

Chapter Two – Pt 2

“D’oh! I’m still locked, you know!”

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AS the door unlocked under his fingers, Suga pushed it slowly, his curiosity peaked, anxious to see the body behind the seductive female voice.



“Hi.” Andrea greeted him, not quite sure what to make of the thin, red-haired young man wrapped in a matching hotel robe, gazing at her with ‘stars’ in his eyes. He was most assuredly Asian. With perfectly proportioned features and flawless skin, he blinked rapidly, smitten by her beauty.

“Anneyonghaseyo,” he greeted politely, showing his sleek damp chest as he bent at the waist respectfully. *Holy Mother of GOD! An Angel in the middle of a snowstorm!*

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TAPPING her fingers on the lunch room bar, Abby glanced nervously from one side to the other scanning the emptied area for a ‘memento’ she could retrieve to take back to the room with her. The bartender seemed busy enough waiting on another customer and hadn’t even started to get her lemon water. He wouldn’t be a problem and the lunch crowd was bleak between meal times.

Was anyone else watching? What if she got caught? What had Andrea dared her? To get something from every place they stopped as a keepsake from their cross-country trip. ‘SHE would do it’, she’d said . . . ‘but, she wasn’t as unassuming, and people would notice her’. Welll, she was probably right.



Spotting a shot glass on the vacant table to her left the dark-haired girl in glasses slipped off the bar stool hurriedly and lunged toward the ‘prize’. Feeling the slick glass beneath her curled fingers she tucked it in her coat pocket grinning and chuckling to herself that she had been successful.

Yesterdays ‘prize’ had been a spoon from the restaurant they had eaten dinner at, and the day before . . . the dessert menu from the rest stop, and lunch. She was on a roll!

“Here you go miss.” The bartender waited patiently for her to turn back around and reach for the glass of water. “Next time, just call down to room service and they can send you up some lemons.” Throwing his bar rag over his shoulder he noticed, even smiling, she looked fidgety and uncomfortable. Anxious to be on her way, she smiled back, showing straight white teeth, and nodding thankfully, nearly knocking the bar stool over in her haste to leave the room.

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WHAT did that girl just do? Oh, she DID NOT just STEAL that shot glass? J-Hope rose up slightly in his chair, tucked away in the corner of the spacious restaurant. Clucking his tongue in disappointment at her covert actions, he tipped his head downward as she glanced his way, making it look like he was searching for something on the table.

Should he say anything? This was America after all. Did this sort of thing happen a lot here? And, of course, now that he was alone, and the manager had left to make phone calls he would be confronted with a situation he wasn’t sure how to handle.



Watching her rush away from him and out toward the lobby, he couldn’t help himself and leaving his dessert half-eaten, jumped up to follow. Ducking behind a large potted plant, he observed her pounding the buttons on the elevator heatedly. *She was obviously afraid of being caught. Served her right. Stealing was stealing, no matter where, no matter what.* In the few seconds he stood quietly by . . . he had made up his mind.

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AS the door closed behind the two of them in the elevator, Abby stood stoic and unmoving, one hand stuffed in her jacket pocket, the other clutching her glass of lemon-water. *Who was this creepy guy? And why was he following her? Not only that . . . Now, he was glaring at her, his eyes boring holes in the side of her head . . .*

Wishing the door would just hurry and open on her floor, she attempted to ignore him, tapping her foot nervously as she waited. Wanting to push it open quickly, as it started to move she hesitated before stepping out, nearly tripping over the metal gap between the floor and the car itself.

J-Hope stepped out as well, politely holding the door while watching with amusement as she stumbled in her haste to get away from him.

“Don’t fall,” he admonished her, now attempting to smile. If he was going to confront her about the glass, he had to be friendly. She was about to race away, acting like he was a threat to a girl alone in a hotel hallway. *Dear God.*

“Thanks.” Mumbling in mock appreciation she started to move, but he stepped in front of her still smiling.



“Same floor as me,” he whispered, nodding toward the end of the hall. She was plainly attractive, her glasses perched at the end of her nose, hair long and dark. With make-up she would no doubt be stunning. Wondering what her deal was, he managed to get a weak smile out of her before realizing that she was shaking, her eyes frightened with that ‘deer in the headlights’ look. She had probably suspected she had been caught red-handed. *Ahhh. Now what to do?*

“I’m in a hurry,” she snapped at him, grazing his shoulder as she swept by headed away from him down the empty narrow hallway.

