

PRWC 7- "Love and Pain"

*"Well there's a hunger in my veins
And it's driving me insane
But I guess it all comes down to love and pain"
~"Love and Pain" Cher*

"And this is Cyberspace." I said as I walked in with DJ, Josh, and Noah.
"Very cool." Noah said as we found a table.
"Hey guys, what can I get you?" Savannah asked coming over.
"Oh hey Savannah. These are my cousins DJ and Noah. Guys this is Savannah James, she runs the place." Josh said.
"It's nice to meet you guys. So are the McKnights trying to over run the city or what?" Savannah joked.
"Never can have too many McKnights." DJ said with a smirk.
"I'm not so sure about that." Savannah said, "Anyway, what can I get for you guys?"
"Milkshake." Josh said.
"I'll take a smoothie." I said.
"Hmmm...root beer float." DJ said.
"Noah? What do you want?" I asked.
No response.
"Noah? Earth to Noah..." Josh said.
"Oh...um...just a date...I mean shake...milkshake." Noah stuttered.
Savannah smiled. "Coming right up." She went to make our order.
"Someone's got a crush." I teased.
"No I don't" Noah said.
"Oh come on bro, you're so in to her!" DJ said.
"Maybe a little." Noah said.
"Ask her out then." I said.
"What if she says no?" Noah asked.
"I don't think she will." I said.
"No...she's so beautiful...and I'm so..." Noah started.
"You're my twin and we all know how good looking I am so that means you are too." DJ said.
"And so modest." I said.
"I don't even know if she has a boyfriend." Noah said.
"She doesn't." Josh said.
"There, now you know." I said.
"Maybe later, after I know her better." Noah said.
"Suit yourself." I said.
"So Har, you up for a race after this?" DJ asked.
"You know it." I said.
"Here's your drinks." Savannah said coming back and setting our drinks in front of us.
"Thanks Sav." I said.

Tally

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"Thanks for helping Kira. There's no way I could have got this unpacked without your help and with Eric setting up the new store and the kids taking off no one else was willing to help." I said.

"No problem. Always glad you help. We're sisters, right?" Kira said sitting down and sipping her lemonade.

"So you didn't seem too happy about Conner working at Starlight." I said.

"I'm not. The idea of my husband working with that traitor day in and day out repulses me." Kira said.

"I know Michelle was wrong but it's been years...maybe it's time to talk it out." I said.

"I don't think so." Kira said.

"OK...well at least Starlight is a worthy cause."

"That's true...though Hunter and Michelle are the poster couple for troubled. I can't see them helping these poor kids."

"Aside from that how are things with Conner?" I asked.

"Great. I'm really happy with him...happier than I ever was with Trent. And our kids...I'm so proud of them. I couldn't ask for more really." Kira said.

"Sounds great." I said. I couldn't help but wonder what my life would have been like if I had gotten Conner instead...not that I didn't like my life, but it was so mundane. Kira seemed so happy with Conner. I had a chance with Conner and I often wondered, especially now that I saw he and Kira's life first hand, if I should have taken it. Sometimes I even felt like second choice to Kira with Eric...I mean she did date him long before I did.

"What about Eric...are you guys happy?" Kira asked.

I nodded. "Yes. Eric is a wonderful husband and a very involved father. My biggest concern is Beth. I'd like to teach her there's more to life than boys and clothes...speaking of which I'm really sorry about that comment she made to Anna."

"Don't worry about it. You can't control what Beth says."

I nodded. "Yeah...I know."

"Anyway I should get going. I told Anna I'd stop at the music store and get her some strings for the guitar." Kira said standing.

"Ok, thanks again for your help." I said.

"Anytime." Kira said leaving.

I went and sat in my new living room and sighed. I did love Eric, I loved him more and more everyday and he was a wonderful man. Any girl would love a husband like him...but there was still that voice in me that questioned if I had made the right choice.

Harley

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I was on the last lap of the race against Noah and DJ. I knew I had Noah beat, but just barely. DJ on the other hand...I was having a hard time pulling ahead of him. Then I got my chance. DJ was a free-styler, he took his jumps to high. I used that

and got ahead at the last minute. Winning by an inch. We pulled our bikes to the pit and took our helmets off.

"You're good." DJ said.

"Thanks. So are you guys." I said taking a drink of my water.

"I was a little off today." Noah said.

"Yeah, in a race Noah can normally beat me. Racing is his thing, free style is mine." DJ said.

"You were all really good." Josh said. He had been watching.

"How come you never took up moto?" DJ asked.

