

# That **Sexy** Bartender

Curvy Girl  
Dates



KATE  
J. BLAKE

# THAT SEXY BARTENDER

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KATE J. BLAKE

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## ABOUT THE BOOK

If you have your worst day ever and you're lost in the middle of nowhere, but then a sexy bartender offers you dinner, would you agree? I did, and it was the most amazing night of my life.

But after I broke up with my shitty ex, I do not trust men, especially ones who are this handsome. And when I try to leave without saying anything, my new gorgeous friend offers me to stay until I find a proper apartment, or as long as I want to.

But will I be able to put aside my prejudice and enjoy the moment? And could this incredible man be my one and only?

- \* Strangers-to-Lovers
- \* Curvy Heroine / Dirty-talking Hero
- \* Extremely Spicy
- \* Over-the-top Sweet
- \* Insta-everything

***THAT SEXY BARTENDER is a spicy romantic comedy novella with dual point of view, no cheating, no cliffhanger and a Happily Ever After GUARANTEED!***

# CHAPTER ONE

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## CHELSIE

I can't believe I just quit. Just like that. With no backup plan. I want to visit my friend in Lake Elsinore and look for places for rent to find something to open my own bakery. Is it a backup plan? It both terrifies me and excites me at the same time.

I worked at Madam Laurent Patisserie, a ritzy and overpriced place next to the Beverly Hills hotel, for the past year. It belongs to a very demanding and so-not-French woman who makes crazy money selling croissants and cappuccinos to her wealthy clients.

Lauren, which is her real name and not a fancy surname with a 't' at the end, is not only demanding; she's a real devil in disguise. All the desserts have to have the same weight, size, and calorific value. The difference should be no more than one percent. And she isn't just extremely sensitive about their weights; she also has a unique calorie-counting machine. And if bakers do not comply with those criteria, they get fired immediately.

Whoever laughed when watching *The Devil Wears Prada* had never worked for the devil himself—or rather, herself. And still, I worked for her for over a year because it was good money. I only quit because I needed to take a vacation to visit



my friend, and she refused. But I haven't had a single day off this year, and I was so tired that I wasn't thinking.

Do I regret it? Maybe. But will I come back and beg for that job? No way. Women have to support women and not put them down.

The only person who has been working at that bakery for more than a year is a girl named Zoe, whose couch I've been sleeping on lately. She could find a much better job, I'm sure. Zoe is good at what she does. We dream about opening our own bakery somewhere quieter than Beverly Hills, in a small, charming town in the suburbs. But right now, Zoe needs money because everyone in Los Angeles needs money; this city is overpriced.

Why did I move to Los Angeles? Alan, my ex, was trying to become a DJ. And not just 'any' DJ, but a 'popular one,' according to what he always told me. He was making money from time to time, when "the deal is good," while we had to pay the rent monthly.

Through those five years we were together, Alan wanted to become a realtor, a dating coach, a nutritionist, and many other things. And each time he came up with a new idea, we moved to a different city. It was exciting at first, then it got tedious, and now in retrospect, it sounds absolutely ridiculous.

Do you think I finally managed to break up with him because I realized how stupid I was? Well, no. I broke up with him because he cheated on me with our next-door neighbor. Cliché, I know. And I'm just now starting to realize it probably wasn't his 'first rodeo.'

Zoe says I should be glad I finally got rid of him. Now I don't have to change my life according to his plans and dreams; I can focus on my own. She's right. And I don't feel

heartbroken. Honestly, I feel relieved. But I also feel furious. I regret that I believed him when he promised we would get married, have kids, a house, a dog, etc. I feel like a fool.

I exhale deeply when I get in the car and put my head on the seat. I am still trying to figure out how I'll get over a hundred miles to Lake Elsinore, where my friend and former classmate Sawyer lives.

My phone buzzes, waking me up from my thoughts.

“Hey, girl,” Sawyer exclaims enthusiastically, “just checking on you to make sure you're still coming.”

“Of course I am,” I say with a smile, unable to believe I haven't seen her for years.

“We're waiting for you. I've already sent you the GPS spot.”

I check the battery on my phone; it's critically low. I tried not to use my cell all day, but it's dying anyway. It's really old, and I've needed a new phone for a long time, but again, I can't afford it. I'm saving money for the bakery.

“My battery is almost dead, so if I don't call, don't panic,” I explain, connecting it to the charger in the car.

“No rush, just make sure to drive toward San Bernardino County, and then, when you get close to Riverside, there will be a turn to Lake Elsinore. It's also raining heavily, so drive carefully.” I hear one of her children yelling as she speaks.

“Really? There's not a single cloud here.” I look at the sky. It's almost nighttime, and all I see is the colorful sky; the main reason I love California is these incredible sunsets.

“I have to go; the kids are fighting over dessert,” she says, hanging up before I reply.

I start the car, and it barely turns on. I know I should have gone to the mechanic weeks ago, but I had no time and didn't want to spend the money. Honestly, my super-old car needs to be traded in, but I cannot afford that with all the money I'm saving for my business. Or, at least, trying to save.

I don't know how long I've been driving when the loud thunder wakes me from my thoughts. I am long past the sign for San Bernardino County. I hope I turned in the right direction because it's raining hard, and I see almost nothing.

My phone is completely dead now. The wire, which has been chewed on by Zoe's cat several times, is not working at all.

About twenty minutes ago, I saw a sign that said *Lake* something and turned there. I am still trying to figure out where I am and how to get to my friend's house. I've never driven here without GPS.

I see a sign that says, *Welcome to Big Bear Lake* and tense. Did I come to a completely different city?

No, it must be next to the same lake. I need to find a gas station and charge my phone.

I see a hotel sign at the exact moment as my low fuel light turns on. Great.

I park in the hotel's lot and go inside.

The place is lovely: high ceilings, a large but cozy reception, all made out of wood and metal, somehow entwining old and new material very naturally. It feels like I am in one of those Hallmark Christmas movies where the heroine gets stuck at a beautiful mountain cabin. Even though it's far after Christmas, I'm sure tomorrow will be hot. In

hotels like this, people always find their happily ever afters, at least in movies.

“May I help you?” I hear a voice and turn to face the reception.

A young woman, approximately my age, with short dark hair and beautiful big green eyes, is looking directly at me. I come closer.

“Welcome to the Big Bear Lodge Inn,” she says with a friendly smile. “Do you have a reservation?”

“I’m not here to stay; it’s just that...” I can’t quite explain what happened, “I got...lost? I’m not sure.”

“Okay,” she says efficiently. “Where were you going?”

“Lake Elsinore. Is that somewhere nearby?” I make puppy eyes as if she can magically transport me to the right place.

“I’m not sure; let me check.”

As she pulls up a map, I already have a terrible feeling inside of me. My gut is telling me that if this woman doesn’t even know the city I’m talking about, I must be far from where I should be.

“It’s around seventy miles from here,” she says calmly after a pause.

Her words don’t sink in immediately; I need time to process them.

“Excuse me? Seventy miles?” My jaw almost drops on the floor as I repeat what she said.

Seventy miles. Seventy miles is what I was supposed to drive from Los Angeles to Lake Elsinore. And now I have to

go seventy miles more. With no phone, no charger, and no fuel. Fuck my life.

“How is that possible? Isn’t it in San Bernardino County?” I ask after coming to my senses.

“It is.” She nods. “But it’s quite big; the territory is even larger than Los Angeles County.”

I exhale loudly, suddenly on the verge of crying. I’m so sick of moving across the state and looking for a place to stay while my ex-jerk lives in the apartment I paid for. I’m so tired after the shift at the bakery that I’m ready to sleep on the floor. I am still determining how I can drive seventy more miles searching for a place I’ve never been with no cellphone.

“Can I borrow a charger?” I ask, realizing just now that I have been motionlessly standing looking at the abyss for the last minute.

“Of course.” She takes my phone and places it to charge.

“Where’s the nearest gas station?”

“A couple of blocks away. But it’s probably already closed.”

And it would cost me a fortune, considering I spent around forty bucks on gas this morning just to get to the wrong place.

“I’m sorry. Are you okay?” she asks, interrupting my thoughts again. “You look like you’re going to have a panic attack.”

And just then, I realize how fast I’ve started to breathe, gasping for air.

“No, just anxiety. It will pass soon,” I assure her, even though I’m not sure myself: I have never had panic attacks.

“Bad day?”

“More like a bad month.”

“Work?”

I say nothing, trying to take in air.

“Boyfriend?”

I nod.

“I knew that. Men are trouble.” She winks at me, and I smile. That makes me feel a little better.

“He cheated,” I say before I can stop myself. Then the words just start flowing out. “With our neighbor. Then he blamed it on me and refused to leave the apartment I paid the rent on. Plus, I got fired today. Well, not exactly: I wanted a vacation, which I haven’t had in a year, but my boss refused, so I quit.”

She shakes her head. “Wow. I definitely didn’t expect that. That’s not a bad day, honey; that’s a disaster.”

I laugh.

“So do you need anything?” she asks sympathetically. “Water? A cab?”

“How much is a room?” I dare to ask even though I’m sure it’s more than I can afford.

“Let me check to see if there’s anything available.”

“Are you serious? It’s a huge hotel.”

“It’s not really. There’s only eighty rooms. It’s a popular place where rich LA people go skiing.” She raises an eyebrow, “Have you never heard of Big Bear before?”

I shake my head. “But it’s not even winter, and it’s not snowing.”

“Yeah, but people hike in spring or go fishing in summer. Anyway, there is a room with a lake view for a hundred and thirty dollars.”

“What? Is that a suite or something?”

“It’s a regular room. We also have a lake view for one-fifty.”

“Do you have anything with a bad view? To a wall, perhaps?”

I have sixty-seven dollars with me, and that’s it. Don’t get me wrong: I have my ‘future business account’ with over seven thousand dollars, but I promised never to touch that money. I need it for the bakery.

I guess I’ll have to sleep in my car.

She laughs. “Let’s do the next best thing. I’ll give you my special family discount.” She types something on her computer. “And you’ll give me thirty-nine dollars.”

“Wow. What discount is that?”

“Seventy percent.”

“Won’t your boss be mad at you?”

“No, he’s cool. And I’ll tell him that you’re my friend.”

I hesitate briefly before asking, “Why are you doing this?”

