loves me,” Bella returned with a sigh. “So please don’t start reading into those dumb media reports.”

“Okay, just wanted to make sure,” Charlie said hugging her tightly. “You’ve looked a bit down lately.”

“I’m fine; tired thanks to the ads, the shoots, the planning for the show, and the movie but as soon as it’s wrapped, I am taking a full break. I am going to clear my calendar, Ty’s, and we’re going to go somewhere and just relax I promise.”

“Good, we’re going to hold you to that Bella-be; you’re getting too thin,” Toby said hugging her. “I made that last dress the exact same as the others and had to take it in half an inch.”

“I’m fine, and I’ll make sure to stop skipping meals. Hell, I’ll make Kelsey put it on my schedule for me, okay?”

“You’d better, now go home and spend some time with that man of yours,” Charlie suggested, and she nodded.

She wanted to spend time with Tyler. She just hoped he wanted to spend it with her.

She found her answer when she walked into the apartment to find the Coopers in the living room with him going over some financials. She turned around and headed towards the bedroom ignoring his call to her.

A minute later the door to the bedroom opened and he walked in with an apologetic look on his face. “Bella, I’m sorry. I didn’t know they were coming over; I thought we had all of this settled last night. I wanted this weekend to be you and me so we could celebrate tomorrow starting tonight.”

“It’s fine, Ty. Go, it’s important right?” she said sending him a half-smile.

“Not as important as you are Bella,” he stated lowering his lips to hers.

She closed her eyes as the feelings washed over her and she wrapped her arms around his neck letting him pull her closer to him. The instant he did she could smell Penelope’s perfume and she found her desire for him squashed. She pulled back and turned away from him so he couldn’t see the tears that hit her.

“Bella...what?” he asked pulling her back into his arms and lifting her chin to look at him. “Baby, what’s wrong?”

“I can smell her, and I don’t like it, okay? I don’t like knowing that she’s close enough for her scent to get onto you. Damn it Ty, you’re *my* husband and you’re letting her drape herself all over you. I know you’re not sleeping with her but it’s time for you to put your foot down and stop this entirely.”

“I did last night; I did Bella. At first, I didn’t even realize what she was doing because I had you in my head all the time but since you’ve been home, she’s...”

“Become a succubus? Ty, I want her out of the house now. Her perfume clogs the air, and it is seriously making me ill. I don’t know what’s in it but every time I smell it, I get a headache so go to the office if you have to just get her out of here,” she sighed rubbing her forehead.

“I will,” he promised heading back into the living room.

“Everything okay Tyler?” Penelope inquired with a smile.

“Not really, I think we’ll have to continue this another time. Bella’s not feeling well and wants to rest.”

“Then we’ll go to the office or my place; it’s just down the block after all,” Penelope offered.

“I think it’d be best if I simply stayed with Bella.”

“What the boss is trying to say Penelope is that he wants to spend his anniversary weekend with his wife,” James stated gathering their things to go.

“Tell Bella to feel better,” Heath said with a grin.

“Tyler we really need to get this worked out,” Penelope said standing up and he understood Bella’s distaste for the perfume as he tasted it.

“We will on Tuesday; also, we’ve had complaints about the perfume you wear Penelope, it’s a bit strong,” he told her, and James tried not to laugh.

“No one’s said anything to me,” she countered.

“I am,” Bella stated coming out into the room. “Whatever is in your one-of-a-kind perfume makes me ill and as this is *my* house, I want you out because I don’t like being ill in my own home.”

“I think that’s our cue to go,” Heath said with a chuckle.

“What’s wrong Bella, your senses not quite up to par since all you wear is that cheap Angels’ crap?” Penelope stated stepping over towards her.

“Do not disparage my line to my face in my home Penelope. I may use Angel as a stage name but it’s the furthest thing from what I’m feeling right now. I’ve watched you fawn all over my husband for nine months and it’s going to stop right here, right now. Tyler isn’t interested in you so back off.”

“That’s not what Tyler was telling me last night when we were in his office alone.”

Bella laughed, she couldn’t help it, the woman was nuts.

“News flash Penelope, Tyler does not want you. He wants me. He has since I was sixteen and my billboard went up in Times Square. Why the hell do you think he chose the office he did?” she asked with a grin as the other two men stared at them. “He started working for his father a few months after it went up and he had them change the office suites around so he could have that one. Now why on *earth* would he do that if he were truly interested in other people?”

“Is that true?” James had to ask.

“Every word, she mentioned it the first time she stopped in,” he answered with a smile. “Every time I would look out my window, I got to see my beautiful Bella, didn’t need any other photos of her in my office when I had a stories tall one right out the window.”

“Precisely, so I would suggest that you back off right now Penelope. Ty told you so last night and now I’m saying it loud and clear. Drape yourself over him again and you’ll find out why the modeling world is so cutthroat,” Bella warned. “Now get out of my house before I have my security detail throw you out.”

They watched as the woman turned on her heel and grabbed her bag before storming out muttering under her breath. Bella coughed as a puff of her perfume was left behind and waved her hand to clear the air.

“You have no idea how long I’ve wanted to do that to her,” James said with a smile. “That stuff reeks, it must be toxic.”

“That it does,” she agreed heading over to open a window to clear the place out.

“We’ll keep an eye on Penelope,” Heath promised them both. “We didn’t realize she’d been quite so forward.”

“Let’s hope that it’s finally sunk in,” Bella sighed as Ty pulled her into his arms. “Mmm, much as I love you Ty you

stink again.”

“That stuff would coat the upper east side with a single spray,” he grimaced.

“We’ll get out of your hair, happy anniversary,” James said leading his brother towards the door.

“Thank you,” Tyler replied closing it behind them. “Bella...”

“Don’t say it, Ty; I wasn’t going to let her sit around here making the place smell.”

“I’m not mad, impressed really,” he laughed. “What do you say we hit the shower together?”

“I might be agreeable on one condition,” she said with a grin.

“What’s that?” he asked slipping his hands underneath her top to graze her skin.

“You make me an omelet when we’re finished. I skipped breakfast and I really do have a headache.”

“I’ll wash it away I promise baby,” he stated carrying her into the bedroom and through to the bathroom where he proved how well he could.

Chapter 12

Bella snuggled deeper into Tyler's side as the afternoon sun streamed in through the windows. They'd spent the better part of the weekend in bed once they'd gotten rid of the Coopers, only going out for a few hours last night to celebrate their anniversary in style for the public to see. When they got home was when they really celebrated.

"Keep rubbing yourself against me like that and we'll never make it out of bed," Tyler teased running his hand down her bare back.

"Promise?" she asked leaning up until her face hovered over his.

"Absolutely," he stated as she moved to kiss him. "How much longer until this stupid movie is finished?" he asked when they broke for air.

"Probably not until New Year's...why?"

"Because I want to take you away so we can spend an entire week like this..."

"Great minds hmm?" she said with a grin. "Because I said nearly the same thing to Charlie and Toby Saturday, not about spending the week in bed but..."

"Good, I've missed you. I know we've been in the same town for the last three months, but it seems as though we never have time to be together."

"I know what you mean," she said, "but I think this makes up for it, don't you?"

"What does?" he inquired, moaning in bliss as she settled herself over him in answer.

It was early evening before they strayed from bed, ordering takeout as they caught up on the news. The entertainment program came on and she was about to flip when she saw a picture of herself flash across the screen and she sighed wondering what story they'd concocted now. It

didn't take long to get to it, and she flinched when a photo of Tyler and Penelope came onto the screen.

"What the hell?" she said turning towards her husband who was staring at the photo.

"I said she'd thrown herself at me," he answered as she turned up the volume to hear the story.

Is this the end for Arabella Angel's marriage? They say a photo is worth a thousand words and that one...sizzles, doesn't it? But that's not the only photos we have folks. Same night that Arabella's hubby was seen cavorting with his financier lady friend Arabella was seen out and about with the one and only Quinn Ross. From the looks of some of these photos it seems that our Angel has learned of her husband's possible infidelity and went running straight to the hunky actor who seemed more than happy to provide a shoulder to cry on.

But just last night Arabella and Tyler were seen having a very public dinner together and a source from the restaurant said they could hardly keep their eyes off one another. Not exactly the tale the photos from a few nights before spoke of, now, is it? So, is our Angel a better actress than we give her credit for or is something else at work in this mess? You know us; we'll keep you informed of all the latest happenings...

Bella turned off the TV as she looked over at Ty waiting.

"Don't give me that look. What the hell were you doing out with Quinn while I was stuck working?" he demanded pushing up from the floor.

"*Working?* Is that what you call letting that bitch drape herself all over you while she's practically *naked*? It's a good thing I didn't know that's how far she went when she was here Saturday because I'd have seen if she could fly and then you."

"Nothing happened, Bella, for god's sake..."

"And nothing's going to Ty, not with her but there'll be someone. I've been fooling myself, haven't I? Thinking that you'd be content to be with just Bella but you're not or else you wouldn't let some snake undress for you."

“That is utterly ridiculous. I am thrilled to be with just Bella; you are the woman I’ve wanted for years, baby.”

