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English excerpt

ROYALTEEN book 2:

PRINCE CHARMING

by

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1

Welcome Back

‘Here we are again.’

The chauffeur flipped the indicator and peered at them in the rear-view mirror.

‘Yessss!’ Kalle yelled, as Margrethe sat in silence, gazing out of the tinted windows.

Elisenberg High School stood there as if nothing had changed, squeezed in between the cafés and tramlines in the heart of Oslo’s Frogner district. It had been more or less deserted since November. Sixteen weeks had passed since Elisenberg and all the other schools in Norway had shut down; since all the students had been told to stay at home to

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stop the virus from spreading; since the parties, the Christmas Ball and all the other fun things people had been looking forward to were cancelled.

Margrethe had been over the moon.

As far as she was concerned, lockdown couldn't have come at a better moment.

Everyone in Norway knew the princess had been rushed to hospital after the Halloween Ball. Everyone knew she had been off sick for two weeks afterwards.

But before she'd had a chance to return to work, the pandemic had struck.

Now breaktime was over.

Margrethe sighed. Her stomach ached.

'Why have you stopped out here on the street?' she asked the chauffeur as she felt the car slow down outside the gate.

'New restrictions. No cars inside the schoolyard. Infection control. Security are already here,' said the chauffeur, Rolf, nodding towards the two suit-clad men who were always in their line of sight.

The shadows, Margrethe's mother used to call them. They stood there, ready to follow her and Kalle inside.

'Seriously?' Margrethe said. 'We have to walk all the way across the schoolyard?'

Rolf nodded briefly, without turning around.

'What makes them think a *car* is going to spread the virus?' Margrethe asked.

Kalle leaned over and took her hand.

'Chill. It'll be fine,' he said.

She looked across at him, the twin brother five minutes her senior, the Crown Prince of Norway. So what if he was childish and hyper – she was just happy she didn't have to do this on her own.

Kalle dropped her hand and unfastened his seatbelt, clearly impatient to get out of the car. Margrethe took a deep breath then released it slowly.

There was no turning back. It was time for her to face the world again.

‘I know what you’re thinking,’ Kalle said. ‘But no one even remembers Halloween.’

Margrethe bit her lip – she knew he couldn’t be more wrong. But how was he supposed to understand? Ever since last autumn, she’d been desperate to tell Kalle what had really happened that night, but she’d chickened out every time. Now it was too late. Now she just hoped he wouldn’t find out about it from any of the others.

Kalle peered out of the window then leaned towards the passenger seat in front of him to get a better view of the schoolyard, tapping his foot restlessly like a little kid who’s just arrived at an adventure playground.

Margrethe knew who he was looking for.

She stuck her hand in her bag, pulled out a pocket mirror and glanced at herself as she shook her hair loose. Her black mascara lay perfectly smooth upon her lashes. She took out her lip gloss and applied a fresh coat, then rubbed her lips together and smiled politely at her reflection.

‘Got your face on? Ready for your comeback?’ asked Kalle as he grabbed the door handle.

Before Margrethe had a chance to answer, he’d snatched up his school bag and bounded out of the car. She’d have to hurry if she wanted to keep up.

Her brother really did seem to have something missing. Or was it that he had an extra something she didn’t have? A kind of shield, a filter. It wasn’t that he didn’t care. She honestly believed he didn’t notice it: that little jolt whenever they arrived somewhere. The way everyone noticed they were there in the blink of an eye – Princess Margrethe and

Crown Prince Karl Johan. Even here at school they found themselves in the limelight the second they stepped out of the car. As the King and Queen's only children, they were always at work. This was what Kalle just couldn't seem to grasp.

A blonde girl in a leather jacket that was slightly too short for her came running up to meet them. Lena Karlsvik, the teen mum from Horten, threw her arms around Kalle. They acted as if they hadn't seen each other for weeks, although the truth was that Lena had pretty much been living with them for the past few months.

Margrethe stopped a little way behind them, hitched her schoolbag impatiently onto her shoulder and waited until they were through. Kalle picked Lena up off the ground by the waist and whirled her around before setting her back down and giving her a kiss full on the lips.

Lena had got herself a prince. Kalle had ended up with a frog.

Margrethe rolled her eyes, then walked around them, taking care to keep her distance. She cursed these idiotic Covid restrictions. Why couldn't they be driven to the door? Was it really too much to ask? She marched towards the classroom, trying to keep her gaze fixed on the ground so her eyes wouldn't stray over to the third years' block. She didn't want to see Gustav Heger. She mustn't draw even more attention to herself.