“Because women are supposed to support other women. Otherwise, when men hurt us, then who will support us if not other women?”

“You’re amazing. What’s your name, by the way?”

“Kenzie.”

“Thank you so much, Kenzie. I’m Chelsie.”

“Nice to meet you, Chelsie. I guess we’re friends now.”

“Well, friend to friend, do you have a restaurant here?”

I realize that I haven’t eaten since last night. I was too nervous about asking Lauren about a vacation to have breakfast this morning.

“Our restaurant is already closed, sorry. But there’s a bar with snacks just around the corner.”

“It’s too late for a bar.”

“It’s half past ten.” She extends a hand to the wall with a clock. She’s right. This day just seems endless to me.

“Okay, I’ll probably pass.”

“Well, your bad. Because there’s a very handsome bartender named Bryan, and he will give you a massive discount if you tell him you’re my friend.”

“Thanks.” I take the key card, and Kenzie explains how to get to the room.

Twenty minutes later, I have showered, washed my hair, and put on a little makeup and the only ironed dress in my luggage. I won’t stay hungry, feeling sorry for myself alone in the room. I’ll go to the bar and have fun.



## CHAPTER TWO

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BRYAN

“Another shot over here, fella!” Lionel, one of my all-time favorite customers, holds out his glass to get a refill. I halt the conversation I was having with Steven and come to serve his drink.

Just as I begin to pour, the bar’s door opens, and a young woman walks inside.

To say she’s attractive is an understatement: a petite body with a thin waist and round hips that are curvy in all the right places. Her full breasts are emphasized by the thin fabric of her medium-length light pink dress, the color of which makes her olive skin glow.

As she walks between the tables to the counter, all the eyes in the room are turned to her, and she lowers her eyes from all of the attention.

She probably came to Big Bear Lake for a celebration, like most people do. It must be a bachelorette party or a birthday. Most people come here for a holiday or a short vacation. That must be why she’s wearing such an elegant dress to a casual place like this one. She’s escaped from some party.

“Get yourself together, would ya?” Lionel whispers, and then I realize I’ve spilled his drink.

“Sorry, this one’s on me,” I tell him and watch her taking a seat, simply unable to look away.

She’s probably taken. Women like her just can’t be single.

“Can I get you anything?” I ask as I come closer and stand in front of her. She looks up at me.

She’s so beautiful: intense deep brown eyes, long lashes, and smooth olive skin. Her short dark brown hair covers her ears. Still, it barely reaches her shoulders, emphasizing her beautiful round face with a small nose and pouty rose lips.

I swallow.

“Yeah, do you have anything to eat?” she asks, biting her lower lip covered with intense pink lipstick, the only makeup she has on her except for the mascara. And she has such a charming voice.

“Sorry, the kitchen is already closed,” I say, and her beautiful facial expression turns to a sad one. “But I can get you nuts or nachos,” I say hastily, grabbing a bowl of nuts off the bar before she leaves.

“But Kenzie said that I could get food here.” She looks at the snacks but doesn’t touch them, as if she’s afraid to.

“Kenzie? Are you a guest of the hotel?” I knew it. She must be here with somebody else.

I almost feel...hopeless? As if I’d expected her to be in this town for work or something, alone so we could talk. I wish I still had the bar kitchen open. I could feed her.

I feel both angry and desperate. Which is ridiculous since I don’t even know her.

“I am Kenzie’s friend.” She finally takes the first bite, and her eyes close when she tastes it.

Gosh, she must be starving.

“Kenzie told me to come here and ask for Bryan,” she continues after swallowing. “She said that he would definitely feed me. Oh, and that he’d give me a discount.”

I chuckle. “It sounds like Kenzie, yeah, but I’m sorry. Those guys watching the game ate all the snacks, and our chef cleaned and closed the kitchen, so that’s all I have. Would you like something to drink?”

“I shouldn’t probably drink because I haven’t eaten all day.” She looks...lost? As if she doesn’t know what to do now.

“I’ll get you something light. What’s your name?”

“Chelsie.”

“It’s nice to meet you, Chelsie. I’m Bryan.” I hunt around and find a few more snacks for her: olives and salted popcorn. I start preparing my signature Paper Plane, with just a pinch of whiskey and a lot of lemon juice so she won’t get drunk quickly.

“Oh, so you are Bryan.” I feel her gaze on my skin as she explores my face. I have no idea what Kenzie told her, but she’s looking at me with slight interest as if trying to decide something.

“So how do you know Kenzie?” I ask to keep the conversation going.

“Mmmm...college?” she says uncertainty, and it sounds more like a question.

I laugh. “You don’t know her, do you?”

“What gave me away? Is it the voice? Damn it. I should’ve said high school.” She smiles at me, taking an olive between her teeth.

“I wouldn’t believe either,” I say, still smiling. “We’re both locals and went to the same school, and it’s a small town, so there were like three people.”

She laughs at my words. It seems like the sound of her laughter fills the whole room, and it’s suddenly harder to breathe. I could listen to her laughing at my jokes all day long.

I suddenly remember that I have customers. Luckily for me, my partner Steven is letting me enjoy this conversation and is serving the other tables.

“Okay, I confess.” She pushes away the snacks demonstratively as if giving them back to me, like I just caught her stealing them or something. “I just met Kenzie. But she helped me, giving me a huge discount, so please don’t tell anyone. I don’t want to get her in trouble. I could never afford that fancy hotel.”

I smile, place a cocktail before her, and push back the peanuts. “Don’t worry, I won’t.”

She smiles at me with that adorable mouth and round white teeth, then leans in to try the drink.

“Oh, gosh, that’s so good,” she moans before taking another sip.

My dick twitches at that sound and how her full pink lips wrap around the straw. I see men looking at her with lust, and I feel the urge to protect her from them. I want to grab her in my arms and hide somewhere to make her moan like that, but only for me.

*Get it together, buddy. She’s not yours to take,* I tell myself, but does my body listen to me? Absolutely not.

How is that possible for a woman to attract me this much? And she’s not even naked. That’s never happened to me

before.

And the second I think about it, I start picturing her naked.

Fuck. I can't watch her sucking on that straw without wanting to undress her, and at the same time, I can't force myself to look away.

She's going to kill me. Just because she exists. And she doesn't even know she's doing it.

“So what did you do to impress Kenzie to give you a discount? She's not that quick to like people.” I try to change the subject even though I'm sure it won't keep me from thinking about her naked in my bed. I can't stop staring at how she licks the straw, making those moans which—and I'm entirely sure—are natural. She's not trying to seduce me or anything.

“Well, you should appear on her doorstep with a broken car, discharged phone, and no money. Then tell her that you recently broke up with a guy, lost your apartment, and got fired from your job.”

She faces me, and just then, I realize that she's serious.

“OMG, I'm pathetic,” she exclaims, looking at my surprised face. “I practically made Kenzie feel sorry for me!” She speaks loudly and looks around because almost everyone is watching her. “I shouldn't be this loud.”

“Trust me, they're not staring because of your voice.” I hint at her outfit, but she raises an eyebrow with no idea what I mean. “You look really nice in that dress. And these old men have only seen beauty like yours in movies.”

She blushes at my words and smiles at me.

I wonder how old she is. I think she's probably a lot younger than I am, maybe ten years. She doesn't look more than twenty-six.

"Thank you for the compliment, but this was the only clean and ironed thing in my suitcase." She exhales both with relief and sadness.

I can't believe I am this lucky. I haven't met a woman this gorgeous in this small town since I moved back home three years ago. Usually, they are all married or have come here to celebrate their engagement. Moreover, I think she's the most beautiful woman I've ever met.

There's something about this girl that I simply cannot explain. And it's not just because of her attractive body. There's something else that appeals to me. It's about the way she speaks, her energy and charm, which makes me want to grab her in my arms and squeeze her tightly to show her how I feel. Kind of like you always want to do with a kitten when you see it but never do because of how small and fragile it is. That's precisely what I feel when I look at her.

"Thank you so much for the drink." She finishes it and moves the empty glass over to me. "I really needed it; I didn't even realize how much." Her lips curl into a smile, and my heart skips a beat. "I need another one. And nuts. And some nachos. And whatever else you have. Oh, but I only have like twenty-seven bucks left after I paid for the room so..." she takes some money from her bag and places it on the table.

"Keep your money; this is on me," I tell her, taking the glass away. "Let's go."

"Where?" she asks, her big eyes round in surprise.

"I'll feed you," I explain. "I can't watch you eat this crap."

“But I thought everything was closed at this time.” She licks her lips, and I think about how they would taste if I did that.

“Yeah, but not my place,” I say, looking away so I don’t stare at that gorgeous rose mouth.

“Nice try, buddy. I’m not going to sleep with you for food.” She chuckles, and I look into her eyes again. The way she says it, both sassy and flirting, tells me she was thinking about being in my bed long before I asked her come to my place.

“Chelsie, you’re obviously hungry, and I suppose you haven’t eaten for a while. If you eat more nuts or nachos, your stomach will hurt. And don’t worry, I won’t ask you to pay for it. Not with your twenty-seven dollars and not with your body.”

It’s true. No matter how attractive she is and how much I’d like to see her naked between my sheets, I would never push her to do something she isn’t ready for, especially right after a breakup.

“What if you’re...a maniac?” she asks after a long pause, with such a serious expression that I can’t help myself.

I burst into laughter. “That’s...possible, but barely. And I think that you’re hungry enough to agree anyway.”

She smiles at me but still hesitates. That’s why I add, “Look, we’re at a bar full of people. The bar has cameras. You can tell Kenzie where you’re going. You can take a picture of me and send it to your family or friends.”

“My phone is dead,” she says and then bites her lip. “I probably shouldn’t tell that to the maniac, right?”

I smile. “Never.”



## CHAPTER THREE

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## CHELSIE

“Steve, could you help look after the place? I’m out for the night,” Bryan says to the bartender at the other end of the counter, standing and extending a hand to help me up.

“Aren’t you going to introduce us first?” Steve asks with a smile and winks at me.

“No,” Bryan responds coldly and possessively. “Eyes off, buddy.”

His tone is commanding and intoxicating, sending a thrill down my spine.

The saying goes that you should avoid powerful, demanding men, but when you see their dominance, why is it so freaking hot? It makes them seem like they know what they’re doing and can handle any situation, which can be incredibly attractive.