“No, you’ve wanted Arabella; I was just the brain attached to her.”

“That is the dumbest thing I’ve ever heard Bella, but maybe you’re simply trying to make me out to be the bad one in this...that’s it, isn’t it? You’ve finally discovered how much passion you have inside you and you want to experience a bit with someone else, is that it?”

“What?” she gasped at him.

“How long have you and Quinn been sleeping together Bella...*how long?*” he demanded.

“I am *not* sleeping with Quinn. He’s a friend, you idiot!”

“Must be a hell of a friend...crying on his shoulder in the middle of the night on the sidewalk where you were overlooking your billboard. You said you’d tell me if you ever fell in love with someone Bella so tell me the truth. Do you love Quinn?”

“No...”

“Then what were you talking about that would make you cry?”

“He asked me why I was so tense, hesitant to shoot the love scene in the movie,” she said, and he cut in not letting her finish.

“So, he made his move and you’re going to him, aren’t you?” Tyler asked as his hands tightened into fists.

“No, god Ty, how could you possibly think that I was or could sleep with him after being with *you* all weekend? You’re the only man I’ve been with...”

“So far,” he stated sending a wave of ice-cold fear through her at his tone.

“What’s the use?” she cried storming into the bedroom and pulling out her suitcase.

“Where the hell are you going?” he stated from the doorway as she threw things into it.

“I’m going to spend the night at the apartment with Kelsey. Right now, I can’t look at you without wanting to smack you for even considering the possibility that I would sleep with someone else while married to you.”

“You’re not going anywhere; there’s likely to be a million reporters out there and them seeing you with a suitcase in hand’s going to bring more out of the woodwork.”

“Then you’ll just have to deal with it, Ty, because you made me a promise once that if anything about this ever affected us, the connection that we had, that we’d end it.”

“That’s what you want?” he said quietly watching her as she zipped the suitcase closed.

“I don’t know what I want Ty,” she lied because he was what she wanted, just him, always, but not like this, not him questioning her the way he was. “All I know is I can’t be here.”

“Fine...run away Bella, you’re good at that.”

“I’m not running away Ty; I’m simply leaving before I lose everything that I love including us,” she sighed before she walked out. Her heart broke as she did and she wanted more than anything for him to stride after her, pull her back into his arms, and kiss her but he didn’t and that made her heart break further.

She had the car meet her underneath the complex and she gave the driver the address for Ty’s old apartment. When they pulled up in front of it, she couldn’t get out and gave him the address for the hotel instead. She registered under her real name and took the key ignoring the inquiring looks from the receptionist.

She dropped her suitcase onto the bed as her phone rang. Quinn’s name came up and she answered. “Hey Quinn...”

“Bella...you saw the report?”

“Did I ever,” she stated with a snort.

“Was Tyler angry about the pictures of us?”

“Yeah, then he had the nerve to ask me how long I’ve been sleeping with you.”

“Whoa, do you want me to talk to him?” he offered making her like the man more, but as nothing more than a friend.

“No, if he can’t believe me then I don’t think he deserves to know anything. After that photo of him and Penelope I was ticked because he didn’t warn me that’s what she’d done but I never once asked him if he’d slept with her.”

“What happened?”

“We had a hell of a fight and I left.”

“Where are you, Bella?”

“A hotel...”

“You shouldn’t be alone right now honey, come over. We can run through our scenes for tomorrow and hopefully you’ll both calm down.”

“That sounds nice,” she sighed leaving her room and heading down the hall to his.

“I’m in my suite so just come on up...hold on someone’s at the...door,” he said opening it for her. “That was quick.”

“My favorite hotel in the city,” she stated with a shrug showing him her key. “I don’t like them because there’s always someone going through your stuff, but I couldn’t face Kelsey tonight and I couldn’t stay with Ty.”

“Come on in,” Quinn offered stepping back to let her into the suite.

“Thank Quinn...”

“Anytime Bella, so what was the fight about?”

“Ty thinking that I’ve suddenly discovered passion and want to experience it with anyone possible. He seriously asked me how long I’ve been sleeping with you, *after* we’d spent the entire weekend not to mention all of today in bed

together. If I were sleeping with you, would I honestly do that?”

“I think the better question would be would I let you?” Quinn teased making her smile. “That’s better, look give it a day or two and let him cool off. He’ll realize how much of an idiot he’s been and come crawling on his knees begging for your forgiveness.”

“Only question is, do I, do it? Forgive him for asking for the *second* time whether or not we were having an affair. He doesn’t trust me, and I don’t think I can live with that.”

“He trusted you with the Chrysler situation.”

“Because I’d told him he was gay from the start, anyone he thinks isn’t, is fair game to be suspicious of, Quinn.”

“He’s in love with you Bella; everyone wants to be in his place. They want to be the one you smile at, the one you wrap your arms around; he’s worried he’s going to lose you.”

“If he keeps this up, he will. I cannot live with him questioning every male I get close to in the most innocent ways.”

“Just let it cool down before you go home, but in the meantime, want to run our lines for tomorrow?”

“Anything to keep my mind off my life is welcome,” she laughed as he tossed her the script. By the time she went to bed she felt better and once they were on set no one could tell that she wasn’t happy as a lark after spending the weekend with her husband.

“Would you like to explain this?” Steven demanded barging into his son’s office with his wife trailing after him. He slammed the photo down onto the desk as Tyler reluctantly took his gaze off of the billboard.

“What is that?” he asked.

“A photo of you and that...*woman* right here in your office,” Steven stated. “How could you do this to Bella?”

“I didn’t cheat on Bella; *yes*, Penelope came onto me, but I pushed her away and turned her down flat. The only person I want is Bella.”

“Then where is she?” Vivien asked. “She’s not at home. I’ve tried her cell, her assistant...it’s been three days since that story came out and no one’s seen her.”

“She’s working on the movie Mom.”

“Where has she been sleeping Tyler? Kelsey said she’s left the set each day like normal but that she hasn’t seen her afterwards.”

“Bella said she was going to stay with Kelsey for a few days after our fight,” he said as fear gnawed at him.

“Fight...about this photo?” Steven asked showing it to him again.

“No, I’m sure you’ll find out anyway. Bella believed me when I said I hadn’t slept with Penelope, unfortunately I couldn’t reciprocate.”

“You accused her of sleeping with Quinn?” Vivien asked in shock. “Tyler what were you thinking?”

“That it’s impossible to resist her and she was upset, leaning on him when that’s always been my job. You don’t have to tell me I’ve messed up. I know that but Bella doesn’t want to talk to me,” he stated, hating that she wouldn’t. He wanted her home, needed her with him desperately.

“Why should she? You accused her of sleeping with another man Tyler! Bella would never do that,” Steven said, and he could hear the disappointment in his voice. “Do you even know what today is?”

“Of course, I know what today is, Dad. I haven’t missed Bella’s birthday in years, but she won’t answer me. I was planning on dropping by Kelsey’s later and surprising her with dinner and a huge apology but if she’s not there...”

“What?” Vivien asked seeing his face fall.

“She’s with Quinn; she said she was done.”

“After one fight, that doesn’t sound like Bella,” Steven argued.

“It’s not the first time I’ve asked her about her relationship with Quinn...don’t alright,” he said seeing the shock and arguments on their faces.

“Find her Tyler,” Vivien stated. “She is too precious for you to lose. We will not stand around watching you hurt her; she’s had too much of that in her life.”

“That’s why she left; she told me once that if we ever got to the point where we weren’t Tyler and Bella anymore, we should end it and it looks like she’s reached that point. I let my jealousy get the best of me and now she’s gone.”

“The only time she’ll truly be gone is when she’s no longer on this earth,” Steven stated. “You two are perfect together. Find her, apologize—show her how much you mean it and how much you love her because I do not want to lose her and that’s what will happen if you let your stupid pride get in the way.”

“You’re right,” he admitted scrunching up the photo and tossing it into the trash. “Beverly I’m leaving for the day,” he said to his latest assistant as he strode out.

“Where are you going?” Paul inquired spying Tyler’s parents in the doorway.

“To find my wife,” he replied and the three smiled.

“About time,” Paul stated turning towards his parents.

“Past time,” Steven agreed.

Tyler hurried home and changed as he dug out the present, he’d bought months ago for Bella. He hoped it would at least let him get his foot in the door wherever she was. He made some calls trying to see if she’d went to someone else’s, but no one had seen or heard from her, and he knew she was with Quinn. The only question was whether or not he was too late.

He made his way to the hotel, strode up the stairs to the top floor, and pounded on the door to his suite. There was no

way he was going to let Quinn Ross steal his Bella. Quinn finally opened the door and his jaw tensed when he saw the other man fresh from the shower.

“Where is she?” he asked before she peered around the corner of the bedroom door and froze. Her hair was wrapped up on top of her head and her skin glistened.

“I guess that answers that,” he said before shoving the present into Quinn’s chest as his heart crashed into his feet. “Happy Birthday, Bella.”

Her feet were glued to the floor, and she felt the need to cry wash through her.

“Ty wait,” she called as he began to leave.