Her polite smile held steady all the way across the schoolyard as she tried to shrug off the long stares. She could feel them with every cell in her body. Kalle was wrong. It might be March now, but when people looked at her, they still thought of Halloween. It hadn't died down. They would still know. After the brief press release reporting that the princess was in hospital, the internet had exploded with speculation. One of the favourite theories was that she had got drunk and tried to kill herself – which was completely impossible to deny without explaining what actually *had* happened.

And going to hospital wasn't even the worst thing to happen that evening.

But that was something nobody knew.

Not yet.

At last, Margrethe caught sight of her class crew. Ingrid with a big brown bobble hat crammed down over her wild curls, and Arnie, the dazzling gleam of his scalp unprotected against the cold. He'd tried to give himself a haircut in lockdown and when the result proved disastrous, he'd shaved all his hair off. And there was Tess, that little snitch of an influencer, with her stupid eyeliner and her long dreads draped over her right shoulder. Margrethe felt a hot rush of loathing. She was convinced Tess had been selling info and pictures of them to the papers for years. Unbelievable how Tess had managed to survive the past four months without any royal gossip to push. Even more unbelievable that her idiotic beauty account on TikTok had managed to accumulate even *more* followers during lockdown. All paid for probably.

Margrethe looked around for Fanny. Where was she? Her best friend had promised to be there.

The whole gang were poring over Ingrid's mobile phone, so absorbed that Margrethe found herself picturing the worst-case scenario.

What if Gustav Heger had sent them... what if they were standing looking at...

'Margrethe!'

Arnie's warm smile loosened the knot in her stomach.

They didn't know.

Kalle's best friend had also been a regular visitor during lockdown. Even so, she automatically retreated a few metres when he walked up to give her a hug. He was left with his arms hanging in the air and his face flushed scarlet.

Everyone stared at them until Margrethe blinked a few times and said, 'We're not supposed to hug each other, are we?'

Arnie lifted a foot for a Wuhan shake at exactly the same moment as she stuck out an elbow – so they ended up looking as if they were battling it out in the world's lamest dance-off. She really hoped nobody had filmed it.

'What are you all looking at?'

Ingrid lowered her phone quickly.

'Nothing.'

That made Margrethe nervous again. Just then, her brother came up, hand-in hand with Lena. He grinned and pointed at the mobile.

'What's up?' Kalle asked. 'Hand it over!'

Ingrid held onto the mobile for just a little bit too long before sighing and giving it to him.

2

Us versus the Virus

Margrethe peered over his shoulder and breathed an inner sigh of relief. It was a YouTube clip. She caught enough of it to realise it was the Danish Crown Princess, Louise. Mother's friend.

It isn't the sick versus the healthy. It isn't the rich versus the poor, or one country versus another. It's one big US versus the virus.

Apparently yet another of Louise's many now-famous addresses to the Danish people had gone viral. When Covid-19 hit, Denmark had been just as badly affected by the

pandemic as Norway, but with one big difference: the Danish royal family had managed to make a success of the crisis. Not only had they delivered heartfelt speeches about community and strength were widely shared on social media; the family had also volunteered at hospitals and nursing homes. The photos of them, clad in white uniforms and facemasks with sweat beading their foreheads, had travelled to every corner of the world.

Kalle handed back the mobile.

‘Yeah, yeah – add some beats and that’ll make a proper Spring Break banger,’ he said with a grin, then lifted up his arm and started to fist-pump: ‘Us-us-us versus the Virus-us-us! One Big Us-us-us! Versus the Virus-us-us!’

Ingrid slowly put her mobile back in her pocket.

‘Well, I thought it was great. The speech, I mean,’ Ingrid said, and Tess nodded. ‘After all, it *is* us versus the virus, isn’t it?’

Kalle shrugged and burrowed his face in Lena’s hair where he did something that made her give a loud squeak.

‘Maybe you ought to volunteer as a nurse too,’ Lena said, tugging on his puffer jacket.

Kalle threw his head back and laughed.

‘Yeah, me and syringes – the papers would have a field day with that.’

‘But Henrik did it, didn’t he?’ Ingrid said.

The others nodded eagerly. Louise’s son, Prince Henrik, had signed up as a volunteer at the hospital when the virus was at its worst.