“You sure your boss isn’t going to be mad when he finds out?” I ask, concerned. I don’t want to get him in trouble. “I can wait till the end of your shift.”

I am actually not really sure about that. I might fall asleep right on this counter.

As he leans lower, he whispers into my ear softly, “Don’t worry about me.” His words are gentle yet full of intent.

“Everything is under control.”

He draws me closer until I can feel his hot breath against my face. My head starts spinning suddenly, and I grab his shoulder for balance. He gently holds my elbow so I don't fall. Our eyes meet, and a warm, pleasant feeling spreads throughout my body.

“Just let me take care of you,” he adds after a couple of seconds as we stare at each other.

I only nod in response, unable to say a word.

A man who wants to take care of me. That's new. That's a refreshing change from what I'm used to. I used to be entirely in charge of my own life and decisions, so it's strange to have someone willing to take on that role.

There's something about this man that I can't explain. He has a certain charm and charisma that is hard to resist. His words and actions make me feel comfortable and accepted. He is genuinely interested in getting to know me.

Just as we get to the entrance of the building, we turn down a hallway that leads to an elevator.

“What's going on?” I ask as we walk into the elevator. “Do you live here?”

“Yeah,” he replies. “Just above the bar.”

The bright elevator light makes this man look even better.

He might not appeal to all women, but probably most of them. He's taller than I am, even though I'm wearing heels. His face is a carefully detailed masterpiece. He has thick, dark, slightly curled hair and deep, almond-shaped green eyes. High cheekbones and a chiseled jaw with a light stubble make his model-type beautiful face look more brutal and masculine.

I can't help but think about running my hands along his jaw, his slender nose, and his full lips, which makes me bite my own lips in frustration as I lower my gaze almost every time he looks at me.

Bryan has a fit, toned body that speaks of many trips to the gym. The white T-shirt he's wearing can't hide the thick muscles, ripped chest, and abs that press through the light cotton shirt every time he heaves a deep breath.

He even has tattoos. Not scary ones, just aesthetic drawings along his arms, emphasizing massive hands with visible veins.

The mere sight of him makes me weak in the knees. This man is damn close to perfect.

Plus, he seems genuinely interested in getting to know me better. It's been a long time since I've felt that spark with someone, so I decide it's worth a shot.

But despite his handsome looks, I'm still wary of him. After all, looks can be deceiving.

"You can rest on the couch while I make dinner," he says, closing the door as we both make our way into the only apartment on the floor.

The apartment has a bright, open floor plan with modern furniture, updated appliances, and plenty of natural light. The warm, neutral colors gave the place a cozy, inviting feel.

What intrigues me the most is that the apartment has so much space—perhaps too much for a bachelor. Does he live here alone? And if so, how can he afford a large, luxurious apartment like this? Yeah, the prices on real estate are way lower here than in Los Angeles, but still, it's California.

*I could open a bakery here if a bartender can afford to rent a Big Bear Lake apartment.* A thought runs through my mind, but I decide not to think about work, at least for this evening.

“It’s so convenient to have an apartment right next to your work,” I say, looking around.

Bryan nods with a smile. “It is. I save so much time in the morning because I don’t have to drive. Plus, it’s great to come home anytime I need to, even for just a few minutes.”

I smile in response, coming closer to take a look at what he is going to cook.

I still can’t believe I agreed to have dinner with a stranger that I met five minutes ago. I am surprised at my own impulsiveness. But I am hungry, and Bryan is hot. Why not take a chance and see what happens? It’s not like I’m making a commitment or anything. We’ll just have dinner; if it doesn’t work out, I’ll never have to see him again.

I just hope he isn’t a serial killer or, worse, a vegan.

“Do you need any help?” I ask as I watch him pull out the products from the fridge, which is, to my surprise, full of food.

“I asked you to relax,” he says playfully, smiling at me. “Can you handle that?”

A man who cooks; wow, that’s rare. My ex didn’t even know how to turn on the stove. At least he never cooked for me, always waiting until I came home to prepare anything if we had no money to order.

I should stop thinking about Alan; he isn’t worth it.

“Sorry, I just...” I pause, unable to find the right words. “I got used to being in control of everything that happens in my life.”

Bryan looks intently at me for a few seconds as if studying me but says nothing. And then asks, “What do you do in life?”

“I’m a baker.” I smile. “My signature recipe is cookies with almond cream. I’m especially proud of my cream recipe, which has unique flavors and textures, making it a favorite among my customers.”

“You make me want to taste some of those cookies,” he says playfully, looking at me again.

My stomach shrinks at this warm, pleasant feeling.

I haven’t flirted with anyone in years; I’ve almost forgotten what it’s like. I can feel the butterflies in my stomach. I’m suddenly feeling more confident and daring, filled with excitement and anticipation of what kind of adventure this could lead to.

But that is also what scares me the most. He slips between my barriers way too smoothly, without any resistance. I know about this sort of men, the seemingly flawless ones who seem too good to be true until they are gone.

But even if I know that, my body conflicts with my mind. My eyes won’t stop focusing on him as I listen to him speak, watching him cook.

And when I stare deep into his green and hazel eyes, my defenses fall away.

But yet, I find it hard to let go. I tell myself it’s only one dinner, a couple of kisses, and one night together. It’s not serious; I don’t have to worry.

And yet, I do.

## CHAPTER FOUR

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BRYAN

“I’ll just have the chicken; I don’t eat pasta,” she says, looking away as if embarrassed or shy.

“Are you allergic?” I clarify.

As she shakes her head, she says, “Diet.”

Is she serious? There must be a deeper motivation for her decision.

“What are you doing on a diet if you’re a baker? How is that even possible?” I ask as a joke, but her face falls.

That’s when I know for a fact that something is wrong.

“It’s your ex’s fault, isn’t it? He told you something about how you look?”

“Yeah, he said it was one of the reasons he cheated.”

I can’t believe that man justified his cheating by saying she wasn’t thin enough.

This is an unacceptable excuse and shows a lack of respect for the woman. I feel angry when I hear stories like this because it implies that a woman’s worth comes down to her physical appearance. This is wrong and sends a dangerous message to other men who might think it is okay to treat women as objects.



“You know what? I’ve been cheated on as well. It’s just an excuse. People who cheat simply don’t have enough respect for the person they are with. It’s not about workload or physical appearance—it’s about the lack of value they put on the relationship. People who cheat should take responsibility for their actions and accept that they are in the wrong.”

“I agree, I absolutely agree with you. It’s just...” She hesitates. “I did gain some extra weight since I became a baker, especially over the past year.”

“So? You look amazing. Did you stop eating because of him?”

“Yes and no.” She shrugs. “I started losing weight after we broke up. I stopped eating properly, my diet became unstable, and I was constantly on edge, worrying about everything like where to live and what to do with my life.”

I come closer to look into her eyes. Her body is tense.

“What else did you do because of him? Or *not* do?” I look down at her. Her chest is rising and falling deeply with her breath, and it turns me on. I want to grab her in my arms and show her how attractive she is.

I cup her face in my hands, my thumbs tracing her jawline, and murmur softly, “Tell me what else he made you do or not do?”

“Nothing. I promise,” she says uncertainly, still not looking at me. “I cut my hair to a long bob despite him. He always said that my cheeks were too puffy for short hair. But I wanted to prove that I could look beautiful in any style, so I cut it anyway.”

I can’t believe how much of an asshole her ex is. He showed a complete lack of respect for her by using her

physical appearance to justify his cheating. He also tried to control her appearance by telling her how to wear her hair, which is a form of manipulation. Such behavior is unacceptable and shows a lack of respect.

“My mother likes to quote one brilliant woman. ‘No one can make you feel inferior without your consent,’” I state, staring at her trembling lips and fighting the urge to grab her right here, right now, and fuck her hard at this same table to erase every single lousy memory she has about her stupid ex and his excuses.

No, not just *bad* memories. I want to erase *all* the memories of the men who were with her before me. And replace them with us so that my making love to her is the only thing that remains.

“That’s from Eleanor Roosevelt, if I’m not mistaken,” she says.

*Beautiful and smart.* How did I get so lucky to find her? She is unlike anyone I’ve ever met before.

I cup her chin between my fingers to make her look at me as I say, “He had no right to disrespect you like that.” I gently stroke her cheek with my thumb as I speak in a comforting, reassuring gesture. “Do you know what I see when I look at you? I see a beautiful, strong woman capable of anything she puts her mind to. Her attractive, curvy features make her look like a goddess. Her eyes are so bright and captivating they make me want to get lost in them.”

As our eyes meet, she parts her lips. I swallow.

“Don’t let his words bring you down,” I continue. My thumb strokes her lower lip. “You have such a beautiful body.”

I'm not lying. I sincerely mean every single word I say. Her perfect curves, thin waist, and round hips accentuate her hourglass figure. She has full breasts and a butt that would make any man weak in the knees and fall at her feet. Her skin is smooth and soft, and her eyes twinkle with joy when she smiles. Her beauty radiates from within.

I gently brush my other hand over her body, up and down, from her waist to her hip. I can feel each muscle tense and relax as I caress her and feel her body heat radiating with pleasure. I can sense the electricity in the air as we move together.

And then I finally kiss her, my lips tenderly pressing against hers. Our kiss is soft and gentle. She moans into my mouth, wrapping her arms around my neck. I can feel her desire for me, and I can't help but return the emotion. I pull her closer, deepening our kiss and feeling a thrill of anticipation build between us. I feel my heart swell, and I know that this moment is something that I will never forget.

I take her in my arms and place her on the counter, pulling her closer and feeling her warmth radiating onto my skin. A wave of contentment washes over me.

I spread her legs wider and arrange myself between them without breaking our kiss.

I savor the feel of her soft skin beneath my fingertips and how her body moves in response to mine. I run the tips of my fingers up and down her arms, tracing the contours of her body and feeling the warmth of her breath.

I love how she melts into me and the feeling of her heart beating against mine.

Her dress is pulled up around her hips, leaving nothing but her panties between her bare pussy and me. As I continue to caress her, I can feel her body quiver beneath my touch. I can feel a wetness between her legs as her desire intensifies, her pleasure increasing as I stroke her, moisture between her thighs, her arousal growing with each caress.

