

HIGH RISE NOVELLA ONE

*Fool
for
Love*

Harper Bliss

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FOOL FOR LOVE

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Preview

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Warning: This title contains graphic language and f/f sex.

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MADDIE

“We have to stop doing this.” Maddie tucked her blouse in her skirt and leaned against the door. She should have said it before allowing June into her office again—and in her panties. “It can’t go anywhere. We both know that.”

“Yeah.” June avoided Maddie’s eyes while she zipped up her pants. They’d had this conversation before, but it wasn’t easy for Maddie to resist June, and the delicious molten copper of her skin, when they had to work side by side every day. “I know.” Maddie realised June didn’t take her seriously anymore when she said it.

“Would you consider transferring to another department?”

This caught June’s attention. She fixed her black eyes on Maddie. “Really? You want to get rid of me?”

Maddie felt guilty already. She should never have let it come to this.

“Look, babe.” She cursed herself for using the term of endearment she resorted to when approaching orgasm. And June had given her plenty of those. Usually against the closed door of Maddie’s office. Their affair didn’t have room for beds or sleep-overs, which was exactly what was wrong with it. “I’m not the one who’s unavailable.”

“You know how I feel about you.” June inched closer. Too close. Maddie could smell her perfume and the musky scent of sex clinging to her skin. “Boss.”

Maddie sighed and let June kiss her neck before pushing her away. “That’s hardly the issue.” She held June at arm’s length. “When I go home tonight, it’s to an empty apartment. And when I wake up tomorrow morning, it’ll be in an empty bed. I can’t do it anymore.”

“So I should just up and move? I don’t think so.” June shook herself free from Maddie’s hold and took a step back. “I’m not ruining my career over this.”

This irked Maddie, but she restrained herself. “I’ll make sure your new position is better than the one you have now.” She took a deep breath. “How does Team Manager of Operations sound?”

“If you don’t want to fuck me anymore, you’re just going to have to work on your willpower.” June pouted her lips and narrowed her eyes. “I didn’t do this to get a promotion.”

“I know.” Maddie threw her hands up in despair. “But you must understand my point of view.”

“I do.” June’s face softened. “And I’m sorry, but I can’t just run off with you. We’ve discussed this and I was always very upfront about it.” A sharp pang of jealousy coursed through Maddie’s bones as June checked her watch. Hubby must be waiting. Maddie didn’t understand how June could lie to herself, and everyone around her, like that. She was born in Australia, for heaven’s sake. She didn’t need to be so Chinese and repressed about it.

“Fine. Go home to Mark. Snuggle up to him closely tonight.” Maddie stepped away from the door and opened it. “I hope you sleep well.”

“It doesn’t have to be like this.” June smoothed out one last wrinkle from her blouse before positioning herself in front of Maddie. “It’s not easy for me either.” June’s voice was soft and sultry. “Give me a little credit.”

Maddie wanted to pull June close again and kiss her until day break. She also wanted to run

away from this mess. She'd always believed she was smarter than this. What a joke.

"Good night." She pulled her face away from June—the time for meaningless displays of affection had passed. Her eyes followed June's tall, slender form as she walked away. Maddie wondered how long she'd be able to resist this time.

She retreated back into her office and dropped down into her leather chair with a big sigh. Maybe she should be the one to leave. This city wasn't really working out for her anyway. Swivelling around to enjoy the view sprawling out around the windows of her corner office, she reclined and let the city's evening glow surround her.

"Not that jaded yet," she whispered to herself. "This view still kills me." She'd stared into Hong Kong's illuminated skyline countless times while June delved her fingers into her depths. It added romance to the act.

Maddie reached for her phone and called the first number in her speed dial list. Isabella picked up after the second ring.

"Hey neighbour, please don't tell me you're still at work?"

"I've no choice if I ever want to make a bid on your penthouse."

"My time is for sale, but my home will never be. You know that." Isabella chuckled on the other end of the line. "But I do agree that you should become a bona fide home owner."

"Buying here feels too permanent. Anyway, I didn't call to get a lecture on my real estate status. I'm willing to give that body combat class a try tonight."

"At last, she relents. Rough day?"

"Hong Kong has beaten me to a pulp again, I need to fight back."

"Hong Kong or a certain resident of this decadent Special Administrative Region?" Isabella was the only person Maddie had confided in about June. She was a psychiatrist and her body language invited confessions like that.

"I ended it. Again."