“Don’t, I get it Bella. I told you if you ever fell for someone else, I’d let you go...so that’s what I’m doing,” he said before turning to Quinn. “I swear to god though, if you hurt her, I’ll kill you.”

“Ty...wait,” she called again but he was already down the hallway, and she didn’t think it’d be smart to run after him in the robe she wore.

“I’m sorry Bella,” Quinn said sheepishly as he stepped away from the door. “Look let me get dressed and I’ll go explain.”

“No,” she said shaking her head and sighing. “It’s over.”

“Bella, you don’t mean that; come on honey, he loves you.”

“No, he doesn’t,” she said as the tears started pouring down her cheeks.

“Bella...”

“He never did. We never were together as a real couple,” she admitted as he pulled her into a hug. She poured out the entire story, including the lies they’d told Tyler’s parents and the promise that they’d made.

“Bella that’s crazy. Tyler loves you.”

“But not *that* way; I’m his friend nothing else, well other than the body that he’s slept with the past year.”

“Stop it; I’ve seen the way he looks at you and he does love you *that* way. He’s crazy enough to step aside thinking that you’ve fallen for me. He wouldn’t do that unless he wanted you to be happy Bella.”

“I wish I could believe you Quinn, but I already know the truth. The world might love Arabella, but no one cares enough to really love Bella. It’s okay though. It’s better this way,” she said pushing away her pain and the tears. “Now I can see what I’ve been missing out on, right? Ty’s always been my security net and now...he’s gone. I’ll just have to learn to catch myself I guess.”

“Bella don’t do anything stupid. The next few weeks are going to be crazy between your work for Angels and the movie...go home and fight this out. Show him how much you love him and let him show you how much he loves you.”

“I can’t Quinn; he doesn’t want me anymore. He’ll still try and protect me but it’s time I take care of myself,” she told him getting up to leave. “Thank you for listening to me while I ranted earlier, and this isn’t your fault, Quinn. He was never going to believe me, not then and not now.”

“Bella,” he tried again but she wouldn’t listen. “At least take your present.”

“Thanks,” she said giving him a slight smile before she headed back to her room. She tossed it onto the bed before she sank to the floor and cried again. She’d be okay; she had to be. She was a fighter, wasn’t she?

She stuffed the present into the front pocket of the suitcase knowing if she opened it, she’d lose the resolve she felt to make a clean break. Quinn was right the next few weeks were going to be crazy, but she’d get through them the same way she always did, one foot in front of the other until she reached her goal.

“Tyler, where’s Bella?” Vivien inquired as he walked into the house on Thanksgiving.

“Probably with Quinn; she’s made her choice and it’s not me,” he stated heading to the liquor cabinet.

“I think you’ve had enough wouldn’t you say Tyler?” Steven said blocking his way. “You were determined on her birthday to bring her home so what happened?”

“What happened is that I found where she’d been, what she’s been doing.”

“What’s that?” Vivien asked.

“Sleeping with Quinn, he was the only one I couldn’t get hold of, so I went by his suite, and he answered the door in a towel. Bella was there in a robe with her skin all nice and slick from the shower, so I let her go just as I’d promised her I would. I let her go so she’d be happy, and now I’m more miserable than I’ve ever been,” he admitted sinking down onto the couch.

“Why couldn’t you have just let it be Mother?” he asked turning on them. “If you hadn’t put that stupid engagement announcement in the paper, we never would have gotten married, and I’d still have at least a part of my Bella in my life. Now the only time I see her is when I stare at the damn billboard and it’s taunting me because I know the truth about the passion behind her eyes.”

“Tyler...you’re drunk,” Vivien declared.

“I’ve been drunk for a week Mother, ever since I found my wife, the *only* woman I’ve ever loved in the arms—or robe of another man. You pushed and this is the end result.”

“This is not your mother’s fault Tyler. It’s yours for being dumb enough to leave without getting answers. Bella wouldn’t cheat on you; she loves you,” Steven said shaking his head sadly.

“No, she loves her friend Ty, she found passion in my arms and proved that she wasn’t the ice queen she thought she was, but she’s never been in love with me.”

“There’s no point in talking with him right now Steven; he’s too drunk to know the difference,” Vivien cautioned as her husband started to speak. “The only thing we can do is hope they come to their senses.”

“I’ll bring him to his if he doesn’t stay out of the booze,” Steven warned as they settled in for a quiet Thanksgiving.

Tyler turned on the TV the next night to watch the recap of the unveiling of Bella’s billboard and nearly swallowed his tongue when he saw it. It was beyond anything she’d ever shot before, and it made him want to go beat the hell out of Quinn for pulling that out of her when he couldn’t. The news coverage of it didn’t help any either.

It’s that time of year again...time for us to discover the latest ad from the Angels brand and they certainly outdid themselves this year. Arabella Angel looks mesmerizing, and rumors have it there’s a new fella in the Angel’s life. Sources close to Arabella and Tyler Reed confirm that they have split following the reports that came out the day after their one-year anniversary. I must say this reporter is quite surprised because when I met with them in May they seemed quite content with one another, but when you have a man like Quinn Ross thrown into the mix things are bound to be shaken.

Other sources say the photo was taken while one of the men in Arabella’s life was present, which one hasn’t been disclosed but whoever he is...he’s a lucky guy. But then we’re all lucky because we’ll get to see the dazzling beauty in our own backyard every day, not to mention the fashion show that’s just a month away, folks. Arabella and Quinn are still shooting their movie, a follow up to the one that put these two together in the first place and it’s been said that their love scene is h.o.t.t....hot. Keep it tuned to us...we’ll bring you the latest gossip about Arabella and her current man...

Tyler clenched his fist as the reporter’s face changed showing a picture from their wedding day and then one of her laughing up into Quinn’s face before switching to reveal her billboard and he lost it. He picked up the vase sitting on the table and launched it towards the screen, watching as they both

shattered. Just like him and his heart, he knew, and all because of Bella.

Chapter 13

Bella held in her sigh as Toby made the adjustments to her dress. She could see the questions in his eyes as well as in Charlie's but thankfully they held them in instead of saying them aloud. She didn't want to get into it right now. She'd probably burst into tears much as she had a million times over the last few weeks. The unveiling of the new ad had hit her hard because she remembered the day that picture had been taken, a day that Tyler should too but he didn't or else he would have come after her.

The fashion show was next week, and she wanted nothing more than to curl up into a ball and cry until it was over, but she wouldn't do that. She couldn't do that. Amazingly the only thing that was going right was the movie. They'd wrapped the final scene the day before and now she was just waiting for the show to get here before she left and went to Paris for a month.

She needed space, especially now. She was tired of living at the hotel. She had a ticket for the first flight out after the show Christmas Eve though no one but her knew that.

"I think that's enough for today," Charlie stated looking at her sadly.

"Bella, what did we tell you about losing weight?" Toby asked getting up. "I'm just going to have to do a final fitting the day of the show because by then you'll probably be falling out of everything again."

"I'm fine," she said slipping the dress off as she turned away from them, sliding into her robe.

"If this is your definition of fine, I don't want to see what not fine is," he countered holding up the dress. "You've never been this tiny Bella; you're about to kick the anorexia rumors back into full gear if you don't stop."

"Honey, we get that you're upset over what happened with Tyler, but this is not the way to deal with it," Charlie added. "You have to take care of yourself."

“I am,” she said turning back to face them head on. “I’m not losing weight on purpose or because my heart’s broken into a million pieces; the truth is...”

“Don’t tell me you and Quinn are really together Bella-be,” Toby stated shaking his head. “He will tear your heart to shreds.”

“I’m not with Quinn; I swear he’s just a friend. The truth is, I’m pregnant...”

“What?” Charlie gasped before a huge grin stole across her face. “Oh Bella, that’s wonderful.”

“It would be if my husband didn’t think I was sleeping with another man,” she sighed catching the tear before it fell down her cheek.

“You and Tyler are acting stupid Bella-be; just go tell him. The man will be ecstatic and then the two of you can be as happy as Jess and I are,” Toby said with a smile.

“I just need some time to process all of this. Please don’t say anything to anyone for now. I don’t want a round of ‘who’s the daddy’ when there’s only ever been one possibility.”

“We won’t say a word honey,” Charlie said pulling her into a hug. “Now how far along are you and all that?”

“Ten weeks, I found out right before the ad came out,” she said wishing she’d known on her birthday, their anniversary and told Ty about it then. Maybe then he wouldn’t have accused her of cheating, then again, he might have asked if it was his or Quinn’s and that would have been worse than just the accusation that she’d cheated on him.

“You’ve known for three almost four weeks and didn’t say anything to us?” she asked.

“I was processing it and that ad didn’t help any.”

“That’s the second time you’ve mentioned the ad,” Toby said eyeing her closely. “Wait that was...aw hell Bella, Tyler was at that shoot. That picture...”

“Yeah, let’s just say that weekend certainly changed things,” she sighed wanting to block out the reminders of that day. “Now every time I see it...”

