Seventeen - Inferno

Last night ended on a terrible note. If my heart was ripped from my chest, I'm sure it wouldn't be much more painful. I have learnt from it though. I need to step it up - take the game to the next level and make myself irresistible. Simple lovey-duveyness isn't cutting it. I cried myself to sleep last night, which is pitiful, and woke up to a pu y face which is just delightful. Today I'm just sad and feel like a bit of a zombie. I am trying to study but I find myself re-reading the exact same sentence three times in a row, and no knowledge is actually seeping into my brain. As my phone buzzes, highlighting the fact it is eleven and I haven't even washed my face, I feel a little lazy, but my home screen of Waverly and I makes me smile. a

I have a message from Roxie asking if I am sure I won't go clubbing with her tonight, as her brother will be there too. I am meant to be going to the museums with Waverly this a ernoon, but I am contemplating over cancelling and going clubbing with Roxie instead. I am in need of a night out, and if I play my cards right I can trick Zander into coming and give him hell for last night...

I know I am not being a great example of a best friend, but I am sure Waverly will understand and we can always rearrange for next weekend. Without stopping to let the guilt kick in, I quickly tell Roxie I have changed my mind and will be coming with her tonight. She texts back almost instantly all excited and asks if I want to make my way over to her apartment at three, so we have su icient time to get ready for eight. Sheesh, what are we going to do for five hours? Shave our heads and glue each strand back on piece by piece? Just as I giggle to myself about my weird thought there is a knock at the door and Waverly comes in with a cup of Jasmine tea - the only tea I can a stomach.

"Hi love how are you feeling?" She asks acting very motherly.

"I'm ok, thank you so much for the drink. How're you?" I ask with a smile.

She is the sweetest person on this planet, and always knows exactly what I need.

"I'm fine Nell. I'm so excited for the city today! There's this museum that I've been dying to go to..." Waverly starts excitedly as she plops down on my bed, but stops when she notices my ashamed expression. "You're not coming, are you?"

"I'm so sorry Waverly... But can we go next week? I just don't want to give up on Zander, and I have the perfect opportunity to make him jealous tonight at the club with Roxie. Of course you can come too!" I exclaim. สื

I feel bad as a flash of disappointment casts across her face, but she shrugs it o .

"Ok Nell I understand how important Zander is to you. We can just go next weekend! And you know me, clubbing isn't my scene, but you don't need to worry, I might go out for dinner with my friend River who is my partner in class. She's really nice and asked if we'd like to meet up sometime." Waverly reveals as she averts her eyes from mine.

"Oh... that's nice. I didn't realise you are... close." I comment, surprised to hear that Waverly is going out with someone that is not me.

đ

a

a

The idea is a foreign concept. Fleetingly panic rushes into my system as I wonder whether this signifies that Waverly and I are slipping apart. Surely not... We have always been best friends; we are a package deal. I feel slightly choked but I'm just being dramatic... We are allowed to have other friends; it's healthy. And I'll be going out with other people tonight anyway, so it's good that she won't be alone.

"Yeah well she's really nice, and when you're at work or out with Rylan and Zander we've been chatting a little bit, and also her friend Nina is sweet... You'll have to meet them sometime."

"Yeah sure, sounds good." I agree but the air feels a little awkward between us.

We have never had tense moments before, or times where we grapple for things to say. Waverly itches the back of her head and clears her throat, as her vivid green eyes dart away from mine. I open my mouth to speak when we are saved by my phone, which starts trilling noisily.

"Oh... it's Isaac... I should get it." I mumble as Waverly jumps up from my bed.

"Right of course, well have a good day - call me if you need anything."

She smiles as she swipes some of her ringlets from her face.

"Thanks, bye!" I exclaim right before she shuts the door.

"Hi Isaac." I call out as I answer the phone.

"Hey Nell how are you?" My brother asks.

"I'm good, are you alright? How come you're ringing?" I ask with a slight frown on my face, worried that something is wrong.

"Yeah I'm fine, just in between tutoring sessions. I swear most of these girls dumb themselves down just to spend time with me." He chuckles self-assuredly.

"Yeah yeah you're not that pretty." I tease him with a grin as I put him on speaker and decide to run a brush through my tangled honey blonde hair.

"You wound me." He gasps dramatically. "Anyway I'm just ringing to ask how the date went. Is someone in need of a beating up?"

"No don't be silly! Rylan is a gentleman." I assure him. "Our date went really well; I really enjoyed my time with him." I exclaim trying to sound upbeat about it.

"Ok that's good. You know I'm always here for you Nell... Any problems day or night you call me, ok?" He demands, and I can just see the determined look plastered on his face in my minds eye. a

"Of course Isaac thank you for always being there. Just to let you know I am going clubbing with Rylan, his sister Roxie and a few friends tonight." I reveal, knowing he is going to freak out and come a too.

