

THE N I Q U I R & CO.

Henry

"A ne gentleman like yourself should have a closet full of custom suits! You're in great physical shape; styling you would be a tailor's dream," the enthusiastic sales rep Theodore told me as he took my measurements. Aires, Indigo, and I had shown up about forty-ve minutes before closing time, and at rst, we were looked at like the scum of the earth. The shop was empty, and I'm sure all the employees were looking forward to cleaning up and going home on time, then we walked in and ruined that plan.

Indigo made a big fuss about getting a hat for her boyfriend back at home; the price didn't matter, and Aires stood at my side and explained how my closet needed an overhaul, and I'd need multiple suits in different styles, colors, fabrics, etc. At times it was like she was speaking a foreign language, but it was the language of money, and the sales rep saw the fat commission check that would be coming his way. So, after a less than receptive welcome, things were back on track, and our plan was underway.

"I work outdoors, and I'm a physical trainer; I don't so much have a need for suits in my life. But my beautiful ancé wants me to have some, and what she wants, she gets."

"Smart man. You'll make your wife happy and get some of the best suits in the world; it's your lucky day."

He and Aires continued to chat about cuts and inseams while I bried eye contact with Indigo in the mirror. She was working with a young female sales rep, but for someone with her talents, gender didn't matter. Indigo was irting shamelessly with the girl, and by the ush of red on her cheeks, Indigo was doing a damn good job.

"You said the hat is for your boyfriend? How long have you been together?"

"Oh, about a year. Your accent is adorable; say something else; I could listen to you all day," Indigo replied.

"She's not playing around, is she? I didn't expect her to be this good," Aires said when Theo walked away to grab some fabric samples for her.

"That poor girl is probably so confused, and she's probably not even into girls like that, but she can't help but be attened by the attention," I stated in return.

"She's too young to have the information we'd need on Wesley; I'd say our guy is the best bet, but Indy can still have her fun."

"Indy? You've got a nickname for her now? That's so sweet," I teased.

Aires laughed and pinched my arm. "She called me 'Airy' earlier when we were getting the food. It was strange, but Indy was the next thing to come out of my mouth. I think it suits my crazy little sister."

"I think you suit her. You two are an interesting and beautiful pair; Wesley will be sorry that he ever walked away from the two of you. That's likely his biggest regret."

"Okay, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, could I have you ll out your contact information here while I take a few more measurements? That way, we can stay in touch as new styles come out or if we have a sale. It's a great way to stay in the loop on all your favorite designers," he said, pushing hard to sell us. Little did he know that this was just what we wanted.

Aires looked at the old leather book and happily took hold of it along with the pen. "Would you like me to put our contact anywhere, or is this alphabetical?"

"Alphabetically. Otherwise, I'd never nd my clients. Thank you so much."

My love winked at me, then went to a nearby table and began to ip through the pages while what seemed like every square inch of my body was measured. It wouldn't take a person more than two minutes to jot down an address, phone number, and email, but Theo was so focused on what he was doing, he didn't even notice Aires snapping multiple pictures of the pages of the book.

"It will take a few weeks to get everything made for you, and since you live in the states, it wouldn't make sense to ask you back for a nal tting. So I can have your selections sent to another shop we frequently work with near Los Angeles; they can make any needed adjustments and make sure everything is perfect for you. How does that sound?" Theo asked.

"That works for me. The blue one will be the one I wear on my wedding day, so it has to be awless," I replied, making him smile.

"Yes, sir. We always strive for perfection, and I'm sure your new garments will exceed your expectations."

When she was done snooping, Aires returned to my side and passed the book back to Theo, who happily accepted it. When it was all said and done, we were going to be spending close to ten thousand dollars on these suits, and I'm sure he saw the dollar signs when he looked at us. I prayed Sunower had used a fake phone number, or I could expect calls every month from Theo, shing for another sale.

"Thank you so much. We're all done here, so if you'd follow me to the front, I can get all of this into the computer, and you can be on your way."

It took another fteen minutes to get entered into the system and pay for the ridiculously priced clothing before we were ready to go. Indigo had ditched her plan for her "boyfriend's" hat and instead purchased a fedora for herself, probably spending way more than any one hat should cost. When the three of us walked out, it was an hour past closing time, but I was pretty sure that everyone, except for my bank account, felt that it was time well spent.

"Did you get it? I saw the old prune pass you the book; please tell me Wesley was in there," Indigo said as we walked down the street.

"There were six Wesleys in the book; I saw an Allen and a Grant along with four others. I took the info for all of them, and we'll see what we've got when we get back to the hotel," Aires explained.

"That's what I'm talking about; I knew you'd pull this off! I was worried when I didn't have an old guy I could seduce like you two did, but I didn't need him. Lacey was awesome, and I even got her number with my purchase."

