

~ *The Perfect Dress* ~

~ *Chapter II* ~

‘Selfish! Inconsiderate! *Nob!*’

vrRRUMMMM. The sleek black Audi A5 roared an echo of Emily Brook’s rage as she stamped on the accelerator. Dropping one hand from the wheel, she hoisted up her cheeseburger and bit down deep and hard, puncturing its greasy heart.

Encased in a crisp sleeveless blouse and taut Louis Vuitton miniskirt that showed off an abundance of upper thigh, and with a glossy fall of rich chestnut hair caressing her smooth honey-gold shoulders, Emily was uncommonly beautiful - especially for a chartered accountant. Eager to capitalise on such a rare asset, her employers sent her to as many meetings with male clients as possible. And, after six months of slow and graceful plumpening in the world’s most sedentary profession, she was deemed acceptable for the female clients too.

It was thanks to this near-constant travelling that Emily had mastered the art of eating while driving. There were two main rules: choose small, easy to lift options (in this case, three kids cheeseburgers rather than one bacon double XL) and use any straight, empty stretch of road to cram as much as possible into your mouth as quickly as you could.

This she did now, mashing the squidgy mass of beef and bun with her palm and poking it with her fingers until her elegantly contoured cheeks bulged taut with an entire cheeseburger.

Not that this suppressed her fury.

‘Fuffing *arffhole!*’ Wiping her manicured fingers on a napkin, Emily groped for her large Coke, which (with blueberry muffins occupying both coffee holders) was wedged between her thighs.

At least, that’s where Emily was trying to convince herself that it was. An impartial observer, considering all the facts, would have been forced to conclude that the Coke wasn’t so much wedged between Emily’s thighs as clasped precariously between her knees - her favourite little business skirt having grown so clenchingly tight in recent months that she couldn’t separate her legs enough to squeeze a pin between them, let alone a large Coke.

Being reminded of this did not improve her mood.

‘Cawl *Noffead!*’ she spluttered at the dashboard.

‘Calling... nob head’ the car repeated dryly, and on a normal day Emily would have felt quite smug about this feat of voice recognition. But today was no normal day. Jamming the straw between her lips as the dialling tone began, she took a wrathful *schlurp*.

Some thirty miles away, near a cabinet of Krispy Kreme donuts in a motorway service station, a mobile phone began to vibrate.

Sighing like man before the gallows, Oliver Atwood swiped the green answer button.

‘Hey honeybuns!’ Suave and offhand: that was the ticket; make her feel like it was all something of nothing. ‘How are you getting along my love - my little blueberry crumpet, my gorgeous little buttercream cupcake?’

The pudding-related epithets might have sounded sickly, but they was method behind them. Emily had a sinful sweet tooth. If Oliver could get her subconsciously thinking about treats - get her tastebuds tingling and her tummy rumbling - the donuts he’d just purchased might be enough to save him.

Before then, though, there’d be a hurricane to weather. He scrunched his eyes and held the phone away from his ear.

The replying voice, however, was surprisingly soft.

‘Your... love?’ it purred, with a note of confusion in the second word. ‘Oh no, Oliver’ - a dangerously casual chuckle - ‘no, no, no; you’re all confused. This isn’t that stripper from last night. This is Emily ... You remember, don’t you? Eh-muh-lee. Your *fiancee*.’

Oliver gulped. That last word had been ground out between the back molars.

‘Angelcakes,’ he croaked, his suavity fast dissolving, ‘please... it was a stag do. I didn’t-’

‘Oh *was it?!*’ Emily gasped. ‘Thank you so much for that useful fact. It changes everything. It’s now perfectly fine that I was woken up at 3am this morning by a snapchat of my future husband bollock naked in a hotel bed with some slut’s wobbling arse bouncing up and down on his stupid chest!’

‘I was tied to the bedposts!’

‘By a flabby slapper with fucking silk ribbons, Oliver! Surely even you’re capable of breaking silk ribbons!’

‘Honeybuns, I was smashed! I could barely see straight! Sugarmuffin, please...’ Oliver groped through his Eton and Oxford educated brain for the right words; words that would soothe, charm and reassure.

‘I’d much rather it had been *you* sitting on my face!’

A screech of tyres.

‘Ahh... I mean.... Oh dammit, Emily. I was tied up! And Rob paid them to do it!’

