

All The Right Moves First Chapter

EMMA

Do you know that cliché scene of a drunken chick, sticking out of a limousine's sunroof top and yelling nonsense to the wind? That's me, wearing a stupid-ass plastic crown and holding a bottle of champagne. Classy. I can check that off my to-do list—not that I have a list of ridiculous things to accomplish before I die, but if I did, that would've been ticked off using a thick Sharpie. I not only did it, I nailed it. Shit, I would've flashed a family in a minivan if Peyton, the bride-to-be, hadn't pulled me back down into the car.

"You're crazy. You're gonna get us arrested," she says between giggles.

"Oh, if it's a sexy cop, I'm down for that." I laugh.

Funny how twenty minutes ago, I was regretting my decision to not hop onto a flight to Brussels soon after New Year's Eve like I'd planned. I let Peyton, one of my friends from high school, guilt me into postponing my trip so I could join her bachelorette party. We were close during our teen years—she was the daughter of a movie mogul, and my father was the top celebrity lawyer in Hollywood. We were considered royalty in school. However, what really made us bond were our views about the opposite sex. Guys were toys, and we got bored of them easily.

Once we graduated high school, we slowly drifted apart. She went to study in Switzerland and I stayed here in California. We kept in touch—meaning, I followed her Instagram account—but I can no longer call her my bestie like I used to. When she told me she was getting married, I thought she was joking. She was worse than me when it came to objectifying boys. But here we are, celebrating her last days as a single woman in the only way she knows how, with loads of alcohol, drugs, and debauchery.

The longer the evening progresses, the louder our group becomes. Besides Peyton, I only know two other girls: her older sister Vicky, and Samara, Peyton's roommate in Switzerland whom I met years ago when I went to visit. But several bottles of champagne later, I'm as thick as thieves with the entire group.

We're ten in total, crammed together in the biggest limo one can rent, going to an unknown destination. It's loud inside the moving vehicle, with Lady Gaga's "Alejandro" blasting through the speakers and the cacophony of voices singing together completely off-key.

Vicky stands on shaky legs, then falls on her ass after a couple of steps. We holler and whistle, and she flips us all off.

“Shut up, bitches.” Bracing on her hands, she gives up on standing and kneels in the middle of the floor instead.

“It’s time for a little surprise, y’all. I’ve got some molly!” She waves a clear plastic bag with small white pills inside.

“Fuck yeah!” Peyton raises the glass of champagne in her hands.

Vicky begins to distribute the drug of choice if you’re rich and famous, but when she offers me the bag, I shake my head. “No, no. I’m good.”

“That’s fucking bull crap, Emma. Take it.” Peyton glares at me from across the limo.

As if you on cue, everyone begins to chant, “Take it, take it, take it.”

“Ah fuck. Why the hell not.” I pull a pill from the bag and swallow it with the help of champagne. Sure, I caved to peer pressure, but this is probably my last wild night for a long time. Might as well go out with a bang.

“Where are we going now?” one of Peyton’s friends asks.

The limo comes to a stop and Vicky announces we’ve arrived. One by one, we get out of the car, but as hard as everyone is trying, not a single one of us can make a dignified exit. I’m lucky I don’t trip and fall on my face. The cold winter air hits my naked arms, and I realize I forgot my jacket in the limo. I try to go back for it, but someone—Peyton, it seems—pulls my arm and drags me to a busy promenade that looks oddly familiar. It’s not until I catch a whiff of the ocean scent that my brain makes the connection. We’re in Hermosa Beach.

“What’s the plan?” I ask to no one in particular.

“It’s a pub crawl,” Vicky yells from the front of the group.

Whistles follow us, but that’s because we’re making a ruckus as we go. I soon forget the cold, distracted as I am by the euphoric feeling pumping in my veins. Vicky picks the first bar, an Irish pub by the looks of the décor—classic dark wood furniture, brown leather booths, several different kinds of beer on tap. It’s busy and we’ll be hard-pressed to find a table. That’s not the plan, though. Instead, Vicky carves up space for herself at the bar and orders shots for us.

While I wait, I glance at the place, checking out the male assortment. Would it be bad if I hooked up with someone tonight? I’m feeling kind of needy.

I sigh loudly, not seeing anyone interesting, until I turn and watch a sex god walk out of the kitchen carrying a tray of food. Holy fuck! I think I might just orgasm from staring at him. He’s the most gorgeous man I’ve ever seen. Okay, maybe that’s the booze and molly talking, but he does give Chris Hemsworth a run for his money. Just as tall as the actor—I’ve met Chris in person—and built like a fortress, that sexy waiter is exactly what I need tonight.

