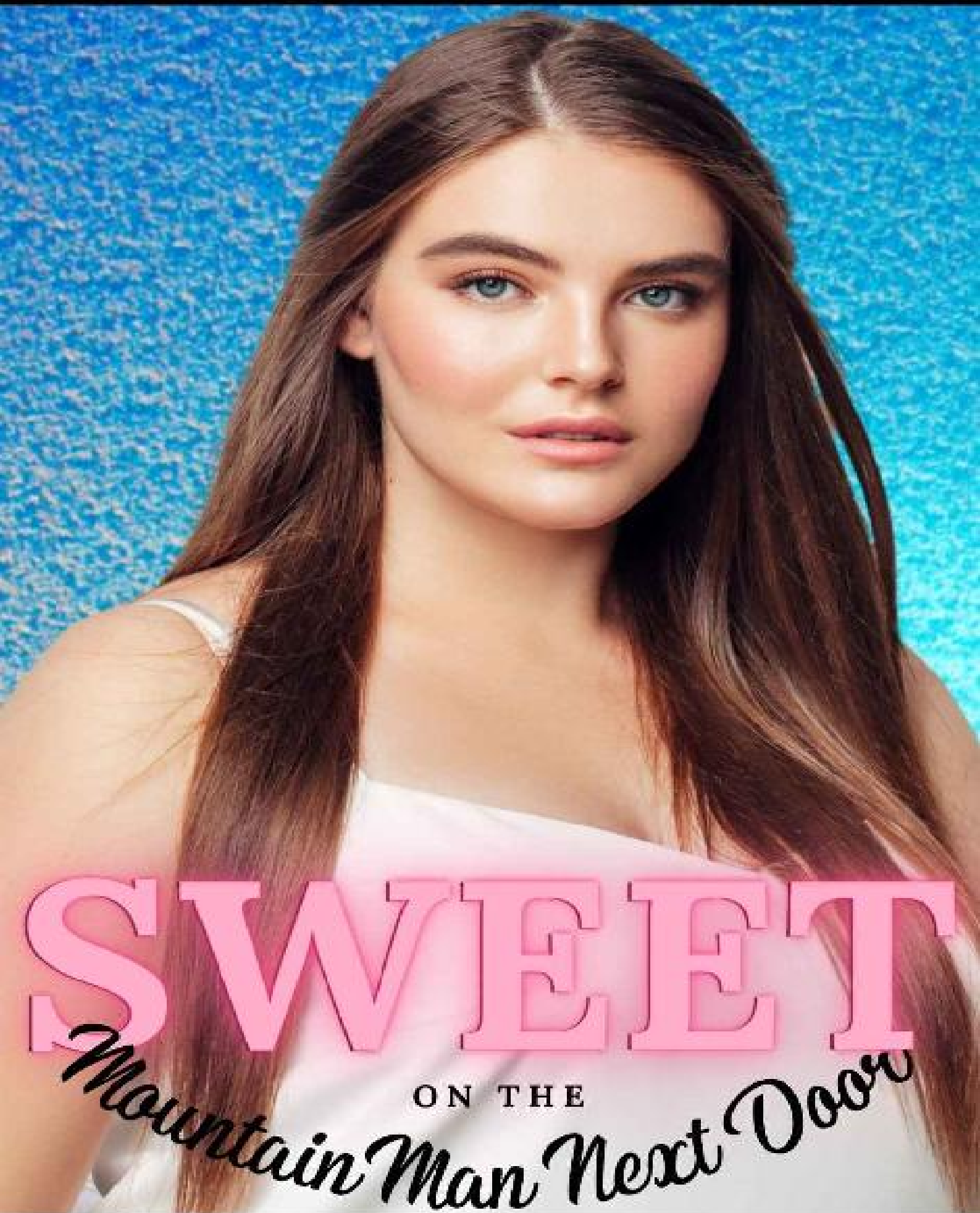


SWEET SISTERS BAKERY: BOOK 2



SWEET

ON THE

Mountain Man Next Door

FLORA MADISON

SWEET ON THE
MOUNTAIN MAN NEXT
DOOR

SWEET SISTERS BAKERY: BOOK 2

FLORA MADISON



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Also by Flora Madison

WINONA

Buzz! THE LOUD NOISE INVADING MY BEDROOM JOLTS ME FROM my sleep. My body jerks as I push up my silk eye mask and reach for my phone in the darkness. Five-thirty in the morning? “You’ve got to be kidding me.”

This makes three days in a row that my next door neighbor has woken me up from a dead sleep after a twelve hour day. On other days it might not be so bad seeing that I have to be into the bakery by seven, but today is my first day off in two weeks and dammit all I want is a good old fashioned sleep-in.

I slam my fist against my nightstand and grab my ear plugs. The strange spongy material expands into the crevice of my ear and almost...*almost* blocks out the loud humming and buzzing sound piercing the precious would-be silence.

Then magically, the noise stops.

I breathe a haggard sigh of relief and pull my silk sleep mask over my eyes once more. With a deep breath I allow my body to sink into my precious memory foam mattress. Sleep, how do I love thee? Let me count the—

Buzz! Buzz! Buzz!

A new, louder machine noise interrupts any chance I have at falling back into dream town. My eyes fly open and I rip my mask off once more. Before I even know what’s happening, I’ve thrown off the covers and exchanged my silk pajamas (an early half-birthday present to myself) for a pair of jeans, my favorite flip-flops, and an old tank top. I’m halfway through my bedroom door when I realize I haven’t put on a bra.

