

When I got back to my cube, the shaking fear and anger I had been repressing finally took control. I sank down in my chair with a tiny squeaking sound and a deep sigh.

Miles heard it and wheeled his chair over to me, a glass of water in one hand. “You look terrible. What’s up?”

I looked up at him, wondering if my eyes looked as vacant and skeletal as they felt. “Nick is a dick.”

“Yeah, we knew that already. What’s going on now?”

I relayed the conversation to him.

Miles shook his head, squeezing his palms into fists at his side. “I will not let him take you down. And if he does, I’m coming with you. I love Laini, but there are other agencies out there. If she does nothing to prevent him from ruining us, let her deal with a clueless AE and losing a creative team on the same day.”

“Are you saying we should go to her?”

He shook his head. “Not yet. Let’s see what Boy Wonder does first.” He ran his thumb across his lips, considering a thought. But then something on the floor near my feet caught his attention. “Is that what I think it is?” He asked, pointing to the yellow envelope sticking out of my purse.

I reached down to retrieve it and its companions. “Yeah, I picked out a few I thought might do me some good here and am carrying them around.” I held them out to him, face down.

He wiggled his fingers like he was choosing a card for a magic trick. He picked the yellow one.

“Open me when...you need a laugh,” I read, nodding to Miles. “Appropriate.”

My mood was already brightening as I slipped my finger into the corner and broke the seal. A small sheet of paper fluttered out onto my lap. I turned it over. There in black and white Alex was grinning up at me, his mouth contorted and his eyes bulged out in a funny face. I had my arms around him from behind. I wasn't as much making a face as grinning manically. Memories from our first date washed over me, and soon I was smiling. I held the photo up so Miles could see it.

"I'm more interested in what else is in there." He reached over and shook the envelope, making it jangle.

I turned the envelope over and heavy, silver object fell into my lap. "It's a key," I said, turning it this way and that, as though I didn't know what it was for.

Miles grabbed the tag dangling from the ring it was attached to. "Go to box 1353 in your building."

"Up for a road trip? It is almost lunchtime."

When we got there, my hands were clammy as I slid the key into the lock. I had no idea what to expect. The box was bigger than most, equipped for receiving packages, a luxury most of us didn't have. I reached inside and dissolved into giggles when I withdrew my hand, clutching a miniature plush doll of one of the minions from the movie *Despicable Me*. Taped to one hand was a bouquet of silk flowers. The other was lodged in the back of the minion's trousers, exposing part of his backside. I could hear Alex's minion impression in my mind, along with the immature giggle that would follow the word "butt."

I didn't need a note to know exactly what Alex had intended with this gift. He was definitely a keeper. Alex had made my day from another continent.