"Not my thing. I'll stick with music." Josh said.

"Music is good too." Noah said.

"So Harley, I really am impressed with your riding. I'd love to get some tips from you...over dinner maybe?" DJ asked.

"Are you asking me on a date?" I asked.

DJ smiled. "I guess I am. You accepting?"

I nodded. "Yeah, sure. Sounds fun." I noticed Josh looked like a deer in headlights.

"You ok?"

"Um, yeah...just remember...I promised Jesse I'd...help him with something. Got to go." Josh said running off.

"That was weird." I said.

"So anyway, pick you up at 7?" DJ asked.

I nodded. "I can't wait." I said loading up my dad's truck and heading back to the Academy.

Josh

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I couldn't believe I was so stupid! Here I was, waiting for Harley to get over Jay fully before I asked her out and DJ swoops in and asks her first. I got to the Academy and ran into Julia.

"Whoa boy...what's wrong with you?" she asked.

"Nothing." I growled.

"Oh come on, what did Harley do now? I know it's something with her."

I sighed. "My cousin asked her out."

"And she agreed. That sucks. You gotta be fast on these things. You waited too long." Julia said.

"Obviously...whatever. How are things around here?" I asked.

"Fine. Actually I need to get back to the lodge and check on things. You wanna come?"

"Sure." I said following her. We got back and I heard the phone. "I'll get it." I said.

"Starlight Academy, Josh speaking."

"Hello Josh, this is Christine Jennings. Is my daughter, Tiffany, available?"

"I believe so. Just a second Mrs. Jennings." I said putting the phone down. I went to the sitting room. "Tiffany, telephone, it's your mother."

"Ok, thanks." Tiffany said going to get the phone.

Tiffany

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When Josh said my mother was on the phone my blood ran cold. What did she want? I took a deep breath and picked up the phone.

“Hello Mother.” I said sweetly.

“Hello Tiffany dear. How are things at that school? Are you keeping your weight down?” Mother asked.

“Yes Mother.” I said.

“Good girl. I just wanted to let you know that your father and I will be in Reefsides on business next week and we will be stopping by to check on you. Make sure you look your best, we might take you to one of our banquets while we’re there and we don’t want you embarrassing us.” Mother said.

“Yes Mother. I’ll make sure I look perfect.” I said.

“That’s my girl.”

“Anyway, yesterday we took a history test and I made an ‘A’! Can you believe I made an ‘A’ in history of all things?” I said excited. History was my worst subject so that was a big deal for me.

“That’s nice dear, I have work to do now. See you next week. Ta.” Mother said hanging up.

“I love you too.” I sighed hanging up.

This was great, I had to have gained at least 6 pounds since I’d been here and I had to lose 10 before my mother would be anywhere near happy. I had work to do and I had to get started.

“Tiffany? Lunch time.” Conner said walking over.

“I’m not hungry.” I said.

“You have to eat something.”

“Fine...” I said knowing it was pointless to argue. I went to the dining hall and got a tray then sat with my group. “Yum, soy burgers.”

“At least it’s healthy.” Jesse said.

“I’d rather have a real hamburger any day. Something big and juicy from McDonalds.” Chris said.

“So Princess, what did the Queen have to say?” April asked.

“She and my father are coming to see me next week.” I said.

“Oh fun. The return of royalty.” April said.

“Step off Ape, you know none of us like having parental visits.” Chris said.

“At least you all have parents to visit you.” Jesse said sourly.

“Dude, chill. What’s the deal?” Chris asked.

“I’m so sick of hearing you guys whine about your parents. At least you have parents that are still alive. Some of us just wish we did.” Jesse said getting up and leaving.

“Guys, he’s right. Maybe we’re being insensitive.” I said.

“Us? Um no. He just doesn’t know what it’s like to have crappy parents because his parents actually cared about him. My mom, if you can even call her that, cares more about finding another bottle of Jack than my well being.” April said.

“Whatever.” I said as I finished eating. I stood up.

“Where are you going? You have to stay with a witness for 30 minutes after you eat.” April said.

“Lay off. I’m going to find Jesse. He looked like he needed a friend.” I said.

“Ok, fine. Go.” April said.

“I am.” I said taking off.

I ran back to the dorms and went in the bathroom. I hated using Jesse as an excuse like this but I had no choice. I lifted the lid on the toilet and knelt next to it and forced two fingers down my throat, which forced my food back up. It was the only way to lose weight and keep the staff here happy and I knew I had to look perfect when I saw my mother. When I was finished I cleaned up and went to go find Jesse for real.

