



THE ULTIMATE SUPER LIKE



BY THE  
**MOUNTAIN MAN**  
FRANKIE LOVE

SWIPED RIGHT BY  
THE MOUNTAIN  
MAN

The Mountain Men of Linesworth

# FRANKIE LOVE



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MOUNTAIN MAN**

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## About

*He may have swiped right, but this all wrong.*

After my break-up, I'm in a funk.

Enter Timber, a new dating app full of bearded hotties.

I'm matched with Wyatt, a man who's seriously too hot to handle.

Ripped biceps? Check.

Six pack? Check.

Eyes as clear as a mountain lake? Check.

Sure, this sexy CrossFit trainer is a player, but I'm not looking for a commitment. And neither is he.

After a night of sexy-times, we wake to realize we're total opposites.

Good thing Timber is just about hook-ups.

The tiny thing though? I need a favor, and only he can help me.

I may have given him a super like on the app... but in real life?

This is a super bad idea.

Or is it?

*Dear Reader,*

*Wyatt knows what you need—a full body workout like you've never had before.*

*With good reason, this rugged mountain man is all kinds of cocky.*

*He doesn't need to lift weights when he can pick you up and put you right where you belong: in his lap.*

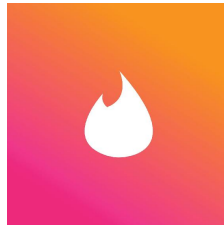
*It's time to swipe yes, please.*

*xo, Frankie*



# Prologue

WINDSOR



I'VE ALWAYS BEEN the practical one. It wasn't a hard role to fit into considering Kensie, my older sister, is the cray-cray member of the family. But now that she's engaged, she's become... I don't know, less of a wild card. More of a sure bet.

And for the first time in my life, I'm the one who doesn't have my act together.

I've been in break-up mode for the past forty-eight hours. Rocking a stretched-out tank top, pajama pants printed with tiny llamas, and hair so ratty no amount of dry shampoo can fix it. I need back up.

"Kensie," I text. "Just come over. Please." Then I fall back on my bed and begin scrolling through Facebook, torturing myself by looking at Markus living his best life. Why do I care what that cheating sack of bologna is doing?

Because we dated for, like, three months. I know it wasn't forever, but I thought it was going somewhere. Instead, our entire history was deleted in a single day.

When my sister arrives a half hour later with Tillie, her BFF, I know I made a good choice in reaching out.

Kensie has brought sustenance in the form of pints of ice cream—my very favorite non-dairy sorbet—and a bottle of organic Pinot Grigio from a local winery. They know me well.

And while I'm usually a health food freak—if I'm going to bend the rules with all this sugar—tonight is the night. Tillie is already pulling up a playlist titled GET OVER HIM.

This pair is golden, and while my sister is four years older than me, we've become so close since I moved back to town this past year. It was supposed to be just for the summer as a nanny, but then I decided to finish my business degree online, which I did as of a month ago. Yay me! Living in the big city of Seattle was fine for a while, but I missed the mountains of Linesworth.

"Markus was a douchebag from day one, Winnie," Kensie says. "You can do way better than him."

"But he was so put together. He worked at a bank. He owned his own home. He—"

"He cheated on you with a ski instructor," Tillie says. "He doesn't get your tears, girl."

"And you're twenty-one years old. You've said yourself, you don't want to settle down. And you're your own woman. You're planning on opening a juice bar for goodness sakes. You have drive all on your own. You don't need a man with a thirty-year mortgage to tie you down. You just need to have fun," Kensie points out.

"Maybe," I sigh, taking the pint of lemon sorbet. "But you're so happy, Kens, now that you have Kodiak. I want a happily ever after too."

Kensie walks to the kitchen and grabs spoons. Handing me one, she twists her lips. "Then you should maybe take a shower. Because this," she points to my clothing and hair situation, "isn't exactly working."

I moan, digging into the sorbet. Her input sounds like a lot of work. Showering. Washing my hair. Putting on clean clothes. I look over at my laptop.

"A Netflix marathon of *Gossip Girl* sounds way more fun than going to a bar to find a one-night stand," I tell them."

"You know," Tillie says with a glimmer in her eye. "I have an idea."

“Are pants required?”

She shakes her head and grabs my phone from the nightstand. “Nope, but a really good selfie is. I bet you have one on here.”

I try to snatch my phone from her, not liking where this is headed, but she squirms away.

“It’s a great idea, promise. You need a rebound. Have you heard of Timber?”

I shake my head, looking lovingly at the unopened bottle of wine. Like the good sister she is, Kensie heads back to the kitchen for a bottle opener and clean glasses.

Not sure she’ll find any considering my sink is filled. I haven’t exactly been in the mood to clean. Wallowing alone in bed is way more fun than that.

“It’s a new dating app. Like, you swipe right on a guy if you’re interested, left if you’re not. If you both swipe on one another, you’re matched.”

“Where are these potential suitors located?”

Tillie smiles, pulling up the app she’s already downloaded. “They all have to be in a thirty-mile radius. So, it’s like, perfect for you.”

“What’s the catch?”

She laughs. “That’s the best part, there isn’t one. Timber is made for mountain men only. If you’re a guy and you want to be on the app, you have to have a beard.”

“That’s...” I pause, looking for the word.

“Brilliant?” Tillie laughs. “Out of town guys who come to Linesworth for the weekend, hop on the app and look for a hook-up. It’s perfect for a rebound. And guys who come here are usually looking for outdoorsy stuff. Which means they are usually the bearded ones.”

I take my phone from Tillie. “What is a super like?” I ask, looking at the screen and seeing an image of a heart that I can choose to tap to make a “super like”.

“Oh, that’s what you do when you, well, super like one of the users. Only tap the heart if you are really interested.” She’s already created a profile for me. All it needs is a photo. “I don’t know if I’m a hook-up kind of girl.”

Kensie hands us each a glass of wine, then sits next to us on the bed. “Winnie, 95% of the time you are totally practical. What if tonight, you gave into that other 5% of your personality?”

I exhale, not liking the way I feel. Lonely.

“What if no one swipes right or whatever on me?”

Tillie laughs. “That won’t happen, believe me. You’re beautiful, inside and out. A guy will see that you have a good heart.”

Kensie rolls her eyes. “Whatever. Guys go on this app to get laid, not to have a heart-to-heart connection. They want big bootys or boobs or whatever.”

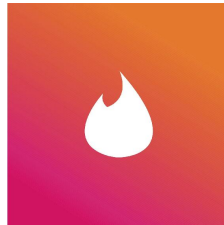
This gets me to crack a smile. I was blessed with junk in my trunk and a rack that needs extra wide bra straps for support. My body is the mirror opposite of my older sister’s.

“I guess I could try,” I say, scrolling through my camera roll, looking for a flattering photo. I pick one and upload without overthinking it. “Now what?”

Kensie grins, saying, “Now you start swiping.”

# Chapter 1

WYATT



THIS WOMAN IS A NEW USER. She has to be. I've never seen her picture on the app before and if I had, I would have remembered. I would've swiped the fuck out of that photo. Which is what I do right now.

As I sit on the couch in the living of my brother's apartment, my pointer finger makes a practiced motion, swiping where I want to go: right to her. One look and I'm smitten. She has wavy blonde hair, green eyes with flecks of gold, sun-kissed skin. I don't think she has on any makeup, and she doesn't need it. She looks healthy, alive... my kind of girl.

I'm not saying the girls I hook up with have to be super fit to be my type, but usually, it's what I'm drawn to. Someone who is active and interested in hiking, rock climbing, working out.

I'm not a fitness-obsessed dude... exactly. Okay, I am, but it's because I'm trying to open a CrossFit gym. So, it is kind of my life. I'm a personal trainer, but I'm looking to expand.

But today it's no work. It's all pleasure. Right now, I'm looking at the woman who I'm going to take to bed.

She's gorgeous. That little smile of hers tells me she likes to have a good time. Her name is hidden unless there is a match. A moment later, there's a ping.

**“Congratulations! You have a match!”**

I take a swig of my beer and grin, having suspected that would happen. The app, Timber, tells me it wasn't just a regular match, this woman Super Liked me, which is more assertive and certainly gets my attention. Now that we've been matched, I can see her name and a brief bio.

♥ *Windsor, 21*

*I'm on the rebound. No strings. Just want to have fun. I don't date douche bags or druggies. ♥*

It's to the point, straight up, and I like it. This girl seems sensible, no-nonsense, practical. Grinning I think, not too practical, considering she's on Timber.

I open the direct messages and type out a text to her.

"Hey! We're a match!" Not exactly suave, but I hate bullshit, cheesy pickup lines. I am what I am, no false anything. These muscles are real, just like my intentions.

"I'm a first-timer," she writes. "So how does this work?"

"Are you free now?"

"I will be in an hour. I'm currently rocking yesterday's clothes and could use a shower."

I laugh. Who admits that? "I could always help with the shower."

Forward, sure, but we're both on this app for one reason: to get laid.

"Um, thanks for the offer, but I'm not exaggerating," she types. "My sister says I can't leave the house without doing something about my hair."

I smirk, she really isn't holding anything back. It makes me glad I'm the one she matched with, considering she's acting like an open book. She needs to be a little more cautious

on apps like this. If a guy was less honorable, she could get herself in a less than ideal situation.

“So, how about drinks at Main Street Pub in an hour?” I ask.

“I’ll be there.” Then she sends me a heart-eyes emoji. Well, that was easy enough. I like this girl even more than I did at first sight. No unnecessary flirting, no silly banter to get us where we both want to go. In bed.

I had been planning on going out tonight. I just didn’t know with whom. Now I do, and considering this woman is the girl of my dreams – if I’m going off looks alone – I figure I ought to pull out all the stops.

I run oil over my beard and tug on a clean T-shirt that fits snugly around my biceps. Next, I put on a pair of dark denim jeans and a pair of brown boots. Finally, I reach for a flannel shirt and cuff the sleeves, then button it up over my broad chest.

Windsor went on Timber looking for a mountain man. It’s a good thing I fit the part. I was born and raised in the wilds of Montana and moved out here just a few months ago following my brother. We figured that with both our parents gone, we’re the only family we’ve got. So, we decided to stick together.

I’m crashing at his two-bedroom apartment for now, but I plan on getting a place of my own. He owns a food truck in town and so the both of us both have an entrepreneurial streak.

It was a good call, coming out here. Linesworth is a great place, and there’s no competition as far as a CrossFit gym goes. If I get my bank loan approved, I will own the first gym of its kind in the area.