‘Of course he did,’ said Kalle. ‘Henrik walks on water.’

‘Are you two close?’ Tess asked curiously.

Margrethe opened her mouth, then shut it again without saying a word. She curled her fingers around the cold iPhone in her pocket. She hadn’t told anybody about the contact

between her and Prince Henrik over the past few months; about the message that arrived right after lockdown. She was surprised to hear from him even though it just seemed to be some kind of standard message. It contained a few supportive words about keeping heads cold and hearts warm, and hoping that she and all the family were keeping well. *Send my best to everybody!* He'd probably sent exactly the same message to the young royals in Sweden. After that flurry of negative press about the Norwegian King and Queen failing to observe restrictions, ignoring their quarantine obligations and crossing borders, Margrethe sent Henrik screenshots of the critical articles on a sudden whim.

What was that you said? Hot heads and cold hearts? It's working brilliantly here...!

He'd replied in a similar tone and they'd carried on texting back and forth. It had been such joy being able to speak freely to somebody without wondering where the information might end up.

'Naaah ... We spent a bit of time together when we were kids,' Kalle said. 'But that was ages ago. I mean, he's almost grownup now.'

'Henrik is only 19,' Margrethe corrected him.

A black Ralph Lauren cap suddenly snuck its way in between Arnie's shiny pate and Margrethe's brown hair. Here she was at last, sweet and smiling in her oversized college sweater and parka.

'Yeah, what are they really like, those Danes?' Fanny asked, peering up from under her cap. 'He seems really... nice, Henrik.'

Fanny's black ponytail bobbed as she gave Margrethe a quick hug and whispered an apology for being late. Margrethe didn't push her best friend away but when she felt Arnie's eyes on her, she realised too late what a mistake that was.

‘Don’t you mean høt?’ Kalle said in a mock Danish accent, wrinkling his nose. ‘But he and his parents are piss børing too. Do you remember that Easter we had to spend the holidays with them and all we did was sit around reading?’

Margrethe remembered it. That calm Easter where they’d all been together and she’d realised that, yes, perhaps families could be like this, too.

‘They’re good people,’ she said curtly as her fingers fiddled with her mobile.

In his messages, Henrik had been funny, clever and self-mocking. He wasn’t piss børing, Margrethe thought. But he most definitely was høt.

‘That’s probably why things have gone so much better in Denmark than in Norway over the past few months,’ Ingrid said. ‘People followed the rules because their leaders did.’

The others fell silent and looked at Margrethe. She felt as if she was itching all over. How was she supposed to respond to Ingrid’s comments? *Sorry my parents have been totally invisible during the pandemic, sorry they broke the rules and messed it all up just when they had a chance to do something good?*

She stared up at the pale blue winter sky.

So awful, never being able to say what you really mean. So awful, never being able to explain why things are the way they are.

‘It’s just a bit difficult to understand why your parents haven’t done more, like the Danish royal family,’ Ingrid said.

She clearly wasn’t going to drop it.

‘You’re right,’ Margrethe said, lifting her chin as the others looked at her expectantly. ‘It *is* difficult for all of you to understand.’

She stared at them. They stared back... then lowered their gazes.

'Well, that's all we have time for on Politics Live. Time to move on to more important matters,' Arnie said. 'What's the regulation distance this weekend?'

'In your case, four metres away from anything remotely breakable,' Fanny said grinning at him.

'Oh, it's such fun to be back together with the whole class again. It's crazy how long it's been! You won't believe how hard we're going to party for your 17th, Fanny!' Ingrid said.

Fanny smiled.

'What do you want for your birthday?' Arnie asked.

'I already told you,' Fanny said. 'For you not to smash anything. Dad hasn't a clue what he's let himself in for by agreeing to host the class party.'

The bell sent them all heading for the classroom.

And that's when Margrethe saw him out of the corner of her eye.

That great mane of blonde hair with its centre parting. He strode along quickly and although she tried to increase her own pace, the others continued at the same leisurely tempo. She felt as if she was wading through treacle. All at once, there he was, right beside her, white teeth bared in a broad grin.

Six months ago, she'd been head over heels in love with Gustav Heger. Now he made her feel sick with shame.

She felt her heart throb in her throat.

'Margrethe! Nice to see you again,' he said, with a cheeky wink.

He didn't slow his pace after he'd overtaken her. Instead he turned around and walked backwards after passing her.