Harley

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I got back to the Academy and found Mom walk with Felicity.

“Hey!” I said.

“Harley!” Felicity said running over to me as fast as her little legs could go.

“Liss!” I said picking her up and spinning her around.

“Have fun?” Mom asked walking over.

“Totally. And I got a date.”

“With who?”

“DJ McKnight.” I said smiling.

“Wow...that’s great.”

“He’s awesome. He’s hot and funny and rides moto.”

“Sounds perfect for you.”

“He is. Anyway, did you and Dad make up?”

“Yes we did. I’m still not thrilled about Conehead working here but it’s not worth risking my marriage over. I love your father more than I dislike Conner.”

“Glad to hear it. What is the deal with you and the McKnights anyway? Kira doesn’t seem too fond of you either.” I said.

“She isn’t. But it’s a really long story and it all happened a really long time ago. I’d rather not go into it. Shouldn’t you be showering anyway? You have to get ready for your date.”

“Oh...right.” I said handing Felicity back to Mom.

“Have fun.” Mom said.

“I will.” I said heading for the dorms. I knew there was something Mom wasn’t telling me...I seriously wished I knew what though. Knowing Mom it was big. I was close to the dorms when I saw Conner. “Hey, how’s it going?”

“Pretty good. I think I’m gonna like it here.” He said.

“That’s great. We’re glad to have you.” I said.

“Thanks Harley. Hey have you seen Josh?”

“No, he took off from the track earlier and I haven’t seen him since.” I said

“Ok, well I need to find him. See you later.”

“See ya.” I said going into the dorm. I went up to my room and took a shower then picked out my clothes for my date. I was just about ready when Julia walked in.

“You are such a clueless freak.” She said.

“What are you talking about JuJu?” I asked.

“DJ. Did you ever stop to think it might be weird for Josh to see his best friend and cousin dating?”

“Um...not really.”

“Of course not. That would require unselfish thought.”

“Are you implying I’m selfish?” I asked.

“Of course not Airy, I’m flat out saying it. You’re selfish.”

“Just shut up ok? DJ is a cool guy and if Josh had a problem with me seeing him I think he’d tell me.” I said.

“Like I said, clueless freak.”

“Whatever. Now if you’ll excuse me I’m sure DJ will be here soon.” I said leaving the room.

I went to the lodge and saw DJ talking to Derek.

“Hey, you ready?” I asked.

“Hey you, wow you look great.” DJ said.

I smiled. “Thanks.”

“You do look nice Har.” Derek said.

“Totally...you’re hot.” Chris said.

I laughed, “Thanks guys.”

“Have fun.” Tiffany said.

“But not too much fun. It’s only the first date.” April said.

“Bye Wild Cats.” I said taking DJ’s hand and leaving.

Josh

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I couldn’t stay at the Academy and watch DJ pick up the girl of my dreams so I went to Cyberspace to hang out. I was sitting alone, sipping a soda, when this girl came up to me. She was very pretty, kinda reminded me of Harley...but she was somehow different.

“Hey, this seat taken?” she asked.

“Is now.” I said.

“Thanks. I’m...Marissa.” She said.

“Nice to meet you. I’m Josh.”

“So what are you doing here all alone? Girlfriend off on her own or something?”

“Actually I don’t have a girlfriend.”

“You’ve got to be kidding me, someone that looks like you doesn’t have a girlfriend?”

“Afraid not.”

“Well how sad for you...but good for me...I hope you don’t think this is too forward but...would you like to go out sometime?” she asked.

I gave this some thought, normally I would have said no because of my thing for Harley but then I stopped. Harley was on a date with DJ, I was here alone...except for Marissa. She was hot, I was single...what was the problem. “I’d like that.” I said.

Tiffany

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After dinner, during clean up, I slipped away for just a second and went to the bathroom for my ritual. I even took a moment to step on the scale, I weighed 105 pounds. I was so fat; Mother would never accept me looking like this. Even purging I'd never lose enough weight in time. I sat down on the floor and started to cry. Why did I have to be such a cow? I saw a razor the dorm monitors had forgotten to pick up (we were only allowed razors for shaving under supervision). I picked up the razor and pressed it down to my skin and cut. I watched as blood started to ooze. It felt good. I started to cut again, faster and faster all up and down my arm. I finally dropped the razor and looked at the dripping blood. I stood up and washed my arm off and once the bleeding stopped I put on a long sleeve shirt and went back down to help clean. They never even knew I was gone...then again when did anyone notice me anyway?