“Wait up.” Dancing up behind and around her, he tried to engage her with no luck. “I’m this way too. Room #301.”

“Great.” Go away . . . she squealed to herself, you’re going to get me into trouble. I just feel it! You saw me, didn’t you? Damn. Maybe I should just confess. Go give it back.

Pondering what to do, it was clear he wasn’t going anywhere, and by the time she’d reached the room, he was ‘indeed’ hovering in front of room #301.

“I’m J-Hope.” Bowing slightly to her respectfully, despite having literally chased her down the hall a moment ago, he continued grinning, his cheeks puffed out pleasantly, eyes bright. “You are?”

NO! Don’t want to talk. Don’t want to give out information. You’ll report me. “Crazy klepto girl named WHATEVER, from room #303 stealing things out of the hotel.” Snow or not, they’ll arrest me. Never been arrested before. Can’t have a record. Want to become a teacher. Jail . . . probation . . . DAMN Andrea anyway! Her and her, NOT worrying about consequences.

“Aishhh, it’s okay. You don’t have to tell me.” J-Hope could see she was spooked.

Well, she was in the room right next to theirs. The room reserved for their remaining members who had gone AWOL in the storm. *Hmmm, what would happen now if they showed up? No room. Meaning, once again . . . they would be sleeping all over the place and sharing one bathroom for however long the storm took to break. Ohhh, life was good!*

“Maybe we’ll see each other again. Looks like we might be here awhile.” He stated respecting her right to silence.

“Okay, whatever.” Shoving through the door hurriedly, it slammed in his face leaving him standing awkwardly alone. She didn’t seem like a thief. Certainly didn’t ‘look’ like one! Maybe he would have to let this one slide.

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IT was midnight. The party had been a success! All the chores were done, everyone tucked in for the night. Humming ‘Happy Birthday’, Sumre and Sundae checked the locks on the doors, and windows, straightening pillows and throws in the living room as they went. Placing ‘Alice’ and ‘the Mad Hatter’ back in their original spots at the piano, Sumre headed toward the stairs, dangling her heels behind her.

“Sumre!”

Flipping back around, she spotted sister Sundae standing at the dining room doorway, tapping her foot impatiently. “Where are you going? We aren’t finished yet. It has to be taken care of before we go to bed.”

Sumre dropped her shoulders tiredly. “Okayyy.” Giving in to her sister’s obsessive demands for ‘order’ at all costs, she swiveled around heading for the large dollhouse.

Standing side-by-side the twins assessed the dolls carefully before beginning the rearrangement of their positions in the house.

“He’s so much cleaner.” Sumre smiled shyly, before lifting the red-head out of the bathtub and leaning him against the wall, making sure he wouldn’t fall.

“Put some clothes on him!” Sundae hissed, handing her the tiny robe off the bed in the other bedroom. “What’s with you and your naked dolls? Pervert!”

“Whatever. He’s disobedient, but still beautiful,” she sighed. “And, that one other there, he’s probably got a sore butt from sitting too long.” Reaching for the doll at the desk, she stretched his legs out straight, running both fingers over his little face.

“Bet he’s thirsty. Been at that desk all day. Let’s give him a drink.” Hauling him out of the house she dashed to the kitchen and stuck his head under the faucet, watching with contentment as the cold water surrounded his unassuming face and neck.

“You’re stupid. All he needed was a drop. Don’t drown him,” Sundae barked from the other room. “Hurry up. There’s one more, where do we want to put him? And then ‘the special guests’.”

Sumre reappeared, the doll wrapped tightly in a kitchen hand towel. Standing him up at a table in the far corner of the small bedroom, she patted him on the head lovingly, placing his hand around a tiny silver bucket.

“Wellll . . .” Finger to her lips, contemplating the fate of the last ‘uninvited’ guest, she sighed. “He’s hard to manage that one. Never wants to stay in one place. Let’s give him space to move.” Plopping him upright at the top of the long staircase, she clapped her hands excitedly adding, “And . . .”

“Okay, okay.” Lifting the final four ‘guests’ to the third-floor bedrooms, Sundae’s face glowed with a reverent satisfaction.

“NOW, we can go to bed.”



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