I text my brother, Benji, letting him know where I’ll be tonight, then head out to my truck.

It’s a crisp night, stars fill the sky, and even though it’s only October, I can already tell it’s going to be a great winter. Not much rain, lots of snow... perfect for a tourist town like this. I drive down toward Main Street, marveling at the Bavarian village.

It always catches me off guard. It's picture perfect, the kind of place you move to and you never leave. I've gotten to know some people in town since I've moved in. The owners of a guide shop, Clive and his brother-in-law, Charlie, have taken me out on a few mountain treks as I got to know the lay of the land. They both tell me that once you move here, you never leave.

Sounds good to me. I have a problem putting down roots—but I want to establish a business here and have no intention of leaving the place Benji calls home. That doesn't mean that right now I have any interest in a long-term relationship right now.

I just want to have fun and enjoy my 20's. Though at twenty-eight I realize that those sweet years are creeping to an end.

After parking my truck down the street from the pub, I jump out taking a deep breath of the mountain air, as I prepare myself for a good time. I have no idea what to expect when it comes to this girl, Windsor, but I'm ready to find out.

I'm ready to get laid. Ready to sink my cock into her creamy cunt, crass as that may sound. We both went on Timber for one reason and one reason only. To hook up, just like she said in her bio.

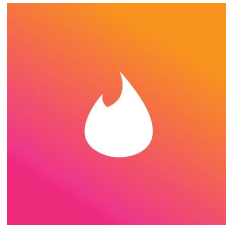
I walk into the bar, scanning the crowd for a girl who caught me off guard by just how beautiful she is. She's not here yet, so I sidle up to the bar and order a whiskey neat.

I take a drink, ready for my night to begin.



## Chapter 2

WINDSOR



MY HAIR IS WASHED and dried, my legs have been shaved and I put on a pair of pretty panties and a lacy bra.

“You’re sure this is a good idea?” I ask Kensie and Tillie as I step into a dress. “What if he’s a lunatic?”

Tillie laughs. “Then you’ll leave. And don’t worry, we will be at the bar watching just in case something shady happens.”

“Thank you,” I say, facing the mirror as my sister zips up the little black dress. It’s short, tight, and strapless. If there was a dress that says let’s go get frisky, this is it.

“This guy Wyatt is gonna cream his jeans,” Kensie says.

“That’s the most seventh-grade comment you’ve ever made,” I tell my sister as I filter through my make-up bag. “Should I wear a clear gloss or go for something more glam?”

Tillie twists her lips. “Gloss. You were *au naturel* in the photo you posted, you want to give him what he is expecting.”

Seeing her point, I slide the lip-gloss over my lips. Tillie may be a virgin and a total sweetheart, yet she’s the savviest when it comes to this dating app.

Walking to the kitchen, I grab a bottle of juice I made earlier today. It’s wheat grass, ginseng, and ginger. Perfect to calm my nerves. I pour myself a glass and offer it to my compadres.

We all take a glass and clink the rims. “To Timber,” Kensie says.

“To Timber!” Tillie and I repeat, before drinking the flavorful concoction. I am so proud of my homemade juices and I really hope the business loan goes through at the bank, so I can open my juice bar.

It’s my dream in life. The biggest hurdle I’m scared of at the moment is Mark, my ex, and also my loan officer, screwing me over. Not in the way he screwed the ski instructor, of course.

“So, I guess, now, I go to have the first one-night stand of my life?” I scrunch up my shoulders feeling a little jittery.

Kensie laughs, looking at my phone. She has his profile up and turns it toward me. “Yep, that is pretty much the plan. He just messaged you saying he is there.”

“He is sexy, right?” I swallow, knowing the answer. Wyatt is clearly in shape, has a bright smile, eyes so blue, so crystal clear, it puts our mountainside lake to shame. His bio sealed the deal. He isn’t from Linesworth, so I won’t have to run into him again anytime soon.

*Wyatt, 28*

*Montana born and raised. Enjoy long mountain hikes and sex under the stars.*

“He’s perfect for a fling,” Kensie assures me. “Now, let’s get to the bar before he thinks you stood him up.”

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When I see him at the bar my jaw drops. He’s way bigger than I expected. Not heavy. I mean tall and strong with a beard that I’m practically drooling over. All I can picture is him between my legs, tickling me until I can’t breathe. Mark could never, ever give me a happy ending that way.

“You okay, Windsor?” Kensie asks.

I swallow, nodding, looking for a word other than hot. “I’m just a little parched,” I manage to say.

“Okay, we’ll be sitting at a booth in the corner,” Tillie says. “Just come over if you need anything.”

“Wish me luck,” I say and head toward the hulk of a man who is so ripped, I’m nervous his muscles are going to tear that flannel shirt in two. Not that I would mind. I like the idea of him turning into a rugged superhero ready to save me from myself.

To think that an hour ago, I was crying over the loser Mark who wore Men’s Wearhouse suits and had a Crest Whitestrips smile. Mark was fake, trying so hard to be something other than himself.

Wyatt though comes off as self-possessed, and we haven’t even spoken a word to one another. There is just an air about the way he stands at the bar with his shot of whiskey in hand. Like he is in complete control, with absolute confidence.

He’s chatting with the couple next to him, and someone must have said something funny because all three of them start laughing. It eases the tension in my shoulders, the easy-going sound. Creeps don’t joke around with people they meet at bars. Do they?

Regardless, here I am.

There is no backing out now. Not that I want to. The closer I walk to the bar, the more certain I am that this is exactly what I need to be doing tonight, even if it is way outside of my comfort zone.

He catches my eye and his smile widens as he takes me in.

“Windsor?” he asks, reaching for me. He smoothly wraps an arm around my back and kisses my cheek. He whispers in my ear. “You look so fucking beautiful.”

I let out a tiny laugh. How is this happening to me?

When I look up, I practically drown in those lake-blue eyes of his.

“I’m Wyatt,” he says. “Would you like a drink?”

“I already feel drunk,” I murmur, mesmerized by the way his large hand feels on the small of my back. Like it is exactly where it belongs.

“Then what are we doing at a bar?” he asks, eyes raised.

My mouth goes dry. “I have no idea.”

“Then let’s get out of here.”

I nod, then turn and wave goodbye to my friends who are looking at me with wide eyes.

“Do you want to stop and tell them we’re leaving?” Wyatt asks his low voice sending waves of delight over me.

“Is that okay?” I ask.

“Of course. They probably want to make sure you’re alright.”

Pleased with his understanding of female relationships, he guides me to the back booth there Kensie and Tillie are staring at us.

“Hey, we’re just gonna head out,” I say, trying to act as cool as possible. Like I have hook-ups with mountain men every damn day.

“Right, okay. So, like, you’re Wyatt?” Kensie asks.

He gives her a smile and offers her his hand. He shakes it, and she seems satisfied.

“Use protection,” Tillie says.

“Tillie!” I hiss. Wyatt laughs.

“What?” she scoffs. “You might get lost in the moment and forget yourself. You might be swept away by... by... you know the whole thing, and forget you just wanted a one-night stand and not a life-long connection to this man as your baby daddy.”

“Thanks for looking out for your girl,” Wyatt says, not at all minimizing her concern. “I’ll make sure there are no babies unintentionally made tonight.”

“Good,” Tillie says, exhaling. “In that case, what are you doing here?” She shoos us away with her hand. “Go get your freak on.”

As we walk away, I snort with laughter from Tillie’s ridiculous comments. And when I do, Wyatt looks at me in surprise. “God, I can’t think of the last time I went on a date with a woman who snorted.”

“Is that a deal breaker or something?” I ask, laughing.

He shakes his head. “No, I enjoy it. I enjoy it a lot.”

“What else do you enjoy, Wyatt?”

“Didn’t you read my bio?”

I bite back a smile as we exit the bar. “Right. You enjoy long mountain hikes and sex under the stars.”

“Exactly. So, shall we?”

“Take a hike?” I ask, looking down at my heels. “I don’t think so.”

“Not that part,” he says, turning me to face him on the sidewalk of Main Street. “I was meaning the sex under the stars.”

I swallow, suddenly needing that drink I turned down.

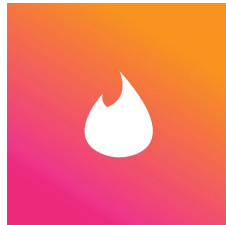
“Yes, let’s.”

He gives me a smile as if knowing I’d say that. Then he tilts back my head, his calloused fingertips against my jaw, lifting my chin. The moment stills and the stars above seem to shine brighter. The chill in the fresh mountain air wraps around us, as the heat between our bodies grows.

Then he kisses me. Hard and fast and I don’t need a drink. I just need this night to last.

## Chapter 3

WYATT



SHE KISSES me like she needs this. Her soft pink lips press against mine as if she's been waiting for this moment her whole damn life. It makes me want to satisfy her in every possible way. It's clear by her friends' comments, that she doesn't usually do this sort of thing... hook-up with men.

So, she must have a reason for needing to let go of her inhibitions tonight.

Her mouth opens, and I swirl my tongue against hers. The soft moan that escapes her lips gets my cock hard and I know I need to get this gorgeous girl off the street before this kiss becomes indecent.

“God,” I groan, pushing my fingers through her thick hair, breathing against her ear. “I want to fuck you so damn badly.”

Her eyelashes flutter. “Is this how Timber hook-ups usually work?” she asks.

“What do you mean?”

“Just... you're like, male model worthy, Wyatt. I feel a little out of my league.”

“Girl, look at you in this tiny little dress. You are in a league all of your own.”

She blushes, shaking her head, and I wonder how she's gone through her life not believing how damn hot she is.

“Not every guy thinks that,” she says, and I see a line of hurt in her eyes.

“Well, whoever broke your heart is a fucking fool,” I tell her, wrapping my arm around her waist, hand on her ass, leading her to my truck.

“My heart isn’t broken,” she says. “More like the idea of what could have been.”

“You’re a romantic, then?” I ask, opening the truck for her, and offering her a hand as she climbs into the passenger seat. Her ass is nice and round, and the girl is fit. Every inch of her is toned.

She sighs, as she buckles herself in. “Maybe. But don’t worry, Wyatt. Tonight, isn’t about commitment or promises. It’s about letting go, giving in. Right?”

I grin, appreciating her candor. I’m sure as hell not interested in settling down.

Though, after one kiss with her, I could see myself changing my tune.

Which is crazy. I’m not that guy. A guy who commits.