“Bella, you need to tell Tyler,” Charlie cautioned. “Make him see the truth so you don’t hurt yourself with regrets. I’ve seen the two of you and you’re perfect together.”

“We were before we got married and everything changed in our relationship. Now I miss him as the man who steals my breath away, the man who makes me feel special just by holding me and I really miss my best friend because the moment I found out all I wanted to do was tell my best friend, but I can’t because it’s him and he thinks that Quinn and I...” she broke off as the tears hit her full force and she couldn’t stop them.

“Oh Bella,” Charlie said holding her tightly as she cried. “Tell him honey.”

“I will, just not now,” she stated pulling away from the woman as she heard two people call out her name. She looked both ways and saw Quinn heading towards her in one direction and Mandy from the other. They both looked serious, and she knew something was up and it wasn’t good news.

“I really don’t think I’m going to like this, am I?” she asked as they reached her.

“Bella, I think you should sit down,” Mandy said holding the magazine tightly.

“Whatever it is just tell me; Quinn, what are they trying to pull now?”

“Bella honey, you really should sit down,” Quinn told her and the look on his face spoke volumes. She grabbed the magazine and stared at the headline before she dashed from the room, barely making it to the bathroom before throwing up. Her entire being shook and she was barely conscious of the hands that picked her up off the floor.

“Bella, it’ll be okay,” Quinn said gently as he carried her to the dressing room and put her down on the couch.

“Bella what’s going on?” Toby asked the only one in the room unaware of the truth.

“Don’t Toby,” Charlie said holding him back as he tried to cross the room to her.

“It’s okay,” she said glancing up. “I’m okay.”

“Says the woman who just threw up after some sleaze said they’ve been having a fourteen-year affair; I get that it sucks but what’s with this reaction Bella?” Toby asked.

“David was Izzie’s husband Toby,” she told him. “He also happens to be the person who raped me when I was fourteen.”

“Holy mother of...Bella,” he gasped in horror.

“What are you going to do about it, Bella?” Quinn asked holding her hand as it shook.

“I don’t know,” she admitted pulling her knees up and laying her head against them to stop the horrible memories that assailed her.

“Sorry,” Kelsey said coming into the room. “I guess you saw it?”

“We did,” Mandy answered.

“There’s more,” she said hesitantly pulling out the computer.

“From that creep?” Quinn asked.

“From Izzie...”

“Play it,” Bella told her, and she watched as her sister’s face came up onto the screen with Renee’s.

Arabella Angel a home wrecker? That’s what it seems, and you’ll never believe whose home it was...her very own twin sister’s. As you can tell Arabella and her sister Isabella are nowhere near identical, but it seems they both were interested in the same man.

“Isabella, when did you first find out about the affair?” Renee inquired.

“Just before David and I split up. Arabella was always jealous of our relationship; she tried to convince me to end things before we married; now I see why.”

“You and David had been a couple for years is that correct?”

“Since I was sixteen, before that we were friends; I suppose it was just to get to Arabella though.”

“You and your sister, your entire family really, had a falling out before her wedding to Tyler is that correct?”

“We did; we tried to be supportive of her career, but she would never let us near her. When the truth came out, she shrugged it off and told us we were no longer welcome, unfortunately she’d warped the Reed’s minds and they cast us in a bad light. I lost everything because of Arabella...my husband, my children’s father, my godparents...and now it seems Arabella is doing the same thing to Tyler and his family. That’s the real Arabella though; she only wants what she wants, no one else matters to her.”

Not the Arabella we’ve all seen is it folks? Is this simply a sister with sour grapes or is Arabella playing us all? Then again when compared with men like Tyler Reed and Quinn Ross what does David Allen really bring to the table? We’re waiting on word back from Arabella’s camp, but I’d hazard a guess that there’s more to this story and I can’t wait to get Arabella’s side of it.

Her heart dropped and she slipped into a place she hated. She could hear voices talking around her, but the words didn’t make sense as she allowed the blackness to wash over her.

Tyler was staring out the window at Bella’s picture when he heard the commotion going on outside his door. He turned in time to see his parents and Quinn stalk into the room.

“Get the hell out of my office you son of a...”

“Tyler Matthew Reed,” his mother reprimanded.

“You have some nerve showing up here,” Tyler said over her. “It’s not enough to steal my wife, now you’re barging into my workplace?”

“I didn’t steal your wife, you moron; Bella loves *you*. If you would have simply listened, you would know what you saw was not what you thought but for the third time you instantly jumped to the conclusion that I’d seduced her. I haven’t. I *can’t* because she’s completely crazy about you but right now that’s not what matters.”

“I said get out,” Tyler ordered clenching his fists.

“I’d suggest you save your anger for the people who really deserve it,” Quinn suggested.

“You haven’t seen the news have you Tyler?” Steven inquired tossing the magazine onto his desk.

He stared at the headline and then up at Quinn, seeing the knowledge behind his gaze.

“Bella told you?” he asked the man.

“Those pictures from before your anniversary, her being upset, were all because she’d admitted what happened to her. I knew there was something off when we were shooting the love scene; she tensed the instant I touched her, and it wasn’t just because there were a million people around. There’s also something else I think you should see,” he added tossing him a few other pictures, including a smaller copy of the billboard outside his window. “I wasn’t anywhere near that shoot Tyler, *you* were.”

He sifted through the pictures and felt the hope returning but he tamed it down quickly knowing it wasn’t real. She might not have slept with him then, but she was now.

“So what? She’s with you now.”

“Good god man, Bella and I have *never* had sex of any sort and right now she needs more than me. She’s at the hospital Tyler; she blacked out after seeing the video of her sister blaming everything on her and she hasn’t come to yet.”

“*WHAT!?*” Tyler shouted as his parents gasped.

“I can help her try and deal with your jealousy but this... you’re the only person who can help her with this, help her make a decision so get off your ass and go to her.”

Tyler wasn’t listening as he hurried out of the room and blindly made his way to the hospital. Somehow, he managed to find her room and he walked in ignoring the stares from her friends. She looked tiny laying in the bed and too pale.

“Bella, baby,” he whispered sinking down onto the chair beside the bed. “Come on honey; come back to me.”

He took her hand into his and held on as he cursed himself for being so stupid. Whatever it took he’d find a way to convince her to forgive him. His parents came in and kissed her cheek before going back out into the hallway as the doctor arrived with Evan.

“Why isn’t she waking up?” he asked as they checked the monitors.

“She may simply not want to, Tyler. She’s dehydrated which is why we’re giving her fluids, but her friends said she’s received a few shocks today. Physically she’s good but emotionally she’s been through hell I’d say,” the doctor told him.

“I’d say hell is a nicer place than where she’s been living the last few weeks,” Evan said giving him a pointed look. “Thanks for taking care of her for me Wyatt.”

“Not exactly the way I thought I’d meet Arabella Angel; let her rest she needs it,” he stated before leaving.

“Want to tell me why you’ve been acting like a complete and utter ass while Bella’s been suffering?” Evan demanded once the door was shut.

“I made a huge mistake. No, I *didn’t* sleep with Penelope, and she’s gone. She left town and the company too. I honestly thought Bella wanted Quinn.”

“Do you even realize the leap it took for her to tell you Tyler? For years the only ones who knew were me, Mandy and Charlie; she trusted you with that, with her body and her heart and you repay her by accusing her of sleeping with

Quinn, multiple times and then don't let her explain what you saw before leaving."

"How do you..."

"Bella's my patient again."

"Your patient? I thought you worked for the shelter," he said completely confused.

"I also run an ob/gyn practice Bella came to me because she's been having issues."

"What's wrong?" he asked as panic gripped him again.

"That's her place but I'd take a nice long look at the last two months Tyler, there's obviously something you've overlooked, a reason why she's been so emotional lately."

"Evan...is...are..." he paused trying to get his emotions under control. "Before we had our fight, she was complaining that the smell of Penelope's perfume was making her sick, and I'd laughed wondering at first if she wasn't...Bella's pregnant?"

"Not as dumb as I thought," Evan said with a smirk. "Don't upset her again."

"Not a chance," he stated. "This...her blacking out it doesn't have anything to do with her condition, the baby..."

"As Wyatt said, physically they're fine, other than Bella being dehydrated, but we're fixing that. She'll come around when she works through it herself."

"Let's hope that's soon," Tyler said before being left alone with his thoughts and her. He'd been a royal idiot, but he'd make it up to her somehow.

It was late evening before she finally roused and the moment her eyes fluttered open, he saw the pain he'd helped cause.

"Bella, baby," he whispered moving over to kiss her forehead. "I'm so sorry about everything honey."

"Ty, what are you doing here?" she asked moving to sit up. "What am I doing here?" she added realizing where she

was.

“Do you remember what happened this morning?” he asked cautiously. “The magazine article...”

It all came flooding back to her and she felt the sob well up in her throat. She tried to stifle it, but she couldn't, and the tears started to flow again. She knew her hormones were only partially to blame; the rest was the utter disbelief that he was there with her.

“Ty...”

“Bella, baby,” he groaned sliding onto the bed and pulling her into his arms, holding her tightly against him as he let her cry much as he had the night, she'd first told him about the attack.

