

A GOOD DAY TO BE BAD

A SEXY
ROMANTIC
SHORT STORY

REBECCA
BROOKS



This is a work of fiction. Similarities to real people, places, or events are entirely coincidental.

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Foreword



Thanks for checking out my FREE sexy short story! I was originally commissioned to write this piece to read aloud at an erotica reading series in New York City. Talk about nerves! I knew I had to make it naughty and give it a surprising twist...but I also needed to be able to get through reading it aloud without blushing too hard!

Well, I did it. Phew! But somehow, I wasn't done. Jon and Leah kept speaking to me even when I thought their story was over. I decided to go back through and give them even more naughty fun. Without worrying about the clock—or embarrassing myself in public—I found I had a lot more to say. I knew I wanted to keep their story short, but they deserved a real chance to fall for each other.

I hope you enjoy this little taste of my writing. For another shorter piece, be sure to check out *His Hands*, a Heart of the Adirondacks novella previously published as *Blackberries in the Morning*. It's short, sexy, sweet, and comes with a recipe for blackberry pie at the end.

To sink your teeth into a full-length novel, don't miss the excerpt from *Above All*, A Heart of the Adirondacks novel, at the end of this story.

I love sharing news about my travels, hiking adventures, and new releases with my newsletter subscribers. Tap here¹ to join the fun, and thanks for reading!

Much love,
Rebecca

1. <http://rebeccabrooksromance.com/newsletter>

A Good Day to be Bad



Sweatpants. Wool socks. Giant marshmallow coat. Some sexy weekend this was shaping up to be.

But it didn't matter how cold it was, or the fact that Leah was unexpectedly, unceremoniously alone. Nothing could detract from the view. Windswept dunes, the ocean sparkling in the sun—she reached for her phone and snapped a photo before she could think.

The picture was beautiful, but she had no one to send it to. Trevor didn't even know that she'd come.

The B&B was classic Cape Cod, comfortable without being kitschy. She sank into an oversized chair by the window and picked up her Kindle. She'd downloaded a brand new romance series, a pleasure she hadn't had time for in ages. Maybe it wasn't too late to teach herself how to relax.

But her brain wasn't following her command to turn off. Curled up in her favorite sweater, she couldn't stop thinking about all she hadn't brought. Lecture prep. Grading. The next chapter from the monograph she was working on, pages slashed with red.

Work. Obligations.

A boyfriend, or the possibility of one.

She was pretty sure that was what it meant when Trevor called minutes before they were supposed to get on the road last night and said he wasn't coming.

A Classics professor in her first year on the tenure clock and a scientist finishing up a post-bac had no time together. Zero. When they first met at a party they'd laughed about it. Who else could an academic date but another academic, someone who understood that weekends were for

grading and “summer vacation” was when you cranked out most of your work?

But Leah was always writing and Trevor was always at the lab and pretty soon it wasn't funny at all.

This was the weekend they'd promised to put everything on hold and actually spend time together, to see if a relationship could be more than two trolls hunched over to-go containers of pad thai, clacking away on their computers. To see if a relationship could actually work.

And then Trevor called to say he couldn't do it and Leah knew it wasn't just the weekend he was bailing on. It was her.

She'd stayed home last night to work on the monograph—what else? But in the clear light of morning the absurdity of it smacked her like a wave. She'd rented a car. Booked a B&B. Scrambled to get enough done to justify the time off. And now she was going to bag it all because some dude she wasn't even sure she'd been officially dating wanted to watch mold grow in a petri dish? Hell no.

She was going to have a good time. She was determined to have a good time. She was *not* going to waste the weekend checking her phone, panicked that it was accidentally on silent or that she'd missed his ring.

She closed the cover on her Kindle and got up. She was going to lose her mind if she stayed in her room all day. The B&B owner Carol had said she'd build a fire downstairs. That would be a much better spot to read. She grabbed her key and went to head downstairs.

But she'd just finished closing the bedroom door behind her when a noise made her jump. She and Trevor were supposed to have been the only guests—this was the off-season after all. But that clearly wasn't the case. Someone was heading down the hall.

She turned startled by the noise. And then even more by what she saw.

This wasn't just any someone. It was an incredibly attractive male someone, and he was wearing nothing but a towel wrapped low around a very tight and very sculpted waist.

Leah stared. She knew it wasn't polite. But she just couldn't make herself stop.

