

Chapter Four – Pt 1

“If Everybody Minded Their Own Business . . .”



IT didn’t matter that a blizzard still raged outside, with howling winds and blowing snow, mounding up against the foggy pool enclosure windows. The giggling and laughter of the three young women in the hot tub could be heard echoing around the room, clear into the hall.

If there was any way to make a quiet un-intrusive entrance, RapMonster was all for it. But, the little band of ‘Musketees’ careening up behind him had other ideas. The sound of their bodies smacking him unrelenting into the glass door sounded like a bomb going off out of nowhere.

Three, startled heads flung toward the shocking sound, as the trio of girls realized they were no longer alone in the pool room.

“Oh my GOD.” Flipping around, Abby tried hiding her face behind her hands at the sight of J-Hope grinning and waving at her from across the steamy room. “It’s him. Get in front of me, hurry,” she whined attempting to slip down between the other two girls, until only her nose and eyes could be seen above the water line.

“No chance, chicken . . . Look who’s with him,” Alex announced matter-of-factly, rising to nearly a standing position. “It’s rapper dude I told you about. He’s so cute. HI,” she hollered, waving excitedly as RapMonster smiled back wanly, hoping they hadn’t made total assholes of themselves, acting like the damned ‘Three Stooges’ falling into the door.

“Well, MINE is the adorable red-head with the TO DIE FOR six-pack,” Andrea purred, craning her long neck to catch a glimpse of Suga as he bounced around J-Hope and over to a deck chair.

“Yours? Wow. Aren’t WE just a tad possessive this morning,” Abby sniffed, still attempting to keep her head below the lip line of the circular tub. “God, PLEASE tell me they aren’t coming over here.”

“Not yet . . .” Alex watched the three young men slipping the towels from around their necks and settling down into chairs at the far end of the pool. “But, I don’t care, I’m going to them. You guys coming?” she asked Andrea, standing to reach for her cover up.

“HELL NO.” Dipping even lower into the water, Abby shook her head emphatically whispering into the frothy bubbles around her mouth, “He’s not my type.”

“Dear Lord Abs, you don’t even HAVE a freaking type,” Alex chuckled, turning her attention to Andrea. “And, what about you? You said he was YOURS. Head on over there and claim him then, Miss-YOLO.”

“Ahhhh, NO. A woman needs a modicum of discretion.” Smiling, Andrea ran her hands through the strands of hair at the base of her neck enticingly. “I’ll lure him to me. Works every time.” Urging Alex to take the lead she shooed her off. “Go on. You’re the brave one.”

Shrugging her shoulders, eyes focused on RapMonster, Alex took the initiative, stepping up and out of the hot tub.

Making her way gingerly around the slippery pool edge, she wondered why her sisters-in-crime, wouldn’t lighten up a little and at least come talk. It was still early, and so far, there was no one else in the pool area except them.



About the time she was halfway around, the antsy, forward J-Hope (unable to contain his excitement) popped up out of his chair. Eyes fixated on the top of Abby’s dark head he bounded like a gazelle down the other side of the pool headed straight for her and Andrea, determined

to get her name. *Klepto just didn’t seem to suit her for some reason.*

Watching him, Suga sat back against the smooth plastic chair. *Should he follow his enthusiastic backside toward the hot tub and the delicious, wet blonde or not?*

Locking eyes with her, clearly (on the heels of yesterday's open-door bantering) she was interested. Unconsciously licking his lips, he sighed. *American girls were so . . . so . . . seductive. It was unnerving at every level, but incredibly wonderful.* Smiling warmly, he decided not to budge, waiting her out to see if she would approach him first.

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HERE she came . . . Coughing slightly RapMon watched Alex approach him confidently, in a light blue, one-piece, dragging her cover up behind her. Again . . . not the most gorgeous crayon in the box, but attractive enough, and MORE than interesting.



Out of nowhere, a soft voice in his ear began rising until (almost as if it were shouting) he heard, “And, THAT girl there, is the SPAWN OF SATAN.”

“WHA?” Hitting his ear once, then twice, he attempted to rid the annoying voice, but it just seemed to get louder. “She’s NOT the spawn of Satan,” he whispered, staring at Alex as she advanced on him, slipping into the empty deck chair to his right.

“Hey there Ice Bucket.” Grinning, she leaned both arms on the glass table between them, noticing his hand to his ear, and the puzzled look on his face. “What’s up? Your Ricky busting your chops this early? Tell him hi for me.” Giggling she tugged his fingers from his head slowly. “Is it a rap? Maybe I can help. I’m pretty good.”

Leaning over to meet her, RapMon smiled back. *She was a talker. It was evident by the way she barked out questions and sentences without waiting for any answers or comments.*

“First, of all . . . my name is NOT Ice Bucket. You can call me RapMon, short for RapMonster. Second, of all I don’t have a RICKY. And, third of all . . . NO, it is not a rap, and I don’t need help. Mianhae (SORRY).”

“Oh, okay then.” Sitting up straighter she bit the side of her mouth, hoping she hadn’t insulted him. Her ‘no filter’ attitude usually got her in trouble at some level. “Sorry. Rap . . . Monster? Is that what you said your name was? That’s not vain at all, is it?” Still smiling, she poked his bare

arm playfully. “I like Ice Bucket. Suits you better. Sooo, I’m Alexandria. Alex for short. And, MY Ricky makes sure I don’t talk to strangers. Spill the pertinent information, or we’re done here,” she finished, staring off into space nonchalantly.