But Windsor isn’t like any girl I’ve ever met. She makes my heart pound in my chest, makes my cock hard with something more than lust. I am filled with desire. A need to make Windsor happy tonight, give her everything she needs. I never get that feeling when I hook-up with women.

Yet, as I walk around my truck to the driver’s seat, I am thinking about where the perfect place to take Windsor might be. Usually, I take girls to my place, but it’s a fucking apartment I share with my brother. I want to take her somewhere special. Somewhere I’ve never taken another woman. I want what I share with her to be ours alone.

“So, where are we headed?” she asks as I put the key in the ignition.

I turn toward her, running a hand over her bare thigh. God, her skin is so fucking soft.

“I told you, sex under the stars.”

Even in the dark truck, I see her eyes light up. “Be careful, Wyatt,” she says with a smile.

“What do you mean?”

“Sex under the stars is pretty romantic; I don’t want you to get your heart broken,” she says laughing.

I shift the truck into drive and pull out of my spot, giving my girl a sidelong glance. Damn, I think I’m in trouble.

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I drive past an abandoned field outside of town, and she smiles when I park the truck in a private clearing.

“What?”

“It’s just, this is the high school make-out spot.”

“Really?” I look around, no other cars are here. “Should we go somewhere else?”

“No, it’s kinda nostalgic, actually.”

“Oh, yeah?” I ask, killing the engine and turning toward her. “Is this where you lost your virginity?”

She nods. “Is that weird?”

“No, it’s just...”

“What?” She asks.

“It’s funny, I didn’t want to take you to my place because I’ve taken other women there, then I bring to the place you’ve been with other guys.”

“Guy,” she clarifies. “I had a boyfriend senior year, we came here Prom night. Gosh,” she laughs. “I’m such a cliché.”

“It’s cute,” I tell her. “But we aren’t staying here.”

She bites the side of her lip. “Why do you care if I’ve been here with another guy?”

I swallow, running a hand over my beard. How do I explain the desire to mark her as mine, and mine alone? That I want to give her a night that she only remembers as ours?



She's a stranger, a woman I barely know. But god, I feel a stirring in my heart when I look at her.

"I just don't want any teenage guys to show up and get a complex. If they saw what a real man was made of, they might not be able to perform for their girl."

She shakes her head laughing. "That is a pretty big show of machismo."

I grin. "I'm a cocky asshole, but I won't apologize."

"You're so not my type," she says with a laugh.

"Really?" I cock an eyebrow at her. "And what is your type?"

She shakes her head. A side of sass is coming and I love it. "It's irrelevant. Tonight, I've decided to make you my type."

"I feel like you're just using me for my body."

She snorts again. Why is that sound getting me so hard? Damn, I want her to make all sorts of sounds.

"I am, Wyatt. Using you. But it's a two-way street tonight, isn't it?" She swallows hard and I have to wonder if she believes the words falling from her pouty lips.

"Right," I say, putting the truck in reverse. "And in that case, let's go to the Bavarian Lodge."

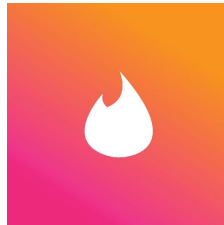
"Is that where you are staying?"

I frown, not following. "No, I'm crashing with my brother Benji."

"Oh," she nods, not asking any more. "In that case, let's go check in."

## Chapter 4

WINDSOR



WHEN HE SLIDES the keycard into the hotel room door, I feel a momentary sense of panic. I'm going into a hotel room with a stranger. A very sexy stranger. A stranger who kissed me, who made my pussy wet with desire with a single flick of the tongue.

Thinking of the kiss makes me a little dizzy, and when Wyatt pushes open the door, holding it for me, he asks me if I'm all right.

"I'm good; just a little... excited."

He chuckles. "I've never met a girl quite like you. You're one of a kind."

I roll my eyes. "Enough with the corny pick-up lines, Mr. Machismo. Let's get to business."

I'm never this forward with men. Then again, I never do this with men. So, maybe I am this forward, this confident. Ninety-five percent of the time I'm focused on my goals, but maybe my brain realizes this is just another challenge I've accepted.

"I like your swagger, Windsor," he says with a grin that makes me melt.

Standing my ground, I walk toward him. "It's the 21st century, Wyatt. Can't women ask for what they want without being judged for it?"

He pushes the door shut behind me. “Oh, you certainly can. Now tell me, what is it you really want?”

I lick my lips and run my hand over his rock-hard chest. So. Many. Muscles.

“You like that, Windsor?”

I nod, thinking. “I *super* like it.”

He runs his hands over my bare shoulders and it sends a shiver over me. “So, this guy who didn’t break your heart, was he good in bed?”

I tsk-tsk him, really not wanting to get too personal. Not so soon after the breakup, even if the breakup meant very little to me. Shouldn’t you wait before you jump into another relationship? I always thought that was the rule. Though, maybe rules on dating are dumb. After all, throwing them out the window tonight has landed me in the arms of a literal mountain man.

“No,” I admit, lowering my chin. “He wasn’t. Though he seemed capable of satisfying the woman I caught him in bed with. She was screaming his name.”

Wyatt pauses, lifting my chin with the crook of his finger. “Why is that? Why couldn’t he get you off?”

I bite my lip, nervously looking into his eyes. “I just never let myself go with him. Like, giving myself over freely, to the moment.”

“Do you think that is something you can do tonight, Windsor?”

I nod obediently. Wanting so badly to drop my inhibitions and take this unexpected night as a gift.

“Good.” With that single word, the stilled moment turns frenzied. His hands are on my face, kissing me with a fervor I can match. His hand finds my ass, squeezing it, making me squeal in excitement, and my fingers move to unbuckle his belt.

I feel his length. He is hard—somehow his cock is harder than his chest. And I want to touch him, feel him. Stroke him.

I have a need to make him happy, make him come.

“I want you so badly,” I whimper as he unzips my dress. It falls to the floor and I step out of it, slipping off my heels. He looks me up and down. I’m glad I went for the lacy bra and panties. Glad I shaved my lady bits. So freaking glad I swiped right.

I want to ask a self-conscious question. I want affirmation that I look okay, that he approves of the way I’m built, a round ass and wide hips, narrow waist, and breasts made to be touched and fucked.

Though no man has ever handled me in a way quite that dirty. But my core aches to be consumed, to be touched and taken.

I don’t need to ask Wyatt what he thinks of my body though because when I look up into his eyes I see my answer.

His eyes are heavy with desire, and as he pulls off his shirt, and then steps from his pants, I see his massive cock standing at attention.

I guess he likes what he sees.

He strokes himself and it makes me so horny, watching the way he runs his big hand over his long, thick shaft. I want to be the one to touch him, to make him satisfied.

I step toward him, lowering myself to my knees. I am here for only one reason.

“Oh, girl,” he groans, his hands tugging at my hair as I open my mouth and begin to lick him up and down. He is so velvety smooth, but also so hard, and my mouth can hardly take him. The tip of his cock is needy, and as I begin to suck him, suctioning my lips around his mighty shaft, he hits the back of my throat.

It’s shocking how good it feels to have my mouth so full of a man like him. A man whose ass I grab, burrowing my face deeply against his cock. He smells so good, like a man, and I want to taste his come. I want to swallow it down. Want it to cover my breasts.

The thought shocks me. How erotic it is. But I'm not ashamed of this feeling. It's liberating, taking hold of my deepest wish. To be really, really fucked by a man who surpasses my deepest fantasies.

"Oh, god," he groans as I bob my head up and down, getting him so close that he is grunting. "I'm so close, Winnie."

Maybe it is hearing him use my nickname that makes me smile, makes me want this all the more. And when he comes against me, I keep sucking like a good little girl, letting his creamy come slide down my throat. I want more. So much more, and he seems to understand.

When he finishes, I pull back, licking my lips so I can savor every last drop of milky cream. But it's not enough. I need more. More of him.

"Don't worry, Winnie. There will be more come for you. But first, I need to see your pussy."

He takes my hands and helps me up. I blink, delirious with his devotion to making this night satisfying for us both.

He unhooks my bra, rubbing his big hands over my full breasts. "God, your tits are perfect," he growls, lowering his head and licking my nipples, sucking them. His tongue rolling over my hardened tits get my pussy so wet, I feel like a single flutter of his fingers would have me dripping.

He pushes down my panties, smacking my tush, massaging my round butt with his hands. "God, your ass is so big and juicy."

I drop my head, overwhelmed by his caress, his want for me. I don't want this night to end.

Drawing me to the bed, he tells me to lie back. I do as I'm told.

"Now spread your legs, baby, let me see that pussy."

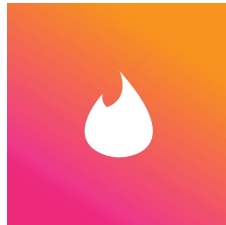
I hesitate, feeling so vulnerable. But then I watch as he kneels before me, his big thick cock aching for another release

and my mouth waters at the thought of more of his come inside me.

I drop open my knees, my pussy's his for the licking.

## Chapter 5

WYATT



I LOWER MY MOUTH, taking in the beautiful sight before me. Not just this sweet pussy, but the undeniable gift that Winnie is. A gift I sure as fuck didn't earn. Being with her makes me realize I've probably never quite treated a woman like she deserves. Like she is precious and more than a good time.

But as I bring my mouth to Winnie's pretty cunt, I pray God will forgive me for my transgressions. I vow to make amends for all the wrongs in my life while worshipping this perfect pink pussy.

"Ohh, Wyatt," she moans as I run my tongue over her slit. She is so wet, so ready, that it takes all my self-control to not fill her with my hard and ready cock, here and now.

But no. I will take my time. I will make her do more than moan my name. I'll make her scream until she's hoarse; until her legs shake, and her pussy trembles with exhaustion. Then I will fuck her the way she wanted the moment she pulled up Timber and swiped right.

"God, you taste so fucking good," I tell her, massaging her thighs as I suck her throbbing clit. "So good."

Pussy juice drips from her cunt, and I bury my mouth against her until she is clawing the mattress with her fingers and until my beard is nestled so tightly against her that her pussy can't help but be tickled into submission.

"More," she begs. "Make me come harder."

I like that she knows what she wants. I press a finger against her warm entrance, then another. I kneel before her and begin finger fucking her tight little hole, watching her squirm the whole time. God, I've died and gone to heaven. There's no other way to explain how this night has gone. Winnie is a goddamn angel and tonight, she is all mine.