Dark hair curled across his chest. A thin line trailed from his belly-button, down, down—

Quickly she remembered herself swung her eyes up. But the view to the north was just as bad. Or should she say good? He had dark stubble along his jaw and once the thought took hold it wouldn't let go. How would his cheek feel scraping across the inside of her thigh? A single bite, hard, chased by the skim of his tongue...

"Sorry, I didn't realize there was anyone here," he said, finally breaking the strange, electric moment between them. He was blushing, but it wasn't a bad look on him. She had a feeling nothing would be a bad look on him. Not a towel, that was for sure. Probably clothes would even suit him okay.

"Oh," Leah said, her voice not quite working. And then, only slightly better: "I just arrived."

"I was on my way—" The man pointed to a door behind her that must have been the bathroom.

"Right, of course!" But Leah still didn't move.

"It's a little chilly out here." A slight smile danced across his lips. Was he teasing her? Making fun of her? Did he know just how tongue-tied she'd become?

She could have stepped aside. That would have been the sensible thing. But then he still would have had to squeeze past, his bare chest and that tiny towel pressed up snug against her.

So she did the only thing she could do, which was turn around and dive back into her room, slamming the door in his face.



SPRAY OF THE SURF ON her lashes, sting of the cold on her cheeks. This was what she'd come for. Not for a man who didn't want to be her boyfriend, and definitely not for painfully awkward run-ins with other

B&B guests. She was here for the sun glittering on the ocean, the wind whipping her hair. The chance to walk along the beach and let her busy mind clear.

She didn't know how much time had passed or how far she'd gone before she decided to turn back toward the house. Now that the incident was over and her heart rate was floating back to somewhere near normal, she could almost see it as funny, or at least as not a huge deal. Nobody ever dropped dead of embarrassment—she hoped.

She was the only soul on the beach for as far as the eye could see. But as she was walking up toward the house, a giant golden retriever bounded up alongside her, a piece of driftwood in its mouth. It dropped the wood at her feet and looked up expectantly.

“Why hello,” she said, stopping to scratch behind its ears. “Who do you belong to, beautiful?”

The owner had to be nearby. And sure enough, as soon as she threw the stick she heard a sharp whistle and the sound of, “Come here, Sadie! Come here, girl!”

Leah's stomach dropped. But shouldn't it have been obvious? The beach wasn't exactly crawling with tourists this time of year. Even from afar she could tell it was him.

There was only one option. She had to take the offensive. “Have a good shower?” she asked as he approached.

He laughed, a sound almost as welcoming as the fire she hoped would be waiting for them when they got back to the house. “It was nice and warm compared to this. I'm Jon.”

“Leah.”

“And that's Sadie.”

“Hi, Sadie.” Leah sunk her fingers in the soft copper fur.

“She likes you.”

Jon was smiling, but Leah shook her head. “Something tells me she likes everybody.”

“I see you've already figured out she's a flirt.”

Sadie dropped the stick at his feet and looked up expectantly.

“An obedient flirt,” Leah observed.

“The best kind.”

“Only if she’s obeying you.”

“But she does.” A beat, and then: “Because I treat her right.”

“Lucky dog,” Leah said.

Jon threw the stick. “Lucky me.”

They turned toward the house. She couldn’t believe how nice he was or how strangely comfortable this felt, despite their initial encounter.

“I’m sorry, by the way, about earlier,” she said.

Jon grinned. “I think I’m the one who’s supposed to be apologizing to you. Traipsing around like I own the place.” His eyes squinted, making a face as dark hair fell into his eyes.

“You don’t hear me complaining,” she said.

She was afraid she’d gone too far. Something about the salt air, and traveling alone where nobody knew her, was going to her head.

But Jon tapped his temple. “File that away under good to know.”

Suddenly, it wasn’t so cold on the beach anymore. She felt herself flush, a warmth spreading all the way down to her toes. But too soon their walk was done, they were climbing the steps to the house, and the moment was gone.

“Carol?” Jon called, pushing opening the front door and stepping inside.

“In the kitchen!” Carol called.

He kicked off his shoes as Sadie bound in past them.

“Wow, it smells great in here.”

And it did. Tomato soup bubbled on the stove. Crispy grilled cheeses oozed on a panini press. But Leah couldn’t pay attention to any of that. She could feel her eyes going wide with horror. Because as soon as Jon shrugged out of his coat and draped it over a kitchen chair, he touched his hand to the small of Carol’s back and planted a kiss on her cheek.

Jon. And Carol.

Shit.

That's why Carol had said there weren't any other guests. He wasn't one.

