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Chapter Five

*Sunshine, lollipops and rainbows,
Everything that's wonderful is what I feel when we're together,
Brighter than a lucky penny,
When you're near the rain cloud disappears, dear,
And I feel so fine just to know that you are mine.*

*My life is sunshine, lollipops and rainbows,
That's how this refrain goes, so come on, join in everybody!*

*Sunshine, lollipops and rainbows,
Everything that's wonderful is sure to come your way
When you're in love to stay.*

- Sunshine, Lollipops and Rainbows, by Lesley Gore

“So how was math?” Peter asked, joining Susan and I at our usual lunch table. “And what's with the suits? All day I've seen 2 or 3 large guys in suits with dark glasses like the FBI or the *Men in Black*.”

I took a bite of my quiche surprise. “Math was... invigorating. As for the suits, I dunno. I think I saw them once or twice.” That was true, I had seen them once, when the deputy head of my protection detail introduced me to them. Then I saw them after my first period class roaming the halls, acting all nonchalant just like was promised.

“Well, they're sort of hot, don't you think?” Peter asked quietly, almost knocking over his drink. “They remind me of that guard dude we saw in your sister's hospital room.”

I looked over my shoulder at them, and back to Peter. “Pete, if they turned you on, you really need to have your head examined. They're way too old for you.” They were all human guards, to keep up appearances. “Listen, Peter... I'm sorry I won't be in English today.” Our school was a little strange. Despite the fact we were on a semester system, our classes moved around so sometimes English was in the morning, and sometimes it is in the afternoon.

Peter just looked at me. “Oh? Do you have a hot date?”

I just rolled my eyes. “No, nothing like that. My Dad met with Mrs. Theophilus yesterday, you know the whole parent-teacher interviews. Apparently he had time before rushing to see Sophia. Anyway, he doesn't like her. So he had the Principal Mr. Fielding put me in a different section with a new teacher.”

Peter just looked at me again. He took a slow sip of his drink. “You're lucky. Counseling will usually never let anyone transfer because of a teacher. Many have tried, my friend. Many have tried.”

Just as Peter finished talking, two people stepped up to our table. “Would you mind if we joined you?” I looked over and it was the girl with the strawberry blond hair from detention, and next to her was the Captain of the school's football team. He was gorgeous. I'd give my first child to date him. Okay, maybe not my first, but my second for sure.

“Um... well... you see...” I stammered. “It's like this...”

“Of course” Susan finally spoke up. “Please, join us. What are your names?”

The blond girl sat next to Susan, “I'm Sharon, and this is my boyfriend Mike.” I just extended my hand to the big football guy. I couldn't help but stare.

“I'm... I'm...” I couldn't remember my own name. “I'm Alexander. It's nice to meet you.”

“It's nice to meet you too.” Mike shook my hand, and flashed his perfectly white teeth.

Peter reached over and smacked me in the arm. “You're drooling.” Mike laughed a bit at that, and sat next to me at the table.

I looked to Sharon, “So Mike's the one you were mentioning?”

She just nodded, and suddenly started to focus on her lunch.

“Mentioned what?” Susan asked as she polished off her quiche surprise.

“Oh... uh... that... uh...” I was drawing a blank to come up with an excuse not to out Mike.

Mike leaned over and whispered in Susan's ear. She just got this big grin all over her face, and gave Mike a big hug. She was now in on the secret.

“What? What?” Peter didn't want to be left out of the loop, of course. I loved him dearly, but sometimes he was a little too excitable.

Sharon leaned over and whispered into Peter's ear. The rest of the lunch hour was pretty uneventful. I did make sure, however, to invite both Peter and Susan over to my house after school. I told them I had to call Aunt Cathy, and then we would play video games.

Little did they suspect.

I cuddled into Peter on the sofa. We were watching some TV in the family room, my Dad and Father deciding on the living room for the evening. They wanted to give me and my friends some space, but I know they just had my best interests at heart. Unless there were more lies.

“So you never did tell us how you managed to get the Principal to get you out of Theophilus' class.” Peter said finally during a commercial.

I smiled a little. “My Dad said she's a security risk, and he understood.”

Peter just cocked his head a little, “What?”

“How can she be a security risk?” Susan asked, fully paying attention to the conversation. “How's your sister by the way?”

“Sophia woke up this morning. They kept her one more day, but she can be released tomorrow. Dad says she's going back to school on Monday.” I explained. Dad had told her the family secret when they were alone a few hours after she woke up. “About the security risk...” I wasn't really sure how to tell them. I suppose this is the problem my Dad had when he told me.