"Earth to Emma." Peyton shakes my arm. "Here's your shot."

I reluctantly peel my gaze from my target and take the offered glass. It's tequila. Jesus, the hangover tomorrow will be a bitch, but if everything goes according to plan, I'll be getting over that while riding Mr. Delicious.

I already have a nice buzz going on, and the tequila goes straight to my head.

Peyton whistles appreciatively next to me, and I know she's spotted my guy. Her behavior makes all the girls turn to gawk at him, and before anyone can say anything, I yell, "Dibs! I call dibs."

"Shut up. You can't call dibs on that!" Vicky says.

"I can and I did."

Peyton crosses her arms and levels me with a glare. "You're not going to ditch us to chase some hot piece of ass. I forbid it."

"Will you relax? I'm not ditching you, but excuse me while I go lay down the groundwork for later."

I fix my dress, making sure my cleavage is on full display, then I veer toward the back of the pub. Mr. Delicious is serving a table at the moment, but I know he'll eventually get back to the kitchen, so I wait for him near the door. Not a minute later, he comes striding toward me and I make my move, blocking his way.

"Hi," I say.

"Uh, hi? Can I help you?"

"I sure hope you can." I smile coyly. "We're celebrating my best friend's bachelorette party, and I've been tasked with raising money for drinks."

"Okay?" Mr. Delicious narrows his eyes a bit and he's not smiling, but at least he didn't tell me to get lost yet. *Shit, he won't be an easy one to snatch. I need to bring my A game.*

I shove my hand inside my purse and pull out a string of condoms we all got as party favors. They're wrapped in pink foil and have Peyton's picture on them. "Would you be interested in buying some?"

He raises both eyebrows as he stares at the ridiculous condoms.

"So, help a girl out?" I bat my eyelashes, exaggerating the gesture on purpose.

"I'm sorry," he says, still eyeing the party favors dangling from my fingers. "I'm rather busy, and I don't have any cash on me right now."

Fuck a duck. I wasn't expecting that answer. But my disappointment only lasts a split second, because he just gave me the perfect opening to seal the deal.

"That's okay. I'll come back for the money later." I shove the condoms in his hand and walk away before he can return them. Only when I'm at safe distance do I peer over my shoulder. Mr. Delicious is in the same spot I left him, condoms in hand and a stunned look on his face. Excellent.

Well played, Emma. Well played.

When I return to my friends, they're ready to go to the next bar. Peyton notices the Cheshire cat smile on my face and asks, "What did you do?"
"Oh nothing. Just made sure I have a reason to come back."

* * *

RORI

What the hell just happened here?

"Hey, boss. What do you have there?" Xavier, my bartender, asks.

"Condoms. Apparently I just bought some on credit." I walk around the bar, but now I can't remember what the hell my customer ordered.

"Oh yeah? From one of the bachelorette party's chicks? They were nuts, high as kites, but they just gave me a two-hundred-dollar tip on a hundred-dollar bill, so I'm not complaining."

"Come again?" I stop in my tracks.

Xavier raises both hands and steps back. "Don't give me that look. I didn't take advantage of them. I actually asked several times if they were sure. By the bling I spotted on some of them, I could tell they were rich. This was probably coupon money for them."

Strangely, that information doesn't sit well with me. I won't begrudge members of my crew a healthy tip, though; they all work hard, and they deserve it. I put the condoms away, shoving them in one of the shelves under the bar counter, and try to get that girl out of my mind. She was attractive, no doubt about that, but I've never had a good experience with rich chicks in the past. I have a problem being treated like property, or worse, like I'm a dumb jock. After a few bad apples, I tend to avoid having anything to do with them.

A minute later, Condom Girl is all forgotten. The pub is as busy as ever, and I don't have a minute to breathe, much less to think about a woman I'll never see again. Around one in the morning, most of our patrons have gone home, and I give the signal to Xavier to announce closing time. As tradition, he puts on the song by Semisonic, and the regulars groan loudly, knowing it's the last round. The kitchen closed a couple hours ago, so I help Xavier on cleanup duty behind the bar. I'm crouching, hidden from view as I organize some bottles, when I hear Condom Girl's voice asking for me. How the fuck do I still remember what she sounds like? I spoke to her for less than a minute.

Shit. I really thought she wasn't going to come back.

"Uh, boss? I think someone is waiting for payment," Xavier chuckles.