Oliver realised that his spade had struck concrete. The pit could go no deeper. Slumping back in his chair, he stared forlornly at the box of Krispy Kremes on the table. Donuts were Emily’s biggest weakness. Oliver wasn’t sure he’d ever seen his fiancee’s beautiful deep brown eyes glow brighter than on their first holiday together, when they’d stopped at the services and bought a tray of Krispy Kremes for the long drive up to the Lakes. Emily had been so excited, and had such trouble deciding which two she wanted, that Oliver had insisted she have three.

It had won him some serious brownie points back then. But he doubted even Krispy Kreme could save him this time. Even if he offered her the whole box.

‘You know, I’m glad there was a fire on the motorway,’ Emily said eventually.

‘You are?’

‘I can throw my engagement ring in on the way back.’

‘Oh Emily, you know I love you.’ *Dammit, why hadn’t he said that at the start?*

‘Then you can jump into the flames and retrieve it.’

A long pause.

‘So... does this mean you will pick me up?’

Emily was silent for some time - partly because she wanted to make Oliver sweat, but mostly because she’d used the earlier pause, and some convenient traffic lights, to attack the blueberry muffins. The first she’d wolfed in three bites. The second was currently stretching her cheeks to chipmunk proportions.

‘I’ll be there in an hour,’ she said eventually. ‘I might pick you up, or I might run you over.’ Emily sighed deeply, squeezing her brow between thumb and middle finger. ‘Christ, Oliver, as if I wasn’t under enough stress already. The adjustments to the dress alone are going to cost a fortune - and *no!* Your dad is *not* paying for them! He’s already paid for everything else. I have to at least buy the dress myself! ... Though it would really *really* help if I didn’t have to leave work early to drive hundreds of miles and spend hours in a traffic jam, all because my stupid selfish fiance somehow managed to get abandoned at a service station by his so-called friends! I haven’t even had a chance to change, let alone get anything to eat!’

Might as well make him feel as bad as possible, Emily thought. Though in truth she was starting to wonder if she hadn’t eaten a little too much. She had, of course, skipped lunch before the dress fitting, and so her large order at the drive thru had seemed justified. Now that she’d eaten the lot, she wasn’t so sure. Her skirt was squeezing her like a vice.

‘I’m so sorry honey,’ Oliver grovelled, secretly relieved that she was still describing him in marital terms. ‘Apparently Rob decided that the stag do didn’t finish just because we were back in the country... So, er, the fitting went okay then?’

Oliver closed his eyes in despair. In his haste to change the subject, he’d jumped from one elephant trap into an even bigger one.

‘It fit perfectly, of course!’ Emily snapped, and Oliver could picture her beautiful olive cheeks clenching and colouring. ‘Why wouldn’t it? ... They just said - they just *suggested* that I might consider having it a little looser in the hip so I could walk more comfortably. And I agreed.’

For the first time that day, Oliver smiled. He smiled at the memory of his fiance lying on their bed earlier in the week, her beautiful chestnut tresses splayed across the pillows, her soft belly pooching towards the ceiling as she thrust her back up from the mattress in a desperate effort to force her favourite little business skirt over those lovely bulging coffee-cream thighs.

Emily might not like to admit it, but her long hours in the office and fondness for sugary treats hadn’t been entirely without consequences.

‘I meant did things go okay with Amelia?’ he said, truthfully.

‘Your charming sister?’ Emily emitted a short, humourless laugh. ‘She sneered at her bridesmaid dress as if it was a second hand Primark. And the *noises* she made in the fitting room - Christ! It was like a constipated warthog being raped. Eventually she popped her face out, purple with rage, and insisted that they’d given her the wrong size. Luckily someone found her a bigger one and pulled off the tags - and even then she complained that it made her look like she had a gunt... Do you know what a gunt is, Oliver?’

‘I’m twenty, Em, not seventy.’ Accepting the large brown bag, Oliver raised his eyes in a silent thank you to the woman behind the counter.

‘Well, your sister’s got one,’ Emily continued, her tone almost gloating. ‘You should see the tubby little paunch she’s put on! ... But of course, it’s all the fault of the dress - and therefore my fault for choosing the dress.’ She sighed. ‘Why can’t some people just accept that they’ve put on weight?’

Oliver opened his mouth, and then, remembering past form, shut it again.

