

## *Chapter Two*

The next day I'm on the phone with my mom, telling me all of the plans that they have for this month. "So, first we are going to see The Nutcracker on December 8th. Then we will go ice skating on December 10th. And you said you'll be available to join us, right?" She asks while I'm icing cookies to give to my coworkers tomorrow. I just finished the Christmas tree cookie when I tell mom that I'll be able to join her and dad. "Great! And on Christmas Eve we are going to the Sioux Falls event they have where you get to walk around, and lights everywhere. And where a café is as well. We used to go there all the time since you were 12." I smile at the memories. I had a hot chocolate at the café where I sipped it too fast and it was still steaming hot, and I panicked and I threw it across the room. Thankfully, everyone was laughing and very understanding. So it wasn't too embarrassing. But my face still grows hot thinking about it. As I start drawing a little snowman on the 3rd cookie, my doorbell sounds and I put down the icing bag and my phone and I jog over to my door. I open it and I look around, not seeing anybody like the last time. But I finally look down again and I see another package. I step outside and I bend over to pick it up, and as I stand up and turn back to my door, I see my neighbor, the one with the tux, who has a package in his hands as well. As I turn around towards my door, we make eye contact. I quickly look away and I step back inside my house. I shut my door and I walk back to my kitchen, where my phone and cookies are waiting. I pick up my phone. "Hey mom, sorry, I had to get the door." I say and I put the package down on the kitchen counter. I look at the name, and it says Kieran Birdwhistle again. I roll my eyes in annoyance. Can't this mailman get anything right? I look away from the box and I focus back on my mom and my cookies. By the time mom is done talking, I just have finished my Christmas cookies and I put them in ziplock bags for tomorrow. After a while, mom and I hang up the phone and I get into my Christmas pajamas and I read one of my books on the couch.

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I wake up on the couch and my book that I read was on the floor. I sit up and I rub my eyes with my hands. I look at the time and I immediately jump off of the couch when I see it's 6:30am. I run to my room and I grab the clothes I had ready for the next day. It's a white blouse with a white skirt that stops right above my knees. I then put on tights I had ready and I fix my hair into a braid that flows down the middle of my back. I put on black ankle boots when I'm done with breakfast and I yank my coat off the rack and I quickly put it on. I grab my purse and the cookies I have ready for my coworkers. I feel like I'm missing something when I look behind me and see the package waiting on the kitchen counter. I grab it and I run towards my door and I slam it behind me. The path down to my mailbox and car is slippery but I don't have time to worry if I'm going to slip or not. I have ten minutes until I'm late for work. And this week I'm in charge of being the cashier at the bookshop that I work at. I basically jump in my car and when I start the engine, I drive off like my house is about to explode.

When I drive in the parking lot of my workplace, I grab my purse and I run in. By the time I run inside, the clock instantly changes to 6:40am. I sigh in relief and I stop by the water fountain and I put my coat on the coat rack. I leave my bag with my coat and I sit down at the front desk for cashier duty. One of my coworkers, Ada, walks in and she places her coat and her bag next to mine with a shiver. She turns to me and she smiles. "Hi!" She exclaims with a smile and I greet her with the same expression. I give her one of the ziplock bags of cookies and I stand up and give it to her. "I made these yesterday. Merry Christmas!" I say and she looks at the cookies with a glint of hunger in her eyes. "Thank you so much. I haven't had breakfast because I was rushed and I woke up late." She says and takes the bag.

“Same, I woke up at 6:30 this morning.” She opens the bag and she eats a cookie in three bites. She smiles at me again before taking the rest of the cookies to her purse and she goes upstairs for inventory.

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Once the time hits 5:00pm, I finish helping a customer finding a romance Christmas novel and when they pay, I grab my coat and my purse and I leave the shop before saying goodbye to my other coworkers, who also loved the cookies I gave them. Before I head home, I drive to the post office and the same woman who helped me before is at the counter. This time she curled her hair and she is wearing a Christmas hoodie with black leggings. She smiles at me and I smile back. “Hi, there was a mixup again today. I just came to give this back to you.” I put the package on the counter and she looks at the name. “Oh, I’m sorry that happened to you again, ma’am.” She says and she takes the package to the back counter behind her. She walks back to the front counter and smiles. “Merry Christmas!” She says cheerfully and I smile as wide as my mouth can go. I turn around towards the door and I bump into a guy, he doesn’t budge but I almost fall on my butt like I did in the entrance of the post office. He grabs my arm, saving me from falling. “Woah, there.” He says, I don’t look at him but I notice that it’s my neighbor. His voice is gentle, but more harsh than gentle. I hesitate to look him in the eyes and when I do, his face is a cold expression. Of course, he is still wearing a tux. Is that all he ever wears? I find my balance and he lets go of my arm. I smile softly. “Right, sorry.” I say awkwardly and I turn a different angle, avoiding bumping into him again. I shove the door open and I walk down the stairs to my car, and once I get into my car, and I start the engine, I find myself blushing in the rearview mirror.