"What? Which club?" He demands.

Bingo.

"Inferno I think, why?" I ask innocently as if I don't know what I'm doing.

"Just so I know where you are and can make sure you don't get into any trouble." He states matter-of-factly.

I know he will definitely make his way down now, and I am hoping he will tell Zander who will take the bait and come too.

"Ok well please don't embarrass me tonight. I don't want everyone thinking I can't go out without my brothers." I reply a little grumpily, although of course it is all part of the plan.

Where Isaac goes Zander is sure to follow.

"Yeah yeah whatever, I'll see you later Nell. Have a good day." He replies.

"Bye Isaac!" I call out, ending the call with a satisfied grin. ***

A few hours later I make my way over to Roxie's to start our long process of becoming public-ready. Everything seems to be ok with Waverly and I as I made us both lunch and did the ironing, and we didn't mention our other friends again. At the end of the day, she is more then a friend - she is my sister, and that kind of bond is not easily broken.

a

Roxanne is gorgeous even without makeup, whereas I have to apply two layers of concealer just to look half-decent. Waking up next to me would be grim. She welcomes me into her apartment, which is just the same as mine, but the theme colours are blue and green. It is also a lot messier with piles of clothes around the room and a stack of dishes waiting to be washed.

"Excuse the mess in here... it is mostly Sofia's. That girl is so lazy, and even though it is her turn to wash up she never does it!" Roxie sighs as we make our way into her room.

"Oh that's annoying." I comment as I drop my bag to the floor and collapse onto her bed, which has numerous flu y throws over it.

"Tell me about it! I would do anything to replace her. Anyway, enough about that useless waste of space! Holea and a few other girls will be coming over soon, but in the meantime we should choose our outfits." Roxie winks as she sashays over to her closet, which looks like it is going to burst open.

A er an hour and a half of trying on and stripping o, we finally make a decision on what to wear. I choose my outfit from four try-on's ago, which is a hand-me-down from Eden that is yet to make its debut on my body. The dress is gorgeous featuring a cowl neck, and the slinky champagne-colour silk wraps around my curves emphasising them and falls to mid-thigh. Of course I am wearing heels, and once my hair is fully dry from my earlier shower, I will create big bouncy curls. Roxie is wearing super ripped jeans (they're even ripped on the bum, allowing half her sizable ass to hang out) with a white lace bodysuit leaving little to the imagination. Soon enough Holea and her friends Caroline and Journey arrive, and we all get ready together with a box of pizza and bottle of prosecco and vodka. Caroline is ridiculously tall with mousy brown hair, and Journey is her opposite with deep, flawless burnt sienna skin which doesn't need any makeup, and is the same height as me. When we are all finally ready we make our way to the club, and I already feel a little tipsy. I think we are all frozen because of our skimpy weather-defying outfits by the time we arrive (we walked as didn't want to spend money on a cab), but I am excited to be at my first club! Rylan is already waiting with his friend Amar, so we join them in the queue. We wait for around fi een minutes, jumping up and down to get warm, before finally being allowed entry into the underground club by two scary bouncer guys, who only nod as they check our IDs. Caroline has already found a man before we are even inside, so I don't think we'll be seeing a lot of her tonight. The staircase winds down into the ground, only lit by neon tubes of light casting a red glow on the corridors. If it weren't for the mu led thump of music and hazy chatter, it would be quite creepy and apocalyptic. Before we are actually allowed onto the dance floor we have to swipe our cards to be charged an eye watering \$25. We haven't even paid for drinks yet! Of course I am not technically allowed to buy any alcohol, but apparently this club has very lax rules and has a reputation of being a little dodgy. a

The dance floor is packed with sweaty bodies we have to squeeze through to reach the bar, and the strobe lights bounce in time with the music, which is so loud it might make me deaf. Holea orders shots as she chats up the bartender who turns a blind eye to my age.

"Come on Nell, drink up!" Holea yells as she thrusts two drinks into my hands.

They slightly slop onto the already-sticky floor as a man stumbles into me. With a giggle, I chuck the two drinks back, wincing a little as they burn my throat. The DJ is pumping up the crowd with timeless anthems, and every crazy person jumping and swaying in this establishment looks like they're having so much fun I feel a need to join them.

"Hey Ry, do you want to dance with me?" I shout into his ear, and pull him away from his conversation with Journey before he can answer.

The club is electric tonight, everyone feeding o the smiles and sloppy dancing. I could go like this all night long, feet moving to the crazy beat as if they belong to the music. I move in my dress like my hips were made to sway, Rylan matching my tempo and spinning me round. I definitely feel more relaxed and carefree with the alcohol in my system. The music is a drug that brings me higher and higher until my mind buzzes with pure joy. I sense eyes on me as I spin, my dress glimmering in the flashing lights, but as I turn my head, I stumble and accidentally stamp on someone's poor toes as I notice Zander sitting at the bar, looking like he is going to smash the bottle in his hand. God... he looks like a three course meal in that tight tank top and slim black jeans. His eyes boring into mine make me feel alive, as if I have woken up out of dormancy, and all at once, the emotion catches up on me. My heart thuds in my chest, and I feel hot - too hot and covered in sweat, which I am sure isn't all my own. Zander's eyes glare at me disapprovingly, but my own harden as flashes of him and Viv kissing assault my mind.

