

She sat back, crossing her arms over her chest. "You can't be serious."

His posture was the exact opposite of hers. Everything about him was opposite. Where she wore a pretty Stella McCartney blouse and prim pencil skirt, he wore ripped jeans and a tight black tee. Her strappy Manolos hadn't a single scratch. His Dr. Martens had to be from 1999 and looked like they'd cleaned up after one too many groupies in the green room.

You're in control here, Nina. You're the professional. He's the client. Shoo him away like the ass he really is.

Oh, but what a fine ass he has, the part of her brain she was definitely not listening to today said.

"I assure you I'm serious. I need a non-clingy, well-proportioned date for a gala fundraiser in two days and I'd prefer she have no illusions as to what this is about." He sat forward in his chair and Nina was sure she saw his abs ripple. She caught her breath and then forced her gaze from the spectacle and back to those blue-blue eyes. And promptly forgot to breathe again. "The money raised will keep music programs in at least fifteen local schools. To keep the cash coming I need the headlines to be about the event, not my social life."

"Then you should go alone."

"Going alone will keep the gossip rags talking. What I need is a pretty date for a one- night-only performance."

Nina blew out the breath she'd been holding. She didn't believe for a second this was a mercy date situation. More like a mercy hookup. She didn't do hookups. Her business set up marriage minded people who were matched based on an algorithm her aunt developed ten years before. An algorithm that had made the company a go-to in Los Angeles.

She shot a glance out the window at the press corps on the sidewalk below her window.

Well, until this morning, anyway.

"I think you've got my firm confused with...something else entirely, but for future reference—" she typed a few words into the search engine on her computer and flipped the screen to face him "—I am a matchmaker. A noun, meaning one who arranges relationships or marriages." She opened the next tab and gestured to the computer screen. "I am not a madam, although madams are also nouns. There is a very large, very cavernous area between matchmaking and houses of prostitution."