

Chapter 21

The flight finally landed in Dublin and it took them several hours to get their luggage, get through customs and get a taxi to their hotel. It was early in the morning when they finally got checked in and settled and they were all exhausted. They left wakeup calls for 9 and headed for bed. Much to their later surprise, Chapin and Skeet didn't make love, or get undressed or even turn down the bed. They just collapsed on top of the covers and fell asleep.

Chapin gasped and sat straight up when the phone rang. It took her a few seconds to realize where she was and what that disturbing buzz was to her left. She picked up the receiver.

"Hello?" she said groggily.

"This is you 9 a.m. wake up call," said a voice on the other end that was much to cheery considering the amount of sleep she had gotten.

"Ok, thanks," she said and hung up the phone. She rubbed her eyes and shook her head slightly to try and rid herself of the cobwebs that had taken over her ability to think straight. She stretched her eyes open wide, thinking that if she didn't, they would just close again and she would fall right back to sleep. She looked over and saw Skeet sleeping. He had barely stirred when the phone rang and she thought he could probably use another couple of hours. She decided to let him sleep just a little longer while she took a shower.

She hung her feet over the bed and drug herself up. She had travelled overseas occasionally but was not used to dealing with this amount of jet lag. She quietly placed her suitcase on the table and took out clothes to wear for the day. She had stripped down to just her panties and headed in to start the shower when the phone rang again and she almost jumped over the toilet. She moved as fast as she could back to the room, hoping to catch it before it woke Skeet.

"Hello?" she whispered.

"Morning!" As usual, Brian's voice boomed on the other end. She pulled the phone away from her ear slightly to lessen the effect. She looked down at her bare breasts and the thin strip of cloth that barely covered her girly bits and giggled slightly.

"Brian, why is it we always seem to start our conversations when I am wearing almost nothing?"

The phone was silent for a moment. "I uh...I don't know? Anyway," he continued. "Did you guys get the wake up call? Is Skeet up?" Brian asked, attempting to avoid the whole subject of Chapin naked.

"Yea, we got it, but Skeet is still out. I was gonna let him sleep while I grabbed a shower, then wake him up."

"Ok, how about we meet in the lobby in an hour. Then we can grab some breakfast and start the search."

“Sounds good. See you in an hour.” She hung up the phone as quietly as possible, although she didn’t know why she bothered trying to be quiet. Nothing else had awakened him yet. She paused and watched him for a moment, telling herself how cute he was, but in reality, she was checking to see that he was still breathing. When she was satisfied that his lungs were working properly, she removed her panties, although she paused at the knee and looked at the phone, expecting Brian would call just as she was completely naked.

She hopped in the shower. It was quite cold so she didn’t stay in long at all. When she emerged, she was shivering slightly. She dried off, wrapped the towel around her and went and sat on the bed next to Skeet.

“Come on, baby. It’s time to get up,” she said softly. He didn’t budge. “Baby, come on,” she said, just a little louder. He still didn’t move. She leaned in close so she could speak directly into his ear. “Sweetie?” she said.

Skeet’s eyes opened wide and he sat straight up. He felt a sudden pain on the side of his head. He turned and saw Chapin holding her lip. She moved her hand and he saw a little bit of blood trickle from it.

“Are you ok?” he asked.

She nodded. “It’s my fault. I shouldn’t have tried to whisper in your ear,” she said.

Suddenly it sunk in where the pain in his head came from. He rubbed the spot where the pain was emanating from. “I’m sorry, baby. Sometimes I wake up a little jumpy,” he said.

“Gotta. I’ll keep that in mind. Not to sell,” she said trying to hold the spot on her lip to keep it from bleeding. He moved her hand away gently and winced slightly when he saw the damage.

“Yikes! I mean I am REALLY sorry.”

“The least you could do is kiss it and make it better, damnit!” she snarked.

“With pleasure.” He leaned in and kissed her slowly and gently. He gently pulled away and looked in her eyes, then bounded out of bed. “Gonna get a shower. Gotta get started.” He reminded her of Tigger, from Winnie the Pooh. She wondered what part in the menagerie from the hundred acre wood she would have played. She tried to think of someone who was tired and wanted to go back to bed. “Why don’t you jump on that computer of yours and see if you can find us a place to start.”

“Ok, ok...stop rushing me!” she said.

She heard the shower start and thought for a minute about just getting undressed and hopping in with him to enjoy the morning, but opted against it. They were here with a purpose and there would be plenty of time for fooling around. She really should try to find them a place to start.