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SQUEEZING into the hot tub between Andrea and Abby, grinning from ear-to-ear J-Hope couldn’t believe his good fortune. *Ahhh, stranded or not . . . this was as good as it got.* Smashed in the middle of blonde ‘Barbie’ and dark-haired ‘Klepto’. It was time for proper introductions all around.

“I’m J-Hope.” Sticking one hand out to the Barbie next to him, he tried to avoid Kleptos’ eyes as she turned defiantly in the other direction to avoid him.

“Hello. I’m Andrea.” Reaching across J-Hopes bare chest, she nudged Abby harshly. “And, THIS, is my friend Abby. ABS, say hello,” she scolded.

“Hey,” Abby whispered off into space, not bothering to turn and look him in the face. “We’ve met,” she muttered quietly to herself. . . . ‘If everyone minded their own business, the world would go around a whole lot faster than it does.’

“Oh, sweet. Then, while you two get RE-ACQUAINTED . . . I’m gonna put on my mermaid fins and take a dip,” she announced, lifting off J-Hopes wet shoulder to step out . . . adding softly, “See if I can lure my man into the deep end.”

Her determined eyes glued on Suga she sashayed in her bright pink and white bikini toward the 8-ft. number painted on the pool room floor.

Watching her leave, Abby cringed down in the steaming water. *Why is he staring at me AGAIN? He knows I took that shot glass yesterday. He’s gonna think I did something else again. He’s probably waiting for me to confess. Aghhhh. GO away grinning boy. Don’t want to talk to you. You*

make me nervous.

“Abby, Abigail, Abs. Pretty.” Reaching both arms back around the cement lip, J-Hope kicked his feet casually. “It’s okay to talk to me. I’m harmless.”



“Don’t care,” she muttered, (ignoring him anyway). “You SAW me yesterday. Don’t wanna be friends.”

“Ohhh, that.” Rearing up J-Hope crouched down in front of her frowning face, the bubbly water curling up around him as he continued smiling. “No big deal. It’s a shot glass. I used to take pencils from the teacher’s desk at school. Broke a ton, heavy-handed. No worries, I won’t tell.”

“Then why did you follow me?” she asked glaring at him openly.

“Just going to my room next door, remember?” he reminded her quietly. *She was spicy, this one.*

“Yeah . . . well . . .” Beginning to notice his large round eyes and massive engaging smile she hesitated, “still . . .” stopping there.

She was the awkward one around guys. All guys. Didn’t matter what age, how they looked, or anything else. If they opened their mouth and talked . . . she walked away. Andrea hated it.

“How about we start over?” J-Hope stood his ground, not budging as she continuing bobbing up and down under water shyly. “Pretend yesterday didn’t happen. I AM J-HOPE. Nice to meet you. Annyeonghaseyo. That’s Korean for ‘hello’.”

“Whatever . . . okay, okay. You win.” Finally lifting up, she parked her bottom on the tiled ledge, motioning him to sit beside her. “But, don’t think this means I’m not watching you,” she warned, wagging a serious finger in his happy, satisfied face. “I know a little bit about Asian flower boys, from Andrea. She spent some time traveling with her folks. They can be PRETTYYYY sneaky, if you know what I mean.”

“Sneaky? Ahhh, actually I DON’T know what you mean.” Studying her intensely, he wondered where people got the ideas they did about Asian men or flower boys.

“She says they act all cute and shy around girls, and then WHAM. They slam ya’ up against the wall . . .” Intensely slapping both palms together in the water to demonstrate, the spray flew up, unexpectedly hitting them both, directly in the face.

“Is that right?” Chuckling at her graphic description, J-Hope wiped his eyes in disbelief. *So, for some reason, she thought he was going to be all cutesy before pouncing on her like a ‘rabid dog in heat’.*

“Then I guess you better get ready. ‘Cause the cutesy comes with flower boy territory,” he cautioned, doing his best rendition of aegyo, to show her what she was referring to.

“Won’t help you. That’s lame flirting, I’m not falling for it,” she responded tartly, flipping wet hair out of her large expressive eyes. “I know better.”

“Good. Best to let me know now. That way I won’t spend all my time trying.” Looking over at her beaming, satisfied face he gauged the situation carefully.

Asian flower boys and lame flirting? Had she just referred to him as a flower boy? Was SHE flirting? Or telling him off? One minute she acted like he was seconds away from getting his ass kicked, and the next she was being coy and understated.

“YAH. Hyungs.” Deciding to go with the ‘flirting’ he bolted up out of the water, shouting across the large swimming pool, “She called me a flower boy.” Patting his chest energetically at the thumbs up from the other members, he did a little happy-dance before dropping back into the hot water, still grinning from ear-to-ear.

“What was THAT all about? Never been called a flower boy before?” Abby quipped, her voice terse and unimpressed.

“Not often enough. The flower boys are the pretty ones,” he whispered jokingly, cupping one hand to her ear. “Suga’s a flower boy.”

“Well dummy. So are you. Geez. Andrea didn’t talk about ANYTHING else last night but flower boys and KPOP, KPOP, KPOP. Until I wanted to KPOP her in the head! Now, can we change the subject? Pleezzzee,” she begged, crossing her arms in dismissal.

And, he thought Korean girls were hard to read!

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