Gazing around the room, I opt instead for my pink, fluffy robe with bunnies on it. I don't care about appearances, I just need to make the damn noise stop.

I fly down the steps two at a time and throw open the front door. The morning sun makes its ascent over the tall mountain trees in the distance. I stomp over to the garage that backs up so close to the edge of my cabin. When I showed my sister, Carolyn, the place she's the one who noticed how close the barn was to my own house. I didn't think it'd be a problem. In a quiet mountain town, how noisy could it be?

I wasn't expecting these early morning construction sessions. What's worse? Once again, my oldest sister Carolyn was right. I don't know how she always does that.

I'm half-way across the backlot of my property when it fully hits me what I'm about to do. What the hell am I supposed to say? What if it's a crazy old man who locks the door behind me and I never see the light of day again?

Easy, Winona. You read too many True Crime novels.

I traipse around to the front of the barn, and it hits me that I'm officially trespassing. It's also the first time I've seen what lies beyond the building. The house in the distance is modest but an absolute stunner. It looks like something straight off of HGTV. I bet Chip and JoAnna would have a field day with that one.

I swallow back any doubt that I have, and before I lose my nerve I raise my arm and bring my knuckles down hard on the old, yet surprisingly ornate barn door. What could possibly be a better excuse than an interruption of one's beauty sleep?

My heart beats in my throat as I wait for the loud power tool to stop. It's like it echoes in the cavernous terrain of the mountains. I wait. And wait. And wait.

I scowl, pissed as hell that I'm even in this position in the first place. I bang on the door so hard it hurts my hand. When the noise still continues, I say a quick and silent prayer before gently pressing on the door. To my surprise, it's unlocked.

Dismissing any thoughts about some cannibalistic backwoods toothless weirdo, I gently peer my head inside.

“Hello?” I call out, but my voice isn’t much louder than my knock. Bravery overcomes me—after all, I’ve come this far—and I step all the way inside. I’m about to announce my presence when my voice dies in my throat.

Standing before me, holding a huge industrial sander-type machine is the tallest, most gigantic, most *ripped* man I’ve ever laid eyes on. Shirtless and glistening with sweat, the muscles in his corded torso pop and flex as he works his way down the long piece of wood. His light denim jeans sit low on his hips, revealing a legitimate six pack, complete with those inhuman grooves on the sides.

The glorious tall drink of water doesn’t see me standing there. His goggled eyes are cast downward, a long strand of dark hair hangs in his face like it’s broken free from his freshly showered mane. His strong hands run the sander along the wood like it’s the most natural thing in the world, as though he’s one with it.

In a haze of my panties being melted clean the hell off, I completely forget I’m not supposed to be in there, and don’t realize I’m staring at this hunk of a man with stars oozing from my eyes until he cuts the machine and glances up at me.

He raises the goggles, revealing the brightest, golden brown eyes I’ve ever encountered. His warm smile reveals a deep dimple in his left cheek.

I’m seriously about to come all over myself.

“Hey there.” He sets down the machine and makes his way over to me. My body reacts like a trapped animal, but the front door’s wide open. “Can I help you?”

Oh Jesus, God. Why am I here?

“I live next door.” I manage to blurt out.

“So you’re my neighbor.” He reaches for a nearby t-shirt and my heart sinks, but at least it will be easier to think. “I heard the place sold, but I didn’t know who bought it. How do you like the loft?”

“How do you know about the loft?”

“I’m Levi Maxwell.” He says with the pop of his sharp chin. He extends his hand, and when our skin touches my center lights up like a Christmas tree. “I built that house.”

THE LAST THING I EXPECTED TODAY WAS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL woman I've ever seen in my life to waltz into my woodshop. Even standing there in her silly bunny robe and flip flops, I can tell she's built like a goddess. It's hard to keep my eyes off of her curves.

"I'm Winona Sweet." I'm mesmerized by bright blue eyes with a glowing hazel ring around the edge.

"The baker?"

"Well, the baker's assistant, really. My sister's the pastry chef, but I helped with the interior design." Her eyes flicker to the ground. "And now I sell donuts. How did you know that I was—"

"Small town."

"Ah."

"So, Winona Sweet." I lean against the post nearest her. It's so hard to keep my eyes off of her body. Never in my life have I seen a bunny robe look so goddamn sexy. "I'm taking it that this is not just an introductory house call."

"No, it's not." Her lips press into a curt line. "Not at five in the morning."

I glance down at my watch. "Technically, it's closer to six."

She crosses her arms over an ample chest that even her robe can't hide. "Technically, I was woken from a deep sleep at five-thirty."

“Yeah, I’m sorry about that.” I click my tongue against my teeth. “For some reason it’s like a pocket of noise right around here.”

Winona peers around the woodshop. “Well, do you have to start so early?”

“I do if I want to keep putting food on the table.”

Her eyes narrow on mine. “Something tells me you’re being a bit overdramatic.”

My finger flies to my chest. This is partially offensive. I pride myself on being a down-home good man of the earth who works with his hands. “Do I seem like the kind of guy who’s overdramatic?”

She looks me dead in my eyes, without blinking. “Yes.” She shakes her mane of waist-length, light brown hair that’s still messy from sleep. “There has to be a compromise. I mean, do you have to work in this barn so early?”

The word makes me flinch. “This isn’t a farm.” I gesture to the projects scattered across the space, all in different stages of completion. “This is my woodshop, and it’s the only place big enough for the custom pieces I design.”