And Leah making a complete fool of herself slobbering all over him. Even Sadie was more dignified, nose in her kibble on the floor.

Was it too late to pack her bags and leave? But she couldn't just run out of there, not right that instant. Not without making herself look even worse. All she could do was stand there, frozen, watching them move about the kitchen with the ease of people who'd known each other intimately for years.

They were both tall, with dark hair and the same graceful way of carrying themselves. They fit together so well, and they looked genuinely happy to see each other. It was nice to know some people found that.

But still. The embarrassment stung.

"What time did you get in last night?" Carol asked him.

"Around midnight. No traffic, and—" Jon popped a grape tomato in his mouth— "the pictures came out amazing."

"Jon's a photographer," Carol explained as she ladled the soup. "I take it you two already met?"

Leah thought she saw Carol give a knowing smile, but she must have been making that up. She had no idea what to say. It seemed her vocal chords were once again having trouble with that whole "conversation" thing.

"I thought you said there'd been a cancelation," Jon said, nodding toward Leah.

"She decided to come anyway." Carol smiled warmly. "I'm glad she did."

"Could have used a warning," Jon stage whispered, shooting Leah a sideways grin.

Leah's face flamed. This was why men should wear wedding rings. And neon signs. With warning labels. CAUTION. TURN AROUND NOW.

She couldn't wait to get back to her room. She could barely taste her lunch. She was only focused on getting through the meal, dodging questions about the book she was working on, barely listening to Jon and Carol chatter amiably away. She really didn't feel like talking. As soon as she finished she begged off, claiming exhaustion.

She thought she was free to hide in her room for the rest of the afternoon. But the next thing she knew, Jon had rushed after her, catching her at the top of the stairs. Leah already knew how narrow the hallway was. She couldn't get past.

"You were awfully quiet down there," he said. "Are you going to slam the door in my face again?"

"Probably." She tried to laugh, but it didn't quite come out.

"Well, don't," he said.

She frowned. "Don't what?"

"Don't slam the door." He stepped closer. She stepped back, so she was suddenly pressed against the wall. "I like you flustered," he said, "but I'd like even more to come in."

Wait. *What?*

It took Leah a minute to fully process what he was saying. He was so close, he smelled like cinnamon tea and felt like warmth itself. She didn't know whether to slap him or melt.

"What about Carol?" she stammered. She couldn't believe she was even entertaining the thought, but she had to ask anyway. She had to get a handle on what was going on. Even if the answer was absolutely nothing.

But Jon screwed up his face. "What about her?"

She stared at him. "Excuse me?"

"You don't have to worry," he said gently. "We don't get in each other's way."

"Are you serious? You two...?" She left the question open, not sure what she wanted the answer to be.

Jon tipped his shoulder in what was almost a shrug. “I don’t know. We both do what we want, and we definitely don’t talk about it. It won’t be weird, I promise.” He reached for her and traced her lips with his thumb, then planted the lightest kiss where he’d touched. “But it’s up to you, Leah. Tell me what you want.”

She closed her eyes. Her heart was pounding. It wasn’t that she couldn’t tell him. It was that she didn’t know.

She thought of his laugh on the beach, the cut of his hips. How unfair that tiny kiss was.

Fucking a married man while his wife was in the house was a thousand kinds of bad. There was no planet on which she’d even entertain the thought. Any guy who wanted that was *not* the guy for her.

Was an open relationship another story?

She’d never thought about it before. She’d never had a reason to. But now? This weekend, when she was miles from home and miles from her quiet, button-down life?

Carol knew Jon had gone after her. So she knew they were upstairs. Together. She probably knew what was happening right this second. She didn’t seem upset about it in the least.

Did she get off on it? Did she have her own extracurriculars on the side? Leah had no idea what to think, or what kind of questions she should ask. This was a little outside her usual routine: meet online or through friends, go on a few awkward dates, stumble home together a few disappointing times before one or both of them decided it wasn’t going to work.

But that hadn’t brought her a whole lot of happiness. Maybe it was time for something different, just this once. Someone she was actually attracted to, the electricity zinging through her with just the brush of her lips.

If that was bad, then it was all the right kinds. Because goddamn did she want to have sex with this man. If it wasn’t the world’s best idea, then surely it wasn’t the world’s worst. Maybe a fun rebound with absolutely

no future was just what she needed. No matter what happened, tomorrow she'd be gone.

"Tell me what you want," Jon repeated.