“My sweet baby,” he said once they'd stopped. “I am so sorry Bella, for everything. I was an ass through and through and I know I don't deserve it, but I can't live without you baby.”

“Ty...”

“Don't,” he said knowing he needed to tell her the whole truth. He wiped away the tears that clung to her lashes and kissed her gently. “Bella, I have loved you for the longest time baby. I was so jealous each time you went out with someone new, but I knew you didn't feel the same, so I held back. When you told me the truth, I wanted to hold you and never let you go but you weren't ready, and you still didn't feel the same.”

“Ty...” she tried but he went on.

“When you stepped out onto that runway at the Christmas show I knew I was going to lose you and I tried desperately to hold onto you. I was secretly rejoicing when Mom put that announcement into the paper because I knew the only solution would be for us to get married. I told myself to stop on our wedding night, but I'd wanted you for so long, loved you so much that I couldn't. When you let me in let me show you how it should be between us, I was lost. I knew one day you would find someone else, someone you could fall in love with,

and it drove me to a place I hated Bella. Every man who looked at you wanted you in my mind and when you seemed so comfortable being around Quinn, I saw the way he looked at you, and I...I let the jealousy get the best of me. Your passion is enough to enflame me, and I knew you'd find it somewhere else."

"Ty, are you finished?" she asked as her heart pounded with wonder.

"Almost," he replied caressing her face. "I've said I love you a thousand times or more but Bella, I don't mean it as just the girl who's been my best friend for years. I am completely in love with you. You are the only woman who fills my heart and the only woman I want. I know you don't think of me that way but maybe one day you will."

"Finished now?" she asked as a tear slipped down her cheek. He nodded wiping it away and waited, praying she'd come back to him.

"I love *you*, Ty; I have for the longest time. Yes, at first you were just the guy who protected me no matter what, who stood by me and made sure I was safe. The night I told you that all changed. I realized I'd done the dumbest thing in the world—I'd fallen in love with my best friend, and I couldn't risk losing you. Every single word I said at our wedding was true Ty; I told you that day that you convinced me that love was worth taking a risk for and it is. I love you with all my heart and I can't stand seeing another woman with you. I know nothing happened with her, but I was so afraid that one day you would meet someone who would steal you away from me and I'd be left with nothing but a broken heart and no best friend."

"You've loved me all this time?" he asked as a smile spread across his face.

"Always Ty, in so many different ways but when you accused me of sleeping with Quinn, I thought it was because you didn't feel the same way. That you didn't realize the only reason I could feel so much passion was because I loved you so much, completely."

“I’m such an idiot,” he groaned before lowering his mouth to hers and showing her how much he loved her.

She sighed happily as their lips parted and lowered her head against his chest letting the love wash through her.

“Bella, I’m sorry I made the last few weeks such hell. I saw you in Quinn’s suite in that robe, your hair and skin wet and him in a towel, and I saw red.”

“I haven’t been staying with Quinn, Tyler. I got a suite down from his because I couldn’t face Kelsey that night and what you saw I swear it wasn’t anything bad.”

“Would you tell me what it was so I can please stop imagining the worst possible scenarios?”

“Quinn knew it was my birthday and that I’d been upset since our fight. He was trying to make me feel better, to laugh and smile because he’s a friend.”

“And that took a shower to accomplish?”

She chuckled softly with a smile. “We’d been at the private pool. I was wearing a full coverage bikini under the robe. Yes, Quinn had a towel wrapped around him because his trunks were wet.”

“The pool?” he asked, his forehead lowering down to hers.

“The pool Ty. When I saw you in the doorway, I knew what you were thinking, and it hurt like hell. It was my birthday and the one person I wanted to spend it with hadn’t found me, hadn’t come after me, and then when you did you said it was done.”

“Never Bella, I wanted to do the noble thing and back off, but every time I looked out my window, I saw you. When they unveiled that billboard...I threw a vase through the living room TV.”

“Ty, *you* were the one I was looking at for that photo, just as you were the one, I was looking at during that first fashion show for Angels. When I looked back as I wore that dress, I

caught your gaze, and I couldn't stop the feelings that flooded me. *You are my passion.*"

"Quinn showed me some pictures from that shoot. I was so wrapped up in my jealousy that I didn't see anything beyond the look in your eyes. When I finally saw the whole shot, I remembered it and everything else about that weekend."

"That weekend...Ty..."

"What Bella?" he asked as she paused.

"Can you get my bag?" she said motioning to it sitting on the chair.

He reluctantly got up and grabbed it watching as she sifted through it until she pulled out a folder and handed it over. He opened it staring at the picture inside and he grinned. "My picture, I missed having this, Bella."

"A bit late but that's not the only picture I have for you in there."

He glanced back down at the folder and saw the edge of another picture, one that hadn't been in the stack Quinn gave him and he stared at it.

"Do you remember that night, Ty?" she asked slightly nervous. "It was different."

"I wanted to pull that look from you, the one you wore during that photo," he answered lifting her chin to kiss her lightly.

"That night, I'd hoped that it meant that you felt the same. I told myself you had to because it was different, deeper somehow and..."

"And what Bella?" he asked watching the worry play in her eyes. "Baby, I love you, whatever it is just tell me."

"It seems that the universe finally made a decision for us," she said pulling out the sonogram.

"Oh Bella, I know you're pregnant. Evan was here; he didn't tell me straight out but gave me enough of a hint," he

said, and a bit of worry hit her again. “No, baby, it’s not the reason why I told you I love you. In a small way it was but the biggest reason is because I hate not having you and I couldn’t lose you again.”

“It’s fine Ty, but that weekend is when it happened,” she said showing him the picture.

“That weekend...that night Bella,” he stated with a huge smile. “Our baby...”

“Our babies,” she said nodding at the look that came into his eye before he kissed her again. “I love you, Tyler.”

“That’s good because I’m never letting you go, any of you,” he replied pulling her down into his arms as he laid back. “You are stuck with me Bella Reed.”

“There’s nowhere else I’d rather be Ty,” she sighed snuggling against him happily.

Chapter 14

“Ty, we do have a bit of a problem. How do we deal with David and Izzie and their crap?” Bella asked a bit later after the doctor and Evan had assured them that both she and the babies were fine.

“I think I can help with that,” a voice said from the doorway, and she turned in shock to see Xavier standing there.

“Who are you?” Tyler stated noting the slight tension that filled her.

“Xavier, what...how did you know I was here?” she finally managed.

“It was on the news. I saw the crap David had spewed and then they played Izzie’s piece. I want to tell the truth about what happened that night if you do Bella.”

“I don’t know...putting it all out there,” she said as her heart raced.

“You can do it Bella,” Tyler promised holding her tightly against him. “I’ll be right beside you. I’ll never leave you.”

“I don’t...” she started but stopped as she saw the people outside the room. It finally dawned on her why they were there, and she shook her head. How on earth could she not see the truth staring her in the face? She wasn’t Arabella to them; she *was* just Bella, and she knew they’d never leave no matter what spin the media tried to run with.

“Bella, baby what’s wrong?” Ty asked feeling her shake her head.

“Nothing, I think it’s time,” she agreed.

“Time for what?” Mandy asked poking her head around the corner. “I didn’t mean to interrupt but the phones are going crazy everyone wants a statement.”

“It’s time to tell the whole truth; the David and Izzie issues, the real way the Remsens feel about me, and the reason

I walked away and came back.”

“You’re not worried that they’ll say you’re making it up to look sympathetic?” Mandy asked replaying one of her reasons she’d used to keep it quiet.

“But I have all the proof, the visit to the ER where they found the drugs in my system, Xavier’s word...”

“And the tape of David threatening me with jail time if I said a word to anyone,” Xavier added. “I didn’t know the extent they’d gone to but once I did...I have it in living color of David admitting what they’d done.”

“You do?” Bella asked in shock.

“After you confronted me, I had to know why, even if you didn’t need it, I did because that night has haunted me for years. I flew out to London and met up with him, telling him you’d seen me and asked if we knew each other, and he told me everything that he’d done that night. It’s right on here,” he stated holding out a flash drive.

“I don’t know what to say,” Bella told him.

“If I’d known the truth back then...if I’d stayed instead of just dropping you off at the ER...I am so sorry Bella. Back then I was the outsider and what they offered...”

“I get it Xavier; try growing up with parents who can’t stand you for some unknown reason. I was the odd duck out, but it’s them who are messed up. It may have taken me years to get that but now, they’re the ones who are going to have to answer to the truth.”

She kept her resolve firmly in place the next morning as she left the hospital with Tyler and his parents by her side. She smiled contently as they pulled up in front of the apartment and hurried inside ignoring the requests for comment from the reporters. The scene inside the apartment was chaotic when they arrived but it was for a good reason. There was only one place she’d feel comfortable enough telling her story and that was home with Ty next to her.

She felt relieved to see all of her friends waiting there as the crew set up the equipment. She allowed Toby and Richard

to make her look her best before she returned to the living room greeting Renee warmly.

“Bella, I must admit I was surprised when you called last night.”