She begins to come the way she wanted, her pussy walls tightening against my hands as I work her creamy slit up and down. My fingers are coated in her come and I love the way it feels to touch her most tender, intimate places.

"Come in me," she whispers. "Right now."

I grab a condom, sliding it on quickly, my aching cock is ready for her tight pussy. I lower myself to her, cradling her exquisite body in my arms. I look deeply into her eyes as my cock begins to fill her.

"Ohh," she whimpers as I move deeper inside her tight opening. "You're so big, Wyatt."

"That I am."

She smiles, a delirious smile you only ever get when you're being fucked hard and good.

We move together, finding a rhythm and a pace that both brings us to the edge, and keeps us going farther and farther to our limits. "I'm so close," she says, pressing her forehead to my shoulder, holding on to me.

"Me too, Winnie, so fucking close."

When we come, it's loud and desperate and so damn good that I'm stunned. For the first time in my life, my cock has been really, truly satisfied. And that's saying something. When I look down in Winnie's eyes, I know it's the first time she's ever been satisfied so deeply, too.

"What was that?" she asks, shaking her head as I roll over to her side.

"Perfection," I say, running a hand over her body. I want to hold her tight against me all night. Forever. "Will you go out with me, Winnie?" I ask, even knowing I shouldn't. She asked



for no-stings, but damn, I can't have an experience like that and walk away from it.

"What?" She props herself up on her elbow. "Go where?"

"Like on a date. A real, proper date."

"You want to go on a date with me?" she asks, seemingly perplexed.

"I do. Really fucking badly."

She smiles, pulling a sheet over her body. I push it away. "Don't," I say. Let me enjoy the view."

She obliges, a satisfied smile on her face. "As you wish."

"Now, about the date. Will tomorrow afternoon work?"

She laughs. "Wyatt, I don't know anything about you."

"You know I'm a good lay."

She rolls her eyes. "True. So, what would we do on this supposed date?"

"We'd go on a hike, the one on the back side of Sugar Mountain."

She scrunches up her nose. "I don't hike. Especially not a six-mile hike full of switchbacks."

"Really? Living in Linesworth? I thought it was a prerequisite."

She shrugs. "I hate exercise. I mean, I am all about healthy living, but working out? Blah." She makes a face. "I only ever go to the gym for the sauna."

"Really? But you're so fit."

"Probably because I'm a health food freak."

I nod, thinking maybe we've found common ground. Though I can't really imagine dating someone this opposed to exercise.

"Then forget the hike," I say. "We could get some charcoal and I can grab some steaks from the grocery store. We can grill those up and hang out, maybe—"

She cuts me off. “No way. I don’t do meat. I’m a vegan. And I can’t believe you’d buy steaks at the grocery store in town anyways. They don’t carry any organic meat. I know, because my sister is a carnivore and I’ve lectured her about it.”

I laugh. “Really? Don’t you think organic is just an invention by Whole Foods?”

Her jaw drops. “You’ve got to be kidding me!”

I shake my head, incredulous. “I just can’t believe you’re that kind of girl.”

“What kind of girl is that?” She pulls the sheet up and I know I’ve put my foot in my mouth.

“Nothing, I just mean, I’m hard-core paleo. Meat is kinda my main course. And I’m a CrossFit trainer. So, hiking and exercise, it’s not only how I make a living, but it’s my life philosophy.”

“Life philosophy?” She snorts. “Eating baby cows is a belief system now?”

“Yeah, it is,” I say, feeling defensive. “And so is CrossFit. I’m getting ready to open a gym here in Linesworth.”

“Wait, what?”

“Yeah, I’m just waiting on some funding but it’s the plan. The dream. Let me guess, you own a vegan snack bar?”

Her eyes go wide with shock. “First of all, not a snack bar. A juice bar. And not yet. I’m waiting for funding too. But secondly, you live here?”

Not understanding her aggression toward that concept of where I reside, I scoff. “Yeah, why?”

She sits up in the bed. “So, let me get this straight, the one-night-stand with an out of townner I’ll never see again was actually with a man living in Linesworth, who happens to be a macho, meat-eating, cave dweller who thinks a fun time is killing yourself just to reach the top of a mountain pass?”

I run a hand over my beard. “Yes, to all of the above. Now, let me get my facts in order. The girl of my dreams who I’m

fucking falling for after a few hours, is actually a judgmental vegan hippy who pulverizes wheatgrass and would rather drink her calories than put in some sweat equity?”

She shakes her head, and damn, she looks gorgeous as she does. She may be certifiable, but she is something else too. I think I could get past all the other stuff if it meant I could look into her eyes forever.

Fuck it, I know I could.

But she is already standing from the bed, reaching for her clothes. “This was a mistake,” she says, not meeting my eyes. “This wasn’t supposed to get personal. It was supposed to be fun.”

“It can be fun,” I try, so badly wanting a rewind button.

“No, it can’t Wyatt. We are fundamentally at odds. This is a disaster.”

“Give me a chance. Go on a date with me,” I say, shocking myself with my vulnerability.

“I don’t see how it would work,” she says, zipping up her little black dress. “Which sucks because you are seriously the hottest man I’ve ever seen.”

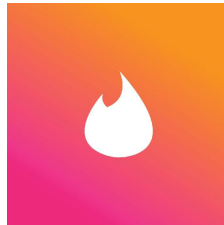
Then she leaves, without looking back.

I may be a player, but I know boundaries when I see them. Windsor needs space and I’ll give it to her. I’m not going to push myself on her—not after sleeping with her.

But damn, it kills me to see the woman of my dreams walk away.

## Chapter 6

WINDSOR



THE LAST WEEK has been excruciating.

Mostly because I toss and turn all night thinking about Wyatt. About his hard chest, his thick beard. The way he made me orgasm so freaking hard.

It's obvious by the circles under my eyes, that I am a tortured mess. When my mom calls, I try my best to sound chipper, but the moment I realize what the phone call is about.

"I told you, Winnie," she says. "Weeks ago. You have to come. Your father is the chairman of the event and your sister and Kodiak are out of town. We need you there."

I pace my apartment, thinking I don't have to do anything. I'm a grown woman.

But she is right. I have to go, and not just because my father is a long-standing lawyer in this community who just so happens to have offered to be a silent investor in my business if I can pony up the rest of the funding myself.

The event she is referring to is the Business Association of Linesworth Annual Auction, and since I'm hoping to open a juice bar in the next few months, I know how good it would be to make connections. I already know that I'll be up against some hurdles because of my age.

"It's at six, right?" I say, already looking through my closet for a dress that looks both professional and cute.

“That’s what the tickets say. I got you a pair of them, don’t you remember? Honestly Win, what’s gotten into you this week? You’re always so on the ball?”

I swallow. “I’m assuming Kensie told you Mark and I broke up?”

“What? She didn’t say a word.”

I fall on my bed, hating that this conversation is happening. “Yeah, he cheated on me, that lying sack of—”

Mom cuts me off. “Winnie, I’m so sorry, I had no idea. But you know he will be here tonight.”

I groan remembering. “He’s the emcee, isn’t he?”

“Yes. So, maybe... Oh dear. This will be awkward.”

“It doesn’t have to be,” I say digging deep for confidence. “I’m fine. Actually, I already have a date, so no worries here. Just make sure we aren’t seated by one another.”

“You do?” I can practically hear my mother’s mind reeling.

“Yeah,” I say feigning nonchalance. “The guy is great. We actually went out last week.”

“Well, that’s wonderful, Windsor. You know, dear, I really wish you’d share more about your life with me. I always feel like I’m ten steps behind.”

I choke back a laugh. She thinks she’s behind? I just invented a date on the spot. But there is no way I’m going to let Mark get the best of this night. I need to meet the other business owners in town, and I won’t let him and his smug smile ruin that.

Hanging up I bury my face in my pillow. Now, what am I supposed to do? Go on Timber and find a date? No, that would invite way too many unknowns into the equation.

Biting my nails, I realize the one man I do know would make Mark feel inferior.

Wyatt. The biggest hulk of a man I’ve ever met.

But going with Wyatt requires me talking to him.

The memory of how I left the hotel fills my mind. Neither of us was our best selves, so maybe this is a terrible idea. Then I remember his words right before I left. *Give me a chance, go on a date with me.*

He wanted a date a few days ago, I guess I need to find out if he's moved on or if he might still give me a second chance.

I pull up Timber and send him a direct message. Hey, can we talk?

He replies immediately. Does right now work?

---

As I leave my apartment, I stop and check the mail. Flipping through it as I walk to my car, I pause when I see an envelope from the bank.

Tearing it open, my heart pounds in my chest as I scan it, seeing that it is the final decision on whether or not I can get the loan. Hope flares through me as I look it over.

My face falls as I read the words: **LOAN REQUEST DENIED**

Hot tears fill my eyes and I pull open my car door, not wanting to be standing on the sidewalk and be seen crying. Linesworth may be a great place to live, but gossip travels fast. I don't want Mark to know I'm crying over this.

I know it's not Mark's fault. He wasn't the banker processing my loan application because it would be a conflict of interest. But it feels personal. It feels like the rug was just pulled out from under me.

I push the key in the ignition more determined than ever to make Mark regret hurting me. Petty, I know, but right now, my dreams were dashed. My dad was willing to pony up half the start-up costs, but it's not enough to get this business off the ground and there is no way I am going to ask him for more, he already helped with my college tuition.

Not. I can do this on my own.

How, exactly, I'm not quite sure of yet.

But I will figure it out. Starting by asking Wyatt to be my date tonight.

I may have been screwed over my ex, and never want to get back together with him, but there is still a level of satisfaction in making him regret his choice.

I'm about to pull out of my parking space when I pause to wipe my eyes. I don't want to look like a total mess when I get to the gym where Wyatt told me he is working out.

My phone pings with a Timber direct message from Wyatt.

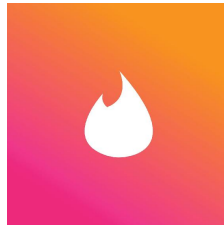
You coming?

I swallow. Hard. Unable to forget how it felt the last time I came for him.

And knowing I wouldn't mind doing that again, no matter how opposite our ideas might be.

## Chapter 7

WYATT



I GRUNT as I finish a set of reps, thinking about how getting that message from Windsor was the second happiest surprise of the week. Damn, guess she couldn't stay away after all.

Finishing my workout in the empty gym, I grab a towel and wipe the sweat from my neck just as Windsor is pulling at the front door.