Her body quivers with pleasure, and I hear her breath catch in anticipation. I can feel her desire for me mounting, and I can't help but be drawn to her even more.

I shove my hand into her panties and start rubbing her clit. Her body jerks in response as I apply pressure, and her breathing becomes heavy. She begins to moan uncontrollably, and my excitement builds as I continue to bring her closer to orgasm.

I can feel the intensity of her desire building as I work her body with skill and precision, pushing her closer and closer to the edge.

And then she finally explodes, her body trembling and shaking as the orgasm takes control of her. She cries out loud as the sensations overwhelm her, and I can feel her muscles tense and then relax as the pleasure subsides.

I hold her in my arms until the last drop of satisfaction leaves her body.

She sighs deeply, her whole body trembling in delight as I gently brush her hair back from her face.

At that exact second, the timer on the stove rings.

“The pasta is ready.” I smile at her, giving her another kiss.

“I don't think I'm hungry anymore.” She laughs, still leaning on my shoulders for support.

“I’m sorry if I took advantage of you,” I say, pressing my forehead to hers, feeling guilty for not asking permission to kiss her first.

“It’s okay.” She smiles, still holding on to me. “It’s not like I was against it. It was a wonderful moment, and I’m happy to be here with you.”

I can’t help but moan in pleasure at what she says, gazing into her eyes and placing another slight kiss on her lips.

A warm, pleasant feeling fills my body. I feel butterflies in my stomach, a sense of warmth and bliss like nothing I have ever felt. I can feel my heart flutter and my soul soar as I look into her eyes.

I am falling for her, and I know it.

“Let’s go.” I take her in my arms and help her get back on her feet.

“Aren’t you...don’t you—?” She’s unable to finish the sentence, her face confused.

“Oh, I do,” I tell her with a sly smile as I take her hand in mine and press it to my hard cock. She gasps slightly in surprise and satisfaction at what she’s just felt.

I’m eager to show her how much I desire her, how badly I want her here with me now.

“See?” I ask playfully, and her beautiful face finally brightens again. “But you have to eat first. You have no idea all the things I want to do with you tonight. You need strength.”

She laughs at my words but doesn’t ask me to clarify. I’m sure she believes me, though.

## CHAPTER FIVE

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BRYAN

“That’s so delicious,” she moans, tasting my pasta, just like she did at the bar, and my still half-hard dick twitches again.

Maybe deciding to wait until after dinner wasn’t a bright idea.

“Where did you learn to cook like this?” She runs her fingers through her hair, making me melt. I want to touch it too.

“Thank you,” I say, trying to get myself back together. “I always liked cooking, mainly because of my mom. She taught me all the basics, and then I started getting creative with it when I moved out of the house and had to cook for myself because I couldn’t afford takeout in New York.”

“You used to live in New York?” She sounds surprised. “I thought you said you were from here.”

“I am, but at eighteen, I decided to study law at Columbia.”

“You...you were admitted to Columbia University? As in *Columbia* Columbia? The Ivy League school?” I’m in awe of the way she can’t conceal her admiration.

“You make it sound as if I invented time travel.” I chuckle. “I guess it’s not a terrible accomplishment. At least it was

worth getting a degree to see this surprised adorable face of yours.”

She blushes and smiles at my words. “What did you study?”

“Law.”

“That’s great!” she said. “What kind of law did you practice?”

“I was a corporate lawyer.”

“That’s amazing! I guess. I have absolutely no knowledge of that.”

I laugh. I like how natural she is: She doesn’t even try to pretend to be somebody she isn’t. She is totally authentic. I appreciate that, and it’s definitely worthy of respect.

While living in New York, I saw too many fake people pretending to be someone they weren’t. Being true to oneself can be difficult in a big city. It’s easy to compare yourself to others and feel inadequate or be tempted to try to hide your true identity. It’s refreshing to see someone who is unapologetically themselves and dares to be who they are.

“You haven’t missed anything; studying is not interesting, at least for me. I couldn’t wait to get to work,” I recall honestly. Sometimes, I feel that life in New York never happened to me; it seems like it happened to someone else.

“I just went to a small college,” she continues, “but I always knew that I wanted to be a baker, even though it takes a lot of work.” She speaks slowly, her gaze lowering.

Immediately, I tell her, “Don’t do that,” and she looks at me with concern. “Don’t underestimate yourself and your job. Being a baker is important. Baking is an art. To do it well, you



need a lot of skills. Not only does it require creativity, but it also brings joy.” As I continue speaking, her eyes glitter again, and a shy smile appears on her face. “You make people happy; people adore you. Have you ever met someone who adores a lawyer?”

She laughs at my words, obviously flattered. And at this moment, I want to take her in my arms and squeeze her tightly—as tightly as she can stand—just to show her how important she is. Whoever told her otherwise is just an idiot and isn’t worth remembering.

“Did you like it there? In New York?” She interrupts my thoughts, and I return to reality.

“I did, at first, a lot, especially after I graduated and started making money—real money—to be able to live in Manhattan, eat in high-end restaurants, buy expensive stuff, and travel around the world. But I didn’t travel and barely slept because I was always working. And then I just realized that’s not exactly what I want in life, you know?”

She nods. “And what about that girl?” I raise an eyebrow silently, and she adds, “Did you move because she cheated on you?” I just stare at her for a moment, trying to find the right words. “I’m sorry if you don’t want to talk about it...” She shakes her head and lowers her gaze.

“No, it’s not that. It’s just...I don’t even know why I moved, really. I don’t understand what was wrong with that woman—Kaitlyn was her name. We were in love, at first, at least. We met at college and both wanted a career, but mine did well while she was stuck at a job she didn’t like. The law wasn’t her thing in general. She applied there because her parents convinced her it was a stable job with plenty of money. And then, one day, I came home, and she was in bed with one

of her colleagues. And, of course, she blamed it on me working too much and not making time for her.”

“People will always find someone to blame for their own sins,” she adds after I’m finished with my speech.

How can she be both this beautiful and this smart? I smile and nod in agreement, admiring her wisdom.

“Oh my gosh, who is that?” she exclaims, looking behind me.

I turn around. “Oh, that’s Red. She’s a mix of Scottish fold and something else.”

Red is my adorable light gray spotted cat with deep green eyes and cute folded ears.

“I adopted her from a shelter a couple of years ago, and she’s now a family member.”

Chelsie gets up from the chair. Before I tell her that Red doesn’t like new people, I watch how easily Red lets Chelsie pet her, even putting contentedly as Chelsie rubs her belly.

“Why did you call a gray cat Red?” She laughs, still petting my cat.

“When I came to the shelter, she was the only gray cat among a bunch of orange cats. I thought she was unique and called her Red because of her color.”

I get up and come closer to them. Luckily, Chelsie had almost finished her dinner, which makes me think of other exciting things we could do.

“How is it possible that you have a cat?” She looks up at me, her eyes glittering joyfully. “Guys like you usually get dogs.”

“Guys like me?”

“Handsome, hot bartenders.” She smiles. “They usually get a dog.”

I laugh. “Thanks for the compliment, but there’s too much work with a dog, and I’m always busy. Still, I wanted to come home and have somebody waiting for me.”

“Oh, I know what you mean,” she says right away. “When I have a partner and a house, I want a dog, two cats, and three children.” She laughs and gets up, looking at me with a smile. “I’m sorry, I usually don’t say this to guys on first dates. I don’t want to freak them out. But it’s not a date, and I’m not sure I’ll ever see you again, so I feel like I can tell you everything on my mind, even the crazy stuff.”

I come closer, take her gently by the chin, and turn her face so she’s looking at me. “This is a date, and we’ll definitely see each other again,” I whisper, moving my face closer to hers. She parts her lips, and her breathing quickens. “And you can tell me anything on your mind; I like you.”

She looks at me in surprise, but before she says anything else, I press my lips to hers for a kiss.

## CHAPTER SIX

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## CHELSIE

Undoing his jeans has my fingers fumbling. Trying to help me, he lifts his hips. It takes me a moment to pull out his cock, relishing its size, thickness, and perfection. My fist wraps around him as I lick my lips.

I get on my knees in front of him. As soon as he's inside my mouth, I realize how huge he is.

There's no way I'll be able to take him all. But my instinct for panic fades away as I suck him deeper. By the time I swallow him down, my jaw is already aching.

He curses softly, and I can't help but open my eyes to look up at him.

"Fuck, you're incredible," he growls, looking at me from above, our gazes locked together.

I like how his eyes glaze over when I suck his dick; he's in a trance, completely lost in pleasure. His soft curse only heightens my joy, and I want to do more. It's like throwing gasoline on the fire of my desire.

He lightly gripped the back of my head, guiding me. The pressure is barely there, more like a suggestion, but I suck him down again as if he is holding me down.

“Mmm...” Keeping my touch very light, I twist my hand around his base, my fingers barely snagging the skin. He chokes, his Adam’s apple bobbing.

Just under his base, I rub my thumb a little more firmly. His thighs clench as he jumps between my fingers.

I’ve never really enjoyed this. Getting a guy off. Now that I see the color rise in Bryan’s cheeks and the jerks of his muscles as I touch him, I finally understand the appeal. Watching him get increasingly turned on while exploring him is so hot that I can feel myself getting wet.

As I keep pushing forward, Bryan curses at me again and grabs my hair with his fist, yanking me off.

“That’s enough,” he groans. “If you don’t stop, I’ll come in your mouth, and I don’t want that.”

“Maybe I do,” I tease him with a smile.

He gives me a look of warning before saying, “Be careful about what you ask for, Chelsie baby. It might come true.”

*Chelsie baby...* He’s already come up with a name for me. That’s so sweet. I can already feel my heart melting.

And then he grabs me in his arms bridal-style and lifts me up as if I’m weightless. No one has done that to me before. He must have worked out to have such impressive strength. I can feel the power in his arms as he holds me, and I am filled with a sense of security that I’ve never felt before.

“That was very good *thank you* for dinner. Now I know why they say the way to a man’s heart is through his stomach!” he says, and I burst out with laughter.

As he carries me to the bedroom, I wrap my hands around him and bury my face in his neck.

He smells like a mix of cedar and musk, with a hint of spice. Holding him close, I cannot help but get lost in his aroma. This intoxicating combination of scents captivates me, sending a shiver down my spine.

