

Chapter 25: First Kiss

"Need coffee?" Riley asked Adrian with a smile.

Adrian paused from working. He said, "If you don't mind."

"Of course, I was going to get one anyway," Riley said before turning to her mother. "I'll get you hot chocolate, Mom."

Riley stepped out of the room and made her way to the coffee shop on the first floor.

Over the weekend, Adrian kept his word. He spent most of his time with Riley and Renee, accompanying Riley to the hospital and getting to know her mother through some light conversation.

However, Adrian spent half his time on the laptop. Occasionally, he would go around the hospital, inspecting each department. The rest of the time, he and Riley discussed the progress of the jewelry company. They didn't really focus on getting to know each other.

Riley was a bit disappointed, but she understood the importance of work. Besides, she appreciated the King's Medical Center's facilities, the expertise of the medical staff, etc. And they all said the hospital was that way because of Adrian's high standards.

When Riley returned, she gave the hot chocolate to her mother before the medical staff took her to the rehabilitation area for more strengthening exercises.

Riley sat across Adrian for a few minutes while drinking her coffee. She could not help but study his serious face as he went over one

email to another.

'He looks so tense but still so handsome,' Riley thought. Unlike most men she knew, Adrian preferred to keep his hair longer up to his nape. This was true even back in college, and Riley thought it suited him perfectly.

Out of nowhere, the image of Adrian's half-naked body flashed in her mind, and she choked on her hot coffee. 1

While Riley coughed, Adrian closed his laptop and asked, "Are you okay?"

"Yeah -" *Cough*

"I'm fine," Riley responded before rushing to the kitchen area of the hospital suite and taking a full glass of water.

'Now that I think about it, how does Adrian maintain such a great figure when he could barely walk across two meters?' Riley mused. 'Well, he did say he strengthened his upper body, so he must be lifting weights.'

Riley wanted to know so much more about Adrian's past, but she was often left only to imagine the answers to her questions.

"Everything okay?" Adrian asked from the coffee table.

Turning back to Adrian, she responded, "Um, yeah. Sorry."

Riley returned to her seat and was about to open her sketchbook when Adrian apologized, "I'm sorry, I have been busy."

"That's okay. I understand. You have a lot on your plate," Riley expressed.

"But I'm all done now." He slumped on his wheelchair and said, "I'm all yours."

"Um, okay," Riley eagerly said. She put away her sketchbook before asking, "Well, for starters, seeing you so occupied, I was wondering if you ever give yourself a break? And what do you do when you take a break."

Adrian smirked. His eyes shone as he answered, "To be honest, I haven't given myself a lot of breaks lately, but when I do, I work out. I get a massage. I go to my private island and swim -" 2

"You have a private island?" Riley gasped in surprise.

"Yes, it's an hour by speedboat from Halliport, the mini islands. I own one," Adrian revealed. "I'll take you there on our first date." 1

Immediately, Riley's heart galloped. She echoed, "First date?"

"Remember, we have to go through the proper stages of a relationship to make everything believable," he reminded Riley.

Riley's lips formed an "O". She asked, "When is this?"

"After you get your divorce certificate, of course," Adrian said.

Very quickly, Riley frowned. She supposed she could use a little getaway but understood the need to wait. She tried to hide her eagerness by saying, "It's just that I haven't been to the beach since

Mom got into an accident."

"Don't you find it hard to swim with your leg condition?" Riley inquired.

"If on the beach, I don't go that far, and I have an assistant on the island who watches over me. I try to experience the things I had once lost, even if only for a moment," Adrian said. His words touched Riley, and she gave out a sorry expression.

"What's your -" Riley dug up the multiple questions she had lined up in her head. "Your favorite food? Favorite drink - I mean, you mostly drink wine and water when we dine, but -"

"I love seafood, steak, and lots of protein," Adrian revealed.

"I am a seafood freak too. One day, I'd like to go to a premium seafood buffet," Riley willingly gave the information.

"Then, let's go one of these days," Adrian suggested. "As for drinks, yes, I like red wine. I drink only lemon juice. Mostly, though, just water and coffee to give me energy." 1

"I love coffee," Riley remarked.

"What is your guilty pleasure?" Riley asked before she grinned.

Adrian thought about it, and then he answered, "Lasagna. My mom used to make it for me."

"Oh, my god! I love Lasagna!" Riley happily said, thrilled with the fact that she and Adrian had many food favorites in common.

"I was addicted to crunchy fruits as a kid. I still like them now, like Japanese musk melons and persimmons," Adrian revealed.

"Musk melons? Oh, I love them too! they are sweet and crunchy!" Riley exclaimed happily.

"Do you like persimmons too?" Adrian inquired.

"Yeah, I love them too," Riley confirmed because it was true. Everything Adrian liked in food was something she also loved. 1

Adrian had a sly grin on his face, one that Riley was surprised to see. He said, "It sounds like, so far, you like everything about me."

Riley's heart raced, and her face burned in shame! As she felt her cheeks, she stuttered in her reply, "It - it wasn't my intention!"

"Haha!" In his manly voice, Adrian suddenly broke into an amused laugh. He said, "Relax, Riley. I was just teasing you."

To save herself from the situation, Riley asked Adrian another question. "You know, you used to be Daisy Harold's rumored boyfriend. Were you together back in college?" 1

Daisy was the female version of Adrian back in college. She was a bright, famous, rich, pretty girl every man wanted to date, and many assumed she and Adrian were secretly dating.

"Daisy Harold." Adrian's brows met as if thinking deeply. "Our families are business partners until now. We often see each other then because of that." 1

"Yes," Adrian admitted. "She was the first girl I dated. We went out for six months before realizing our priorities and interests differed. We were pressured to date because of our fathers. We did not love each other, but we admired each other. Eventually, we agreed to remain friends."

Riley paused. She remarked, "I see."

"What about you? Was Brian your first boyfriend?" Adrian inquired.

"Urrgh!" Riley sighed in annoyance. She rolled her eyes and admitted, "Unfortunately. He was the first, my first love and first kiss." 3

There was an awkward silence between them. Riley saw how Adrian's jaws clenched. However, after a while, he said, "Technically, I was first."

"What?" Riley asked, bemused.

"I kind of kissed you first on the beach," Adrian described. His eyes narrowed, and he added, "The CPR." 3

"Oh." There it was again. Riley felt an intense warmth spreading across her cheeks. Her heart fluttered, and she didn't know what to do. 'Oh, boy. My poor heart. Something's happening to me.' 4