It's locked, so I go over and open it for her, immediately noticing her red-rimmed eyes.

"You okay?" I ask as I step inside.

"I'm fine," she says hoarsely, her eyes now darting around the barren warehouse. "Um, where is everyone?"

"Oh, no else is here. Just you and me."

"You work out alone in an abandoned warehouse?"

I grin, pretty damn proud of this place, but not wanting to get into all that right now. "Yeah. But did you really come here to talk about workouts? If I remember correctly, you aren't really into those."

"True." She shakes her head. "Sorry I left the way I did last week. We were both just being..."

"Assholes?"

"Pretty much." She groans. "Sorry, Wyatt. I don't even know if I should be here. I'm kind of all over the place."



As she finishes her sentence, her eyes roam over me, taking in my bare chest, my low-slung shorts, the beads of sweat falling down my body.

She presses her lips. “You’re really sweaty.”

“That’s true,” I say, stepping toward her. “You wanna come to help me wash up?”

She snorts, that sexy-as-fuck snort of hers and she rolls her eyes. “Who are you even, Wyatt?”

“I’m yours.”

“You mean it?”

I lift my eyebrows in surprise. Talk about a 180. Last week she swore me off forever.

“What did you come here for again?” I ask, crossing my arms.

“I have a favor to ask.”

“Oh, yeah?” I smirk. “What kind of favor.”

“Not a sexual favor,” she says, pointing a finger at my chest for emphasis. “A friendly one.”

I set a hand on her hip. “How friendly?”

“You are such bad news, Wyatt.”

“Naw,” I say, brushing her hair back over her shoulder. “I’m not so bad.” Then I smile. “Even if I am a cave-dwelling manwhore.”

“I never said manwhore.”

“You were thinking it.”

She cracks a smile. “Fair enough.”

“So, what kind of friendly favor do you need?”

“It’s a long shot, but I need a date for the Linesworth Business Association auction tonight.”

I smile, not letting on that I already have a ticket for that auction. Of course, I do, I’m opening a business in this very

town. This very warehouse. That is the first great news I got this week. My loan was approved.

“Tonight, huh?”

She nods. “Do you have plans?”

“Why do you need a date? Can’t you go alone?”

She bites her bottom lip. “I could, but my ex is gonna be there and I know you and I don’t share a lot of common ground, but I thought if we came as a couple he might get... ugh, it sounds so lame to say out loud.”

I lower my head, wanting to kiss her lips so badly. “You using me to make him jealous?”

She nods. “Is that terrible of me?”

“No, it means you think I’m pretty fucking sexy.”

She laughs, pushing at my chest. But then, instead of pulling her hand away, she rests it there. “The question was never whether or not I thought you were sexy.”

“Right, it was my life philosophy that spun you up.”

She groans. “So, is that a yes or a no?”

Drawing both her hips closer, I say, “How about if I do this for you, you do something for me?”

“What’s that?”

“I need a shower if I’m taking you out tonight.”

“And how does that involve me?”

I squeeze her ass. “I thought you were going to help get me nice and clean.”

Her lips part, the offer posed. “You want me to take a shower with you in exchange for being my date?”

I exhale, my cock knowing exactly what it wants. Her. But I’m not that guy. I may be a player, but I’m not going to exchange anything for a sexual favor.

“No, I’ll go with you; no shower required.”

Then she licks her lips. “But what if I wanted to shower with you?”

God, this woman is too fucking good to be true. I lift her up, her legs wrapping around my waist.

“Then I’d say it’s time we both get out of these clothes.”

---

The warehouse has a single bathroom installed, but it has a shower, which is all I need right now.

“You know,” I say, as the hot water runs over our bodies. “For having so many opposing opinions, we seem to fit together quite nicely.”

Winnie blushes. “I was thinking the same thing.”

“And honestly, our opinions aren’t that opposing,” I say, turning her around, her hands on the tiled wall. Damn, her skin looks so good when it’s slick with water.

“My ex and I didn’t agree on anything either.”

I lift her hair, kissing her neck as my thick cock rubs against her pretty ass. “I don’t want to talk about your ex, Windsor.”

Her shoulders shake as she laughs softly. “Duly noted. I don’t want to know about your conquests either.”

I run my cock up and down her ass, her back arching as she offers me herself.

I slip a hand between her legs, her sweet pussy so warm and wanting. “Not one of them matter when I’m with you.”

“Don’t, Wyatt.”

“Don’t what?” I spin her around, taking hold of her hands and pinning them over her head.

“Don’t get your heart involved.”

“Too late,” I say, lifting her up, and easing her down onto my cock. Her back is against the wall and water sprays down

on us. Her tits are so round and ripe that I dip my head, pulling a hard nipple into my mouth.

“God,” she whimpers as my cock begins to fill her up nice and good. Fucking in the shower, pressed against the wall is a goddamn dream. She looks so good, feels so good. I know I’ll need her again.

“You feel so right, baby,” I moan as I thrust my cock into her eager cunt. She clings to me, her mouth on my neck, my ear. “Make me come,” she whispers.

And I do. I get Winnie off the way she wants and needs and when we finish, she slides off me, gasping for breath. I kill the shower, the hot, steamy bathroom is going to overheat both of us if we’re not careful.

She lets her head fall against the shower wall, her fingers massaging her neck. “I needed that.”

As I reach for towels, I remember her red-rimmed eyes. “Today rough?”

She nods. “The loan I wanted, for my juice bar? It got declined.”

“Shit.” Guilt settles over me.

“I know.” She wraps the towel around her as we step out of the shower. “It was my dream, you know? I had a logo made and everything, Fresh Fit Juice Bar was going to be the name. But now all that is going to go on hold.”

“Can you start on a smaller scale?”

“Yeah,” she says. We get dressed as she talks. “I can do the farmer’s market in the spring and save up. But I went to business school and know the profit margins. I need to scale up to make money at this.”

“You went to business school?”

She nods. “Yep, just graduated.”

“I went to Montana State for business.”

She lifts her eyebrows. “So, there are some brains under all that brawn, is there?”

“Ha,” I deadpan. “But honestly, Winnie, I’m sorry. It sounds like it meant the world you.”

She shrugs. “Well, at least tonight I won’t have to face my ex alone.”

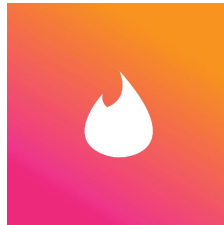
“You think having me by your side will make you feel better?” I can’t deny that the idea feels good.

She steps toward me, runs her hand over my beard and nods. “Actually, yes, Wyatt. I do.”

Pride surges in my chest. Damn, the idea of being her man feels so good. Thank god we both swiped right.

## Chapter 8

WINDSOR



AFTER THE WAREHOUSE SEX, I go home and group text Tillie and Kensie. Even though my sister is out of town with her husband-to-be Kodiak, I can't not fill them in on the developments in my life.

*Me: The loan wasn't approved. :(*

*Kensie: Really? I'm SOOOOO sorry.*

*Tillie: Want me to beat that loan officer up?*

I smile, trying to imagine innocent Tillie beating anyone up. Kensie could sure, just try to take away her iPhone and that girl will go batshit crazy.

*Me: And I have the auction tonight. Mark will be there. So, my day is officially shit.*

*Kensie: Tell Mom you can't go. Boundaries, girl!*

My thumbs hover over the keypad. I get what she is saying, but I wanted to go tonight. Mark be damned.

*Me: Actually, I'm going. With a date.*

*Kensie: WTF? WHO?*

I bite my lip, suppressing a smile. Remembering the way Wyatt's hands worked themselves over me in the shower. I guess maybe I don't mind workouts if they are led by him.

*Me: Wyatt. We just hooked up again. I can't believe my life right now.*

*Tillie: TIMBER FOR THE WIN!*

*Kensie: I thought you hated him?*

*Me: I thought so too.*

The thread derails from there, Kensie starts talking about making sure I wear the red dress Mark loved and Tillie says I ought to give Wyatt a chance. Maybe he is more than a hook-up. I scoff at that in the form of aghast emojis, but deep down, I'm wondering the same thing.

There is something about Wyatt. When I'm around him, I feel so sexy and funny and wanted. I like feeling those things.

I like feeling those things with him. And maybe he is right. Maybe our differences are surface level. Maybe there is hope for us yet.

Later, as he takes my hand as we get out of the truck, I feel that flicker of hope again.

“You know I’m dying to rip this dress off of you, right?” He leans in, whispering in my ear and his hand is on the small of my back as he leads me inside the auction hall. In the end, I went for a light blue dress, preferring to match Wyatt’s clear blue eyes over Mark’s personal tastes. I’m happy with my decision as Wyatt’s eyes linger on me.

“You clean up pretty nice yourself,” I tell him. “This is a big change from blue jeans and sweaty workout clothes.”

He tugs at the collar of his button-down shirt. “A good change?”

I nod, kissing him on the cheek. “You look great, but I admit to preferring bearded men in flannel shirts.”

He chuckles as we reach the registration table. I give Tanya, the woman working the line my name, though she already knows it, of course, most everyone in town knows who I am. That’s what happens when you aren’t a tourist in a tourist town.

When we get inside the auction hall, I see my parents and point them out to Wyatt.

“That’s my mom and dad. We need to go say hello.”

He lifts his eyebrows in surprise. “This must be serious, you and me. You already want me to meet the parents.”

I place a hand on my hip. “Don’t make this weird.”

“Why would I make it weird?” Then he runs a hand over his beard. “Except when they ask how we met, what would you like me to say?”

“Right. Uh, if they ask, just say we met at the pub.”

We walk toward them, and I give my mom a hug. “Wyatt these are my parents, Jim and Susan.”

“Great to meet you,” my dad says.

“You too, sir,” Wyatt says, shaking his hand.



“It’s a great turnout, Dad. I see everyone is here.”

“Yeah, and remember the benefit for Luke this summer?”

“I wasn’t there. I was babysitting Clive and Hazel’s little ones.”

“Oh, right. Well, the local band, Heart Song played. Everyone loved them so much that we booked them for tonight.”

“They sound great,” Wyatt says, and we all turn toward the band on stage.

The four of us scan the room and I admit to looking for Mark. But Dad pulls us back into the conversation before I can spot him.

“So sorry about the loan, sweetie,” he says. “I know you were counting on it. Do you think maybe tomorrow we could grab a cup of coffee and talk?”

I nod, not wanting to cry. My parents have always been so supportive of me, always behind my decisions.

“Don’t cry, Win. You’ll ruin your makeup,” my mother says.