“So were we,” she admitted, “but out of everyone who I could tell my story to, you seemed to be the only one who would make sure it got out there right. I didn’t want a sob fest like the ones we see with others.”

“You’re really ready to tell everything?” Renee asked. “The truth about why you and Tyler have been apart, what brought you back together, whether or not Quinn and you had an affair?”

“I promise everything will come out. I just want to tell it my way, if you’re not okay with that just say so and we’ll find someone who is willing to make sure that it is. We want editing rights because this is important and some things that may not seem important to the network, really are to us.”

“Bella, you’re giving me the biggest exclusive in the world. I’ll let you say whatever you want, we’ll go through it frame by frame, but I’ve got to make sure I can ask some questions in this.”

“You can ask...for once nothing’s off limits but after I tell it,” Bella promised.

“Alright, just one question for my own personal reference, you and Tyler...your recent time apart...”

“We had some issues to work through. We’ll explain more later but I can say with a hundred percent, complete and utter certainty that we have never been happier or in a better place in our relationship, even if it did take a scare to get us there.”

Renee gave her a nod and she settled down on the couch beside Tyler who wrapped his arm around her for strength and support as they got started. It was a similar pose to how they were sitting a few nights later, two days before the fashion show and the annual Christmas Eve party for the company, as they watched the final product appear on the screen.

Welcome ladies and gentlemen...once again our show is dedicated to the one woman the entire world loves to hear about, but our show tonight is one for the record books, time wise and content wise. I had the incredible privilege to sit down with Arabella earlier this week and get a firsthand account of her remarkable story. Tonight, is one you don't want to miss, and I can promise it'll run you through your emotions, so have a box of Kleenex handy.

Before we get started, I'd like to say something about and to Arabella. For sixteen years we've watched her grow from a stunning teenager and into a woman whose strength and integrity I have always admired. Thank you, Arabella, for allowing me to see and experience this with you and I cannot wait to see what else you have in store for us. Now on to Arabella's story...one she told us in her own words for the first time ever, completely candid and unabridged...

They sat watching the screen though they both knew what to expect but the pain of it all wasn't there anymore and she rested her head against Tyler's chest happy to be home. The normal half hour program slipped to the hour mark and as they neared the hour and a half she was finally at the end. The program broke for a commercial break and when it came back on Renee was back to start the question-and-answer section of the interview.

We're not finished just yet...once again I was able to ask Arabella questions and there was nothing she held back.

“Arabella, your story, your life, it is unimaginable what you must have gone through. How did you cope with it at fourteen?”

“I didn't, not very well at least, but I had the two most amazing women acting as surrogate mothers who knew the truth or as much of it at that point as we all did, and they made sure I was never put into a situation like that again.”

“Did you speak with anyone, counselors, who helped you through it?”

“No, outside of Mandy and Charlie the only other people who knew were the doctor and nurses who were on duty when

I came into the ER. I've always been the type of person to internalize what was hurting me. I'd never had someone to lean on other than Tyler and it wasn't something I wanted him to know at that time. It took me too long I'd say to finally admit it to him and to myself."

"When you did tell him, were you scared it would change the way he looked at you, treated you?"

"Completely, and it did in a way, but surprisingly it was all for the better. It was also the moment I allowed myself to see what I'd been doing by keeping it all inside. I was terrified to step back onto that runway for the first Angels' Fashion Show, but I was able to because he was there in the front row, and I knew without a doubt that he would catch me if I couldn't do it."

"It was the turning point in your relationship with Tyler?"

"It was, as we said before, after that night we both knew we couldn't deny what we'd always known. That for us... there was always only the other."

"There have been rumors and reports that your relationship lately has been problematic, that it's driven you to anorexia, the hospital," Renee said leadingly.

"The reason I've visited the Verona Center for Eating Disorders is for a couple reasons. One, I was hoping to convince an upcoming model who has been struggling with anorexia for the past year to finally accept the help. And two, is because I am the founder of the clinic. I put the money down for its creation after my friend Veronica Verona died because of anorexia."

"You donated the money you received from the pictures of your wedding to the Verona Center as well as the New Hope Shelter, the center for teenagers, is that because of what you went through?"

"I founded the shelter also. A few years after my experience I met a girl who'd been in a similar situation and even though I couldn't bring myself to talk about it, I knew it was what others needed and I could provide it. Thanks to my

wonderful father-in-law, we set them both up and continue to support both places.”

“Remarkable but back to the questions on everyone’s mind. Tyler, Quinn, and your recent hospitalization?”

“Tyler is and always will be my best friend. We’ve had our problems just as everyone else in the world has, but ours were magnified because of the media exposure. Quinn is a dear friend but that’s it. As for the visit to the hospital, it was a combination of emotional stress over some difficulties in my relationship with Tyler along with the emotional toll that hearing the lies from David and Isabella and a slight case of dehydration leading to an order from my doctor to take it easy.”

“But isn’t that a little hard with the fashion show right around the corner not to mention the movie you’re filming with Quinn, who happens to be here along with your husband...would you mind if we bring them out?”

“Not at all,” Bella answered watching as the two men came over. Quinn kissed her cheek before settling down on the chair leaving Tyler the spot on the loveseat with her. He kissed her forehead and her eyes fluttered closed.

“I have to ask Quinn, Tyler...what has been going on with the two triangles that have been hitting the airways since February?”

“I think the best answer to that is nothing,” Tyler stated. “I don’t mean we’re saying nothing, but nothing has gone on despite what it may have appeared to the public, and I will admit to myself for a brief time.”

“You believed Arabella was cheating on you with Quinn?” Renee asked amazed.

“Stupidly yes, I have to admit that my wife had more faith in me than I had in her. She was angry and upset that I hadn’t told her the truth about the extent to which Penelope had attempted to take things, but she fully believed me when I said nothing happened.”

“So, the photos from that night of Arabella and Quinn where she was upset weren’t caused by your infidelity?”

“No,” Tyler answered.

“That was simply Quinn being a wonderful friend and pulling the truth from me,” Bella added.

“I knew Bella had been upset and that she had been tense regarding the love scene in our film, which we have wrapped so no more stress in her life from that, and I just wanted to make sure she was alright,” Quinn stated.

“Those photos were taken after I’d told Quinn about my past and being the great guy that he is he comforted me, which led to Tyler going a bit crazy.”

“I did. I couldn’t imagine anyone being able to be just friends with Bella. I look at her and I see my world and I know that other men can see it too. It was that part of my brain that I was allowing to rule myself.”

“And now?” Renee inquired looking at the three.

“Now, it took something horrible coming out for me to admit that I can’t possibly live without my Bella. The last month without her has been hell, as the three assistants I’ve had in that time can tell you,” Tyler said with a chuckle. “The moment I heard that Bella was at the hospital I realized it didn’t matter what I was imagining because the truth was and always has been literally staring me in the face.”

“What does that mean?” Renee asked.

“My office at work faces the most amazing billboard in all of Times Square, from the day I started working for Reed Financial I’ve had the same office, even when I took over for my father, I refused to leave it because every time I look out the window, I see my Bella. I had forgotten the shoot until Quinn threw some photos at me when he came by to tell me that Bella needed me. When I saw the pictures it all came back to me, and I knew instantly that I had to tell Bella the complete truth.”

“Which is?” Renee asked.

“That I love her and the only thing that I truly am afraid of is losing her,” Tyler said kissing her forehead again. “I allowed myself to believe the fodder about her and Quinn because in a way I was trying to lessen the impact of the day that I lost her.”

“But that day’s never going to come,” Bella said resting her head on his shoulder.

“So, the man behind the scenes at the photo shoot that produced the new photo, was you?” Renee asked Tyler.

“It was. I’d forgotten the shoot because the weekend after it was the only thing that I could remember. It was the perfect weekend,” Tyler stated.

“And what is your take on this Quinn?” Renee inquired.

“As long as Bella’s happy I’m happy for them. Yes, when Bella did her cameo in the first film, I thought about trying to worm my way in between them. I am a man after all and it’s Arabella Angel, the woman who’s been filling our fantasies for years. But after meeting and getting to know the real Bella, there was never any doubt that she’d say no a million times over,” Quinn answered.

“And the pictures of you and Arabella out and about around town are?”

“Just photos taken from the set of the movie, the only time my lips have ever touched hers is for the film. Her heart belongs to Tyler, though it is big enough to let the rest of us in as her friends and we’re happy that Tyler finally listened to reason.”

“Amen to that,” Tyler agreed. “And now that I have my Bella back, I’m never letting go; no matter who tries to get their fifteen minutes of fame.”

“Such as Chrysler?” Renee laughed.

“Don’t even mention that debacle...that guy,” Bella said rolling her eyes.

“What’s next for Arabella and Tyler? The movie has wrapped, the fashion show’s just around the corner...what

then?”

“Well, I think I’ll be cashing in my ticket to Paris,” Bella said laughing when she saw the surprise on Quinn and Tyler’s faces.

“Ticket to Paris?” Tyler asked.

“You were being an idiot and I needed a break.”

“But not anymore?” Renee asked.