I unfurl from my crouch and find Condom Girl standing on the other side, leaning against the chair as if she needs the support to remain upright. Her makeup is a little smeared, and her eyes are bloodshot.

Jesus. I can't believe she's still standing.

"Hi there. I came back." She gives me a lopsided smile. It would've been cute if she weren't drunk as a skunk.

I look in the door's direction. "Where are your friends?"

She shrugs. "Don't know. I ditched them to come back here before you closed."

I groan in my head. *Just fucking great. Now I have to deal with this.* I walk around the bar and when I'm almost in front of her, she turns, letting go of the chair. She stumbles over nothing and ends up falling into my arms. I don't know if she did it or purpose or not, but if she's trying to seduce me, she's wasting her time.

"Okay, lass. It's time to get you into a cab."

"My name is not lass. I'm Emma. And you are?" She looks at me from under her ridiculously long eyelashes, not the fake kind. Damn it. I shouldn't be noticing these things.

"Someone who's been on his feet all day and wants to go bed."

"Alone?" Hope shines in her big green eyes. I bet they're lovely when they aren't bloodshot.

"Yes. *Alone.*"

She steps away from my arms, frowning, then pulls a chair out to sit down. "Fine. Then go get my money."

Is she for real?

Shaking my head, I ask Xavier to hand me a twenty from the cash register. "All right, how much for the condoms?"

She plucks the bill from my fingers. "This will do."

"That's four dollars a pop," I say.

"Those are special condoms." She shoves the money down her cleavage and jumps off the chair with the grace of a giraffe on stilts. She can't walk a straight line as she heads for the door.

"Hmm, boss? You can't let her leave like that," Xavier says. "I'd offer to take her home, but I don't want to get in trouble with my lady."

"I know," I grunt. "Close everything, just don't put the alarm on." I pull my apron off and go after Emma, who's already disappeared through the door.

The promenade is much quieter now that all the restaurants are closed. Emma didn't make a lot of progress, and I find her curled forward with her hands braced on her knees. *Ah fuck. She's not puking, is she?*

"Are you okay?" I stop next to her, shoving my hands in my jeans pockets.

"No," she whimpers, not moving from her position.

"Do you need to throw up?"

She straightens up and takes a deep breath. "I don't think so. I'm light-headed and everything's fuzzy."

"What did you take?"

"Molly," she says without hesitation while she keeps staring ahead.

Of course. The drug of choice of rich fools.

I place a hand on her lower back and nudge her forward. "Come on. Let's get you home."

"I can't remember my address." Her voice raises to a shrill pitch. "Oh my God. I think Peyton slipped me another pill before I left them."

Are these people nuts? Emma grips her hair, pulling at it like she's about to lose her shit.

"It's on your driver's license," I reply. When she doesn't respond, I add, "Your address. It's on your driver's license."

Still no response from her. I don't know what stage of her trip she's in. And worse, I have no idea how much alcohol she has in her system either. I'm debating whether I should just take her to the emergency room.

She finally looks at me with eyes a little clearer, but not by much. "Thank you for taking me home."

"Don't mention it," I say, a little grumpier than I intended.

She takes a step forward, still with difficulty, so to speed up our progression, I lace my arm with hers and pretty much drag her along. She takes advantage of the situation and nudges closer, resting her head against my arm. We get to the main street, and as fate would have it, there are no cabs in sight. I can't call an Uber—sometimes those drivers can be such creeps. Resigned, I head for my car parked two streets up.

Halfway there, Emma begins to rub my arm. "Thanks for thanking me home."

"You already said that." I should make her stop caressing me, but what would be the point? She's beyond getting a clue.

"I'll make it worth your while."

My nostrils flare as anger simmers in my gut. She's lucky I'm the one taking her home and not some perv who would take advantage of her in this state. I'm pissed her friends let her walk alone in this vulnerable condition, but they probably weren't thinking straight either.

I help Emma into my car, and by the time I walk around it and sit behind the steering wheel, her head's propped against the window and her eyes are almost closed. I

don't move, paying attention to her breathing. It sounds normal.

I shake her arm lightly. "Emma?"

She blinks slowly, her eyes languid and sleepy. "Yes, Mr. Delicious?"

Mr. Delicious? Ah hell, I must've pissed some deity off.

"How are you feeling?"

Licking her lips, her gaze drops to my crotch. "Horny as fuck, if you must know. I can't wait to get you into my bed."