I take the tissue she hands me and blot my eyes. “It’s just hard to give up on a dream.”

Wyatt squeezes my hand. “You’re not giving up on anything. The timing is just different than you expected.”

My parents give Wyatt warm smiles, and I’m glad he’s making a good first impression. God, why do I care if he is or not? He was supposed to come as arm candy, nothing more.

Except I know he is.

So much more.

“I’m going to grab us some drinks, Winnie.” Then looking at my parents he adds, “Can I get you anything?” They shake their heads, and he squeezes my shoulder. “I’ll be right back.”

When he leaves, my mother practically squeals. She is the most hopeless romantic I’ve ever known. Why else would she

name her daughters after royal palaces? She says it's because Kensington and I are her happily-ever-after.

“Windsor!” she exclaims. “Where exactly did you meet this man?”

“At the pub. Last week. He seems nice, right?”

“It seems like he likes you,” my dad says. Right then, Clive and Hazel pause to say hello. After working as their nanny last summer, I feel a connection with this sweet-as-sugar couple.

“Who likes whom?” Hazel asks, giving me a side hug.

“Wyatt is here is with Win,” Dad explains.

“Wyatt, the CrossFit trainer?” Clive asks. When I nod, he adds, “Nice, he’s a stand-up guy. Charlie and I took him out on the mountain a few times when he first got to town. He’s had dinner with us a few times too. I give my approval.”

I feel my cheeks heat up and Hazel notices. Tapping her lips with the finger, she looks like she’s trying to remember something. “How is it for a vegan like yourself to date a meat eater like Wyatt?”

“It’s been a... learning curve.”

She smiles. “Hey, I know you hate working out, but maybe Wyatt can bring you over to the dark side. Then maybe you would come to the Pilates Greta and I keep trying to get you to join.”

“Don’t hold your breath,” I say with a laugh.

“It’s awesome he got the space for his gym. That warehouse is going to be perfect,” Clive adds. “It’s awesome that his funding went through. I know I’ll be at the CrossFit gym all the time.”

I try to absorb his words, but it feels like a gut punch. The warehouse where we had sex today is the space for his own gym? Why didn’t he tell me? Trying not to show my emotions, I focus on the conversation, feeling my stomach flu-flop with jealousy. Wyatt got his loan approved and I didn’t.

“You mean you’ll be at the gym when you’re not on diaper duty?” Hazel says, swatting his arm playfully.

“Exactly.” He wraps his arms around his wife. “We’re gonna go mingle. See what’s up for auction.”

I nod, watching them leave, my eyes falling on Wyatt across the room.

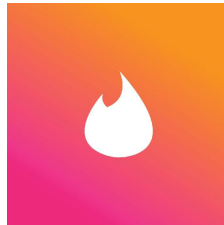
He has a drink in hand, and he’s clapping a man on the shoulder, laughing like they are long, lost friends.

When the man turns around, I see it is none other than Mark.

My ex.

## Chapter 9

WYATT



WHEN WINDSOR WALKS up to me, I can tell right away something is wrong. I hand her the white wine I got for her, explaining I don't have a drink because the beer keg is just getting hooked up right now, but she isn't concerned about the drinks.

"Why are you standing with him?" she asks, her eyes flaring with frustration.

"What do you mean?" I look over at Mark, the guy who processed my bank loan. He just came over saying we should have a congratulatory drink.

"Hello, Winnie," Mark says to her, obviously familiar with the woman I have my eyes on. Well, more than eyes. She has my goddamn heart. "You look great tonight, as always."

"Don't talk to me," she says to Mark, her words icy. "And you Wyatt, why didn't you tell me?"

"Tell you what?" I ask.

"That you got approved. That your gym," she says, blinking back tears. "That your gym is opening up."

"Hey," I say, trying to wrap an arm around her shoulder, but she steps back.

"Are you guys friends or something?" she asks, looking between Mark and me.

Mark gives her a smug smile. "Yes, Winnie, we are."

“Are you kidding me?” she asks incredulously.

“Why do you care?” Mark sneers and points to me. “You’d hate this guy.”

“Why is that?” I ask, crossing my arms, hating the idea of Winnie really, truly hating me. Sure, we disagree on some things, and we know how to argue—but hate?

Impossible.

When I took her in the shower this afternoon, it was about more than sex.

“Because I know Winnie,” Mark says with a sly grin. “Really know her.”

“You know shit, Mark,” she bites back. “You’re a cheating bastard and my one regret is that I didn’t break up with you earlier. I should have known, should have trusted myself. You always had the perfect lines and perfect dates and perfect hair. But I don’t want perfect.”

“What do you want, Windsor?” I ask, desperate for her to say it’s me she wants. Only me.

She blinks back tears, shaking her head. “Why didn’t you tell me you got funding?” she asks, this time her voice soft.

“I know. I should have mentioned it this afternoon but—”

She lifts her hands. “You know what, Wyatt? I’ve been played once. I don’t want to be played again. We met on Timber, there’s no way this could be real. You and I are a bad idea in a hundred different ways. You’re buddy-buddy with Mark, of all people, for goodness sakes. I’m not going to let you break my heart on top of everything else.”

Then she walks away from me. I reach for her arm, but her eyes are so wounded. “Please” she whispers. “Let me go without making a scene. Half the town is here. The last thing you need as a new business owner, Wyatt, is having people talk behind your back.”

I let her go, hating that she’s walking away.

Wishing like hell I was reason enough to make her stay.

---

I leave the auction before it even starts. Once Windsor leaves, all it takes is a few questions to Mark, asking why things ended between him and my girl, to realize just how shady this motherfucker is.

No wonder Winnie's on edge. She was cheated on by this loser.

And to top it off, today she lost the opportunity to open her own business. I can only imagine how crushed I'd be if I were her.

When I get to my brother's apartment, I'm surprised to find him there. If Windsor thought I was a player, Benji brings it to a whole new level. Like me, he's rarely at home on a weekend night—hell a weekday night. He's the epitome of work hard, play harder.

“Thought you'd be out tonight,” I say, reaching for a beer in the fridge. I check my phone as I do. I've already sent Winnie half a dozen direct messages via Timber. She hasn't replied to any of them.

“I'm headed out soon,” he says. “The ski slope is open for night skiing as of today.”

“Sweet.” My word doesn't match my tone. I feel fucking lost.

“Dude, you look like shit.”

I lift my eyebrow, looking down at my clothes. “You don't like me in a button-down?”

He laughs, taking a swig of his beer. “No, I just mean you look like you've had a rough night.”

“I have.” I fill him in on everything. Meeting Windsor, losing her. Mark, the loan, the fact Winnie and I are wrong in so many ways... ways that make it right.

“Shit, you really like this girl.”

“She’s probably too young for me, too sweet for me, too fucking good for me. But damn, she makes me crazy, Ben.”

“So, what are you going to do?”

“Figure out a way to make her dreams come true.”

“Isn’t her dream to open a juice bar?”

I nod. “Yeah, it is.”

I must have a crazed look in my eyes, because Benji leans forward. “Look, don’t do anything stupid unless you love her.”

I laugh. “That’s the sage advice from my older brother?”

“Not that much older. Thirty to your twenty-eight.”

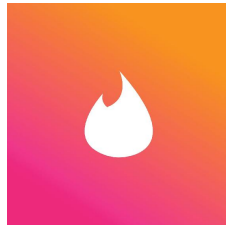
I run a hand through my hair, amazed at how Winnie has wrapped her way into my heart so damn fast. She’s funny and refreshing and good and... fuck. I’m in love with her.

“Hell,” Benji laughs. “By the look on your face, you’re screwed.”

“Nah,” I say, thinking it through. “I’m a man with a mother-fucking plan.”

## Chapter 10

WINDSOR



IT'S like nothing's changed.

Here I am, in my bed, looking like a hot mess. Well, just a mess, and crying over a boy.

Is my life on auto-repeat or what? I swear I was in this exact same spot a week ago.

But God, it feels so, so different than my break up with Mark.

Losing Mark was losing the idea of a real-life happily-ever-after like my sister and Kodiak have. It wasn't about him as a person. It was the idea of him. The idea of a man choosing me, over all else.

The way I feel right now, is so much different than the agony I felt seeing Mark in bed with another woman.

This pain is soul-crushing and heart-breaking. It's not about not getting my juice bar. It's about not having Wyatt.

A knock on the door startles me and for a split second, I run my hands through my bedraggled hair terrified that it's Wyatt who has come for me. I mean, I want him to come for me, but not looking like this.

But then keys jam into my apartment door and Kensie and Tillie trip in with coffee and cinnamon rolls from Greta and Maggie's bakery.



“What are you doing back?” I ask my sister. “You and Kodiak were supposed to stay in Spokane until Monday.”

Kensie hands me a soy latte. “We heard about the auction and left early.”

“Seriously? Who told you?”

My sister looks over at Tillie who speaks up. “It was kinda everyone in town. Apparently, when you have a fight in front of every business owner in Linesworth, it’s basically the entire population.”

“Haven’t you looked at your phone?” Kensie asks pulling out the cinnamon rolls and plastic forks from the paper bag. “Mom is freaking out. She texted me like four thousand times this morning. She was on her way here, but I stopped her from coming, telling her that Tillie and I had it covered.”

She hands me the delicious looking treat, but I shake my head. “No refined sugar.”

“Oh my god, have you looked at yourself? You need this.”

“If my blood sugar is low, I should make a carrot and apple juice.”

“Stop it,” Kensie says, shoving a forkful to my mouth. “Eat.”

I obey, letting my big sister force-feed me like the absolute baby I am.

“Why did I freak out on Wyatt?” I moan as I fall back on my pillows, the cinnamon-sweet ooey, gooey goodness putting me in an instant WTF-am-I-doing coma. “He was perfect,” I moan thinking I should curl up in a ball and stay in this bed forever.

Okay, that’s an exaggeration but I *am* dying inside. At least that’s what this feels like.

Tillie gasps, and I ask what now. She has my phone turned back on and shoves the screen in my face. “He’s IM’d you like fifty times, Windsor.”

I take the phone from her hands and sit up, staring at his delicious bearded profile picture. I see his beautiful blue eyes and I start crying, realizing that I walked away for him not once, but twice.

I give her the phone back. “I can’t read it,” I say. “He must think I’m such a freak.”

“He doesn’t,” Tillie says. “Trust me.”

“How do you know?”

“Because I talked to him last night.”

“What?” I sit up in bed. “Really?”