"Body combat it is then. Meet me in the lobby at eight."

ALEX

Alex had energy to burn. She always had. Rita always said she was born with way too much of it. Then again, Rita had also looked her in the eyes and told her she loved her. She'd whispered it in her ear before they went to sleep and before she left for Mandarin class and started chatting up her teacher. Rita was a big fat liar.

Scanning the studio for newcomers, Alex shut down the road her thoughts were going. All the familiar faces were present. Her Wednesday evening class was always full. She'd give them a good workout. She'd taught five sessions today already, and still she felt as if she could go on for days. Maybe she didn't have a girlfriend anymore, but at least her lean muscle mass had increased after the break-up.

"Do we have anyone new today?" Two people raised their hands. An older Chinese man with an impressive moustache and a blond lady who'd come in with Isabella.

“Don’t overdo it the first time. Let your body get used to the new movements. And don’t lock your elbows when you punch.” Alex nodded at the newbies and shot them an encouraging smile. “I’m Alex and I’m here to kick your butt.” She grinned at the two dozen of people in front of her. “Let’s do it.”

She searched for the first track on her iPod and began the class with a taxing warm-up. People who attended body combat didn’t come to mess around.

During the boxing round she locked eyes with the blond newcomer a few times, impressed with the intensity of her punches. Maybe she had as much frustration to burn as Alex. In all honesty, most people looked quite ridiculous when cleaving their fists through the air—always catching up to the beat, or racing way ahead—but the blonde had a certain elegance to her movements.

After class, she walked up to Isabella, a faithful regular, and her companion. They both had sweat running out of their hair, their faces sporting a healthy pink flush.

“Not bad for a first timer.” Alex wiped her brow with a towel. “Will I be seeing you again?”

“I really needed that.” The new woman had an Australian accent, just like Rita. “And yes, I might be persuaded.” She smiled confidently at Alex.

“Excellent.” Another convert always filled Alex with professional pride. “What’s your name?”

“Madison, but everyone calls me Maddie.”

“Maddie it is then.” Alex noticed the peculiar colour of her eyes, not quite blue and not quite grey, but very distinct. “Let me know if you have any questions.”

“Thanks.” Maddie curled the corners of her mouth into a smirk. “I’m about ready to collapse.”

“You’ve earned it.” Alex shifted her attention to Isabella, whose shoulders stood out nicely in her tight lycra tank top. “You’re in great shape, Isabella. Keep it up.”

“All because of you.” Isabella winked at her. She always messed with Alex's gaydar. Then again, most women in sweaty workout clothes did.

“Have a nice evening, ladies. I hope to see you again on Friday.”

They both nodded enthusiastically. Alex shot them one last smile and headed out of the studio to make room for the next class. She was done for today. Back home, her new home, she had two more boxes to unpack, and then she’d be done with Rita too.

She’d moved out as soon as she’d found out about Rita’s extracurricular activities with her teacher, crashing on Nat’s couch the first night. The next day, Nat had made up the spare bed in what had fast become Alex's new room.

“Frankly, I don’t need the rent but I could sure do with the company,” Nat had said. “I hate living alone.”

Without even looking for it, Alex had found a new place to live. In a building she’d never be able to afford on her own. With Nat no less, for whom she’d had a soft spot since meeting her three years ago. A small silver lining to a very dark cloud.

“Did you knock the wind out of them, roomie?” Nat asked as Alex entered the apartment.

“I’m sure some will have difficulty getting up in the morning.” Nat sat at the wooden dining table in the silver glow of her flipped open laptop, surrounded by a stack of dishevelled papers.

“Where were you, anyway?” Nat took most of Alex's classes, assuring her rock hard abs Alex had,

admittedly, glanced at a few more times than strictly necessary among flatmates.

“The muse called... you know how it is.” Nat sipped from a glass of whiskey flanking her computer.

Alex rolled her eyes. “We both know you hate the M-word and it’s only Wednesday. Go easy on that stuff.” She’d probably taken advantage of Alex’s absence and brought a girl home for a few hours of no-strings-attached fun.

“Yes, mom.” Nat leaned back in her chair and gave Alex her signature cocky smile. The one Alex was such a sucker for. “Did I miss any hotties?”

“No one you’d be interested in.” Since her sudden break from Claire, Nat only went for younger women—plenty of them and never for longer than a fortnight. Alex sank down on the sofa and picked up the TV remote. “Has the great Nathalie Orange finished for the day? Can we finally watch *Snow White and the Huntsman*?”