“Not unless he’s with me,” she said smiling up at him.

“How does a month on some secluded beach sound?” Tyler asked lowering his mouth to hers.

“You’re going to be there with me the entire time?” she questioned.

“Always Bella,” he answered kissing her forehead.

“Should we be expecting the sounds of little feet from the two of you anytime soon?” Renee asked. “We’ve heard rumors that Angels is looking to start a maternity and children’s line but won’t unless you’re the face behind it as always.”

“I can say that I plan on giving it my best shot,” Tyler stated.

“I’m thinking a yes is in there, as always we’ve left things to fate,” Bella added.

“I’m sure it’ll be a beautiful baby and I’d be happy to have another exclusive with you. So, I’ll wrap this up with one last question for you Arabella. What is the one thing you want the world to know about you or just in general?”

“Never let anyone make you feel bad about being you, trust your heart because for me, love is the one thing that really matters. When you find it, don’t be scared and run away from it. Embrace it and you’ll find your strength like you never have before,” Bella answered before the screen went back to Renee.

I told you it was a powerful story folks you just didn’t how powerful did you? So, from all of us here we wish you well

Arabella and we'll see you soon. We have a fashion show to recap after all and I have a feeling it'll be incredible.

“You’re incredible,” Tyler whispered against her temple as they turned off the TV.

“Am I?” she asked lifting her face up to his.

“Shall I show you how much I love you and our babies?” he inquired lifting her into his arms and heading down the hallway to their bedroom.

“Please,” she agreed smiling yet again.

Chapter 15

Bella took a deep breath before she stepped out onto the runway for her final walk. She focused on Tyler, sitting in the middle of the front row, his eyes glued to her, and she smiled just for him. The reception she'd gotten the last two days had been incredible. Granted more than ever people were watching her and coming up to her but it was amazing to hear the stories and the thanks from total strangers. She'd met a dozen girls who had been through the shelter and even more who'd been through the clinic, but the best news was Rebecca had finally admitted that she needed help.

Tonight's dress was amazing, Toby had outdone himself on it and she had never felt happier walking for millions as she did in that moment. When she reached the end of the runway she paused then stopped as Tyler stood up from his seat. She watched with a surprised smile as he knelt down at the end of it, holding up an eternity band to go along with her wedding set and she felt the tears prick her eyes. She laughed and held out her hand to him letting him slip it on in front of the entire world and then bent down pressing a light kiss to his lips before he bestowed one on her forehead and then let her continue her walk.

She wiped away a happy tear as she looked back at the crowd sending a wave to Tyler and the crowd lifted to their feet. Charlie and Toby were waiting with the other models, and they soon joined her on the runway giving her hugs before letting her close out the night in her own special fashion.

When he joined her backstage, she didn't care who saw her wrap her arms around his neck and kiss him because she was completely content. "I love you."

"I love you more," he countered adding at her raised brow, "there're three of you but only one of me."

"Ha, ha, ha," she teased against his lips as they slipped out to head to the office party. It was going full force when they arrived but the moment they did, the music stopped and a

round of applause went out. She leaned into Tyler as he gave her a light kiss and then hugged her in-laws.

“You have no idea how happy we are to see you two so happy,” Vivien stated holding her tightly.

“You’re glowing Bella,” Steven added, and she grinned.

“Must be because of so much happiness just growing inside me,” she told them as Tyler laughed.

“Bella,” Vivien asked studying her closely. Her hand flew to her mouth and her eyes sparkled.

“Eleven weeks, we want to keep it quiet still but Merry Christmas,” she said before receiving another round of hugs as Toby and Jessica reached them.

“Did you?” she asked glancing towards the older Reeds.

“Yeah.”

“Thank god,” she laughed. “Don’t worry we won’t say anything before you all make the public announcement but at least I don’t have to worry about spilling it to the parents.”

“Well, there’s one more thing,” Bella stated as Tyler wrapped his arm around her pulling her to his side.

“What?” Steven asked.

“It’s twins,” she told the group.

“You know that already?” Vivien questioned.

“I had an ultrasound a little over a week ago so they could be sure of the due date but yeah, there are two of them in there.”

“Congratulations Bella,” Jessica said softly.

“Thank you,” she replied before they were interrupted. The party flew by, as did the holidays.

True to his words Tyler found them a secluded place to spend January and when they returned, she was glowing more than ever. She wasn’t showing yet, much to Tyler’s dismay and they decided to let the announcement wait. They quickly shot the new swimwear campaign during February and as

March crept closer she began to get a slight bump which grew bigger during the month, and they began to shoot the maternity line.

On the last day of the shoot, she let Renee come by and her reaction was absolute perfection.

“Oh my god, you little sneak,” she teased hugging her and feeling the bump. “How far along are you?”

“Six months, give or take a week or so.”

“Wait, you knew back in December, didn’t you?”

“I did, but we wanted to wait to reveal it. Ty and I had just gotten ourselves to the perfect place and we wanted it to be just family for a bit.”

“Alright I’ll forgive you. I take it this means you’re ready for the announcement to come out?”

“Yes, because the maternity line will be hitting stores this summer, and the sneak peek into it is what you’re here for really.”

She and Tyler watched the show the next night and true to her word Renee told their news with a large smile.

Pitter patter of little feet must be contagious in Hollywood and by connection right here in our favorite city. What’s the stylish mom-to-be going to wear this summer? Only the best of course and that comes from the masterminds at Angels. Yes, ladies and gentlemen our favorite Angel is about to have one of her own.

When is the happy event to take place? Sooner than you might think, Arabella confirmed her expectancy as well as her anticipated due date of...July 8th, told you it was sooner than you’d think. Arabella and husband Tyler knew back in December but were keeping mum until the burgeoning bump could no longer be hidden. Congratulations Arabella, Tyler, we look forward to seeing your bouncing baby...now the only question that remains is...blue or pink?

That part she didn’t reveal but I’d say either way...that baby is going to gorgeous...

“They will be,” Tyler agreed.

“Is it horrible to say that I hope none of the other Remsen genes come through?” she asked as he held her.

“It won’t matter what they look like Bella as long as they have you, they’ll turn out amazingly.”

She hoped he was right. She already loved them both, but she didn’t want one of them to feel like the odd duck as she had growing up. It was something that stayed in the back of her mind as the weeks went by putting her closer to meeting them. The premiere for the movie was fabulous and Toby had made her a stunning dress that proved she still had her curves despite the one on her stomach.

She got them settled into the house they’d finally purchased and by the end of June she was more than ready to meet them.

She was at home one afternoon when the bell rang surprising her with visitors. Tyler was working from home, something both of them enjoyed as well as his assistant because it meant he wasn’t pacing the floor expecting her call, and he went to answer it.

When he returned, she saw the worry on his face as their parents came in behind him. Another person arrived behind them, and she gasped in surprise.

“What?” she asked as her mind whirled in confusion.

“Bella,” Vivien said gently coming over to her. “I’m sorry we should wait.”

“Wait for what?” Bella asked putting her hand over her stomach as her mind continued to whirl.

“It’ll keep Bella, this is too close to your due date,” Steven stated.

“Would you please explain to me what is going on? Who are you and what are you doing here?” Bella asked the woman.

“Bella, this is Joanna...your mother,” Vivien answered.

“Mother...no...how?” she asked completely confused but the other woman shared her resemblance and something about it made sense.

“I think you all should explain very carefully,” Tyler told them moving over to sit next to her.

“I believe I should,” Joanna stated. “Jonathan and I are twins. I was a screw up, the black sheep of the family, and as such he eradicated me from his life. I was arrested on drug possession just before I found out I was pregnant with you. Jonathan agreed to take you in because you were family, but he didn’t want anyone to know that you weren’t his. It seemed like fate because Maria was pregnant again and our due dates were close. She went into labor a day before I did and after you were born, they took you in.”

“So, all of them, Isabella, Jordanna, and Dorianna are really my cousins? They’re not my sisters and Maria’s *nothing* to do with me?” Bella asked feeling a sense of relief for her worries.

“Yes, Jonathan said he was going to take care of you. When I saw your story in December...I am so sorry Bella. If I’d known that was what you were going through, I would have come and got you when I was released. You were six and I wanted to, but I thought you had a wonderful life, so I left. I’ve been living in Australia ever since. When you started modeling, I was so proud.”

“Why did you come here now? That was six months ago,” she asked confused.

“I wanted to come instantly when I heard but I figured you didn’t need me. But when I saw the pictures of you a few days ago...there was something in your eyes that worried me, and I needed to know if you were okay. It was...”

“Something only a mother would know?” she stated as tears hit her.

“Bella, what’s wrong?” Vivien asked as they spilled over.

“I’ve been so worried that I’d turn out like Maria, only loving my child if they reminded me of me, the way she

seemed to with the others,” she admitted reluctantly.

“Oh, Bella that would never happen with you, but it doesn’t matter love. You have nothing to do with Maria,” Vivien stated kissing her head.

She felt laughter make its way up and she couldn’t stop the shake of it in her shoulders. Tyler hugged her tightly kissing her temple as he whispered words of love to her.

