

Installment 5

When Didi and Charlie had eaten more than they should, Charlie took her back to the dancing. As she remembered from the weekend at Farrington Hall, Charlie was a capable dancer and they jiggled and wiggled until they couldn't catch their breath anymore. However, as they were leaving the floor, a slow number came on and Charlie grabbed her hand from behind.

"Shall we?"

Didi gulped. This was actually the kind of thing she had dreamed of. She nodded shyly and he took her easily in his arms, one around her shoulders and the other snugly around her waist.

Just being close to him set her heartbeat racing and she felt at a loss for words. He was taller by about six inches so her cheek was at the level of his broad shoulder and she felt her stomach flip. He talked of old times that made her laugh and surprised her by remembering little details about her from their past.

He rearranged his hand around her waist so that she was infinitesimally closer to him and she had trouble concentrating. She felt a magnetic pull to lay her head on his shoulder but worried that he was just being kind and would flinch at the intimacy. She continued to chuckle at his stories as she weighed the consequences. His voice was light and easy and she felt a deluge of attraction for him but rather than douse the spell, she kept her head up.

When the music finished he dropped his hands to clap and she felt cold.

"How are you getting home?" he asked her. "Do you need a ride?"

Though a door-step goodbye with him sounded more than a little interesting, she admitted, "Our driver is here with the car."

"Can I walk you out?" he asked.

Her heart stuttered. "Yes! That would be lovely."

They retrieved her coat and fur wrap and he took her hand, which was completely unnecessary but raised her hopes a little.

Finding the car, she turned and leaned against the door hoping that something might happen. She made doe eyes, trying to telegraph her willingness to seal the evening with a kiss.

"It has been smashing meeting up with you here," he said, stepping back, hands in his pockets. "Made the evening much more fun. How about meeting in town for lunch at Tony's the day after tomorrow? Do you know it?"

"Doesn't everyone?" she replied, hoping disappointment was not infecting her tone.

"What time?"

"One o'clock alright?"

"Perfect!" She hesitated. Charlie leaned forward at the waist and she stopped breathing and closed her eyes. When his lips met her cheek, her shoulders sagged.

He reached around her and opened the door, helping her in. "Until then," he said, closing the door and tapping the roof.

They pulled away and Didi looked back to see him walking up the stairs. She willed him to look back.

He didn't.