“I told you not to wait for me for your drooling session over Charlize Theron. And you know I prefer my entertainment a bit more intellectually stimulating.”

Alex propped her feet up onto the coffee table. “Fine. *Young Adult* it is then.”

“You’re an excellent negotiator, Pizza. I’ll give you that.” Nat closed the lid of her laptop and settled next to Alex. “I can live with that compromise.”

Alex playfully nudged her in the ribs. “Don’t call me that.”

“Only if you give me control over the remote.”

“Never.” Alex dangled the remote in front of Nat’s face. “You’ll have me watch some pseudo-intellectual indie movie again where no one ever stops talking.” She fixed her eyes on Nat’s bright blue ones. “I still haven’t forgiven you for *Synecdoche, New York*. Two hours of my life I’ll never get back.”

“May I respectfully remind you that you slept through more than an hour of that unrecognised masterpiece.”

“You can hardly blame me for that.” Alex used the remote to flick to the iTunes movie channel and sank down into the soft cushions of the couch until her shoulder comfortably rested against Nat’s.

MADDIE

Maddie couldn’t wait for her morning espresso as she stepped into the elevator at seven thirty. Her muscles ached from last night’s workout, especially in the area around her shoulders, which felt as if it had taken a nasty beating. Good thing the instructor was cute, she thought as the elevator stopped on the forty-second floor.

“Morning,” a cheerful voice Maddie vaguely recognised chirped. She looked up and stared straight into Alex’s eyes.

“Hey.” Maddie certainly hadn’t expected to share her morning elevator ride with the sexy gym instructor. “What a surprise.”

“A welcome one I hope.” Alex beamed a broad smile and Maddie wondered how someone

could look so fresh and energised at this ungodly hour of the day. “Not too sore today?”

“Yeah, about that...” Maddie shifted her weight to her other foot. “Do you do massages?” The words just slipped out, surprising Maddie. She wasn’t the flirting type anytime before noon.

“There’s an idea.” Alex stroked her chin pensively. “Break ‘em and then fix ‘em. A potential gold mine.” She grinned at Maddie. “I just moved in so I may need some time to set up.”

Maddie snickered at Alex's playful repartee. The elevator chimed twice, indicating they had reached the ground floor.

“Down the escalator I presume?” Maddie had a hard time peeling her gaze away from her companion’s pronounced biceps as she held her backpack over her shoulder.

“Just like everyone else on this mountain.” Alex exited the building with what seemed like a spring in her step. “But not without fuelling up on coffee first.”

“That makes two of us.”

They walked the short distance to the escalator in silence and slid down to the street below. Maddie perked up at the sight of her favourite coffee house. And the company she was keeping. Ever the numbers’ person, she did wonder how much money gym instructors made to be able to afford rent on the forty-second floor of a prime real estate location like The Ivy.

Alex gallantly held the door of The Bean open for her, sparking the question if she might be of the same sexual persuasion. Maddie made a mental note to ask Isabella, who would surely know. She had a better eye for lesbians in this town. Maddie didn’t have a clue, which was probably why she had ended up fumbling with a married woman behind closed doors for the past six months.

“Busy day ahead?” What was that accent? The sexy instructor definitely had Chinese blood running through her veins, but it was mixed with something darker and more exotic.

“Always.” They shuffled forward in the line to place their order. “As good as married to the job.”

“What do you do?” Alex's dark eyes locked with hers and Maddie felt something flutter in her belly.

“Ah, the most frequently asked question in this city.” Maddie held Alex's gaze. “I’m an investment banker at Crawford & Charles.”

“Oh.” Maddie couldn’t help but notice the disappointment in Alex's eyes. She figured she’d probably heard the words investment and banker one too many times. Half of the expat population in Hong Kong practiced the same profession.

“I do sincerely apologise.” Or maybe she was part of the Occupy Movement. Or a communist. Either way, if you lived in The Ivy you had to love money at least a little.

“May I take your order, please?” The girl behind the counter asked in broken English.

“A tall espresso and whatever this lady is having.”

“A skinny mochaccino, please,” Alex told the barista, then turned to Maddie. “Thanks. I owe you one. I gather I can find you here every morning?”

“Like clockwork.” Maddie paid for the beverages and they padded over to the reception counter. She suddenly thought that, despite being the opposite of a morning person, she wouldn’t be opposed to having a coffee with this tank topped beauty every morning.