She opens her mouth to speak and at the same time truly takes in the space. Her mouth snaps shut as she makes her way to a dining set I’ve been slaving over for the last two weeks. “This is amazing.” She runs her pink painted fingers along the smooth wood. “You made this?”

“Yeah, from a tree the owners had to cut down.” I make my way over to her. Standing near her makes me feel like a giant. Her clean shampoo scent fills the air between us. “The house has been in their family for generations, and obviously so has the tree. When they found out it needed to come down, we salvaged what we could and...well, you’re looking at it.”

“That’s insane.” Her sparkling eyes widen.

“So you see why I have to work a lot of long hours, including early mornings.”

She turns on me, mouth in a perfect o-shape. “No, I didn’t say that. I think we need to come up with a compromise here.”

“I already told you—”

“And I told you that you’re interrupting my peace. Listen I lived in the city for two years. It wasn’t half as noisy as what you’re pulling.”

A little laugh escapes my mouth. I didn’t expect her to be so assertive, not dressed like that. Then again, would a woman come over here dressed like that with any *other* intention than getting whatever it is she wants? “Okay, a compromise. I won’t start until six.”

“I leave for work at seven.”

“Seven!” I run my hand through my still damp hair. “That’s two-hours of work I should be doing.”

She tosses that sexy mane of hair over her shoulder and looks up at the ceiling. “There’s electricity in here. You have lights. Work at night.”

“I can’t believe you have the nerve to come over here and tell me what hours to work.”

“Believe it.” She thrusts her hands on her hips and her robe pops open at the top. The little gap is enough to reveal a low cut tank top, and a hefty view of her soft, sexy cleavage. I immediately stiffen against my zipper, and I can’t tell if it’s her nerve or the way her cleavage makes me want to rip off all of her clothes and taste every square inch of her luscious, curvy body.

“Six-thirty.” I manage to toss out.

“Fine.” She lets out a sigh, pouting her lips in the process. “But, seven o’clock on my days off.”

“What are your days off?”

“Today. Other than that.” She shakes her head. “It varies.”

“Well,” I say, feeling brave. “Maybe you can shoot me your schedule so I’ll know when to keep it down.”

“Fine.” She yawns, and the sassy woman before me melts into someone who’s been up past their bedtime. It makes me want to scoop her up and carry her to bed...and stay there with her. “Can you just please keep it down this morning. I’ve been pulling some long hours getting the bakery up and running. I need my beauty rest.”

“I don’t think you need it.”

Her doe eyes sparkle in the warm light of my woodshop. I mean it as a compliment, but instead of thanking me, Winona pulls her robe tighter and turns on her heels.

“Please, just give me one good hour?” She says over her shoulder, and leaves without waiting for an answer. For a couple of seconds, I don’t move. Once I get my wits about me, I peer out the door and watch Winona walk back across the property line to her side. Her round hips sway with each step.

I’d heard that the Sweet sisters were a good looking group of women, but I didn’t expect to be gobsmacked by Winona. A shiver races across my shoulder blades as she rounds the corner, out of sight.

I’m not a man who falls at the feet of women, but I’ll be damned if a woman like Winona Sweet barges into my life and expects to leave as anything less than mine.

WINONA

IT'S AMAZING WHAT A DAY OFF CAN DO TO YOUR SPIRIT, EVEN if it's just spent grocery shopping, watching Netflix, and chilling at your sister's house. Of course I end up staying all night at Meg's, she loves sleepovers even if she acts like she's too tough for anything on God's green Earth—I blame too many years living in the city.

We're at the bakery by a little after seven, and of course, Carolyn is already aproned up and ready to face the day. "You're always so chipper," Meg says, then throws her purse on the counter.

"I just cleaned the glass, Megs." Carolyn scoops it back up and hands it back to her. "And it's easy to be chipper when you do what you love."

"And are in love." I say under my breath.

Carolyn rolls her eyes and continues humming as she re-wipes the glass counter. My sister's been struck by cupid's arrow. Reluctant as she was, she finally opened her heart and let that hot cop into her life. I'm glad she did, for all of our sakes.

"We watched the most messed up True Crime documentary last night." Meg reaches into the cabinet and pulls out a caramel apple fritter. "Seriously, if I ever date someone who seems too good to be true, smack me across the face and tell me to wise up."

"I'm not smacking you!" I throw my hands in the air.

“I give you permission.” Meg wipes the crumbs from her chin.

“Uh-uh. Something tells me you won’t remember this conversation and I’ll end up with a black eye,” I say.

“Yeah.” Meg licks the sugar from her bottom lip then pivots toward her office in back, calling over her shoulder. “You’re probably right. Don’t even try it.”

“Oh crap!” Carolyn says, thumping her palm against her forehead. “I forgot to put out the fresh batch of cupcakes. Watch the front.”

I don’t have time to answer, let alone prepare myself a cup of coffee before Carolyn high tails it to the back kitchen. Simultaneously, the front door chimes.

Awesome. Customers before coffee. Can there be anything worse?

I plaster a smile and turn toward the door. My greeting dies in my throat as my smoking hot neighbor, Levi, steps into the bakery. The image of him sweating, slaving over a piece of wood pops into my head, but in this vision, it’s me he’s bent over, having his way with me. The image is so vivid, I nearly soak straight through my panties.

“Morning, neighbor.” He says, showing off that stellar dimple that I thought only belongs to movie stars.