I'm overwhelmed with emotion as I cling to him, not wanting to let go. I never want this moment to end. I'm afraid that when this all ends, I will be sad, longing for something I can never have again.

"Don't overthink it, Chelsie baby," he says calmly and softly as if reading my mind. "Don't compare, don't hesitate. Just enjoy the moment. Let me take care of you. I want nothing more at this moment than to give you pleasure."

His voice is soothing; his sense of assurance washes me in a gentle wave.

For some reason, I know I can trust him, and I can feel my worries melting.

Bryan gently places me on the bed and undresses me, not breaking our eye contact.

His gaze is tender yet passionate, and I can feel my heart racing in anticipation.

He slowly unbuttons my dress, one button at a time, never turning his eyes away from mine. He carefully slides my dress off my shoulders. Then he moves to take off my underwear, carefully brushing his fingers against my skin as he slides my panties down.

As his hands linger on my body, I can feel the warmth of his touch radiating through me. I can tell he is savoring every moment, just like I do.

"I want to see you come on my cock, Chelsie baby," he whispers, brushing his fingers over my skin. "I've never

witnessed anything more beautiful than when you relaxed and came on my fingers in the kitchen. I need you to do that again. I want to see you come on my cock and feel every bit of pleasure that goes with it.”

I can feel the heat radiating from my cheeks as I blush in response to his naughty words. No man ever spoke to me like this, but I can’t even explain how much I like it.

My heart is pounding with anticipation, eager to see how far the conversation will go.

“Take me now. I can’t wait any longer,” I plead, my breath ragged with desire. My eyes meet his, and I can feel the electricity between us.

And we both know that this is only the beginning.

His eyes darken with desire, and he murmurs, “Dirty girl, you have no idea what you’re asking for.”

I smile wickedly and reply, “Try me.”

He takes a condom from the nightstand. I reach out to help him put it on, my fingers lightly grazing his skin. He shivers slightly from the contact, and I smile again, knowing I have a hold on him, too, just like he has it on me.

“You drive me crazy, Chelsie baby,” he growls, arranging himself on top of me and guiding the tip of his cock into my hole, stretching me.

“Tell me how you want it,” he growls, teasing me, brushing the tip of his dick against my entrance, pushing it slightly inside me, and then pulling it out again.

“Hard and fast,” I say right away, unaware of where this thought came from. “I want you to fuck my brains out; I’ve never been fucked like that.”



I know he likes what I say because of the mischievous smile on his face.

“Beg me,” he commands, watching me without even blinking.

“Please,” I say without hesitation, “please, fuck me so hard I see stars.”

And then, in one fast motion, he enters my pussy. I arch my back as I moan in pleasure, feeling my entire body trembling with desire.

I wrap my arms around his neck and pull him closer. I know I’m in deep, and there is no escape, but I wouldn’t want it any other way.

He starts pushing himself in and out of me, thrusting slowly and deeply, and I can feel every inch of him inside me. His thrusts are sharp but gentle at first as he prepares me for what will come next.

“Fuck, you’re tight,” he growls into my ear. His breath hitches as he increases the speed. I feel a delicious pressure buildup within me as his movements become quicker and more passionate.

He starts fucking me fast and rough, pushing himself deeper and deeper inside me with each thrust. I can feel my walls close in around him. His grip on me tightens, and I can barely contain the sensations flooding my body. I’m close to the edge, aching for the explosive release I know is coming. My senses are on overload, and I have never felt so alive.

This is the best sex I’ve ever had. His touch is electric, his movements intoxicating. I feel myself being pulled deeper and deeper into a state of euphoria as the pleasure builds to an almost unbearable level.

“God.” I close my eyes. “God, I’m so close, I—”

“I know,” he rasps. Of course, he knows. He can feel me twitching and throbbing against him. He wraps his arms around my hips and drives even deeper into me. I moan, rubbing against him as I tighten my grip, digging my fingers into his firm ass, scratching his delicate skin.

I feel his heart hammering in his chest as he pants for air.

Every part of me tingles, and my body is wholly overcome with sensation. My breath is ragged and my muscles tense, and I am lost in a wave of pleasure crashing over my entire body. I am absolutely consumed by the intensity of it all, and I can’t help but cry out as I reach the peak of my orgasm.

He drops his head to my shoulder and lets out a strangled shout, every muscle in his body tensing and shaking as he explodes right after me. I can feel his cock pulsating inside my pussy, prolonging my climax.

It’s the longest and the most intense climax I’ve had in my life.

I eventually quieted, slowly opening my eyes. I feel warm and incredibly soft throughout my whole body.

If my first release was explosive, this one is slow and delicious, almost dreamy, slipping through my veins.

He slowly pulls out of me, and I feel a sudden emptiness as his warmth leaves my body. He tenderly wraps his arms around me and kisses my neck before cuddling me close and settling us into the bed.

“Thank you,” I mumble, twisting his curl around my finger. “For inviting me.”

He smiles and softly kisses my lips. “I should be the one thanking you, Chelsie baby.”

## CHAPTER SEVEN

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## CHELSIE

I need clarification on what is going on. I'm still asleep when I feel a warm, pleasant feeling between my legs. I'm unsure if I'm dreaming or if this is really happening, but I can't deny the sensations I'm feeling.

Pretty sure I'm dreaming. That just can't be real; it feels too pleasant.

And this dream is just as good as the one I had yesterday, where I met the most handsome guy in the world. He fed me and gave me the kind of pleasure I never knew I needed.

I never even knew that kind of pleasure existed in the real world; I thought it was a myth you only read in romance novels.

But it doesn't matter if it's real or not. I just want to keep dreaming.

Bryan's tongue runs up and down my pussy. It glides through my folds, and I press a hand to my forehead because it feels *so* good.

He's licking my clit, and he's doing it with such skill that I can't help but moan out loud. His tongue circles around, and I feel my juices dripping down my thighs. His fingers join in, and I'm thrown into pure bliss.

His tongue is like velvet, sending waves of pleasure through my body as he expertly explores my depths. The sensations seem to build and build until it feels like I can't take it anymore. His touch is like magic.

And he's really, *really* talented at licking. He knows exactly what I need. He knows the proper pressure to apply, the right angles to explore, and the right speed to work at. He takes his time, and the sensations he creates keep intensifying until it's almost too much to handle. He's truly gifted.

I open my eyes and get on my elbows to look down at him. This is definitely not a dream.

Bryan pulls away and glances at me. He smiles shyly, and I know that this moment is real.

"Good morning, beautiful," he murmurs with so much satisfaction as if I am the one who receives this pleasure. "I'm sorry to wake you up, but I couldn't resist."

"Morning," I respond, barely able to speak.

His voice is so gentle and soothing that I can feel my heart melt. I feel a warmth rising inside me, and I can't help but smile.

Bryan's hands push on my thighs, urging me to spread my legs wider. I do so, bending over again.

As he blows another hot breath over my pussy, he pauses for a moment. The air brushing across my sensitive nerves almost imperceptibly makes me squeeze my eyes shut, feeling how wet I am inside my thighs as my sensitive nerves are touched almost imperceptibly.

"You taste like heaven, Chelsie baby," he pulls back slightly, running the tip of his tongue around my clit, brushing it with pleasure. *Almost* enough.

But it's not enough; it's not enough.

"Please, please." My whole body jerks.

I'm begging for something I can't name, for something I can't explain. It's time to fill my craving with something that will satisfy this desire.

"Please, what, baby?" He gives me another teasing lick.

His touch was like a spark, electrifying me and setting my body alight with a passionate yearning.

"Please, let me come." I'm gasping for air.

His fingers linger, coaxing my every nerve to stand at attention as my skin tingles with anticipation. I want nothing more than to explode.

He groans deeply. "Take it. Take what you want, Chelsie baby."

And so I do. I slowly rub myself against his mouth, drawing small circles over his face with my hips. I feel his hands grip my hips tightly, pushing me closer and closer to the edge.

That drives him crazy because he starts groaning, panting hard into me.

I dig my fingers into the sheets, arching my back even more.

And then he inserts a finger into my pussy. I moan in pleasure as he thrusts deeper, his fingertip exploring my sensitive inner walls. He moves his finger in circles, stimulating my G-spot, while his tongue massages my clit, increasing the pleasure.

My body quivers from the sensations, and I let out a loud moan.

There have been guys I've been unable to convince to go down on me, and this one is doing it as a greeting to me.

It's too much; I can't stop shaking. My hips are jerking and twitching under the pressure of his mouth.

Suddenly, I start rocking over him, riding his face and rubbing my wet pussy against his mouth helplessly. As soon as I do, he lets out a sound of agony.

"Yeah, Chelsie baby; that's right: take what you need." He groans, desperately burrowing his face into my pussy, licking, nibbling, and sucking me so hard that I can't breathe.

And then he locks his lips around my clit and sucks hard. His expert tongue skills work on me like a charm, sending me into pure bliss and pleasure. I'm overcome with sensations as his movements and pressure increase, sending me closer and closer to the edge as I moan and scream his name in pleasure.

And I cry out loudly, falling apart in his arms. He slows his movements and cuddles me close, murmuring sweet words in my ear as I come down from the high. I'm exhausted and blissful in his arms, still trembling from the pleasure.

As I finally respire, I expect him to come inside me, but instead, he murmurs, "Let's go; I'll make you breakfast." He places tender kisses on my inner thighs.

"Won't you...come inside?" I ask desperately. I bite my lower lip as I feel disappointed.

I can't believe how quickly I became addicted to this man's touches. I can't help how I feel; I'm already hooked, and I can't help but want more. I'm feeling a type of



connection that I've never felt before, and I'm scared to let it go.

"I want you, Chelsie," he says thoughtfully, looking intently into my eyes. "I thought we were both clear about that. Didn't I show you how much I want you throughout the night?"

I smile.

"But as a gentleman, I will make you breakfast first." He gives me a quick kiss.

I ask, "Can you give me a T-shirt, please?"

"Take any you want at the chest drawer. I'm going to make some coffee."

And then he leaves.

It feels slightly uncomfortable to open his drawers when he's not here. I'm rummaging through his things. But he said it casually, as if he's known me for a long time, as if we're roommates.

While I run my hand through his perfectly ironed, tightly packed, fresh-smelling T-shirts, for a second, I feel as if we are a real boyfriend and girlfriend who live together and can share everything, including clothes.

