



Chapter Five

THE CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

Extract

We grabbed a drink and bravely resolved to mingle. I occupied an empty seat on the terrace next to butch bra-less Brigitte from Brussels who I rashly assumed to be a lesbian. Maybe it was the navy-blue polo shirt, manly pants and sensible moccasin lace-ups that gave the game away. Or perhaps it was the crash helmet haircut. I threw myself into conversation and our tête-à-tête seemed to trip along quite nicely.

‘You have a girlfriend in Turkey?’ I asked.

Brigitte’s face froze. I looked for signs of life. Eventually her eyes began to roll, slowly at first and then with such speed I thought they might spin out of their sockets. Gradually, her features contorted into a position I had seen so many times before. The classic, well-practised and obviously faux, how very dare you look.

‘Fils de pute!’ spat Brigitte. ‘Son of a bitch!’ With that, Butch Brigitte thundered off into the house and ignored me for the rest of the evening. This was my first social gaff of the evening, though in my defence it was an easy mistake to make.

Liam came to my rescue.

‘What the hell did you say?’

‘I implied she drank from the furry cup.’

‘Tell me you didn’t.’

‘Well, if it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, it is a bloody duck.’

My next social intervention met with much greater success. I sidled next to Charlotte, a vivacious, energetic brunette with a sun-kissed complexion and a bouncing cleavage that heaved in rhythm to her filthy laugh. We hit it off immediately. Botticelli Babe Charlotte and her tall debonair silver-haired husband were ex-pat veterans. Alan and Charlotte had sold up in England and built their dream home on a hill overlooking Yalıkavak. It was obvious we shared similar values and I sensed a friendship might develop.

‘So how did you two hook up?’ enquired Charlotte.

‘Now there’s a story.’

‘I’m all ears, sweet pea.’

‘It was a gay pub near Trafalgar Square. Halfway to Heaven.’

‘Only halfway?’

‘We didn’t go all the way for weeks.’

Charlotte shrieked, drawing the attention of the sedate throng.



'Liam took up pole position, perched on a bar stool like a hormonal cockatiel, preening himself every now and then in an imaginary mirror. He was every bit the suave business type, tailored suit, crisp white shirt and three buttons undone to tease the punters.'

'A tart, you mean?'

'Yes, a tart. The man was sex on a stool. I felt that instant rush of attraction.'

'It's the same with my George.'

'George?'

'Clooney.'

I smiled.

'The arrogant bugger let me dance around him for ages without so much as a come hither for my trouble. In the end I thought sod you and cut my losses. As I headed for the door he glanced up and threw me a broad smile.'

'A goodbye smile? A sorry you're leaving smile? A good riddance to bad rubbish smile?'

'It turned out to be a can I buy you a drink? smile. I had a double. The rest, as they say, is history.'

'That's just lovely sweet pea. I met Alan when he came round to fix my dodgy boiler. He knows how to clear out a girl's pipes, I can tell you.' We screamed.