“Levi. What are you doing here?”

His work boots scuff on the walnut floor planks I worked so hard to get at a decent price. “Coffee.” His light brown eyes take on a golden shade as the sunlight pours from the window beside him. Jesus, this man is truly the epitome of a walking wet dream. I nearly laugh out loud at my own thoughts.

“I see you’re in a better mood today.”

“Yep,” I say, and grab two neon pink “Sweet” mugs before heading to the coffee machine. “I slept at my sister’s last night.”

“Nicer bed?”

“No.” I let out a little laugh. Is he flirting with me? “More like no one to wake me up at the butt crack of dawn with their power tools.” Ugh, did I just say butt crack?

“Well you missed it then, because I didn’t touch my tool until well after seven. Then, I went to town until about nine.” He opens his mouth to continue, then furrows his brow. “That came out wrong.”

I wink at the gorgeous man before me before setting down a steaming cup of coffee in front of him. “Sure did.” Although now I can’t get the delicious image of him with his long, pulsing length in his hands out of my head. Hell, I don’t even want to—*dirty, dirty me*.

“Oh,” Levi says, staring at the cup in front of him. “I think I have to take this to go.”

I tear my eyes away from his white t-shirt stretched across his broad chest and realize my mistake. “Oh, I’m sorry. I was about to make a cup for myself and just ended up...” I pull the cup back toward me. “I’ll put this in a carry-out.”

“Wait.” Levi reaches across the counter and rests his hand on mine. A million daggers of heat rush between my legs, and I realize that if he moves his hand I just may die from the lack of his touch. Geez, now who’s the dramatic one?

“It’s not a problem.” I manage to say.

“I—”

“Yeah.”

“If you’ll join me, I’d like to have coffee with you.”

My heart nearly beats out of my chest. “I guess I could do that.” When I turn to fill my own mug, I mouth the words “Oh my God!” to no one in particular. By the time I turn back to Levi, so casually gorgeous it makes me wanna die, I’m composed and pretending like this isn’t the most exciting moment of my time in Brighton Ridge so far.

My big sis must have keen intuition because she waltzes out from the back room with a tray of freshly iced cupcakes right as we make our way to the table in the back. She shoots

me an inquisitive look and I dart one back at her that screams, “Tell you later.”

I shuffle into my chair across from Levi and my excitement turns to nerves. I know this isn't a real date, but dammit it feels like one. I brush a stray hair that's come loose from my top knot away from my face, and silently thank myself for putting on makeup today.

“So—”

“How long have you been—”

We both speak at the same time, and follow it up with an awkward laugh. Maybe I'm not the only one who's a little nervous. Though I can hardly imagine why. Levi is ripped, looking like he stepped straight out of an old school Chippendale's catalogue—my mom had one when I was little that she got as a gag gift—and I'm an average, if not larger sized woman who works at the family bakery. We've got nothing in common.

“It's been a minute since I've had coffee with a woman. Let alone one as beautiful as you.” Levi's words send a rush of heat to my cheeks. “So, Winona Sweet, tell me everything about you.”

I FEEL LIKE A FOOL, BUT WINONA HAS MY TONGUE TIED AND my stomach knotted. The way the morning sunlight hits her high cheekbones, highlighting her face and giving her the appearance of an honest to God angel, has me wiggling in my seat. I should be at work. I'm behind on orders and there's not a lot of time to catch up, but I refuse to miss an opportunity to stare at the woman of my dreams over coffee.

"There's not much to tell." Winona shakes her head as she stirs creamer into her coffee. "I moved here with my sisters to open the bakery and here we are."

"I know that, but what makes you tick. Who *is* Winona Sweet?"

"Oh God, you sound like a gameshow host—"

"Other than someone who will bite your head off if she doesn't get her sleep."

Her face goes serious, but a hint of playfulness remains on her baby pink lips. "That's true, and I will come back over there and kick your ass if I hear those power tools so early again."

I throw my hands up and shrug. "I already promised, and if you were home this morning you would've seen I kept my word." She glances up at me with those stunning blue eyes of hers and I'm lost, a total goner. In my whole life I've never believed in love at first sight, but Winona's changing all of that. I see a strong and sassy independent wife, a mother who can rule with both love and an iron fist.

Jesus, Levi, tap the breaks will you?

I clear my throat. “So, you like baking?” Damn, that was lame.

“I studied interior design in school. After a few failed internships I realized that I’m better working for myself but it’s not an easy field to branch into without the proper capital. Money makes the world go around.”

“I hear you on that.” I take a long sip of coffee. It’s perfection. Just like the beauty sitting across from me.

“So what’s your story, Levi? You from here?”

“No. I grew up on the East Coast. Been here for about ten years now. Started working for someone who builds houses, then decided it was more fun to make furniture. So, I opened my own business and the rest is history.”

“That’s right, you built the house I’m renting.”

“I sure did.”

“It’s really beautiful, but not as beautiful as your house.” Winona sinks her teeth into her bottom lip. It makes me want to lean over and grab a taste of them. “If that’s your house next to the barn.”

“Woodshop.” I correct her with a smile. “I mean, maybe once it was a barn but I hate thinking that. It’s my workshop. My happy place. But yes, I do live in that house, though I don’t spend much time there.”

“Oh man, I’d never leave it.” She sighs and I can’t help but study the curve of her neck. “That house is stunning.”

“Well, I work a lot. Almost too much.”