And then my hand hits something small but firm. Something that feels totally out of order, as if hidden.

A box. When I look at a small package, I know exactly what it is.

It's a jewelry box. Is he...?

No, it can't be. This box isn't an engagement ring. He can't be getting married. He's so honest, open with me, and

sincere.

It could be a pair of earrings.

But again, why would they be hidden? And even if those are earrings, they are obviously still meant for someone else.

*For another woman.*

I know I shouldn't do this. But I pull out the box and open it anyway.

It's an engagement ring.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

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BRYAN

Instead of wearing my T-shirt, I see Chelsie fully dressed, holding her bag in her hands. I immediately realize that something isn't right.

“Where are you heading?”

She hesitates before responding, “I have to go. My friend is waiting. Plus, I have a crucial meeting with a landlord. I can't be late.” She is obviously lying and avoiding eye contact.

Everything was great. What happened?

Gosh, that's when I realized she probably found the engagement ring. How could I forget that it was there?

“Chelsie, please don't go,” I say, blocking her path and preventing her from leaving.

I can feel my heart pounding in my chest. She slowly turns around, and when our eyes meet, I know my suspicions have been confirmed. My stomach drops. She's on the verge of crying.

“Look, we had a great time,” she says, not even looking at me. “You were probably nervous and needed a distraction, and I was stupid enough to become one.”

“That's not what you think.”

“Everybody says so. However, I don’t believe it.”

“It’s Kenzie’s ring,” I say, gently taking her shoulders.

Chelsie looks up at me in shock. Her confusion is evident as she takes a few moments to process what I am saying.

“Are you dating Kenzie? The girl who suggested I go to the bar?”

“Kenzie is my sister.” I interrupt before she says something else, coming to other ridiculous conclusions. “She wants to propose to her girlfriend.”

A long pause follows as we stare at each other.

“Kenzie is...your sister?” she clarifies, unable to believe her words. “And that’s *her* ring? And it has nothing to do with *you*?”

“Well, if I lose it, she will kill me, but yeah,” I joke, and she finally smiles back, her eyes glittering with tears. “My sister and I have a very close relationship, and she often visits my place with her girlfriend, Hannah. She wanted the ring to be hidden so Hannah wouldn’t find it when she was here. So now I have to be extra careful. She’ll cut off my balls if I lose it. Literally.”

She laughs, her body finally relaxing in my arms. I smile and hug her closer, relieved to feel the tension in her body eventually dissipate.

We stand silently for a moment, hugging each other, not saying a word, just listening to each other’s heartbeat.

“I can’t believe you wanted to leave without even talking to me.” I finally break the silence, pulling away slightly and looking at her. “Promise me to never do that again.”

“I think I just really suck at one-night stands,” she says as if apologizing.

“It wasn’t a one-night stand.”

“Okay. I mean, I don’t know. I’ve never...”

“I’ve had enough for both of us, and trust me: We did *not* have a one-night stand.”

And then she grabs my shirt to pull me closer and starts kissing me.

She tastes so delicious, like a late-spring night mixed with honey. I hold her head in my palms, pressing her into me. She moans, so I bend down to push her into the wall, unable to get enough.

“So we’re good?” I ask after a moment, coming up for air. She nods, but it’s not enough; I want to hear the words. “Chelsie baby? Are we good?”

Then I bite into her bottom lip, closing my eyes as I do so. It’s plump and soft.

“Are we all right? Because if you think it was a one-night stand, then...”

“No. I...” She reaches up and brings her mouth to mine for a gentle kiss. “No. We’re good.”

“Promise?” I ask against her lips.

She nods. “I promise.”

“Okay, let’s go have breakfast before I undress you and tie you to the dining room table so you don’t run away.”

She laughs. “Oh, role-playing. I like it.” She winks at me, and I grab her for another hug. “I’m not hungry, but I’d like a huge mug of coffee, please.”

“Well, then, it’s good that I have one right here.” I extend a cup of freshly brewed coffee to her.

“Oh my gosh, that’s some good coffee!” she moans, tasting the dark-roast blend.

“Thank you, I roasted it myself. Plus, that’s a good coffee machine.”

“It would have been nice to bring my coffee machine when I moved out.” She looks regretful, but just for a moment. “And now I have to wait until I open my bakery and buy a high-quality coffee machine. But rent prices in Los Angeles are so high.” She rolls her eyes. “So it’s not going to happen soon.”

“You can open a bakery here,” I suggest, and she looks up at me, surprised. “I know the landlord of an empty building next to the bar.”

“Don’t tempt me, or I might agree.”

“I’m serious.” I kiss her. “I don’t want you to leave,” I whisper against her lips, pulling away just slightly. “I want you to stay with me for as long as you want. Hopefully forever.”

She laughs but then realizes that I’m not joking. “You can’t be serious. We, like, just met.”

I look her in the eyes. “I am serious. I know it’s crazy and unexpected, but I feel like I’ve known you for much longer than just a few hours.”

She stares back at me, seemingly speechless, biting her soft lips. “I want that, too. But I just...I don’t want myself to get...” She pauses.

“Hurt again? I know.” I lean lower and bite her lip myself. She moans with pleasure. “But you can’t always hide in a

shell.”

I gently kiss her, pressing my lips against hers, and she sighs in response. I can feel her body relax, and I hug her closer. I whisper softly, “It’s okay. I’m here for you.”

“I have to call the hotel and prolong my stay.”

“I already did that.”

“But I have to collect my stuff,” she insists. “I can’t afford another night there. And aren’t you going to work today? And what about your landlord? Shouldn’t you discuss it with him first?”

“Too many questions, Chelsie baby.” I swipe my tongue over her lower lip. She shudders, and her skin breaks out in goosebumps. I can’t get enough of how responsive to my touch she is.

“That’s your apartment, isn’t it? You don’t have a landlord?”

“Yes, it is.”

“And that is your bar, so you don’t have to worry or ask for permission to leave.”

I say nothing. I didn’t want to tell her. I don’t like bragging, but I don’t want to lie to her.

“Oh my God,” she exclaims, pulling away, “that’s your hotel! Kenzie doesn’t just know the owner; it’s her brother!”

“I would have told you. Eventually. I just didn’t want to freak you out,” I say honestly, but she pulls farther away from me.

“How’s that possible? How old are you?” She looks at me, amused.



“Thirty-six. I sold my part of the law firm and bought this whole building.”

“So the place you offered for the bakery is also yours? What kind of corporate lawyer were you? Like mobsters? Who launders their money?”

I laugh. Even though she isn't serious, I am always amazed by how she expresses herself.

“I worked with music labels, and my firm received a small part of each contract with every artist. It was profitable.”

“But how...what...” she stammers, making her look even more adorable. “What would be the conditions of a contract? You don't even know if I can afford to pay the rent!”

“It's not rent that I want from you.” I lean in for a kiss, but she pushes me away, placing her hands on my chest.

“I'm serious.”

“Me too.” I brush the hair off her face. “I would like you under me, over me, from behind, in the kitchen, on the couch, on the floor.” I continue, looking at her beautiful face, “But that's not *all* I want from you; it's not *everything* I'm hoping for. I need you to understand that it's *not* just about sex.”

I stop for a second, taking a deep breath before I continue, “I would like to keep talking to you. I love making you laugh. I don't intend to fuck you *once*. I would like to do it a lot for a long time. I expect you to come to me for sex, but I also need you to come to me when you need help with your taxes and moving your equipment at work. I want this to be only one of the million things I do for you. And I want to help you open your bakery and...” I clear my throat because it's getting harder to breathe. “And move your stuff to my place—our

place—and then buy a house with a dog, two cats, and three children. Well, it's not like we can buy children..."

"Shut up." She presses her palm on my mouth and smiles at me. Her eyes sparkle with tears. "I can't believe you remembered exactly what I said."

"So it's not a no, right?" I clarify, and she shakes her head, laughing.

"No, it's definitely not a no." She gets on her tiptoes to give me a long, deep kiss, after which I pull away and smile. "So I take it that's a yes?"

She nods, and I wrap her in a hug, feeling content. And then I grab her in my arms. "Let's go shower together if you don't want to have breakfast."

"You know I can walk, right?" she asks, wrapping her legs around me.

"I like it better when you're in my arms."

## CHAPTER NINE

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CHELSIE

“I’m sorry, I...” he mumbles, walking into the shower behind me, “I don’t think I have another condom. That one was in my drawer for a long time, just in case, but...”

“Well, I’m clean,” I say right away, unable to believe how much I want him. “I got tested right after...the breakup. Are you?”

“Of course, and I’ve never...had it bare.”

The thought that it’s going to be his first unprotected sex and it’s going to be with me arouses me even more.

“I’m on the pill.”

And he doesn’t need more words. He takes off his clothes and comes to shower with me.

And then he starts kissing me. No slow and gentle kiss like before. He kisses me hard and passionately like he’s wanted to do this for days.

His hands roam my body as his mouth explores mine. He kisses me like he wants to eat me alive. I moan, wrapping my fingers in his hair, and I’m completely lost in the moment.

Eventually, he pulls away, panting. I gulp as he quickly turns me around and presses his warm body against my back.

One of his hands moves down my hip, sending shivers down my spine. I bite my lip to suppress a groan. My legs press together as my body tingles in response to his touch.

Bryan moves the shower head to spray directly on my breasts as he kisses my neck. The hand on my hip slides down to my inner thigh. This makes me shudder.

His fingertips trace circles around my clit as his other hand squeezes my nipples. His mouth moves down my body, and I feel his tongue against my skin. I moan in pleasure as it moves lower.

He spreads my legs farther apart and shoves one finger into my pussy. I can feel his hands and mouth moving around me, exploring and teasing. I'm panting with desire as he slides his fingers in and out of me, sending waves of pleasure through my body. I'm lost as I experience the most intense arousal in my life. I can feel my orgasm building up inside me.

"I need you...inside," I gasp, arching my back and placing my hands on the wall for support.

"Not yet," he murmurs, his voice low and husky. I can feel his warmth radiating through me.

Bryan gets down on his knees, spreads my ass cheeks, and starts licking my pussy and ass from behind.

"You're so *soft*," he says, his voice grating. "How are you this *soft*?"