‘I’m sure she doesn’t *really* blame you.’

He said it with so little conviction that Emily snorted sarcastically.

‘Have you met your sister? I could feel her eyes burning into me all the way home. Anyone would think I was forcing her to wear a sumo suit to the wedding.’ Twisting uncomfortably, Emily tugged at her seatbelt. She was starting to feel a little like she was wearing a sumo suit herself. *Ugh*. It was as if those muffins in her stomach were mopping up all the Coke and expanding. ‘And I’ve got to go on this stupid “second hen do” with her in Dubai,’ she continued, repressing a minor burp. ‘And we’re staying with Angelica Clay. *Angelica Clay*, Oliver! She used to puncture my armbands with pins and push me into the pool. She makes Amelia seem like Mother Teresa!’

Emily sighed. All of a sudden she felt exhausted.

‘God knows what they’ll try to do to me.’

Leaning back from the table, Giovanni Domingo frowned a frown that connected his fuzzy eyebrows above the nose, like two sections of a railway track clicking together.

‘*Kill her?*’ he said.

A waft of jasmine mingled with fresh oregano tingled his nostrils as the blonde goddess beside him nodded softly, causing the mass of spaghetti that hung from her glossy lips to wriggle like the tentacles of some half-consumed sea creature in its death throes. For a few moments Giovanni stared at her, watching those beautiful cheeks bulge and turn pink as she sucked the spaghetti monster down to its doom.

Then the mists cleared. A slow grin spread across his face.

‘You think,’ he said, ‘that because I am from Italy and I own a restaurant, I must be in the mafia? ... Oh *bella!*’ Giovanni slapped the table and shook his head with a hearty chuckle.

‘That’s such a *stereotype* of Italian people! Here, hav-a some more spaghetti.’

Dabbing her silky lips with an equally silky napkin, Amelia watched the mound of pasta and meatballs rise again in her bowl. That was what she loved about Domingo’s. Not only was the food incredible, your plate was never empty for more than a few seconds. It was like being in the Hogwarts banquet hall - a thought which gave Amelia, who was secretly a huge Harry Potter fan, a warm feeling inside that even calzone couldn’t match.

On the outside, however, she sighed with cool disappointment.

‘Then what’s the point of sleeping with you?’

Giovanni chuckled. ‘Ah, come now,’ he said, grating a snowfall of parmesan over Amelia’s hefty second helping. ‘We both know you only sleep with me because I feed you so well.’ Shuffling closer, so that their thighs were touching, he pushed a particularly juicy meatball

between Amelia's eager lips. As she moaned in delight, Giovanni slipped a hand around her waist and gave her belly a generous squeeze.

'Perhaps I feed you a little *too* well,' he whispered into her ear.

Amelia's response was a lazy, unimpressed belch.

'Ugh, don't you start as well,' she groaned, twisting pasta around her fork like wool around a spindle.

Giovanni couldn't help grinning. Most girls would have slapped him for that remark, or at least recoiled from his touch. But not Amelia Atwood. She didn't even stop eating. Not for a second did it occur to her that the chunky gut she was packing with pasta might make her any less irresistible to him, a handsome chef who had his pick of the many wealthy beauties who frequented his restaurant.

Giovanni slid his fingertips along the underside of Amelia's potbelly, warm and plump with rich Italian cuisine. Stroking gently, he marvelled at how much weight there was in it, how chubbily it protruded, distorting her expensive dress. He swore he could feel it growing rounder, heavier with every greedy gobful of pasta and meat she gulped down. His eyes roved up to that sinfully swollen bosom, pulsing as she glugged blood-dark wine to coat the food mountain in her belly.

And he found that she wasn't wrong.

'It doesn't matter anyway' - Amelia paused to cover another belch - 'I've got a better plan. Mm... a little higher.'

Obediently, Giovanni scrolled his fingers up the slope of the blonde's overfed middle and began rubbing slow, soothing circles around her bellybutton. Amelia grunted appreciatively and speared another meatball.

'Usually,' he whispered huskily, 'you ask me to go *lower*.'

Now it was Amelia who couldn't help smiling. It was hard not to feel attracted to Giovanni. His confidence was so raw. A far cry from the faltering bravado she encountered amongst the city slickers. Even the teasing was somehow refreshing.

Not that she'd let him get away with it.