“Yeah, he’s really scared of losing you.”

I take another bite of the forbidden bun of yeasty pleasure.

“Read it,” she says, forcing the phone back in my hand.

So, I do.

He left one message after the next, throughout the night.

*I’m so sorry you didn’t get the loan, Win.*

*Let’s talk.*

*I can change who I am if it means having you.*

*Mark is a fucking asshole. I can take care of  
him—you’ve seen my muscles.*

*Are you okay?*

*I’m worried, Win. I don’t want to lose you.*

*Let’s compromise. I’ll buy organic if you don’t  
bust my ass for eating meat.*

*I want to hear you snort again.*

*Your laugh makes me believe in love.*

*I want to be a better man because of you.*

*How is it possible that two dates changed my  
life?*

*You are the one I want.*

*I want to try again with you.*

*I want you in my arms.*

*I*

*Want*

*You.*

Then this morning, he messaged again.

*Come to the warehouse at eleven.*

*Please.*

*Trust me.*

I wipe my eyes, tears are falling down my cheeks. I look at the time. It's ten thirty-eight.

"You guys." I flash the phone toward them, but I realize, they must already know. While I was scrolling through the messages they've pulled out clothes, plugged in my flat iron, and a have a hairbrush in hand.

"We have to hurry," Kensie says. "You'll want to look Instagram good for this, I promise."

---

The drive over is so fast, so furious, that I can't really focus on the situation.

Wyatt wants me.

I don't know why Wyatt's being so good to me, so kind. I've done nothing except be harsh and critical.

God, if he really truly gives me a second chance, I will be a freaking saint. Well, as long as saints go down on their men like it's a religion. Because that is what I want. What I want to do. For Wyatt.

"What's this about?" I ask Kensie and Tillie as we pull up to the warehouse where just yesterday, I screamed Wyatt's name as he pressed his hard cock into my willing pussy. God, I want to be in that shower with him again.

Be anywhere with him.

"We can't tell you," Tillie says. "I promised."

As we get to the parking lot my eyes narrow. "Why is Mom and Dad's car here?" I ask.

Kensie and Tillie share a look.

"What?" I ask, suddenly nervous. "What's going on?"

"Here, put on some lip gloss," Kensie says as Tillie parks the car.

I swipe the pale pink shade on my lips before getting out of my seat, feeling all topsy-turvy inside.

"Is this going to—"

Tillie cuts me off. "Just wait and see, okay?"

---

When I walk inside the warehouse with Kensie and Tillie by my side, the lights are all off. But then I hear Wyatt's voice and a calm settles over me.

"Hit the lights, Jim," he calls out to my father.

The warehouse brightens, and I look around trying to figure out what exactly is going on.

“You came,” Wyatt says, walking over and taking my hand in his.

“I did.” I bite my bottom lip. “But um, can I speak to you, privately?”

He frowns. “Can I show you why I bought you here, first?”

I shake my head, looking over at my parents who are standing with Kodiak, Kensie, and Tillie. Another guy is here too, a man I’ve never seen before, but I’m assuming is Wyatt’s brother, Benji, considering this is some weird family-affair.

“I really want to talk.” I take his hand, squeezing it, feeling surge wash over me as I do.

“Okay.” He looks over at our family and nods toward the front entrance. “Windsor and I are going to take a sec, okay?”

We walk outside, the crisp November air circling us. “Hey,” he says, cupping my face as if last night never happened.

My eyes prick with tears, and I lean into his hold. “Why are you being so nice to me, Wyatt?”

“I have a thing for dark haired vegans who make really good juice.”

I laugh. “You’ve never even tasted my juice.”

He laughs. “You sure about that?”

I shake my head. “Don’t. I wasn’t trying to make an innuendo. I mean, you don’t know me, Wyatt. I could be a crazy person.”

“Could? “

“Stop,” I say, laughing through the tears. “Those messages were so... so...”

“Sincere.” He takes both my hands, kissing my knuckles. “I know it’s crazy fast, I know we have these things we aren’t eye to eye on, but big picture? I have a feeling this could work.”

“Me too,” I admit. “Last night, I was so upset about the loan and Mark and feeling like... like I was going to lose you. It freaked me out, and so I freaked out on you. I’m really sorry, Wyatt.”

“I wish I had known how shitty a guy Mark is. And I feel like crap over having given him any kind of commission.”

“I’m glad he gave you the loan, Wyatt. This business is going to be a success. You were made to be a trainer.”

“How do you know? You’ve never even had one of my workouts.”

Now it’s my time to crack up and toss it back at him. “Oh, I’m pretty sure you’ve worked me over up and down, Wyatt.”

He wraps an arm around me, pulling me in for a kiss. “God, I want to do it again. Soon.”

“Then get my family out of your warehouse.”

He kisses me softly, tugging on my bottom lip, making my knees turn to jelly. “No. They’re there for a reason. Come inside and let me show you.”

When we walk back inside, Wyatt leads me to the corner of the warehouse where our family is standing. It isn’t until I get close that I realize they are all standing in front of something.

“Ready for your surprise?”

I nod, still confused. They step away, revealing a 5x3 banner printed with my Linesworth Juice Bar logo, affixed to the wall.

“Wait, what is this?” I ask, shaking my head.

“Well you didn’t get the loan, but I did. And I propose you open your juice bar in my CrossFit gym.”

My dad claps Wyatt on the back. “Think of it Win, this space is one block off of Main Street and we can cut out a window in the side of the building for walk-up customers.”

Mom chimes in. “It’s the best of both worlds, really.”

Kodiak nods. “And it’s a win-win for both of your businesses, you’ll have that much wider of a reach to find customers.”

I look at Tillie and Kensie. “You both knew about his when you came over?”

Tillie nods. “I sent Wyatt the logo last night. Don’t kill me.”

I shake my head in disbelief. Turning to Wyatt, I try to come up with the right words.

“Do you hate the idea?” he asks. When I look into his eyes I see that he’s nervous, scared I might not want to be partners with him.

“I don’t hate it. It’s the sweetest...” I cover my face, and he pulls me in his arms. “It’s the nicest thing in the world.”

“It’s not about being nice,” he says, looking down at me with those mountain lake blue eyes.

“No?”

“No. It’s about love.”

“You love me?” I ask, my chest pounding, my devotion for him growing by the second.

“I do. So damn much. Wouldn’t do something this crazy for a girl unless I was sure.”

“And you’re sure about me?”

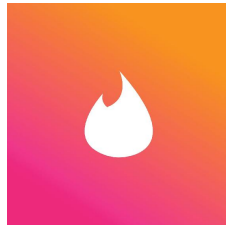
He nods. “I don’t want you to swipe right on any other man if that’s what you’re asking.”

“Oh, Wyatt,” I whisper, wrapping my arms around his neck. “I love you too.”

“Good,” he says with a grin. “Because I already deleted the Timber app.”

## Epilogue

WYATT



Ten months later...

I LOOK at Windsor's hand, as she pushes another carrot through her juicer. I know exactly what that hand is missing.

"You look so hot when you pulverize vegetables," I tease, leaning over the counter of her juice bar.

"And you literally just look hot."

"I know," I play along, running a hand over my beard. "Dead sexy, right?"

"I was being more literal," she says handing me the freshly made juice. "You're a sweaty mess."

"Your sweaty mess." I take a drink of my post-workout drink. This girl has made a convert out of me. Well, in some ways. I'm still a meat-eating Neanderthal, but I don't live in a cave. We've bought ourselves a three-bedroom bungalow in the heart of town, just down the street from our co-owned establishment.

"Do you need someone to come to help clean you up?" she asks.

I lift an eyebrow. It's noon and I have a class in an hour.



She sighs. “I know. We can’t play right now. I just miss you. I didn’t see you this morning because you had the five am boot camp.”

“Tonight, I’ll make it up to you. Let’s go out after my last class.”

She nods. “Okay, sounds good. It’s an eight o’clock class right, so it will be late?” I nod, and she says that works great. “I promised Kensie I would help her with her baby registry tonight.”

I lean over the counter, kissing my girlfriend. “I love you, Win.”

“Love you more,” she says, as more customers walk up to her outside window.

I watch her take their orders, so efficient and at home here, doing what she loves.

We took things slowly after we said those three little words that cemented our relationship. Opening the business has been our priority this year, and I wanted to make sure I was in a place to financially take care of the woman I wanted to spend the rest of my life with.

Now, ten months later, business is booming. Neither of us are working the crazy hours we did the first few months we opened our doors. Kensie and Kodiak tied the knot a month ago and even Benji and Tillie have gotten engaged before us.

It’s our time.

---

I walk into the house, having showered at the gym, and greet Winnie with a kiss. “You ready to go out for a drive?”

“A drive?” She looks at me with surprise. “Okay.”

“It’s only August. Let’s go enjoy the warm weather while it lasts.”

Minutes later we’re in my truck, driving down the highway.

“Where are we going?” she asks, her hand on my thigh.

“The place where things started.”

I pull up to a familiar clearing in the woods. “Really? You said where things started, I didn’t realize how far back were going. This is where I lost my virginity in high school.”

“I know but’s also a place that holds meaning for me.”

“How so?” she asks, as I park the truck, and unbuckle, turning toward the woman I love.

“It’s the place I took you the night I realized I had to have you as mine. The night I realized you were something special, different than any other woman I’d ever known. The night I started falling for you, Windsor.”

She twists her lips. “No one would guess a grizzly man like you would be such a romantic.”

“I am because of you. I love you, so much.”

“I love you too,” she says softly. Her long dark hair falls in her face, and I lean over to tuck it back.

“Marry me, Winnie.” Her breath catches as I pull a diamond ring from my pocket. “Be my wife.”

“Oh Wyatt, she says, pulling my mouth to hers. Kissing me with the devotion I know we both hold in our hearts for one another. “Of course,” she says between kisses. “Of course, I will marry you.”

I slip the ring on her finger and press my forehead to hers. “I will be the man you need. I swear it.”

“You already are.”

I get out of the truck and walk to the passenger side, pulling Winnie out.

“What are we doing?” she asks, laughing, the glittering ring shining as brightly as the stars overhead.

“Remember my bio on Timber? I enjoy long mountain hikes—”

She cuts me off. “And sex under the stars.”

I nod. “No hikes, but the sex? Girl, let’s get you in the bed of this truck and consummate this engagement.”

I lift her onto the truck bed where she finds a pile of blankets and pillows I’d stocked there earlier today for this very occasion. She finds the picnic basket behind the quilts. “You packed snacks?”