It's a rhetorical question, and it doesn't take long for my body to react to his tongue. I was already on the edge of arousal, and now I am completely lost in the moment.

He curls his finger inside me. I'm getting desperate now. I keep rubbing against him, slamming my pelvis against the heel of his hand. The insides of my thighs are hot and sticky. Oh,

God, I need to come so badly. I can feel it starting to happen as I begin to shake around him.

The sensation overwhelms me. “Bryan, please, oh my God!” I start screaming as I reach my orgasm.

My body is shaking as I feel every nerve within me being electrified. I’m trembling as the waves of pleasure come crashing down on me. It feels almost as if my body is lifted off the ground with each surge of happiness. He keeps licking and fingering me until I’m completely spent.

“Good girl,” he murmurs and then gets up rapidly and enters me from behind, thrusting deep and hard in one swift motion.

He presses me so hard that I scream in delight as he ravages my body. His hands grasp my waist, and he thrusts deep and fast, pushing me closer and closer to the edge of sheer pleasure. I’m panting, my body shaking with every thrust. My body appears to be his to do with as he pleases.

I cry out, shutting my eyes. My entire body vibrates.

He fucks me hard and fast, his hips slapping against my ass. The sensation is incredible, and I can feel myself getting closer and closer to the edge again.

Before I even have a chance to comprehend what is happening, my body spasms, clenching around him. I keep coming, gasping, shaking against him all over again as he plunges in deep, wringing the pleasure right out of me.

“I want to come inside of you,” he growls. “Can I? Please?”

I smile, unable to speak, but then I realize he can’t see my face from behind.

“Yes,” I whisper, barely audible. “Yes,” I add louder, feeling his arms wrap around my waist as he starts coming.

He shoots his cum inside of me, and I can feel it spreading inside, a warmth that both comforts and excites me. He presses his torso to my back, and I can feel him trembling, his heart beating fast against my back.

We both pant heavily, our breaths coming in short gasps as we wait for the pleasure to subside. I feel exhausted, but a warm feeling of contentment spreads through me.

I close my eyes and let the moment linger, savoring the pleasure of what we just shared. He pulls out slightly, and I can feel his body’s warmth slowly fading.

He takes a towel and starts wiping me gently, his hands tenderly tracing the contours of my body. I bask in the warmth of his touch. my legs as weak as water.

“That was... breathtaking,” he whispers, taking his time, caressing my body, and when he is done, he kisses me softly on the forehead. “The best sex I’ve had in my life.”

I smile. I know what he means because I feel exactly the same way. And it’s not because we match so perfectly physically; it’s something else, something deeper.

It’s almost as if we understand each other on another level, and it’s a connection that can’t be easily explained. It’s like we can read each other’s minds, knowing exactly how to touch and where to kiss to make the other person feel even better. It’s an unspoken understanding of one another.

I take a deep breath and let out a contented sigh; it’s a feeling of joy and satisfaction that cannot be put into words. “I’m sorry, I can’t even talk,” I say with a smile, and he smiles in response.

And then he takes me in his arms—it's already become a habit—and carries me into the bedroom.



## EPILOGUE

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BRYAN

*One year later*

“I’m so glad you hired Zoe as your manager; now you can spend your mornings in bed with me,” I murmur into Chelsie’s ear, kissing her neck while she’s still half asleep.

I can’t believe how time flies. It’s been exactly a year since we first met. Those days were the best of my life. Even with long work hours, we both managed to make it work. With Zoe managing her workload, we have more time together, and I’m thankful for that.

“Yeah, she’s been a great help,” Chelsie murmurs, opening her eyes. “I feel more secure knowing she’s there. I’m thankful to have her as my manager. Plus, I get to spend extra time with you in the mornings and sometimes longer.”

That’s true. Sometimes we both just stay at home. It rarely happens since Chelsie is a very responsible bakery owner. However, on occasion, I still convince her to stay with me and just lie in bed all day, talking and making love.

“I love you,” I say, and she smiles at me. “I love you so much.”

“I love you more.”

“Impossible.”

She leans to kiss me.

No matter how much time passes, I still feel the same butterflies when she kisses me. As if we just met.

And she still arouses me just with a look. She doesn't have to do anything else, just look at me, and I'm already turned on.

“Can you give me my reading glasses, please?” I ask before I forget what I wanted and start making love to her. “They're in your drawer.”

“You...have reading glasses?” she clarifies, surprised.

“Yes, I got them recently. I need them for reading the small print.” I'm lying, and I can see that she knows it.

She grins. “Okay.”

But of course, when she opens the nightstand drawer, there are no glasses in there; there's a wedding ring lying right in the middle with nothing else around it. I just wanted her to not miss it when she opened the drawer.

“I don't see any glasses,” she says casually, and I lift up to look. Isn't she seeing the ring?

But Chelsie turns to face me with a smile on her face. Oh, she saw it. She's just enjoying my confusion. And I thought I could confuse her.

She takes the ring out of the drawer and looks up at me. “Another friend ask you to hide something for them?”

“Yeah, but it's not important,” I say immediately. “Just throw it away.”

She punches me on the shoulder. “It's so beautiful.”

“Do you remember what day it is today?”

She chuckles: “Of course. It’s the day I met my best friend and the love of my life.” She leans closer to me. “I met Red.”

I laugh into her mouth. “I’m serious, Chelsie baby. Will you help me keep this ring safe on your finger? Not for long, just like, for the rest of your life?”

This time, she laughs. “I will.”

*Dear Reader,*

*Thank you for reading **THAT SEXY BARTENDER**. I hope you enjoyed Bryan and Chelsie’s story just as much as I loved writing it. If you have a few moments, please consider leaving a review for my book. Honest, heartfelt reviews are like gold to authors, and I read each and every one.*

*Thank you so much!*

*Love,*

*Kate*

You can get my book **MAKE ME BELIEVE** for **FREE** by signing up to my newsletter [CLICK HERE](#)

Or take a sneak peak of the first three chapters of my most popular book **LEAVE ME BREATHLESS**, a Forbidden High School Age Gap Romance Novella. Read on for a preview.

A romantic scene of a man and a woman in a pool. The man is shirtless and has his arms around the woman, holding her face. The woman is wearing a pink bikini top. The background is a blurred pool setting with water splashes.

KATE J. BLAKE

- DIRTY ELITE ACADEMY -

LEAVE ME  
*Breathless*

EXCERPT: LEAVE ME BREATHLESS

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## CHAPTER ONE

ALEX

I open my eyes, and it takes me a couple of seconds to realize where I am. After staring at the snow-white high ceiling for a few moments, I finally come to my senses. That's right, I'm in my new house in Malibu, California, two thousand miles away from my hometown. I've been living here for almost two weeks but still can't get used to it. I should call Los Angeles my new home now since I paid rent for the whole year.

Will I ever get used to living here? My shrink said I will, but I genuinely doubt it. He also noted that a change of scenery will definitely help me. But that's what he told me about those antidepressants, which I quit taking a couple of months ago since they did not work. Just like the pills he prescribed me before that, hoping it would get better soon. It didn't; they only helped me sleep a little better, and then everything came back to where it had been. So the only thing left for me to try is a change of scenery.

But a new house and a new job do not mean a new life. I wish it was that simple, but it isn't. Especially not for me, not after what I've done. I understand that the guilt I feel inside cannot be removed; I just have to somehow get used to living with it.

I brush my teeth on autopilot, take a massive cup of strong black coffee, and walk on the terrace overlooking the ocean, still wearing nothing but the black boxers I sleep in.

It's a cloudy day, and I see a vast gray spot in the distance as if it's going to rain, so rare for Los Angeles. I take a deep breath, inhaling the smell of saltwater into my lungs. The ocean...I've always dreamt about living next to it. When I was a kid, I couldn't even imagine that someday I'd be waking up to a view like this one... Too bad it doesn't give me as much joy as I thought it would because of the enormous hole in my chest, the one that'll never go away, because it's much darker than the cloud I see in front of me.

My house stands on the top of a giant rock at the end of the beach. That's why the rent was cheaper than others in this place: nobody wants to live in Malibu without direct access to the beach. Nobody but me, because privacy is my middle name. I can easily access the beach by simply walking half a mile, and the view from the top of the cliff is gorgeous, so much better than from the beach houses next to the water.

At six in the morning on Saturday, there aren't many people walking on the beach. That's one of the reasons I like mornings so much. I can stand silently on my terrace for hours, and no one will disturb me. I simply stand there, thinking profoundly and drinking my coffee before doing anything else. That's my kind of meditation.

When I slowly refocus from the beach to the ocean and that gray spot in the distance, something moves in my peripheral vision, and I rapidly turn my head to the left, looking toward the edge of the cliff.

It takes me a couple of moments to realize what is going on.



My hands start shaking, and the mug slips out of them, hitting the stones of the terrace I stand on, spilling coffee all over the place, including my feet, but I don't feel the pain of the hot drink. I feel nothing but fear.

A young woman is about to jump off the cliff.

"Don't do that! You'll kill yourself!" I try to yell, but my throat has gone so dry that the words stick in my mouth, and I'm not sure whether I've said anything or not. I hear nothing but pounding in my ears. I wave to her, but she doesn't see me; she's not paying attention to anything.

She's at least twenty feet up from the water. She could easily hit a rock and break her neck. And even if she does a cannonball, which is the safest move for amateurs, there's still a considerable risk she'll break her leg.

She raises her hands into the air as if she is going to dive headfirst. It seems like my heart stops pounding as I watch.

She can't do this. She will hit her head and drown. It's suicide.

That can't happen to me. Not again.

She's standing about three hundred feet away from me. And she's already on the edge of the rock, so even if I run to her, I won't be able to catch her before she jumps.

I go to the edge of the cliff. It's around fifteen feet high from where I stand. There are tons of rocks under the water. It's almost impossible to jump safely. There's a big chance that if I jump, I'll hurt myself, too, even though I'm a professional swimmer.

But I don't think twice before I jump into the icy cold ocean.

I can't let her die like this. Not on my watch. Not again.

## CHAPTER TWO

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When my body plunges into the chilling water, it feels like thousands of little needles pierce right through my skin. At first, it hurts, but then it slowly starts to fade. I don't move, keeping my whole body under the water, including my head, because I don't want to get rid of those stings any faster. I enjoy each of them: they make me feel alive.