“I know, I can hear you working a lot.” Winona playfully rolls her eyes. “But, something good came out of that.” Her long lashes bat against her cheek.

“Yeah? What?”

“I wouldn’t have met you if you were some quiet reclusive mountain man hiding in his barn—I mean, workshop.”

“Woodshop.” I correct her once more, but a smile splays across my face. It’s bigger than I’ve smiled in ages. This is also the longest conversation I’ve had in ages, aside from my clients. “One other thing, I wouldn’t have been able to see your sexy little bunny robe.”

Winona’s jaw drops. A crimson flush paints her cheeks. She’s about to retort, but a huge crash from the back room has the two of us on our feet.

“What the hell was that?” I whisper.

“Mother f—” A roar from the back room booms through the bakery.

“Oh shit. That’s my sister, Meg.”

“Is she okay?” The words haven’t left my mouth before both Winona and her other sister go flying into the back room. I don’t think twice about following them. We rush past a tiny bathroom and a back kitchen until we reach a small office. All three of us land in a pile at the door.

“It broke!” Her sister, Meg says staring down at the pile of papers splayed across the floor. “The leg just cracked right off.”

“Mom’s table!” Winona cries, rushing over to survey the damage. She holds up the broken leg and examines it. All three of the Sweet sisters have tears glistening in their eyes as they go back and forth about how it’s an antique. It was their grandmothers. It’s been in the family for years.

“I can fix it.” I interrupt them.

“What?” Her sister, Meg, looks up at me for the first time. “Who’s this?”

“Noisy neighbor, Levi.” Winona says.

“Meg.” Meg points to herself.

“Carolyn.” She wiggles a little wave. “I don’t know if you can fix this. It’s ancient, been on its last leg for years. Literally, I guess.”

“I can fix it and I will.” I step forward, taking the piece of wood from Winona’s soft hands. “I make furniture for a living. By the time I’m done with this it will be as good as new.”

Carolyn and Meg look at me for a beat, then simultaneously turn to Winona, who nods in reassurance. “He can do it. I’ve seen his work.”

My heart swells a little. Of course I know without a shadow of a doubt I can do it, but hearing Winona’s faith in me makes me puff out my chest that much more. I’ll do anything to keep her happy, and the hopeful smile playing at the corners of her lips tell me that this would put her and her sisters over the moon.

“I’ll pull my truck around back.” I head for the door. “You’ll have it by tomorrow night.” As I leave the room I hear Meg say, “Now *that’s* too good to be true.”

“Do not slap me.” Winona replies, and I’m glad I’m out of the room for whatever comes next. I grew up with no women other than my mom and I do not get sisters. What I do get, however, is that I’m going to be even further behind on the orders I’ve promised. It’s worth it. Anything that makes Winona smile at me like she does is worth any discount I’m about to give for a late delivery.

WINONA

“I’M JUST SAYING BE CAREFUL, HONEY.” MEG PUTS HER CAR IN park as I hop out in front of my house. “Just because we lost Carolyn to a big, bearded softy doesn’t mean they’re all like that.”

I roll my eyes. Meg’s cynicism can be overwhelming at times. When she puts that pessimistic attitude away, she’s actually the life of the party. “Not everyone’s a True Crime tale waiting to happen. Besides, I can take care of myself.” I lean over and give my sister a big hug. “But I love you for not wanting me to be cut up into a million little pieces and fed to bears.”

Meg pulls back, eyes darting around the car. “I didn’t even think of that.”

“Put on a Rom-Com tonight!” I close the door before she has a chance to respond. Up the stairs and into the house, it occurs to me that I didn’t even get to thank Levi for offering to fix the table. He was out of there so quickly. Still, I thought about him all day. How can a man that stone cold fuck-able still be single? Maybe Meg’s right. Maybe there is such a thing as too good to be true.

I shake the thought from my head and throw on a pair of jeans and my favorite t-shirt. Then I grab a pair of Chucks, dab on a coat of lip gloss, and free my hair from its top knot. It falls in long waves down my back as I give myself a well needed scalp rub. As much as I love working with my sisters, being on my feet all day in a bakery is not exactly the life I

had planned. I thought I'd be designing the world, not serving it baked goods.

I turn on my bedroom light and glance out the window. Levi is out there, either in his house or in his woodshop. Would it be crazy desperate if I went over there? To thank him, I mean. I rest my forehead against the glass and try desperately to talk myself out of what I'm about to do, but I'm just not strong enough.

Why waste good lip gloss?

I grab my keys and head back out the door and across the property line that separates my house from Levi's woodshop. My heart races ninety miles a minute. Am I overstepping my bounds? He was definitely flirting with me and dammit I have to see him.

It's quiet when I get to the door. When I rap my knuckles against the ornate wood, it echoes and there's no doubt he can't hear it if he's inside.

Crickets chirp all around me. The almost full moon beams down overhead, casting a glow on the side of the building. I take a deep breath, but don't have time to exhale. The door flies open.

"Winona." His deep voice, a whisper.

"Hi." I clear my throat. "I didn't get a chance to thank you."

"Come in." He holds the door wide and I catch a whiff of pure testosterone and pine needles as I brush past him. It intoxicates me, dulls my nerves which is exactly what I need right now. "I was just about to call it a night."

When I finally come back to my senses I see it. Over Levi's shoulder sits my mother's antique table. It looks better than it has in years. "Oh my God, Levi." I rush to it, run my fingers down it. "It looks like a brand new table."