Their drinks didn't take long to arrive and they left the shop together, joining the dozens of other escalator commuters down to Central.

"I swear to you, this is my only vice." Alex shot her a gloriously caffeinated smile. "I'm usually such a good girl." A little bit of froth clung to her upper lip and Maddie was convinced it would be the cutest thing she'd see today.

"Really? That's it?" Maddie raised her eyebrows. "No skeletons in your closet?" She mildly regretted her choice of words, but was curious to see the other woman's reaction.

"I'm half-Chinese and I came out at the tender age of eighteen. I've respectfully buried all the skeletons and the door to my closet is wide open."

In the two years Maddie had lived in Hong Kong she'd never heard a Chinese woman speak so candidly about her sexuality, without obvious qualms or hang-ups. Refreshing, she thought, as her interest in this new addition to her building heightened by the second.

"I was twenty-one, but I believe I'm a generation older than you."

"Don't be fooled by the smoothness of my skin. It's an Asian thing. I'm probably older than you." Alex winked at her. "This is my stop." They stepped onto the platform between two moving parts of escalator together. "See you tomorrow night for combat?"

Oh yeah, Maddie thought, but just nodded before Alex, along with her impressive shoulder line, was swallowed by the crowd. Maddie continued her journey to work with a surprisingly sunny disposition.

When she arrived at the office, her assistant Venus was already present, buzzing like a bee.

"Morning, Maddie." Venus was always around, lurking about, which was basically her job, but still, with Maddie's recent indiscretions she might know more than was good for her. "June called in sick."

The mention of June's name made Maddie stop dead in her tracks. "What do you mean sick? What does she have?" This was Hong Kong. You didn't call in sick unless you were almost dead—and even then it was frowned upon.

"She didn't give me any details."

"When will she be back?" Relief—the guilty kind—washed over Maddie at the prospect of at least not having to avoid June today.

"She said she'd call once she'd seen a doctor."

"All right. Keep me posted." It was too much of a coincidence for June's sick day to not have anything to do with last night's events. Maddie closed the door of her office and wondered if she should call her. Better not when she's at home, she concluded.

ALEX

"Is she blond? A bit uptight looking?" Nat asked. They munched on Thai salads, beef for Nat and pomelo for Alex.

"I wouldn't say uptight. She's a banker though." Alex couldn't help but scoff at the word. She'd slept with her own private banker for six years and was adamant not to repeat that mistake.

"I think I've seen her around with Isabella." Nat bunched her lips together in a pout. "I'd never pegged her as gay though, but you know what bankers are like. Poker face until they die."

Alex puffed out a disdainful snort. "You're preaching to the choir."

Nat dropped her chopsticks and patted Alex's hand. "It's not because Rita was such a bitch that they're all the same."

"I haven't made this assessment lightly, Orange. I've thought long and hard about this. I even suffered for it. And the evidence is glaring. They're all stone cold greedy bastards for whom nothing is ever enough—especially the women." Alex leaned back and held her arms wide. "Look at me. I work out thirty hours per week, if not more. I have a pleasant enough personality. Some people might even call me 'a catch'." Alex curled her fingers into quotation marks. "But not Miss Rita Lowe. Oh no. She had to go and have a bit on the side."

"Rita obviously lost her mind." Nat let her blue eyes glide over Alex's form. "You are a catch, and don't let anyone ever tell you differently." Alex wasn't especially gunning for the compliment, she was more joking—or rather, venting—when she'd said it, but it was a welcome balm to her bruised ego.

"And let's be honest here." Nat caught Alex's gaze. "Our neighbour does sound like your type."

"Nu-uh, I'm done with that type. I don't want another Rita."

"I'm not saying you have to marry her. You can simply have a bit of fun."

Alex sighed. She'd never see eye to eye on this with Nat, who was always pushing her to have more *fun*.

"So fundamentally different, but such good friends." Alex didn't feel like the twelve-hundredth quibble on this topic. She had three more classes to teach that afternoon, of which two back-to-back RPM sessions, and she needed to save her energy.

"If the need ever gets too big, I'm in the next room."

Alex got to her feet and mock-slapped Nat over the head. "You disgusting specimen of a woman." Not that Alex hadn't ever entertained the notion. Nat was certainly pretty, with her big blue eyes and unevenly cut black bangs, but she wouldn't ruin their friendship over a one-night-stand. And a relationship with someone like Nathalie Orange was out of the question.