And then they're gone...

I slowly float to the surface, lying on my back and letting the water take control of my body, swaying it back and forth on the waves as if I'm weightless. I close my eyes to relax.

I know it's forbidden and even illegal to jump from that cliff. If my dad saw me jumping, he would be furious and have me suspended from school for days, maybe weeks. I know most people would be glad to stay home, but not me. Being away from school means being away from my swim team, and I can't let that happen. One day without swimming and my body is aching for it as if for a drug. A drug I will never be able to quit.

That's why I jump from the cliff every time I can. Luckily, the nearest house has been empty for more than a year now, so no one ever sees me. I always do it in the early morning, when there are no people on the beach. Yes, it's forbidden, but I

can't help myself; it makes my heart beat faster, my knees tremble, and my palms sweaty. It makes me feel alive.

My parents say they worry about me when I come here, but that just makes it even more desirable. Actually, the danger is what motivates me the most.

Luckily, my parents are out of town for another couple of weeks, so they won't find out. I'm glad that that Shanghai cardiology conference is almost a week long, and then they go to Beijing, Hong Kong, and Singapore. They are leading researchers and will test some new robot-surgeon who will replace humans in places that are difficult to get to, like war zones. They wouldn't miss it, even though they're probably going to be gone for my nineteenth birthday. But who cares, right? I'm not as important as robots who perform surgery.

The anger I felt when they told me ached inside of me for days, and I knew the only way to get rid of it was to jump. I discovered the first week we moved here when I was twelve years old that jumping from the cliff calms me down. My parents pissed me off by saying they wanted me to attend some fancy Beverly Hills Academy instead of a boarding school for swimmers, which I'd dreamt of. That's when I walked to the cliff, checked to see where the underwater rocks were, and jumped from the safest spot I could find.

My parents were furious when they found out. They said we'd move away if I did that again. But I have, many, many times. And each time, I've gone a little higher. My parents have threatened to stop paying for my swimming lessons, but they never did because they knew that it would've killed me.

The moment I feel my body finally start to relax, someone grabs me by the ankle, and I scream loudly in fear, flopping on the water as if I am drowning.

“Are you alive? Have you broken something?” I hear a low male voice and realize that a stranger is talking to me.

“Get your hands off me!” I yell at the maniac, trying to push him off, but his grip on my ankle is tight.

I can’t see him clearly because of the water in my eyes, but I know that he’s unshaven and dark-haired.

“You’re in shock because you’re hurt,” he continues in a calmer tone, and that’s when I realize that he’s trying to hold me as if I’m drowning for real. That’s a unique grip I’ve been taught in my swim lessons.

“Let go of me. I’m not drowning!” I keep yelling, rubbing my blurry eyes, trying to escape, but he doesn’t let me.

“You’re bleeding,” he insists, and I look down at the water.

“That’s not my blood,” I say calmly, looking at the massive cut on his arm.

He finally lets me go, and I rub my eyes, looking at him in frustration.

He’s not as old as I thought in the first place. He’s about thirty, maybe older. I can’t say precisely because of the dark beard.

He looks at his arm and the blood oozing out of it, and he is overcome with bewilderment, almost as much as I was just a minute before.

After a moment of silence, he looks back at me. “Why the hell were you jumping from my cliff?” he barks angrily.

And that’s when I really become afraid of him.

“From *your* cliff? But that’s Mr. Styles’ house, and I was just...” I begin, but he cuts me off.

“I’ve rented this house for the next year.” He keeps raising his voice, becoming even more furious with each word.

Okay, I get it. My cliff is on my new neighbor’s property. The best thing he might do is tell my parents, and they’ll ground me for ages, so long as they think I will not jump anymore.

The worst thing he can do is call the police, and I’ll be suspended not only from the academy but also from my swim team...

“Were you trying to commit suicide?” he continues, not giving me a chance to continue that thought. He’s holding his injured arm higher from the cut, knowing exactly how to stop the bleeding.

He must be a doctor, just like my parents. He knows how to hold a drowning person and what to do when your arm is bleeding.

“No, of course not!” I raise my voice again at how ridiculous it sounds. “I’ve jumped from that cliff a hundred times!”

“You’ve done this more than once?” he barks again, even louder this time, like a homeless dog defending a bone. “Are you crazy? You could’ve died!”

I realize that yelling and arguing with him won’t help me avoid punishment. It can only make it worse.

That’s when I say, “You need to rinse that wound as soon as possible so it doesn’t get infected...”

“I know what I need to do!” He turns away and starts to swim toward the beach.

For about a minute, we swim silently, but as we get closer to the shore, I try to talk to him again.

“Please, please don’t call the police. I promise I will never...” I started pleading.

“Do you have a first aid kit?” he interrupts without giving me a chance to finish.

I look at him in bewilderment. I thought he was a doctor.

“Do you?” he repeats once again, barking as always.

I nod silently, unable to speak anymore.

“Get it!”

I splash out of the water and run in the direction of my house.



## CHAPTER THREE

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I grab the first aid kit and almost slip on the wet marble floor. I had no time to dry off before entering the house because I got so scared I couldn't think straight. And only when I catch the tabletop to keep myself from falling, I take a second to calm down and think.

Am I seriously going to a stranger's house alone? Even though he said he's renting it from my neighbor, I can't stop and check to see if that's true.

This stranger tried to save your life, Gabrielle. I can almost hear my mother's voice as if she's speaking in my head. She's always so polite and perfect, always knows the right thing to do. It pisses me off.

But this time, she would be correct: this man tried to save my life, even though he probably doesn't know how to jump into the water from a height like that. And in the process, he injured himself and will probably need stitches.

Without thinking twice, I rush back to my neighbor's house to help a man I don't know. When I am almost to his door, I realize that I'm still wearing just a swimsuit and have nothing to cover myself with. But I have no time to go back home; if I'm too late, he could get an infection, and then he would definitely report me.

I carefully open the terrace door and step inside the house. I've never been here before, and I have to admit that it's pretty cute: old dark-brown wooden floors, cozy furniture, sun-burnt curtains. This house is nothing like ours with its marble floors and golden ornaments.

I see no one when I get inside, and that scares me even more. Where is he? Shouldn't he have waited for me on the porch?

"Hello?" I say carefully, although it sounds more like a question.

No response. I also hear no other sounds like creaks or clatters. I hear only noises from the outside because of the open window in the living room. It feels like there's no one in here except for me.

I take another careful step, and shivers cover my entire body, from my lower back to the top of my head. What's wrong with me? I've never felt like this. I'm the one who jumped off the cliff; I'm not the one who's afraid of her neighbors. And this house is nothing but cozy and beautiful, but the energy is so unique. I can't say it's scary—no, it's different than that, something that makes my stomach shrink in anticipation. Exactly the way I always feel before I jump.

Is it because of this man? The guy who looked like a homeless person and makes my heart beat faster? No way!

But my gut never lets me down.

And that's when I hear quiet but deep breathing. As if someone's doing yoga or something and taking deep breaths.

I listen carefully, trying to understand where the sound is coming from.

I take a couple steps in that direction, and I hear the breathing becoming heavier.

Has he actually started to exercise? For a second, I think that I must have gone to the wrong house.

When I get to the beautiful bright kitchen with light-beige walls, open shelves with white tableware, old solid dark wood table and chairs, and lots of copper cooking utensils, I find myself thinking that I just entered a Nancy Meyers movie. This house is so charming.

I don't see him right away because I'm too distracted by the beauty of the kitchen design. But with another deep inhalation, I finally notice my savior at the corner of the room, sitting on something that looks like an old dower chest. His back is pressed to the wall behind him, head tilted down.

My heart stops when I look at him as if I've never seen him before: he's young, obviously not older than thirty, with a lean, muscular body.

I feel my heart start beating again, this time with much more force. I can still see the same man that saved me, with messy long hair and an unkempt beard, but at the same time, it's a completely different guy, with a body that doesn't fit his messy hairstyle.

This man is gorgeous: slightly tanned skin as if he spends a lot of time outside, wide chest where each muscle is visible, broad shoulders and lean arms, toned legs. He's not huge or overgrown, the kind of man who eats tons of protein and energy drinks. No, he's a different type of man, one who does a lot of physical work to have a body like this. And also, of course, he obviously has good genes. This man might not take care of his beard, but he definitely works out a lot.

He ignores me. It seems as if he doesn't see me even though I'm standing five feet away. I think he didn't even hear me talking to him.

That's when my eyes slowly go lower, to his bleeding hand, and I realize that I am standing right in front of him, exploring his gorgeous body, while he's probably in pain, and that's why he's breathing so heavily.

I fall on my knees in front of him, opening the first aid kit in a hurry. My hands are shaking, and my voice trembles when I say, "Please, don't call the police. I promise I won't ever do that again."

I start to clean his wound, putting on a bandage after washing it thoroughly twice. But my new neighbor doesn't seem to notice what I am doing with his hand because when I finally look up at him, I see the same distant gaze I saw when I came in.

He's looking at the floor, but at the same time, it seems like he's looking through it, as if he's sleeping. Could he have fallen asleep? But why is he breathing so heavily? Maybe he's...

And that's when I realize what's going on. He's having a panic attack!

I start shaking even more, unable to do anything with that. I know what to do with a person having a panic attack, but am I allowed to do it to a stranger?

But there's no time to think twice, so I just grab him by his shoulders and press my wet self to his naked torso, hugging him as tightly as I can.

Would you like to know more about Alex and Gabi's story? *LEAVE ME BREATHLESS* is LIVE! [CLICK HERE](#)

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kate J. Blake writes spicy romance novellas for naughty readers who love hot heroes and happily-ever-afters.

Originally from Ukraine, Kate currently resides in Southern California, enjoying the warm weather all year round.

Kate used to work as a stylist, and loves everything about fashion. She's a fan of online shopping, and buys tons of useless stuff, trying to convince her husband that she possibly can't live without all of that.

Kate reads 100+ books a year, but still orders many more titles than she could ever possibly read. She loves binge-watching romance TV shows and always misses her writing deadlines.

Kate has visited 30+ countries, and is not planning to stop travelling any time soon. You can find out more about her trips through her social media accounts.

Connect with her at:

[www.katejblake.com](http://www.katejblake.com)