'Seem like you're having fun with your pals, huh?'

He was speaking more loudly now, and pointed at them with the mobile in his hand, before raising it towards his head, as if in a salute.

Margrethe's blood ran cold when the sleeve of his jacket slid down his arm to reveal a thin white support bandage around his right wrist.

Was it... ?

'Catch you later, Princess.'

She found she was having difficulty breathing. Suddenly she couldn't get enough air. The others turned to look at her, puzzled.

'What was up with him?' Tess asked, sceptically, sneakily.

'Gustav Heger, no less,' Ingrid said – failing, as always, to notice anything was wrong. 'What *did* go on between you two? Was there any more action after Halloween? Is that why we've hardly seen you?'

Margrethe shook her head, shrugged her bag higher onto her shoulder and walked faster. She marched away from them and bounded up the steps. Taking them two at a time, she made her way to the front of the crowd of students. She stood on the metre mark waiting to be let into the classroom. Fanny popped up right behind her, staring at her with the same expectant, enquiring look she'd worn ever since the Halloween Ball. She hadn't asked any questions, just ... been there. Turned up at Margrethe's house, taken her out for walks, chattered about the news, the virus and how boring it was that the tennis courts were shut. Whenever Fanny was there, Margrethe felt a bit lighter, a bit more energetic, a bit brighter. She couldn't even bear to think what this time would have been like without her best friend. But not even Fanny knew – not even she could know – about everything that had really happened at Halloween. No, Fanny must *certainly* never find out.

Margrethe felt her phone vibrating in her bag. She checked it quickly and her heart skipped a beat.

The others came up behind her and Margrethe walked towards the classroom, where their teacher Ove stood with a box, ready to collect their mobile phones.

Margrethe. I've had an idea, read the message from Henrik.

She didn't have time to read any more before she had to hand over her phone.

'Shall we sit in the same places as before?'

She nodded and smiled at Fanny and that's when it hit her.

Her smile was holding up all by itself.

Gustav Heger might not be finished with her, but nor was Prince Henrik.

And he'd had an idea!

3

Warm Heart

Margrethe ate her pasta salad slowly. She popped the cherry tomatoes into her mouth one by one and picked away at her lettuce. Cooking up some excuse about needing to ring her father, she stayed at the canteen table after the others left. It was a safe place. Gustav Heger and his friends never came into the canteen: they always bought lunch outside school.

Margrethe put down her fork and read the message over and over again.

I've had an idea. It's so unfair how much criticism you're getting. Maybe we could help each other out? And how is the beautiful princess holding up in the midst of all this? Warm heart? <3

His words settled over her like a warm blanket that stretched from her heart all the way down to her stomach. It wasn't that Prince Henrik had said she was beautiful. Or not *just* that. It was also the concern he showed. The fact that he saw her. His messages were also a lovely reminder that there was a world beyond the walls of Elisenberg High, that there were other people out there apart from her crew. A place where she wouldn't feel different, where people would simply *understand*.

She took her time replying, keen to make her message as smooth and charming as his own. Henrik was only three years older than her, but he had always been so grownup, so proper. The smooth black hair and gorgeous green eyes weren't the only things that appealed to her about the Danish prince. There was also the way he always said and did the right things.

Last time they'd met was on his 18th birthday, at the official celebrations in Amalienborg almost two years ago. During the gala dinner he gave a beautiful, moving speech about what it had been like to grow up as an only child, but how he had never felt the lack of siblings or been lonely because his parents and grandparents had always been there for him. He made everybody laugh by saying that although he was heir to the throne, he was in no hurry to claim it because he assumed that his grandfather, the nearly 90-year-old King of Denmark, would rule for another hundred years at least. Okay, so maybe it wasn't side-splittingly funny – it didn't take much to make people to laugh at royal jokes – but Henrik was so confident, so pleasant, when he spoke in public.

Margrethe had always thought her own brother could learn a lot from him. The only thing they had in common was being heirs to the throne. That and the fact that both of them were charmers. Kalle and Henrik had never had particularly good chemistry. Kalle used to say Henrik was a square, but wasn't that exactly what royals were meant to be?

She read the message again. *Maybe we could help each other out?* What did he mean by that?

Hi Henrik! All well here in Norway, she started, then deleted the text at once. After all, she knew she could speak openly to Henrik.