I grin. “Organic, dairy-free, peanut butter truffles. And champagne.”

“God, you’re perfect,” she says, wrapping her arms around me.

I lie her down gently on the truck, the thick quilts softening the space. Pulling up her dress, I ease her lace panties off, the moon hanging overhead, the willow trees surrounding us, creating a magical moment.

“I love you,” I whisper as I lean over her beautiful body. Her breasts are pulled tight against her dress, and every inch of her gets me hard.

“I’m gonna marry you so hard, Wyatt.”

“Yeah, you are,” I say looking deep into her eyes. Unbuttoning my jeans is torturous. My shaft is so thick and ready for her. She takes hold of my cock, running her fingers over my ridges of need, and her lips plant a row of kisses up my neck.

“You feel so good,” she moans as she caresses me.

I run my fingers over her slick entrance as her legs wrap around me. Her pussy is so sweet and knowing that no other man will ever see it, taste it, fuck it—it makes me growl with desire.

“I need your cunt so bad,” I tell her as I guide myself into her warm slit. She wraps her arms around me, arching her back as I keep my hold on her. Her body opens for me like it was made to do.

I groan in pleasure as I thrust my hardness deep inside her warm and supple body.

“God, Winnie.” I run my hands under her ass, needing to touch more of her bare skin. “I’m so fucking hot for you.”

We come hard, our chests pounding as we finish, our bodies were ready to join as one. Just like our hearts. I pull her into my arms, her head resting on my chest as we catch our breath.

She props herself on her hands, looking into my eyes. “You’re mine forever.”

“Good thing I super like you.”

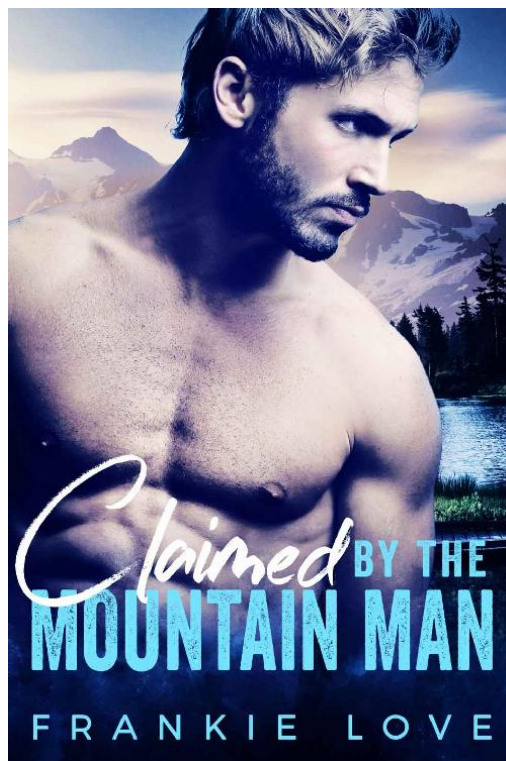
We smile, and both our eyes glisten with tears. It doesn’t matter how much of a macho man I may have been in the past, I know now what truly matters.

It’s not a bunch of women swiping right at your profile picture.

It’s the one woman who sees beyond a selfie. A woman who can see straight to your heart.

## Preview

CLAIMED BY THE MOUNTAIN MAN



### **PROLOGUE**

#### **EVERLY**

Grabbing the Prosecco from the fridge, Everly finds three mason jars, pops the cork, and divvies up the bubbly. The goal tonight is to forget the reality of the situation she and her two best friends have found themselves in.

Homeless. Jobless. Boy-less.

Champagne will certainly help the cause.

“Is that the last bottle?” Delta asks, as Everly balances all three glasses in her hands and walks back into the living room.

Everly moans as she delivers the drinks. She’s wearing her hair in a messy bun and her nerd-girl glasses contribute to her low-key appearance. But tonight she isn’t acting low-key. Tonight she is dramatic and drunk.

A dangerous pairing for any twenty-two-year-old woman.

“The state of my checking account was so depressing I was like, *eff it*, and bought two more bottles,” she says.

“That’s what I love about you, Everly,” Delta snorts. “You’re just so damn responsible.” She takes the glass from Everly’s hand and sets it on the coffee table before screwing the cap back on a bottle of eco-friendly nail polish. She’s just painted daisies on her big toes, as if declaring herself the ultimate flower child. Her long hair and boho dress complete the look. She’s a vegan, through and through, and living in Portland, Oregon makes her lifestyle easy.

Clinking the rims of their glasses, Everly takes a long sip. “I know, it’s hard to be such a put-together adult, but somebody has to do it.” She smirks, knowing she’s anything but put-together.

“No, but like, for reals, what are we going to do?” Amelia, who is braiding her hair, asks. She’s in ratty sweats and a tank top, but she gets a pass considering Derrick, her boyfriend of four years, just broke up with her. “I mean, all of us were legit counting on staying at Derrick’s summer house for the next three months. Now we’re going to get kicked out of here in a week. Then what?”

“Calm down. It’s all going to work out,” Everly tells her, not believing the words herself, but knowing Amelia needs the affirmation—considering she’s the one recovering from an unexpected break-up.

Everly falls onto the couch, squeezing between her two best friends. They all take drinks of the bubbly, each lamenting their own personal hell.

They aren't exactly on top of the world. And they feel deceived. The entire universe led them to believe that if they went to college they would be grown-ups. But here they are, all three of them a week out of Oregon State College, with no job prospects, no boyfriends, and—apparently—no housing.

“This sucks,” Amelia says, her head falling on Everly's shoulder. “Why didn't a career counselor ever mention the fact that a Fine Arts degree wouldn't help me? All it did was teach me that I'm more of a hobbyist in terms of creating visual masterpieces. Like, I can legit scrapbook, but that isn't a job.”

“Um, sweetie,” Delta says, “my degree is in Hospitality. There are literally no jobs for me.”

“You can be a hotel desk clerk,” Everly suggests.

“Yeah, except I didn't need a degree for that, and it won't offer me health insurance or pay my student loans. It's not realistic.”

“I know,” Everly says. “Even if I sold a story to some magazine, I'd make what—fifty bucks if I was lucky? And I can't afford to sit here and write the next great American novel. That won't pay any of the bills.”

Everly thought a degree in English Literature would help her become a writer, but so far she's only completed a few short stories about her life as a college student. Not exactly inspiring.

“At this point I would do anything to stop feeling so out of control. I just want a plan,” Amelia says. “I feel desperate.”

“I'm not desperate, I'm just horny as hell. I haven't been with someone in like, three months,” Delta moans. “I want a husband, someone to keep me warm at night and fuck me all day long.”

“Then we should have gotten MRS degrees, not BAs,” Everly says, sighing into her champagne. “Not that I'm exactly ready for marriage.”

Delta and Amelia both look at Everly, giving her puppy dog eyes. It's no secret that she's a virgin, and if anyone needs a man, it's her.

“What?” Everly shrugs. “I’m not holding out for Mr. Right. The problem is, I’m just never going to meet a guy who is okay with taking it slow.”

“You don’t need to take it slow,” Amelia says. “You need a man who isn’t going to take no for an answer.”

“I don’t need to take it slow, either,” Delta says. “I just want to take it, if you know what I mean.”

Amelia shoves a pillow in Delta’s face. “Yes, we get it. You want to get laid. But on a more serious note, maybe there are new apartments on Craigslist?” Amelia suggests. “You know, since we’re getting evicted.”

“Not evicted,” Everly reminds her. “It’s just we’re in campus housing. We have to go.”

“Like, in a week.” Delta sighs. “This is dumb. Let’s do something bananas. Like, move to a commune. Or become Amish.”

Noticing the now-empty glasses, Everly returns to the kitchen and brings back some more champagne. “I just want a nice house and a normal life. Nothing crazy, just something regular.”

“With good sex,” Delta adds, winking. “And on that note, let’s look in the Help Wanted section with an open mind.” She opens her laptop. “At this point we don’t have many requirements.”

“I just want to get out of this college town,” Amelia says. Forgoing a glass, she grabs the bottle from Everly’s hand and takes a swig. “I can’t handle it here,” she says, wiping her mouth. “There are way too many memories of Derrick and me in this town, and I need to move on. Stat.”

Delta scrolls through the housing pages, and it’s more of what they’ve already seen. Tiny studios or massive houses requiring three months’ security deposit.

“Hmmm.” Delta keeps clicking, but there are no new listings. Eventually she takes the bottle from Amelia and drinks before passing it to Everly.



Everly follows suit, then sits between them once again, starting to feel more than a little tipsy.

“There’s nothing,” Amelia moans.

“Even if there were,” Everly adds, “it doesn’t matter. None of us have jobs. That’s priority number one.”

“Tell me again why none of us have parents who can help out?”

The three of them were roommates freshman year, and instantly bonded over the fact they’d all been raised by their grandparents. It was such a coincidence—it felt like destiny, and they had to stick together.

And they always did, through thick and thin, for four years. They put Delta’s grandpa in assisted living, attended the funeral for Everly’s grandma and grandpa, and were there when Amelia’s grandma moved in with her older sister.

They have family that love them, but not family that can support them, or even house them.

It’s time they figure this out on their own.

“Okay, go to the want ads,” Everly says, pointing at the tab on the screen.

“Let’s see, here.” Delta takes another sip as the page loads.

The three of them read the job descriptions, not one of them remotely appealing.

Dog walker, ten hours a week.

Editor, must be proficient in Dutch.

Smoothie stand, pasties the required uniform.

“Well, we could do that,” Delta says, laughing. “We all have decent racks.”

“More than decent, but that doesn’t mean I could do it,” Everly says, frowning, knowing her looks have never been her problem.

The problem is, she’s never had a real boyfriend because she always gets so nervous and shy around guys.

“We’re all cute enough so the tips would be good,” Amelia says, considering the smoothie stand position. “But, it just seems so cold.” She covers her chest with her hands, cracking up.

Okay, so they are definitely buzzed.

“This is stupid.” Everly hovers her fingers over Delta’s keyboard. “Let’s try something totally different.”

In the search bar, she types: *pretty girls, college degrees, open-minded, need jobs.*

The first hit causes all three girls to tilt their heads to the side, and reach for the champagne, simultaneously.

Huh.

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## About the Author



**Frankie Love** writes sexy stories about bad boys and mountain men. As a thirty-something mom who is ridiculously in love with her own bearded hottie, she believes in love-at-first-sight and happily-ever-afters. She also believes in the power of a quickie.

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