

Chapter One - Out Clubbin'

At a dark corner of the club catering to a teenage crowd, Amber Leigh kept moving her body to the rhythm, her eyes falling upon the Oyster Bay High uber-babes, the white blonde duo, Selma and Thelma Duncan, twin sisters, highly desirable, hotly pursued by half of the Oyster Bay, New York male population. The Duncan twins lived in Oyster Bay Cove, in an exclusive 12-acre property with a magnificent view to the Long Island Sound, surrounded by trees, which protected the members of the Duncan family from the curiosity of others.

Amber didn't know the Duncan twins very well. The sister duo lived in a world apart. They lived the life of the super-rich kids, who drove Lexus SUVs to school, squandered their money on drugs in private parties lasting several days in a row, and had strings of boyfriends just because they could.

Amber Leigh had tried to enter that world, but she felt unwelcome. The hostility toward the less affluent was an undeniable undercurrent when she tried to interact with the super-rich crowd. It was not so much the words they said as the words they didn't say. She had once dated a guy who definitely belonged to the Oyster Bay's elite, but things had gone wrong from the start. Because he had money and was accustomed to get what he wanted, he pressured and cajoled her for more than a simple cuddle or a kiss. She rebuffed him, but he kept pushing and pushing until she hit him in the face and scratched his forearm until it bled. The punch came swiftly and unannounced. She blacked out, unconscious to the world. 911 was called, she was rushed to the hospital and stayed in comma for a week. Her parents had sued the bastard's family but, so far, without much success. Veiled threats ensued, hateful phone calls and text messages popped in regularly on her cell phone, even after changing her number twice.

Amber looked around her, searching for her boyfriend, Toby Marks. Lately their relationship was suffering because of his constant ogling. She didn't think herself as unreasonably jealous, but there were limits she could bear and accept. They had fought and since then Toby seemed distant and dismissive. She had considered dumping him, but somehow she didn't want to take that step herself. He had called her "jealous, stupid bitch," but still she was willing to forgive and forget.

There was a moment when Amber caught Selma Duncan's eye. Selma was the older sister, just an inch taller than her younger sibling, despite the fact that they were supposed to be identical twins. Selma seemed also to be the more popular of the two sisters; Thelma was more of a follower than a leader, tagging along behind her big sister in most occasions.

The glance was interrupted by yet another guy trying to catch Selma's attention. Amber shut her eyes and sighed, raising her hands, letting the strong rhythmic bass invade her supple body of a teenager who took great care of herself with an unrelenting regime of a vegetarian diet and karate. At sixteen she had already reached third kyu and earned her brown belt, notwithstanding the teasing she had to endure when her friends called her "the karate kid," an allusion to the Hollywood movies with the same name, which she found both cheesy and unrealistic.

Suddenly Amber felt someone behind her, grinding against her to the music.

"Get away from me, you idiot!" she said, turning and pushing an unknown guy away from her.

The guy looked at her and grinned, obviously drunk, even though the club didn't carry a liquor license. "Wow, fiery, I like that," the guy said. "And I like what I see."

"Yeah, right. In your dreams."

Amber wasn't usually so vocal when she shoved off unwelcome sexual advances, but that evening she felt the need for showing off. She didn't immediately understand the reason why until she felt Selma's eyes upon her a second time. When Amber looked up in the blonde's direction, Selma looked away.

Again Amber closed her eyes, raised her hands and moved her body to the rhythm, mouthing the lyrics to herself, "I like the way you move..." A smile appeared on her face, being engulfed by a feeling of elation. Little by little, the significance of what she was doing and the reactions of her body could not be denied any longer. She was enjoying Selma's attention far more than she should. Actually, she had never felt the need to show off to anyone, and here she was doing that and more over a girl who wouldn't talk to her.

Before Amber could delve deeper into her feelings, Toby finally showed up with a suspiciously guilty face.

"Where were you?" she asked.

"Hanging around," he replied, shrugging, his hands buried in the pockets of his loose pants.

"Hanging around? With who?"

"Amb, cool it. I've been with Jimmy, OK? Don't make a scene out of nothing."

"Yeah, in the meantime, a guy almost grabbed my ass because you weren't here to keep away the weirdoes."

"Somehow I don't think you need protection anymore. You can kick anybody's ass, if you want."

"Yeah, right, but if I do that I'll be expelled, and you know that."

"Yeah, I know. I think that's crap, though. You should use your karate moves whenever you want."

"But I can't."

"OK, OK. Hey, the Duncans are here."

"Yes, they are." Amber sighed and looked at the twins, each of them hunted down by two to three guys, who competed for the girls' attention with a misplaced mix of shyness and boldness.

"Wow, those girls are hot."

"Toby!" she said, hitting him in his chest with a fist. "You're such an ass!"

"C'mon, it's not like I'm coming on to them. I'm just saying what I think."

"Yeah, but you're still an ass."

They danced together, both of them looking at the twins from time to time. Amber felt suddenly sad, being overwhelmed by a sudden need to cry and scream out her frustration. She didn't know what hurt more—if Toby's lust for those girls or the simple fact that Selma was making out with one of her many pursuers. Confused, she danced on, shutting her eyes and emotions, focusing on her own body and the music, repressing the tears, repressing any serious thoughts about the Duncan twins and her boyfriend.

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