Henrik! Lovely to hear from the royal nurse. Things are a bit rough right now. We'd be glad of some assistance – it's great to see how well things are going for all of you.

She sent it off, thought for a bit and then wrote another message.

You must never tell anybody this, but now and then I wish I were a Danish princess instead of a Norwegian one. She added a gritted teeth emoji.

She quickly sent that one off too. The clock told her that her next class started in five minutes, so she didn't have time to sit there wondering whether that last message had been a good idea. As she dumped her half-eaten salad in the bin she noticed the glances of the two girls behind her. As far as she could see, neither of them had their mobile phone out. But even so, the rumours would soon be flying about this too: the princess hadn't finished her lunch – did she have an eating disorder? Everything was interpreted. Almost everything was *misinterpreted*. She shook her head, picked up her water bottle and walked quickly along the corridor back to her classroom without meeting anybody's gaze.

'Margrethe!'

Arnie was coming towards her from the entrance at a half-run with his puffer jacket in his hand. She wouldn't be surprised to find he'd spent the whole of break outside without putting it on – he'd probably forgotten all about it. Sometimes he was as scatter-brained as a kid.

He stopped a couple of metres away from her.

'Hey, I just wanted to apologise for not remembering to keep my distance this morning,' he said. 'It was so stupid of me.'

'Oh, please don't worry about it,' Margrethe said. 'I only reacted like that out of habit. And partly so nobody could say we weren't behaving *correctly*. No need to stress about it. After all, we've been Covid buddies, haven't we?'

Margrethe had mostly stayed in her room whenever Arnie visited Kalle. She couldn't cope with the questioning look in his puppy-dog eyes, his constant attempts to corner her for a confidential chat. He clearly couldn't let go of that Halloween night. Not even now, when they were standing right in the middle of the corridor.

'Sure. I mean, we are still buddies, aren't we?'

'Of course we are. Why do you ask?' Margrethe said, starting to walk off. She acted as though she didn't understand what he meant.

Arnie kept his gaze fixed on the ground as they walked along.

'Well, you know, I've been feeling so damned guilty ever since ... that thing happened. And whenever I try to talk to you about it ... well, it seems as if you aren't keen to talk and I kind of get the feeling you're still a bit cross with me.'

Margrethe halted, sighed and looked at him.

'Listen. How many times have you apologised for all that business?'

'Quite a few times.'

'And how many times have I said it wasn't your fault but mine?'

'Every time.'

'Exactly,' she said. 'So I really don't think there's very much more to talk about.'

'But Kalle says you've been so sad ...'

She could have thumped her brother.

'Kalle says all kinds of peculiar things. Now listen to me: we are friends. I am not cross with you. Everything will be fine. Class is about to start. Can't we just leave it at that?'

Arnie nodded.

'Okay, we'll leave it at that,' he said. 'And you'll be there on Friday, right?'

Darn, she'd need to remember to sort out Fanny's birthday present. It was too late to order anything online. Could she ask somebody else to go to shopping for her? It wouldn't do for her to go traipsing through downtown Oslo herself. Going to a party was the very last thing she felt like doing right now, but she couldn't *not* go.

'Wouldn't miss it for the world,' she said.

Arnie walked on ahead of her and dropped his iPhone in the teacher's waiting box. Margrethe was about to make some quip about how they were doing the virus a favour by letting all those phones rub up against each other, covered in the sweaty fingerprints of twenty different students. But she forgot all about it when she took her own mobile out of her bag and felt the warm blanket settle over her again.

Henrik had answered. Already!

Easy. If you want to be a Danish princess all you have to do is marry me, he wrote.

4

Pair work

The teachers were on the attack. On their very first day of normal classes, Ove had already set them a Norwegian assignment. When he told them to team up in pairs, Margrethe grabbed Fanny's hand. She couldn't bear having to make small talk with anybody else,

although she regretted it as soon Ove told them they'd be presenting their poetry analysis the very next day.

This was the last class, which meant they'd have to do the assignment at home.

Margrethe ought to have paired up with Kalle – that way they could have sat and done the assignment quietly at the kitchen table. But if she knew him, he'd have his hands full all that evening 'doing pair work' with Lena. They'd been putting in a whole lot of 'pair work' lately.