"It's a beautiful piece." My body vibrates when he steps closer to me. "I went ahead and stabilized the other legs, and put a fresh coat of varnish on it. That's why it looks so new."

I turn to him. He's closer than I expected. My hands fly upward, gripping onto his rock hard chest to keep my balance. A tiny gasp escapes my mouth, but Levi braces my weight, keeping me upright.

"Thanks." I whisper.

"It's my pleasure." The way the word leaves his full, sexy lips sends an electric current deep into my core. Neither one of us moves. The warm glow of the lighting around us makes his eyes sparkle as he stares down at me.

"You're so big." I say before I can stop myself. Levi shoots me that dimpled grin that turns my knees weak. "I mean—"

"Is that a problem?"

He leans down closer. I shake my head no.

"I like you, Winona." His lips brush against mine when he speaks.

"I like you, too."

"Like more than just a neighbor." His hungry eyes burn into mine. "Much, much, more."

Before I have a chance to respond, Levi's lips come crashing down on mine. His sweet, gentle kisses turn hot and hungry almost instantly. My fingernails claw at his back, pulling him as close to me as humanly possible. My brain works overtime, unable to believe Levi's actually kissing me and allowing myself to enjoy the moment.

Every time he parts my lips with his tongue, I grow soaking wet. I love it. The way he makes me feel, sexy and petite. His strong arms hold me tight and I allow myself to melt into his embrace. He kisses me like I haven't been kissed in years. Strike that, ever.

When we finally come up for air, his lips instantly move to my neck. "You are so beautiful, Winona. I've wanted to kiss you from the first moment you stomped in here." His hot breath gives me goosebumps up and down my arms.

"I didn't stomp." I fist the back of his thick hair.

“You did, and I love it.” His hands work their way up my shirt. “There’s nothing sexier than a woman who knows what she wants.”

I don’t know if it’s his panty melting kisses, or the way he tastes in my mouth, but a wave of confidence wells up inside of me. I’m not playing games. We both feel this connection, and I’m ready to have some fun.

“I know what I want, Levi.” Now it’s my lips that tickle his ear when I speak. “I want you. Right here. Right now.”

THE WORDS HAVE BARELY LEFT HER LIPS WHEN MY MOUTH comes crashing down on hers once more. My hands slide up her soft stomach until I reach her full, round breasts and tease her stiff buds between my fingers. My length tightens against my zipper, begging to be set free. But first, I'm going to take my time with her.

I pull her shirt up over her head, finally starting to get a better view of my woman's gorgeous body. Her hair flows as her shirt lifts gently landing across her bare shoulders. "Take that thing off." I say, nodding toward her bra. I grunt as her bare breasts spill onto her ribs. "Goddamn, Winona." I rub myself over my jeans. "You are the sexiest fucking woman I've ever seen."

A crimson flush rises in her cheeks and I love how insanely gorgeous, yet vulnerable she looks in the midst of my woodshop. I growl, taking one of her diamond peaks into my mouth, lashing the tip of her nipple with my tongue. Winona's delicate fingers fist the back of my hair, filling my mouth with more of her sweet, ample flesh.

Her heavy breath fills the air as I kiss my way down her smooth stomach, fumbling with the zipper on her jeans. "I can't wait to taste you, baby." I moan, unable to unlatch my mouth from her sweet, soft skin. She helps me pull her jeans over her voluptuous hips and steps out of them, kicking them to the side. Standing there in nothing but a pair of white cotton panties Winona looks like a dream. I nearly come on the spot just taking in every inch of her curvy frame.

“You’re going to drive me mad if I don’t touch you soon.”

“What are you waiting for?” Winona flips her hair over her shoulder and bites her lower lip. She looks like a pouty pin-up. *My pin up.*

My vision blurs with desire. I wrap my arms around her waist and lift her onto one of my newly finished oak dining tables. As soon as that ripe, round ass of hers hits the wood I spread her legs and step between them, exploring every wet inch of her mouth with my tongue. How can one woman taste so good?

Winona moans into my mouth when I cup her mound. “I can feel how wet you are through your panties, baby.”

“For you, Levi.” Her low, sultry voice reverberates all through me. “For you.”

“Only for me.” I pull the fabric to the side, and run my thumb along her dripping wet center. “From now on this,” I slide one finger into her tight little opening. “Belongs only to me. Say it.”

Winona gasps, spreading her legs wider for me as I saw in and out of her. “It’s all for you, Levi. I’m yours, totally and completely.”

Again, I kiss my way down her stomach. My tongue trails along the inner flesh of her thigh, causing her to shiver under my touch. “I want to make you feel good, baby.” I press a soft kiss to her steaming center.

“You are.” She moans.

“Tell me what you want.” I say, sawing my finger in and out of her.

“I want you to kiss it.” Her rosy peaks protrude like two precious diamonds. “Deep.” Her hips thrust into the air, inviting me.

I meet her eyes and bring my finger to my mouth, sucking her juices. “You taste like heaven, baby.” When I plunge my finger back inside of her, a sharp inhale escapes her lips. “Just like I knew you would.” I trail the tip of my tongue up and

down her slit. Winona shivers, hips jutting further forward as I take her tiny bundle of nerves between my lips and suck as hard as I can. She's so wet that she's dripping onto the table and I love it.

Winona looks like a goddess splayed out before me. My finger presses deeper inside of her, twisting and tapping that spot that I know will make her explode all over my face. My tongue lashes at her nub. A tiny squeal escapes her mouth.

"I'm going to come." She says through ragged moans. "Oh my God."