"That's what friends are for." Nat grinned broadly at her. Alex did love her dearly. She had been the one to pick up the pieces of Alex's broken heart after she found out about Rita and her Mandarin teacher Peggy.

"What about Isabella?" Alex changed the subject. "I've had my suspicions about her."

"She's a tricky one to figure out. I've only had a few short chats with her at The Bean." Nat painted a pensive look on her face. She took matters of determining someone's sexuality extremely seriously. "And everyone in body combat looks gay." With her mouth drawn into a smirk, Nat locked eyes with Alex. "Especially you. You're a beast up there with your little microphone and bumbag. A completely different person than the one sitting in front of me now." She took a sip of her lime soda. "Don't get me wrong. I love your fitness dominatrix persona. And I'm sure I'm not the only one."

“Shut up.” Alex dipped a finger into her glass of water and sprinkled some in Nat’s direction. “Anyway, I’ll have my revenge later. Pump or spin today?”

“I’m not sure I want to take a class with you when you’re in this kind of mood. I fear I may live to regret it.” Nat bent over the small formica table. “You need to get some. Trust me, I know the signs,” she whispered. “And you may not want to see it that way but, from where I’m sitting, Blondie looks like one hell of a prospect.”

Usually, Alex found Nat’s ceaseless innuendo amusing, but today it grated her nerves a little. Maybe because there was an inkling of truth to her statements. “Well,” she stood up. “We can’t all sit around and do nothing all day. I have to get back to work.”

“I don’t feel spoken to in the least.” Without a care in the world, Nat folded one toned leg over the other and fixed her eyes on what looked to Alex like a sixteen-year-old girl who had just walked into the restaurant. “I do a lot of research for my next masterpiece in places like this.”

“Good luck, Hemingway. See you in class later.” Alex left some bills on the table to pay for her share of lunch and left the diner.

On her way back to the gym, she contemplated seeing Maddie the Banker again. Maybe if she shut off all her emotions—or if she had a lobotomy. Alex wasn’t one to make the same mistake twice. The first time around had hurt too much for that. And, unlike her flatmate, she didn’t have a problem with staying dry for months. She had other, more sane ways of draining the excess energy from her body. Hell, she used her body all day long. In bed, all she wanted was a good night’s sleep—which, due to Rita’s antics and the effect they had on Alex—was pretty hard to come by of late.

MADDIE

On Friday morning June was back at work, the pallid complexion of her skin contrasting with the big dark shadows under her eyes. Maddie’s first reaction was concern. She figured June had called in sick the day before because of Maddie’s umpteenth lousy attempt at a break-up. Now it appeared there really was something wrong with her and, apart from concern, Maddie had to deal with floods of compassion washing over her. She wanted to call June into her office, close the door, take her in her arms and tell her everything would be all right. Except, it wouldn’t. It never would.

While squinting at a spreadsheet on her screen, her thoughts kept drifting to her sexy co-worker. Was it love? Maddie didn’t have a clue, which was probably a clue in itself.

By eleven she couldn’t take it anymore and punched in June’s number.

“Hey,” she whispered, even though she was hiding behind a closed door. “Could you come and see me for a second, please?”

“Is it business or pleasure?” June’s voice sounded measured, her tone clipped, as if, this time, she’d really resigned herself to the fact that they were over.

“I...” Maddie hesitated. “I just need to know you’re all right.”

“I’m fine.” June sighed into the receiver. “I have a lot to catch up on. Is there anything else?”

“No, not—”

“Good.” With a cold click, June hung up.

Maddie massaged her temples. Two years in Hong Kong and only some heart break to show for.

Stretching her shoulder muscles, which were still slightly sore from Wednesday's brutal immersion into the world of group fitness classes, she wondered what she'd do this weekend. Probably come into work on Saturday to pick up the slack of the week. There was always slack to pick up. Always an excuse to not take a junk invitation or go hiking with Isabella. Then there was Sunday. How to get through that again?

On impulse, she picked up her phone once more and called Isabella.

"Let's do something this weekend."

"Is that an indecent proposal?"

Maddie chuckled into the receiver. She'd never really thought of Isabella that way. She might as well face it. Maddie had a serious penchant for Asian girls, which was probably the only reason she was still in Hong Kong. But she decided to play along. "It can be if you want it to be."

"Your blatant enthusiasm is really winning me over."

"Don't take it too personally, please."

"No worries. And leave it to me. I have two clients to see Saturday morning, then I'm free. Maybe you should take Monday off."

