**Chapter 2**

The next day, Oliver sat at his desk staring out of window. Each time, he started a task, he caught himself drifting off. Doing out of the window, Anne suddenly came blustering in the door.

“What are you doing? I need you now.”

He rolled his eyes. “Responding to language program inquiries to increase program revenues can wait, I guess.” He sighed as he stood to face Anne. She wore a long, floor-length printed blue and red kimono over a slim black form-fitting jumpsuit with blue strappy heels. “What’s wrong with my feet? Why are staring at them?”

“Nothing,” he responded, wincing. “You look nice,” he admitted. “What is it that you need?”

“It’s really an emergency,” Anne asserted. Oliver fought his natural inclination to roll his eyes. After the previous night, he thought they may have grown. Oliver cursed his foolishness. “The Minister of State for Tourism wants to interview me about the World Language Institute’s immersion programs. He thinks that his office can leverage our program to build more interest in tourism in smaller regional markets.”

“Okay, but you’ve had these types of conversations before. Why is this particular interview an emergency?”

“It’s an emergency because of who he is and what this could mean for the organization going forward. I don’t expect you to understand the gravity.”

“Right. Well, since I’m so ignorant, I don’t see how I could possibly help you in this matter.” He turned to walk back to his desk.

“Calm down.” She placed her hand on his arm. The contact almost made him pull away. She never touched him. “You know how I get when I get nervous.”

“Yeah, you become even more of a dragon than you were before.”

“Okay, I need your help. You know the details on how all of the immersion programs work. You know the marketing strategy. You understand the organizational strategic plan. I need talking points. I need to understand how to sell him on why he should work with us.”

He placed his hands in pockets. That was the closest he ever came to receiving a genuine apology from Anne. “Well, it seems to me that the Minister is already desiring the partnership. So, instead of focusing on how we sell him, we focus on explaining the direction in which the organization is naturally going.”

“If you have talking points to me by tomorrow, I will take you out to dinner.” Oliver’s posture stiffened, feeling his muscles tighten.

His mouth fell slack. “Sure, okay,” he responded in a halting voice. “Yeah, I can have the talking points prepared.” His voice sounded exceedingly small. Anne grinned.

“Well, it’s a date.” Anne turned and walked out of the office. Oliver returned to his desk. He never thought he would hear the word ‘date’ come out of Anne’s mouth directed towards him.