Her lips pulse against mine as I work overtime on her sensitive spots. She fucks my face, riding me like a bronco until I drink every last drop of her desire. Her body convulses as she recovers.

"Jesus Christ." She says, laying back on the table. "No one's ever done that to me before."

"Never?"

Winona shakes her head. "I've never been much of a foreplay girl."

I kiss my way back up her body, and gently plant my lips against hers. "Well, that's about to change, because you taste so good that I could eat you all night, every night, and I plan on it."

"Levi." She runs her tongue along my lips until she's tasting herself. "I promise I won't stop you." Her blue eyes sparkle like sapphires, as I pull the panties down over her hips, finally exposing her fully.

I can't help but rub her opening once more. She's still wet and I'm still harder than I've ever been in my life. "You're fucking perfect, Winona Sweet." She closes her eyes as desire takes over once more.

"Take your fucking pants off already." She says, raising her chin to meet my eyes. My breath catches in my throat. I undo my jeans and throw them to the side, then slide out of my boxer briefs. Winona sits up, showing off those perfect breasts

of hers, and her wide eyes light up as she gazes down at my rock hard length.

“Fuck.” The word comes out a whisper. Then she giggles like a schoolgirl, covering her mouth with her hand.

“What’s so funny?”

“I figured everything about you would be big.” She licks her lips and presses her breasts together with her arms. “But this exceeds all expectations.” I take a step closer to her, and she presses her hand against my chest. “Levi Maxwell, you’re fucking huge.”

“Is that a problem?” I ask, stroking my length.

“I guess we’ll see.” Her long lashes flicker. “But I’m pretty sure I can handle it.”

WINONA

IF I THOUGHT LEVI LOOKED GOOD WITH HIS CLOTHES ON, IT'S nothing compared to what he looks like now. Standing in front of me, holding his long, thick shaft I feel like I've won the lottery. His naked frame seems like it's carved from stone. His massive shoulders, toned pecs, corded, muscular arms...all of it seems nearly inhuman, and dammit I love it. I want to be pressed against that body at every possible opportunity.

I wiggle my finger, beckoning him closer.

“Do you...I have some protection around here somewhere.” Levi turns his head, causing his messy hair to fall over one eye.

“Normally I'd insist, but I honestly don't think I can wait if perchance you *don't* have anything in here.” I scrunch my face up, waiting for his reaction, hoping this isn't a game changer. Levi just shoots me that sexy dimpled smile.

He's on me in a flash, hungry mouth exploring mine. The feel of his powerful, tanned flesh beneath my fingers makes me soaking wet all over again. I'm not sure what that'll do to the table, but right now I couldn't care less.

He presses himself between my legs. His tip, already glistening with pre-cum separates my lips, teasing my eager opening. I take a deep breath, knowing that this may be a bit painful but in the best goddamn way possible. I'm not prepared for the white hot surge of pain as his tip stretches my tight opening.

My hand comes down on his back as I suck air between my teeth. “Oh my God, baby. I’m sorry. We’ll go slow. I didn’t know...are you a...?”

“No, I’m not a virgin. I’m just out of practice.”

“That’s not a bad thing.” Levi growls in my ear. “And you won’t be for much longer.”

I inhale deeply and let Levi press further into me. I stretch to accommodate his massive girth. It hurts so good, and seems to last forever. Finally, he presses all the way into me and after a few moments our bodies come together like they were built for each other.

I groan as Levi presses further into me than anyone’s ever been, hitting just the right spot in a severely dangerous way. A whimper escapes my lips. Levi’s a master. He knows right when I’m about to come, but stops just before. Then, he manipulates my body into a new position. Against the wall... and again, from behind bent over the table...and finally, he lifts me up so that my back is pressed against the ornate door.

“I can’t hold it any longer.” The animalistic tone to his voice tells me how serious he is. “I’m going to come.”

“Come in me.” I say, unable to believe he’s holding my weight up like he is. He pushes himself deep inside of me and groans in my ear. My hips grind in tiny circles against his coarse patch of hair, and in a flash, I’m coming right alongside him, body convulsing like an earthquake is passing through it.

“I’m coming, baby. Fuck.” His aggressive words match the firm grip he has on my ass. I’m too breathless to tell him that I’m right there with him. After we both recover, Levi sets me down, and grabs a flannel shirt from a nearby hook.

“Here.” He says, and wraps it around my shoulders. “Levi, I have my clothes.”

He halts my words by pressing his soft, swollen lips against mine. “I don’t care. I want to see you in my shirt.”

My stomach does somersaults as I slip my arms into the oversized red and black flannel. “I’m swimming in this.” I say, more of a surprise than anything. It’s hard for women like me

to find oversized anything, but I supposed all of Levi's clothes would be like that on me. I can't help but smile as Levi slips back into his boxer briefs and jeans. He doesn't put a shirt on, and dammit I'm grateful for that.

"You look perfect in my shirt, Nona." His eyes roam up and down my body, drinking me in.

"Nona, huh?"

"It slipped out. Is that okay?"

"Normally, I'd say hell no." I wrap my arms around my chest. "I don't let anyone call me that."

"But—?"

I bite my bottom lip to keep from smiling. "But I think I like it when you call me that."

"Would you like me to call you that more?" He sidles up to me, hands in his pockets like a nervous teenage boy.

"That depends."

"On what?" His brown eyes land on me. The warm glow of his wood shed accentuates every groove in his perfectly toned torso. How the hell did I get so damn lucky?