"Impossible."

"I thought so. See you tonight for another round of combat."

"Can't wait."

Maddie hung up and let her thoughts wander to Alex. She had hoped for an impromptu elevator encounter again this morning, but in a massive building like theirs you hardly ever rode the elevator with the same person twice.

She had the same smoky eyes as June, but her hair was much too wavy to be exclusively Chinese.

A beep from her private phone jerked her out of her reverie. A text message from June. *It's for the best we ended it. Trust me.*

One lunch and two more meetings and then the weekend awaited. She might even be frivolous and have a lie-in on Saturday.

* * *

Body combat hurt like hell. Clearly, Maddie's muscles hadn't recovered yet. If it weren't for Alex's encouraging smiles, she would have given up. She wondered how Alex did it. How many classes did she teach per day? Per week? And what must that body look like underneath that skimpy tank top?

"Left foot in front, please. Maddie?"

While dreaming of Alex's abs, Maddie had missed the supporting leg switch. Alex nodded at her and, before shifting her focus to the group again, shot Maddie a quick wink. Maddie felt her cheeks flush but didn't know if it was because of the strenuous workout or the special attention from Alex.

"Hey, teacher's pet," Isabella teased, while reaching for her bottle of water. "Did I miss

something?”

“Teach likes her,” a voice whispered from behind. Stunned, Maddie turned around and stared straight into Nathalie Orange’s face. As the week had progressed, the days had gotten stranger and stranger, culminating in a body combat class with one of her favourite writers. Maddie had seen her around the neighbourhood, but, as if victim to a teenage crush, hadn’t had the nerve to address her. “She’s my roommate, so I know.” Nathalie grinned at Maddie. “Although she’ll be the last to admit it, so don’t press her on it.”

“Enough talking, ladies,” Alex yelled from the front, her voice so naturally authoritative in front of a group. “This class is not over yet.” She clapped her hands. “Save the gossip for happy hour.” Did she just wink at Maddie again? “Come on. Front stance. And keep that guard up.”

Maddie had even more trouble keeping up now. The instructor lived with Nathalie Orange. Clearly they weren’t an item. But still, she couldn’t help but look at Alex with whole new eyes. And by god, the hotness level in that flat. And Hong Kong was already so warm and humid.

“Let’s ask them for a drink.” Isabella stood panting against the studio wall. Maddie had barely made it through class and had trouble catching her breath.

“What?” She rasped.

“It’s common knowledge Nathalie Orange can’t say no to a fine single malt and I happen to have a bottle of Cadenhead lying around.”

Maddie slurped her water as if she hadn’t had any fluids in days. For all her shrewd banker brain cells, she was stumped for words.

“I’m the boss of you this weekend. And we’re all neighbours. Why the hell not?” Isabella continued. “Hey, Nathalie.”

In two strides, Isabella was by the writer’s side. Quick enough for Maddie to wonder if she had ulterior motives of her own.

Nathalie looked up from her iPhone, which she appeared to be glued to. She probably had a hundred messages from admirers.

“Can I interest you and your flatmate in a Friday evening sampling of some of the world’s finest Scotch?”

Nathalie’s face brightened instantly, as if someone had said the magic word to her well-guarded kingdom.

“There’s an offer I can’t refuse. Penthouse right?”

“Correct. Let’s say in an hour, and don’t forget to bring your flatmate.”

Alex was just approaching after showing an elderly lady the correct execution of the side kick a few times.

“Good to see you again, Maddie.” She smiled with an energy Maddie had seldom, if ever, witnessed. “Good class, Isabella. Keep it up.”

“These ladies have invited us for friendly neighbourly drinks. We can’t possibly decline. Imagine the awkwardness in the elevator if we did,” Nathalie chimed in.

Maddie scanned Alex’s face. Her first, purely physical reaction seemed to be cautious, doubtful even.

“Sure, but I have a class tomorrow morning, so don’t count on getting me tipsy.” She jabbed Nat playfully in the bicep. “This one is a really bad influence.”

Maddie was intrigued by the jesting interaction between the two friends.

“Wonderful. See you in a bit.” Isabella said her goodbyes and Maddie sheepishly followed. She had trouble determining if it was because of meeting Nathalie Orange or because of Alex's intense bedroom eyes—and the two winks she had been the recipient of during class.

***Fool for Love* is available from [Amazon US](#) & [Amazon UK](#)**