She pulled her laptop from its bag and plugged it in. Luckily she had remembered the European power adapter, or to be more precise, Skeet had remembered it for her. He had traveled Europe enough to know that your standard US adapter wasn't going to cut it without some help. She did, however, struggle with getting a connection. It took her a good 15 minutes and a call to the front desk to get it all working.

Once she was rolling on the information superhighway, she decided to make a quick stop and check her email. She glanced at the in box. There was the usual spam, sprinkled with an email or two from Joe, her boss and another few from her mother. She smiled at the screen. It was nice to get email when she was so far away from home. Her smile soon turned to a frown, however. It began to dawn on her that it was Monday morning, she was in Dublin, fucking Ireland and no one except Shawn and Jaque knew where she was. She wasn't sure how many time zones Dublin was from Chicago, but she was sure she was now late for work and her mother was probably trying to call the police about Skeet kidnapping her again. She began to think of international authorities breaking down their door and arresting Skeet, yet again.

She grabbed her cell phone and tried to dial, but soon discovered she didn't have international coverage. Now what? She grabbed the hotel phone but an overseas call was going to be a royal pain. Maybe she could go to an AT&T store and just get the international feature added, but did they have AT&T stores in DUBLIN FUCKING IRELAND. She really hated to bother Skeet with any of this. She felt that she should be able to take care of her own life but, she didn't know what to do in DUBLIN FUCKING IRELAND.

She went to the bathroom door and heard the shower still running. She knocked lightly and slowly opened the door. "Skeet?"

"Hiya gorgeous! Come to join me?" he asked with a hint of hopefulness.

"As tempting as that sounds, I have a problem."

"Problem? What problem?"

"Well, my cell phone doesn't work over here and I just realized that neither my work nor my parents know where I am. My mom could call the cops and cause an international incident and I could be in some serious shit at work. I tried the hotel phone, but that was like pulling..." He cut her off.

"Just use my cell. It's got all that international hoo ha on it. Problem solved!"

"Perfect! Thanks" She began to close the door.

"Are you SURE you don't want to join me?" he asked.

"More than you know, but I gotta get this taken care of and then we have to get to work. But later? Definitely later!" she said and closed the door before she changed her mind.

She grabbed his phone and began dialing her parent's number. Her mother answered.

"Mr. Seaton! I want to know where my daughter is right this minute. I will be calling the police as soon as we are through here and if you harm one hair on..."

"MOM!! It's me! Calm down. Jesus!" Chapin said exasperated.

"Oh thank God! Chapin where are you? We have been worried sick! Has that...man...kidnapped you again? Just cough once and I'll call the police right away."

"Jesus mom, calm down. I am not nor have I ever been kidnapped. I tried to explain this to you earlier."

"Well, where are you, child? We got a call from Jack looking for you. All we could get out of him was that something horrible had happened. That Seaton man had tried to kill him and now he was accusing Jack of horrible things. We mortgaged the house, but we bailed him out for you, sweetie."

Chapin gasped. "You did what? Oh mom, no. Damn it!"

"Dear, we weren't going to let your fiancé rot in jail on some trumped up false charges." Her mother couldn't understand why Chapin was being so ungrateful. They had gone into heavy debt to help her out and she just seemed irritated.

"Ok mom, one last time. I want you to turn off the TV so you don't get distracted. Then go get dad and put this on speaker phone. I want you to both hear it so between you, you'll understand."

"I just don't understand any of this. Could you please..."

"DO IT NOW!" Chapin screamed.

Her mother did as she asked and when the speaker phone was on and her father and mother were both listening on the other end, Chapin began the tale yet again. She explained the very short relationship with Jack, the breakup over the break in, the constant harassment, meeting Skeet, Jack's sabotage of the charity concert, Jack's manipulation of them to have Skeet arrested and finally Jack's attempted killing of Skeet but hitting Shawn instead. She only left out a few details, namely sleeping with Skeet, Brian's obsession with her naked body, and the whole mystery guitar track.

The phone sat silent on the other end. "Mom? Dad? Are you still there?"

"Well Chapin if you just would have told us all this in the beginning, we wouldn't be in such a pickle right now. You know you really should let us know what's going on in your life, dear," her mom said.