'Go and check on my tiramisu,' she purred, dabbing her lips demurely. 'If it's perfect, I might just reconsider my sleeping arrangements for tonight ... And bring more cheese!' she called after his departing form.

That's right: run along little puppy. Amelia watched the tight wiggle of Giovanni's buttocks. Yes, she definitely fancied a squeeze of those later.

Her attention was arrested by her Gucci bag, which had begun to vibrate against her thigh.

Amelia fished out her phone, looked at the screen - and smirked.

Speaking of puppies...

'Well?' she said.

'Sent it,' the caller's voice was a cocky, croaky rasp. 'Left the little gimp at the services too.'

Amelia shivered. False bravado. Was there a bigger turn-off?

'So...' the sweaty rasp continued, and Amelia could practically hear the saliva sloshing around the man's mouth, 'I'd say that's mission accomplished... Which means *you've* got a little something to send *me*, don'tcha, babe?'

Amelia shuddered. There was: poor enunciation.

‘C’mon, don’t be going all coy on me now! You promised me boobs! Full frontal... Unless’ - here the voice snarled like a jackal denied its meat - ‘you want me to tell Oliver that it was his own *sister* who hired those strippers to bounce on his face, and had the video sent to his fiance... Hmm?’

Amelia sighed in resignation. ‘All right. There’s no need to be like that. You’re right: you’ve earned this ... There, it’s sent.’

The breathing on the line grew rowdier and heavier. Then it fell silent.

‘The fu- the fuck is this?’

‘What?’ Amelia asked sweetly, ‘You don’t recognise your own dick?’ Her lip curled, ‘Then again, I suppose you probably don’t have a microscope handy.’

‘Who the *fuck* did you get this from? I’ll-’

‘The question you should ask, Rob, *babe*, is who the fuck am I going to send it to?’

‘You bitch! You promised me your tits!’

‘Careful Robbie,’ Amelia was enjoying herself now. ‘Your tiny little penis might not break the internet, but it could certainly ruin that legal career. Mm. Imagine the whispers in court. All those sexy paralegals sniggering behind their papers as you approach the bench.’

‘Wait...’ Rob’s bolshy rasp had become a choking whimper. ‘Okay.. I’m sorry. Just, don’t send that anywhere, please? I’ll... I’ll do anything.’

‘All you have to do is keep your mouth shut,’ Amelia leaned forward, pressing her lips to the receiver, ‘and don’t call my brother a gimp!’

Tossing her phone back into her bag, she stretched her long arms up high, yawning lazily.

God I’d make a good Slytherin.

A bubbling from beneath her bosom caused her to frown.

She could see it, actually see it - if she pulled her shoulders back and craned her neck forward. An ugly little mound peeking out beyond the majestic golden slopes of her bosom, spoiling an otherwise perfect view. A blot on the landscape of her glorious body. When she tried to push it out of sight, it sent a hiccup up her throat that forced her to let go, and then popped back out again with a mocking wobble.

‘I’ll deal with you soon enough,’ she said out loud, patting the impudent bulge carefully. ‘Let’s see how chubby you’re looking after three weeks of Angelica’s crack-of-dawn cardio blitz.’

Amelia took a moment to bask in her own genius. Everything was going according to plan. Oh, she didn’t really expect anything to come of the stripper thing. That was just a bit of groundwork - a marginal gain. Amelia smirked. A precursor to the not-so-marginal gains she - or rather Emily - would make in Dubai. Gains that would have the girl bursting a fresh seam of her wedding dress with each waddling step she took towards the altar.

As for inviting her own mother to Dubai - another masterpiece! Lady Charlotte Atwood hardly needed any extra weight, of course, but it didn’t hurt to be sure. Plus, Emily would surely feel a whole lot better about her own overeating with her future mother-in-law hoisting hippopotamus sized portions just across the table.

And while those two hogs were snoring off their feasts, she, Amelia, would be up at the crack of dawn with Angelica Clay, the finest athlete in their school's history and now a professional personal trainer. Running circuits, lifting weights, swimming lengths. Ensuring that none of the brunch pudge stuck to her own waistline and working off the pounds she'd accumulated in Newcastle. Restoring her perfection. Her victory was so close that she could practically taste it.

In the meantime, there was something else she wanted to taste.

Amelia looked around towards the kitchens.

'Where the hell is my cheese?'

By Halrion

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