“I’m okay,” she said catching her breath. “I’m...free of it...of all of it.”

“You are,” Steven agreed with a smile.

“Bella, I hope one day you can forgive me,” Joanna said coming over to her.

“What is there to forgive?” she asked truthfully. “You were trying to do what you thought was best. I get that; I may not have before but now, I would do anything to keep these two safe.”

“Two?” Joanna asked with a smile.

“Twins...a boy and a girl,” she told her.

“Bella, that’s wonderful. Perhaps one day you’ll let me meet them or you can come meet your brother and sister?”

“I have a brother and sister?” she asked amazed at the change an instant could make still.

“Yes, they’re not twins but they wouldn’t be here without you. You saved my life Bella. Finding out I was expecting you made me own up to my mistakes and make a new life, find a wonderful man who loves me, flaws and all, and have two more children I love, but there’s always been a special place for you.”

“I think I’d like to meet them. Do they know about me?” Bella asked her, worried they’d resent her appearance in their life just a bit.

“Ralph does; I’m sure your brother and sister do too they’ve just never said. We’re staying at the Royale. If you could...but there’s no rush,” Joanna said hesitantly.

“I’m not really up for going out right now. Tyler worries about every little twinge,” she teased kissing her husband. “I wouldn’t mind if you joined us for dinner though, nothing fancy.”

“We’d love to,” Joanna stated. “But don’t feel like you have to cook for us; why don’t we cook for you?”

“I think that’s a wonderful idea,” Vivien agreed. “Would you mind if we joined you also?”

“I wouldn’t be here without your agreeing to help me talk to Bella,” Joanna said with a warm smile.

“You’re always welcome here Mom,” Bella told Vivien. “Both of my moms are.”

That night was wonderful, and she soon found out that her seventeen-year-old sister was a budding model in disguise. She looked like her, but her hair was a dark brunette and she was a couple inches shorter, but Bella was thrilled when she asked her for her opinion about pursuing a career of it.

“I know a fabulous agent, a wonderful photographer and a model that can get you some jobs if your mom agrees.”

“Angela, you’ve barely finished high school, and you’ve never been out on your own,” Joanna said with worry.

“Please Mom.”

“You’re more than welcome to use the apartment in town. We don’t use it and you could pop in and out to check on her,” Tyler offered seeing the happiness in Bella’s eyes at the thought of having them around; he’d do anything, accept anyone that made her happy.

“That’s very generous of you, son,” Ralph stated, “but I think it’d be best to find our own place; after all, we are moving here.”

“We are?” Angela and Andrew asked together.

“We are, are we?” Joanna inquired showing that it was as much of a surprise to her as it was to the kids.

“I can’t imagine you’d want to live halfway across the globe from your grandbabies and I think this place would be a nice change from Sydney. What do you say Andrew? You’ve always said you wanted to attend college here. NYU, acting school...”

“Hell yeah,” the sixteen-year-old replied making them all laugh.

“Are you sure you’re okay with all of this?” Tyler asked the next morning.

“Never been better,” she admitted with a smile. “I honestly can’t believe it, but yet it’s so right.”

“Have I mentioned how much I love you lately?” he stated with a kiss.

“Mmm not for the last eight hours or so,” she returned happily.

“I do—you and these two, my own little angels.”

“Well, I have a slight feeling our angels want to hear that for themselves,” she told him feeling the same pain she’d been having half the night again.

“They do, do they?” he asked leaning over to kiss her stomach. “Bella,” he said his eyes full of questions when he felt the tightness of it.

“I think it’s time Ty.”

“Now?” he asked, and she could see the panic well up in his eyes.

“Relax Ty, they’re still about fifteen apart,” she told him with a smile as he jumped out of the bed.

She laughed watching him rush around grabbing things left and right. He stopped in the doorway and turned back to her dropping the bag and heading back to help her up. He gave her a long kiss and she knew he was back.

“Better?” she asked.

“Sorry, are you ready to go?”

“Give me a few minutes. I don’t feel like walking into the hospital looking like this,” she said sweeping her hand over her nightgown.

“Of course not,” he agreed easily but she knew he was anxious.

He kept glancing at his watch as she changed into a maternity dress of Toby’s and slid her feet into the flats she loved. She couldn’t believe her steadfast husband, her Ty, was acting so loopy but she knew why. He was worried something would happen and he wouldn’t be able to help, and she loved him more for it.

Did you hear the bells ringing today, folks? Well, you know the saying every time a bell rings an angel gets its wings...well today two new angels were born to our favorite one. Yes, I said two...seems the gender of the baby wasn’t the only thing the proud Reed parents were keeping quiet. This afternoon Arabella Angel and husband Tyler Reed offered up this statement:

Arabella and Tyler joyfully announce the birth of son Matthew Spencer Reed and daughter Ashley Joanna Reed. Mom and babies are happily resting surrounded by their family and friends. Dad can be found beaming brightly from his favorite spot right next to Mommy.

Adorable, isn’t it? I know what you’re asking when do we get to see pictures right? Arabella and Tyler promised this reporter the first glimpse of them...but for now we say congratulations Reed family.

“This is Dad’s favorite spot,” Tyler said holding Bella against him as his son rested on his chest and their daughter on hers.

“I love you, Ty.”

“I love you, my Bella; thank you for giving me the world over and over again.”

“Always,” she promised.

It's that time again folks, the Angels Fashion Show led by none other than Arabella Angel herself. This year we were treated to an extra special surprise, including a look at the children's line new offerings displayed by you guessed it, Arabella's own little cuties. Although cute does not begin to cover those two. They are bound to break hearts when they get older just like mom, but also like their Aunt Angela... Angels' newest model and sister to Arabella herself.

Seems like Angels is keeping it all in the family, but with looks like those who could blame them...until next time keep watching because with these girls anything is possible.

THANKS

Thank you for reading, I hope you enjoyed. If you did, please leave a rating so others can find and enjoy as well.

Thanks, Rosa

Find all of my books on Amazon now.

Claiming What's His

His Little Lie

Taking Her Home

Woodman's Pixie

A Man for Christmas

Too Intense

Kidnapping His Bride

Dirty Sexy Letters

Wren in Time

Loving KC

Vacation Mom

The Sheriff's Snowstorm Surprise

Claiming Them

Simply Jo

His Baby Girl

Paisley's Rock

His Secret Heiress

His Surprise Fiancée

His Innocent Mistress

Keeping Secrets: Scared to Trust

From Tattoo to...Love?

Aria's Secrets

Lie Dani Told

Hitman's Secret
Gillian's Match
His Precious Bet
His Bella
The Lycan's Curse
Claiming His Family
Reclaiming His Mate
Gigi's Bear
Her Lonely Mountain Bear
Her Giant, His Bear
Her Bear's Promises
Stealing Dru
Roping Erin
Forever Home Series:
Finding Home
Going Home
Unconditional Love Series:
Book 1: Unexpected
Book 2: Undeniable
Daddy's Babies
Daddy's Babies: Jackie's Story
Daddy's Babies: Julie's Story
Daddy's Babies: Jesse's Story
Curvy Girls Holidays Series:
Book 1: Tami's Treat
Book 2: Penny's Pilgrim
Book 3: Layla's List
Book 4: Keke's Kiss

Book 5: Collie's Cupids

Book 6: Delicious July

Dragons MC Series:

Book 1: Saving Daisy

Book 2: Protecting Nicole

Book 3: Rescuing Jenna

Book 4: Paying Rose

Book 5: Convincing Hope

Book 6: Finding Lia

Book 7: Repairing Molly

Book 8: Covering Karlie

Book 9: Healing Megan

Book 10: Managing Courtney

Book 11: Handling Rachel

Book 12: Defending Abby

*Dragons MC Forever: Dragons MC Series Books 1 - 6
Box Set*

*Dragons MC Forever: Dragons MC Series Books 7 -
12 Box Set*

Escaping the Church:

Book 1: Biker's Roadside Package

Book 2: Falling for His Leather

Book 3: Race for His Heart

Book 4: Her Building Boy

Tied for His Pleasure Series: (Box sets also available)

Book A: Tied in the Shower

Book B: Tied in the Bed

Book C: Tied in the Van

Book D: Tied in the Office

Book E: Tied to His Desk
Book F: Tied in the Studio
Book G: Tied in the Limo
Book H: Tied in the Plane
Book I: Tied in His Son's Bed
Book J: Tied in the Boat
Book K: Tied to the Net
Book L: Tied in His Closet
Book M: Tied in the Library
Book N: Tied Under His Tree
Book O: Tied to His Saddle
Book P: Tied in the Garden
Book Q: Tied in the Pool House
Book R: Tied in the Tour Bus
Book S: Tied in the Theater
Book T: Tied in His Locker
Book U: Tied in the Apartment
Book V: Tied in the Hotel Room
Book W: Tied to His Car
Book X: Tied in the Museum
Book Y: Tied in His Kitchen
Book Z: Tied Under the Stars

Want to stay in touch?

You can find me at rosaminkwriting@gmail.com or follow me on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for first looks at new books coming soon.