"Are you into girls?" I asked, looking for clarity.

"No, not really. I like who I like at the time, and 99% of the time, it's guys. But I could be persuaded for the right woman."

"I'm pretty sure my Sunower told me that exact same thing when we rst started dating. Is it a vampire thing?"

"Who knows, Mi Anor? Maybe it's just something we inherited from our father; maybe he's off with his husband now living his life free from all the women who now hate him. But in the end, it doesn't matter because I wasn't meant to be with a woman; I was only meant for you," Aires sweetly answered.

"I'm gonna need some salty to balance out all this sweet you two are giving me. Ooh! Food!" Indigo yelled, rushing up to a nearby restaurant.

"But we just ate a few hours ago. Does she have a tapeworm or something?" I asked with a laugh.

"Indy is a mystery to us both, but she's happy, so I'm happy. I was not too fond of the idea of leaving her at the Pony to be drained night after night, but I'm going to need two-a-day training sessions to work off all the calories she seems determined to shovel into us on this trip. Aye! We don't need more f****g sh and chips, chical. If you're getting food, get something else!" Aires yelled while following behind her sister.

Honestly, there were parts of my Sunower that were still a mystery to me, and watching the two of them interact, it was evident that revealing the secrets that Indigo and Aires held was going to be a wild ride.

Aires

"Oso! I just want background checks on the six names. Oh, and schematics and mapping of the addresses I have. And if you can run the phone numbers too, that would be perfect."

"Is that all, your highness? You don't want their blood types, or maybe a kidney or two while we're at it? A full DNA prole possibly?" Tyson replied.

"Blood and DNA would help narrow down the eld substantially; I'll take that too."

"Air! I don't have time to get you all that s**t! What do you think I am, the f****g CIA?"

"No, I think you're my oldest friend, and you're better than the CIA. I need your help; I know that we're close to nally nding Wesley and putting this to bed," I pleaded.

"You want this by tomorrow morning? Full proles on six different names, some that could possibly be, and likely are, aliases. Do you know that I have ve kids, Air? Five. Plus, a wife and your son running around out there, and you want me to work through the night like I'm your slave."

"Don't be so dramatic, Oso! Isaiah will play with the girls and not even bother you or Taylor. He's obsessed with them. And you can start searches then come back in the morning once they are done; don't bullshit me," I replied.

"If Taylor loses her mind trying to keep six little people alive by herself, I'm whooping your ass. I'll dedicate an hour to this s**t, and after that, I'm going back to my family. Got it?"

"Thank you, and I love you too, Oso. I'll talk to you tomorrow. And thank you for taking care of Isaiah, Henry, and I appreciate it."

"I'm his godfather; it's my job, and I'm happy to do it. You, on the other hand, I'm not so happy about. Goodbye."

He smirked as he hung up on me, and I tossed my phone on the bed.

"Do you purposely irritate Tyson, or does it come naturally?" Henry asked.

"It's all-natural," I replied. "We've always been oil and water, but somehow we managed to build a tight friendship despite all the arguments. Deep down, Oso knows I love him and would do anything for him, and I know he feels the same way."

"I'm happy you two can be there for each other. You have the ladies, and I know what they mean to you, but I also know how important it is to have someone who knows the other side of you. You and Tyson have seen each other at your worst but still found a way to see the good you both had inside. A friendship like that should be cherished."

"I used to worry that you would have an issue with Oso and I spending time and being so close."

"Why? I know you love me and would never hurt me, and Tyson only sees his wife and kids. Besides sharing a beer and cursing each other out, what would you do? Maybe spar a bit?"

It was beautiful to see how much my man trusted me. He knew about my past with Oso, which wasn't lacking passion or lust, but he never questioned if I'd slip back to those old ways. I saw Oso as a big brother now rather than a lover, which was why he was the only person I wanted to be my son's godfather, but he was still a very handsome man, and I was a very s****l woman. Still, Henry never doubted my devotion to him, and I was grateful.

"Oso won't spar with me anymore. I always go for his eyes, and he's too obsessed with his pretty face to have to wear an eyepatch," I admitted.

"You ght dirty, Sunower. It's one of the things I love most about you when we're on the training eld. You're going to get your man, and you're going to break him, no matter what. I'd go into battle with you by my side any day."

"I need you to write that down; those would be the best wedding vows a girl like me could ever hear," I laughed.

"I've already got it committed to memory; don't you worry."

I went and sat in Henry's lap and rested my head on his chest. If all went according to plan, I'd have my father's blood on my hands in the next few days, which weighed heavy on my heart. But I never worried, not anymore, because I knew that I'd always have Mi Amor to soothe me once the battle was done. Henry would forever be there to wipe away my tears, massage away the pain, and make my heart whole. So no, I wouldn't ever worry again.