I shiver, rubbing my arms. I don't know if it's the cool night air or the way Levi makes me feel. "On if we can continue this party at one of our houses."

"Oh shit, sorry." Levi wraps me in a bear hug and the strangest sensation washes over me. I feel like I've been in his arms my whole life. That this is exactly where I'm supposed to be. I've always believed I'd find love someday, but I never thought it would be from my noisy as hell next door neighbor, and I never thought it would happen so fast.

"I love you." I whisper. My eyes bolt open. "Oh shit. I didn't mean that."

Levi pulls away and stares down at me. "You didn't mean it." He cocks his thick, sexy brow. "Or you didn't mean to say it."

A long beat passes between us. Long enough for me to think I seriously might die of embarrassment. “I don’t know.” Levi’s mouth pops open and I’m sure he’s going to tell me to get the hell out of his woodshop. That I’m a Grade-A psychopath clinger who should lose his number.

Instead he surprises me. “I can live with that.” He leans down and whispers in my ear. “I love you, too.” Then winks. Honest to God, the man *winks* at me.

“Wait are you saying that because I did, or because you actually think that?” He wraps his fingers around the front of his flannel and pulls me closer, pressing a single kiss on my lips. “I don’t know.”

I squeal as he lifts me off my feet and cradles me like a bride. “Your house or mine?” He says.

“Yours.” I say, and allow Levi to carry me out of the woodshop and up the path to his gorgeous, fairy tale house. The funny thing is, deep down inside of me, I’m certain that one day we’ll be calling it *our* house.

EPILOGUE

WINONA

FIVE YEARS LATER:

TODAY IS THE BIG DAY. It took a bit of blood, sweat, tears and equity, but Levi and I are launching our new business. After working my ass off in the bakery, Levi sculpting and carving more custom furniture that I thought was humanly possible, we're finally opening Maxwell Designs, an all-in-one interior design firm with made to order custom wood pieces.

I press the sides of my dress with my palms, wondering how on earth I got my bumps and bulges to smooth. A whistle from the doorway turns my head. Levi, dressed in the custom suit I made him buy for our opening, leans against our bedroom door frame.

"Holy cow, you look unbelievable." His eyes roam up and down my body and I can feel my cheeks turning the same shade of red as my dress. "My stunning sexy as hell wife."

"That suit is unbelievable." I toss my hair over my shoulder and move toward my gorgeous husband. "The man wearing it's not so bad, either." I press my nose against his neck and take a long inhale of his clean woodsy scent.

"It's a little snug." He says, wiggling in his pants.

"It's supposed to fit that way." I straighten his starched collar. Levi drew the line at a tie. You can't win them all. My hand shakes when I pull it away, and as with everything I do, Levi notices. When I head back to the mirror to double check

to see if my dress really fits or if I'm delusional, Levi wraps his strong arm around my waist and pulls me snug up against the front of him.

“Are you nervous, baby?”

I take a deep breath, forget to blow it out. “A little.”

“It's just a party, Nona.” I've grown so accustomed to the nickname that I'd think something was wrong if he called me anything else. But, if anyone else dared try it I'd have to put them in their place. “You love parties.”

“I know. *Other* people's parties. This is like a celebration of us.”

“Exactly.” He presses a kiss against my neck. “It'll be fantastic.”

How quickly he forgets. The unnecessary attention makes me itchy. It's this exact reason that we eloped and only invited my three sisters and his immediate family, which worked out for the best. Three days before the wedding we found out that I was four months pregnant. We were so caught up in the throws of each other, in planning a wedding and the utter relief it felt to find someone you connect with on so many levels, that not having a period completely slipped my mind.

Our daughter looks just like Levi, taller than the other preschoolers. The good news is she's easy to find in a crowd. Our son is only six months old, but it looks like he too will be following in his fathers oversized footsteps.

“You'll be great.” Levi whispers into my ear. “All of your sisters will be there and just say the word and we're out of there.”

I nod, then turn to face my handsome husband. It never gets old waking up to him, or falling asleep to the gentle sound of his snores—though, he denies it. Levi is the man of my dreams, and the second we started dating, he pushed his start time in the wood shed back to eight o'clock so that I could get my beauty rest. What a guy.

A vivid image of the first night we were together runs through my mind. My center tingles at the memory. “Maybe

we will cut out early.” I wrap my arms around his shoulders. Levi’s dimple makes an appearance.

“Oh yeah? What do you have cooked up, Mrs. Maxwell?”

“That table. You know...*the* table.”

“The one that’s still in my wood shed? Yeah.” He draws out the word.

“I think it’s time we utilize it again.” I clear my throat. I’ve never been great at dirty talk. “You know what I’m saying.”

Levi presses his mouth against mine, parting my lips with his smooth, silky tongue. In the doorway of our bedroom, I let my husband kiss me long and deep.

“I know what you’re saying, Nona, but now you’ve got me wanting to see that table right the fuck now.”

“Easy, boy.” I reach down and press my hand against his rock hard length. “This will give you an excuse to come home early.”

“You’re killing me.”

I slowly walk back to the mirror, swinging my hips dramatically. My husband is right. Tonight is a celebration of us. Of our life together, of our community involvement, and the relief of finally being able to open our business.

I secure my earring back and give myself a final once over. Not bad. Not bad at all, I think to myself knowing damn good and well that this red dress will end up in a pile on the floor of my husband’s barn later. I mean, *woodshop*, of course.

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