

“Selk!” Before I even turned around, I knew the owner of the shrill voice that had called my name. Brandie, my petite springy friend, trotted toward Cliff and me. I took one look at her and shook my head, using all of my strength not to laugh. Her honey-blond hair usually had a faint wave or two, but today fell just past her shoulders in a perfect glossy sheet. She wore a metallic silver jogging suit and smooth sweat-free makeup that told me she hadn’t exercised yet.

“Hey guys,” she said, coming to a bouncing halt in front of us. “Got a minute?”

“Yeah,” I said, biting my lip to stifle a giggle. “What’s up?”

She cast a timid glance at Cliff before looking back to me, though she was addressing us both. “I was wondering if you could show me some of the basics. You know, boxing and all of that.” She looked at Cliff again, this time with a little more courage and a catchy smile. “Selk always makes it sound like so much fun.” She blushed, and her eyes fled back to mine when Cliff smiled at her.

“We’re actually already done for the day and were about to hit the showers.” Brandie looked so disappointed, I added, readjusting the gloves on my shoulder, “But after that, we’re headed to Mack’s if you’re up for a bite.”

Like she’d never frowned, her face brightened into a grin. “Always!”

I glanced at Cliff, hoping he wouldn’t mind babysitting a crush-struck teen, though she was older than me by a month. But he just laughed softly at her enthusiasm, looking amused.

“Great,” he said. “See you girls in a few.” Cliff threw Brandie an extra-polished smile before disappearing into the men’s locker room, removing his sweat-soaked white tank as he went.

I watched Brandie stand gaping after him for a full five seconds before she squealed and spun, clasping her hands to her chest. “Okay, Selk, now I get why you love the whole boxing thing. Who wouldn’t want to tackle *that*?”

I rolled my eyes, starting into the females’ locker room. “First of all, there is no tackling in boxing. Second of all, Cliff is just my trainer and good friend. He’s not my type.”

Brandie groaned as she followed me to my locker. “*No one* is your type.”

“I’ve admired a few lookers over the years.” I shrugged, grabbing a change of clothes and shaking my hair from its ponytail before shutting my locker door. “Maybe I don’t have a type. Maybe I just call them as I see them.”

I left Brandie sitting on a bench by my locker door. She obviously hadn’t planned on working out long or hard, because she didn’t have a change of clothes. I knew the reason she chose to wear her jogging suit was because she thought Cliff dug workout chicks.