I grind my teeth because my cock is beginning to get onboard with that idea, even though my brain is screaming, *Abort, abort.*

"Do you always proposition men you don't know?"

"Not always. Only if they look and sound like you."

"Sound like me? I don't even know what that means."

"You sound like sex on a stick. I bet you could make me come just by whispering naughty things in my ear in that yummy accent of yours."

Damn it. My cock is totally awake now. I shouldn't have asked anything. I'm not a perv, and I've never slept with an intoxicated girl before or felt remotely inclined to do so. So why the hell do I have a boner now? I should be repulsed by Emma's attitude, not aroused by it.

"Driver's license, please," I say through clenched teeth.

"Eager, aren't you?" She giggles, thinking her seduction game is working on me.

She's not completely wrong, I think perversely. This is a sign that I need to get laid pronto if my dick is reacting to a chick who can barely walk straight.

She hands me her ID, and I recognize the address. "You go to DuBose College?"

"Yup. This is my final semester, but I'll be in Brussels on an internship until summer. Tonight is my final hoorah before I enter serious adulting territory, so I'm making it count."

By drinking like a fish, getting high, and picking up a stranger for a booty call. Jesus Christ. This kind of irresponsible stupidity hurts. Even when I was a teen, I didn't pull shit like that. Then again, I was focused. I knew exactly what I wanted, and nothing was getting in my way.

And look what happened in the end, the devil on my shoulder whispers in my ear.

My anger drops down a notch, turning into annoyance. I clamp my mouth shut and don't offer any more comments. Why waste my breath lecturing someone who clearly doesn't think she's doing anything wrong?

Without asking, Emma reaches for the radio, tuning it to an obnoxious pop music station. I guess it's better than her spending the fifteen-minute drive coming on to me.

When I pull over in front of her building, I'm half tempted to let her go in by herself, but my responsible side won't let me do that. I get out of the car and escort her to her floor. The elevator is out of service—of course it is—so we go up the three flights of stairs. The trip takes twice as long, thanks to Emma's lack of coordination. It would be faster if I just threw her over my shoulder and dragged her ass up. She stops in front of a generic white door and announces it's her place. It takes forever for her to dig the key from her purse, and another minute for her to fit the damn thing in the hole. In a fit of giggles, she finally pushes the door open and kicks her shoes off. From the hallway, I see it's a nice apartment, big for college standards. She must have roommates.

Emma turns to me with a frown when I don't follow her in. "Aren't you coming?"
"Nope. Make sure you drink enough water before you go to bed."

Why am I giving her advice like I care? It'll serve her right to wake up with a massive hangover.

"I'd rather drink something else besides water." She reaches for my hand and drags me in. My feet take two steps forward before I make an effort to stop.

"Emma, please. Just go to bed. Trust me, you'll regret this tomorrow."

She leans closer, bringing her body flush against mine while pressing her hand against my chest. And goddamn she feels nice attached to me like that, despite her drunkenness and all.

"Don't worry, Mr. Delicious. I know exactly what I'm doing. I want you, and I always get what I want."

Bam! A bucket of cold water is dumped over my head. Her arrogance is exactly what I need to snap me out of this moment of insanity.

I pull her hand off my chest and take a step back.

"The name is Rori O'Shea. Not Mr. Delicious."

"Fine, *Rori O'Shea*. Now stop playing hard to get. I know you want me." She runs her hand over her body, like she's a cheap hooker showing off her goodies to entice clients. It's ridiculous and embarrassing.

I should give her a break—she's high on molly, after all, a drug known to lower one's inhibitions and increase libido—but I'm pissed at myself for not leaving already, and at her for being stupid.

"I'm heading off. Have a good night." I swing around and veer for the door.

"Wait. Are you leaving for real?" Genuine surprise laces her tone.

"Yes," I say over my shoulder.

Incredulity flashes in her eyes for a brief moment before her gaze turns into a glare.

"Fine. Suit yourself, Rori O'Shea. But I want you to leave with the knowledge that the only reason you're able to stand your ground, the only reason you're not in my bed

yet, is because I don't want you. If I did, you would be on your knees, begging."

"Funny. Didn't you say a minute ago that you wanted me, and you always get what you want?"

"I lied."

She pushes me the final steps through the door and closes it in my face with a loud bang. Exactly the same reaction you would expect from a toddler who was denied a toy. She threw a fucking tantrum because I said no. My earlier assessment was right: entitled rich girl. If I never see her again, it'll be too soon.

So why the hell am I still planted here, staring at her fucking door?