"Hey are you ok?" Rylan leans forward to whisper in my ear, noticing I have stopped dancing.

"Yes fine." I reply indignantly. "Dance with me..." I purr, deciding to give Zander a show.

Karma's a bitch. a

a

ส์

a

a

đ

a

As the music fades to a slower, more seductive song I sway my hips against Rylan's whose eyebrows raise to the roof.

"Erm Nell... Are you sure you wanna do this?" He asks, his breath hot in my ear, but I only grind my hips harder in response.

Zander looks like he wants to beat Rylan's face in as we dance provocatively. I throw my arms around his shoulders and bring him closer to me, smirking as I notice Zander's jaw locking and he angrily turns his head away.

"Oh God... Eww." Rylan suddenly comments, and I follow his eyes to see Roxie pressed up against the bar with my brother Isaac between her legs and making out quite furiously.

I grimace and roll my eyes, knowing it was going to happen eventually. What I see next to them makes me frown though, as I notice Ethan and Journey exchanging flirty looks and standing very close to each other. Where is his girlfriend Peach? Rylan stifles a groan as I grind into him to the pulsing beat again, before grabbing my hand and pulling me o the dance floor and out of Zander's furious eyeline.

I stumble in my heels and a boob nearly pops out as I half dive to the floor, trying to keep up with Rylan and dodge every drunken fool in this place. I feel a little sick at the strong scent of sweat and alcohol, but I don't think I'm going to chuck up.

"Look I want to get laid tonight. Do you want to release some stress with me or should I find someone else?" Rylan asks a little breathlessly as we reach the main corridor where the music is a little quieter, taking me back.

"W-What?" I stammer as a rosy blush races to my cheeks and my head thumps.

On instinct I turn to look for Zander, but I am unable to see him through the jumping crowd.

"You know what I mean Nell. Do you want to hook up?" He asks a little impatiently.

Wow... ok. Talk about being straightforward! My eyes skim his appearance, and I can't deny that I like what I see, but I only view him as a friend, and my heart only wants Zander.

"No, sorry... I'm not one to sleep around. Go have fun though." I reply with a small grin.

My heart beats a little faster in my chest as a momentary flash of disappointment races through Rylan's eyes, but I don't feel jealous when I think of him with someone else.

"Ok Nell, no worries. Are you ok on your own?" He double checks, as I notice he makes bedroom eyes with a curvy blonde across the room.

I smile to myself as I notice he is already distracted by someone else, and nod in acceptance.

"Of course! Go get her! I'll go find Roxanne or Holea." I shrug, and he gives me a cute little side hug before we part ways.

Feeling quite flushed and way too sober a er that awkward encounter I head up to the bar, dodging wandering hands along the way. When I'm there, I order a Malibu and coke from the crookednosed bartender and look around for my friends. Unsurprisingly my brother and Roxie have disappeared, and I notice Holea making out with a random guy in a dark corner when I strain my eyes. Journey is busy with Ethan, which really pisses me o, and I am not sure where Caroline has disappeared to. Everyone seems to have someone apart from me. Well, that's depressing. I roll my eyes at myself and down my drink as it is served to me, quickly ordering another stronger one when I finish the first.

Nothing has changed; it's the same club, same repetitive dance song and same crowd jumping and grinding to the beat, but now the lights aren't as bright and the music is way too loud causing my headache to worsen. I sigh into my hands as some dude with the smile of a cat sidles up next to me and asks to buy me my next drink. In response I simply throw back the one I already have, feeling down and forlorn.

"She's fine thanks mate." I hear Zander shout as he possessively pulls me into his chest, the fast movement causing my head to spin. a

I don't know what the guy does but he obviously slinks o into the crowd looking for his next victim.

"How much have you had to drink?" Zander frowns.

"I mwissed you Zwander." I sigh as I snuggle into his chest, his cologne relaxing me and reminding me of home. "Let's get more dwinks!" I exclaim, but Zander shakes his head.

"That's enough for you. Come on now, I'll take you home." He sighs as he picks me up, causing me to gasp and fling my arms around his neck.

I snuggle into his chest as he carries me e ortlessly through the club. He is just so strong and manly... I feel so safe and warm in his arms, but there is an underlying sense of sadness.

"Zander... why won't you love me?" I mumble just before I fall asleep. 🛃 Edited

There is going to be 25 chapters and an epilogue guys, so we are nearing the end! •

Continue reading next part