Getting together with Lena, a chavvy teen mum from Horten, was her brother's weirdest and longest-lasting stunt to date. Margrethe had thought she'd saved him from this disastrous relationship but to her immense shock, he'd used the Halloween Ball to declare his undying love to the tacky teen. He'd even done it from the stage. During his performance, Margrethe had stood up and clapped along politely to his dismal singing. But what she really felt like doing was giving him a good slap. She was embarrassed on her brother's behalf and despaired about all the headlines his idiotic prank would spark. But the very worst thing of all was that Kalle hadn't told her about it. All the rest of their crew had been in on the secret. That was perfectly obvious from the way they'd all sat next to the stage, nodding their encouragement. Kalle had settled on his plan, and had then rehearsed, planned and discussed it with Ingrid and Tess – and yes, even Fanny. None of them had said a word about it to Margrethe.

When that happened she was glad she'd ditched the lot of them and gone to the ball with Gustav Heger instead.

If only she hadn't gone with him to that house afterwards.

'Shall we sit and work in The Juicery?' Fanny asked. 'Or will that be too stressful for you? We can go to my place instead if you'd rather.'

Margrethe looked out of the window and caught sight of Rolf, who was leaning against the car outside the school gates. There was no sign of Gustav Heger. Where was he now? What was he up to? What was he thinking. Did he have a ... plan?

Would he be in The Juicery?

She couldn't face taking any chances.

'Can we go back to mine? That way, Rolf can drive you home afterwards.'

Fanny nodded and, as usual, asked no awkward questions.

'Sure, we'll do whatever's best for you.'

Margrethe put on her coat and Fanny threw her parka on over her sweater. They wound their scarves around their necks and went out together, into the cold.

Rolf waved at them when they got closer.

'Miss Fanny! How lovely to see you,' he said. 'Get in, get in. It's nice and warm in the car.'

Fanny and Rolf chattered all the way to Asker. That suited Margrethe fine just because it left her free to re-read her messages from Henrik. Obviously all that stuff about getting married was just a joke but surely there couldn't be any doubt that he was flirting with her?

Even though he was sweet and nice, she'd always had the impression that the Danish prince saw her as just *en lille pige* – a little girl. Other than at that grand, formal 18th birthday party, they hadn't hung out together since she was – what ... eleven?

Perhaps the Halloween scandal hadn't been all bad for her image after all?

A sneaky google search threw up a photo she'd never seen before. It had been taken on a beach. Damp-haired, wetsuit rolled down to his waist, Henrik stood there bare-chested, glistening and grinning. It was clearly not an official photo. But God, she'd never seen him looking so hot! *The perennially single prince*, read the caption. The photo was from

some stupid ranking of Denmark's sexiest men. She clicked her way to the article. The journalist who'd written it obviously thought there was some big mystery about the fact that the prince didn't have a girlfriend. There was nothing mysterious about that as far as Margrethe was concerned. She was all too familiar with the problem. All it took was one date, one snap with a stranger and just like that, the online news sites and gossip accounts would be abuzz with the revelation that you were a couple. How could you possibly get to know anybody under those circumstances?

Now more and more of her group of friends had started dating. Kalle and Lena were a whole saga in their own right, but Ingrid and Tess had had a few flings too; they kept making jokes on the group chat about their stupid ONS experiences. She didn't know if they were serious – whether they'd actually *had* any one-night stands, but it wasn't beyond the realms of possibility. Life was so easy for them. The very thought of it made Margrethe cross. She hated the feeling of being left behind. Like when they did a fitness test in P.E. at middle school and everybody else just dashed off. Only this time, no amount of training would help her catch up with them. Like, what could she do? Who could she sleep with? Who was it safe to trust? And when was it supposed to happen? When she was ... thirty – by which time everybody else would have been married for ages?

That business with Gustav Heger at Halloween had just made matters worse. After that, she'd sworn to herself that she would never put herself in such a vulnerable position again.

She would stop trying, stop hoping.

This was her fate: she was born to die an old maid. She was destined to stand around, silent and strange, while everybody else prattled on about their fantastic experiences.

Or was she..?

She blushed violently as a sudden thought occurred to her.

Of course.

Henrik must have had exactly the same thought.

Yes!

Slowly, she swiped his tanned, semi-naked body aside.

Felt a rush of excitement in the pit of her stomach.

There was a possibility.

There was an absolutely perfect number one.

The very thought of it made her entire body fizz.

'What are you laughing about?' Fanny asked.

'Nothing,' Margrethe said as she leaned her face against the car window, unable to hide the smile that was reflected in the glass.