Chapin's mouth sat agape and she slowly raised her hand and, making it into the shape of a fake pistol, pointed it at her temple and mimicked blowing her brains out. Skeet, who had finally emerged from the bathroom, giggled at her. She shot him a look to which he turned around to the mirror to brush his hair, hoping she wouldn't see the big grin on his face in the reflection.

"Well where are you now dear? We have to call the bail bond place and find out what to do, but we would like to have you and this Seaton fellow over for dinner tonight."

"Oh that could be a problem, you see, I'm in Ireland right now."

"With Mr. Seaton?" her mother asked.

Chapin became confused. How did she know? "Yes, with Skeet. How did you know that?"

"Caller ID, silly. This is the twenty first century, you know."

Chapin glanced down at the phone. She had completely forgotten she was using Skeet's phone, not hers.

"Now why are you in Ireland with...umm...Skeet, is it?"

"We are...umm...working on a story for work, mom," which reminded her that she need to call Joe Bailey, post haste or she may be unemployed. He was very understanding and easy to work with and, in fact, she thought she could convince him to let her do a story on the Irish jazz scene so the trip wouldn't be a problem at all. However, he hated not knowing what was going on and the longer she delayed talking to him, the harder it would be.

"Look mom, I need to check in at work. I'll call you later on today, ok?" Chapin asked.

"Yes dear. We'll look forward to it."

Chapin felt her confidence in their understanding of the whole situation waver just a bit. "Now mom, before I go, who is my boyfriend?" Skeet turned from the mirror and looked at her as if she had just questioned the existence of Big Ben.

"Mr. Seaton is dear. That's what you said, right?"

"And who is Jack?"

"Why that vile man who tried to shoot your Mr. Seaton. We understand now, it's just that you don't keep us up on what's going on with your life," her mother said in a matter of fact tone.

Chapin mimicked shooting herself in the head again and, through gritting teeth, agreed with her mother and said goodbye. "Now to call Joe and hope I still have a job."

"Joe Bailey, right?" Skeet asked.

“Yea,” she responded wondering where this left field question had come from.

“Joe’s an old friend of mine, one hell of a drummer too. Just tell him you’re working on a project with me. I’m sure he’ll be ok with it. If not, tell him he’s not invited to any more poker games! We can probably turn this whole thing into one hell of a story when it’s over.”

Chapin began to boil. “Skeet, I told you I am not over here with you for a story. If that’s all you think of me then I am...” Skeet picked her up off the bed and kissed her hard on the lips. He wrapped his arms around her tightly and continued kissing her.

He looked in her eyes. “I know you aren’t here for a story, but you have to admit, one way or the other, this is gonna make a great one. And if anyone is going to do it, I want it to be you. At any rate, just tell Joe that. It’ll buy you some time. We can work all that out later.”

She swooned slightly from the kiss and sat back down on the bed with a sigh. She picked up the phone and did as she asked. Joe had been worried about her more than anything and knowing she was with Skeet gave him some relief. The story of Jack and Skeet and Shawn had hit the paper so he had been very worried. The fact that she could be with Skeet in another country while this whole thing calmed down was a good idea. He didn’t even ask for details on the story, just when he could expect it.

“Maybe for the January issue?” she said.

“Great, that gives you plenty of time. Oh yea. I heard you gave quite a performance with Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea a couple of nights ago at the Astoria. I didn’t even know you could play and I must say if you impressed those two, I am automatically impressed. I will expect a full story on the experience for next month’s issue.”

“You got it, boss!” she said with a grin. “I’ll talk to you later.”

“Wait a minute! How do I get hold of you if I need to? I may just be the editor, but I do get worried about you, kiddo,” Joe said in a somewhat fatherly tone.

She explained about her cell phone problem but gave him the hotel information. She said goodbye, hung up the phone and lay flat back on the bed with a sigh.

“You know,” Skeet began, but hesitated.

“What?”

“Well...you...never mind. It’s no big deal.” Skeet turned back to the mirror

“Hey, open and honest, remember? Whatever you have to tell me, I can take it. So shoot.” Chapin said.

“Really, it’s nothing.”

“Look, don’t worry about hurting my feelings. If there’s a problem, I want to know so we can work on it.”

He turned and looked at her with a big grin. “I was just going to say you could have gone to the AT&T web site and turned on the international service. It’s happened to Brian and me before. Like I said, it was no big deal.”

Chapin buried her face in her palm, breathed a sigh of relief and began to laugh hysterically. She grabbed her lap top and had AT&T turn on her international service, giggling the whole time.