Peter could see my apprehension. “Sweetheart, whatever it is, it's not that bad. Did she threaten you? I know she sent you to detention because you daydreamed a lot, but threats are a big...”

“No, no nothing like that.” I interrupted him. “Her over zealousness in enforcing certain rules is a risk to mine and Sophia's safety. You know that Sophia was poisoned.” I took a deep breath, and sighed. “I'm the Crown Prince.”

Peter just blinked, and Susan looked like she wanted to fall out of her chair.

“You? The Crown Prince?” Susan looked completely baffled, and Peter was just completely silent.

“Of the Empire. The entire Empire. My Father's the Pharaoh, and my Dad's the Queen that's why they're rarely together when they visit. They say it's another security risk. That's why Sophia and I are here. I guess there are lots of troublemakers in the royal court.” I shifted a little uncomfortably.

Peter just started to laugh. His was a deep, rich belly laugh. “Oh that's funny, Alexander. I would never have dreamed that up! It's April Fools Day, isn't it? I thought it was February, but perhaps I missed a few months I wasn't aware of.”

I just stared at Peter. He was supposed to be my boyfriend. “I'm not joking, Peter. When my Dad told me last night, I was very... angry. I'm still very angry. Not at the position, but because of the lies. I even threw a glass against the wall, and you know how committed to non violence I am.”

Susan just shook her head a little. “Wow, I never knew anyone important before. Not even a celebrity. Now I'm best friends with the Crown Prince. I don't know how to handle this.”

“There are more glasses in the cupboard if you want to smash one, but don't do it against the wall. My grandmother wasn't too happy about the wall being damaged, neither was my Dad.” I gave a faint smile.

Peter just kissed me on the cheek. “So I'm boyfriends with the Crown Prince. How much cooler can it get. We can remain boyfriends, can't we?”

I nodded a little, eyes closed. “Yes, Dad said yours and Susan's security check's came back okay. They had to do them as part of the investigation. The suits at school are part of Sophia and my protection. They're supposed to be undercover. There are more whom are far less noticeable.”

“So they have to be there?” Susan asked for clarification.

“Yes, or I can't go to school there. Dad said it's far too insecure a place for us to go to school if we choose to tell everyone. So you two have to keep this to yourselves, or both Sophia and I could be killed. Or my parents.” I was worried now that they'd say something. I trusted them normally, but this was asking a lot.

Everyone was just silent, and it felt all awkward. Maybe I shouldn't have told them and just gone to a new school. I started to feel depressed, because I didn't feel I could depend on my two closest friends anymore. I put my head in my hands and started to cry.

“Sweetheart, what's wrong?” Peter asked as he gently rubbed my back.

I sobbed a little. “I never...” sniff, “never asked” another sniff, “for this. If I thought I'd loose you two, I'd never have... never have...”

Peter took me into his lap, and just hugged me. “I'm sorry, Alexander. We're both just shocked. We never meant to... I know you're stressed over this, I can't imagine how you had

to handle your Dad telling you. But I still love you, and Susan is still your friend, and I'm still your boyfriend. Nothing has changed except maybe you're a little more influential in the grand scheme of things now."

"Yeah" Susan said quietly. "We're with you, just a little shaken up. We'll be fine in the morning."

"So why didn't you tell us about Mike?" Peter seemed to bounce back.

"What?" I looked at him.

"You never told us he's bisexual. The Captain of the football team is bi!" Peter exclaimed, pretending to be upset. Sometimes Peter's mood swings were like night and day, and this was one of them. He was probably trying to distract us.

I looked around a little. "It wasn't my secret to tell. You know the rule about outing people, Peter. Besides, I had no idea who he was until they arrived at our table."

"It seems they, or at least Sharon, want to be friends with us." Susan commented idly.

I just shrugged. I thought Sharon could do with a complete makeover, and Mike was nice but he was still a jock, and he wasn't out so I didn't know if he would betray our confidence or not.

"If you guys wouldn't mind, I think we should be cautious around them. I get told I'm the Crown Prince, and suddenly those two want to be friends with us? I don't believe in coincidence, and neither should either of you." I turned up the volume on the TV, ending all discussion for the rest of the night.

For the first time, it felt good to be the Crown Prince. Though this was probably the first and last time I'd ever have anything to say about my own security.

Joy.