A clatter came from downstairs, where Carol was cleaning up and talking to the dog. Leah's eyes fluttered open. Reality hit her hard. How was she even considering this?

But she caught the spark in Jon's eyes, the way he seemed to devour her just by looking. Maybe it was weakness, or maybe she was brave. All she knew was that she couldn't walk away.

She hooked her first two fingers through his belt loop. "I'd rather show you," she said.

She turned and opened the door to her room. He walked her back toward the bed, his lips pressed to hers in the kind of kiss she'd always dreamed of but never had. One where her eyes closed, her mouth parted, and in the world disappeared except for the weight of his body on top of hers as he pushed her down on the bed. The slide of his hands on her hips.

His belt came off. His sweater. Hers. He unclasped her bra but this wasn't the time to linger, not while he was grinding into her like that. She'd never wanted anything so badly as the feel of his naked body against hers. She tugged down his pants, the thrill of his erection against her thigh radiating through every nerve.

"Hold that thought," she said, and wriggled out from underneath him. Luckily she'd packed when she thought she was going to be working on a relationship with Trevor, not when she'd thought she'd be flying solo. She still had a box of condoms in the bottom of her bag.

He pulled off the rest of his clothes and rolled onto his back. He was long and lean, spread across her bed, his cock thick and standing at attention. He stroked it slowly, his eyes never once leaving her as she walked across the room. She swallowed, mouth dry. Just looking at him was enough to make her heart race.

“Are you always this prepared?” Jon asked, eyeing the box. “Not that I’m complaining,” he added quickly. “Just, you know. Curious.”

“Let’s just say I thought I was going to have a different kind of weekend.”

He looked puzzled. “You were you expecting an eight-hour orgy?”

She laughed, then decided to be honest. “I was expecting someone else to come with me.”

“I see.” He paused. “I hope you’re not too disappointed.”

Leah climbed onto the bed, sliding her lips, her breasts, her stomach over his cock as she came to crouch on all fours over him. She wanted to laugh. He probably thought she did this all the time, when the truth was that everything about this weekend was new. *She* was new.

Bold. Flirtatious. “Why don’t you find out how disappointed I am?” she teased.

He slid his hand between her thighs and let out a low moan. The heat of the moment, its unexpectedness, the sense that even though shouldn’t be doing this, she wanted it with a depth of desire she didn’t know she had—all of it was making her slick and eager for his touch.

“I guess I’m doing okay as a backup plan,” he murmured.

“Not the backup plan. The new plan.”

“I appreciate your flexibility.”

She arched her back over him. “And I yours.”

But it was getting harder to speak. Jon was making slow, teasing circles, closing in on where she needed him.

“Show me,” he whispered. “Show me this is what you want.”

Leah slid the condom over him and lowered herself down.

“Show me,” he whispered again, his hands on her breasts, grazing her nipples with his teeth.

“Show me,” he panted one last time as she buried her face in the crook of his neck and began to rock.

She rode him slow, circling her hips, letting the feeling build up inside her. She rode him fast, the length of him full and hard and wanting.

His breathing quickened. Her hips bucked harder. And there it was—the catch in his throat. The desperate look in his eyes.

“Leah,” he gasped.

She said, “Come for me.”

He said, “You first.”

She could hear the strain in his voice, feel how desperately he was trying to hold on. She angled herself forward so her lips grazed his ear. “Your turn to show me this is what you want.”

When he came, he kissed her—hard—groaning into her mouth, grabbing her close, grinding her into him.

“You,” he insisted. Leah circled her hips, getting the double sensation of his cock still hard inside her and his pelvis pressed to that perfect spot against her clit, the feeling building until there was nothing in her world except his command: *come*.

When she cried out, Jon pulled her head to the crook of his neck, muffling the sound with the pillow. “Shh,” he murmured as she came, pulsing hard around the fullness inside her.

She remembered too late that Carol was downstairs. A pang hit her—jealousy? guilt?—but she pushed it away. No thinking—not now. Not while she felt like a jellyfish floating away.

She was aware of the creak of the bed as he stood, the warmth of his body sliding next to hers again. Scrape of his stubble grazing her cheek as he kissed her.

And then she was asleep, his arms around her, holding her close.



SHE WOKE UP IN THE dark, naked and alone.

Her phone was on the nightstand and she reached for it to check the time. She'd spent so much time staring at that stupid block, willing it to buzz, but it was still a surprise to see the text from Trevor: *We should talk*. She put down the phone. Talk? To Trevor? Why?

She didn't feel guilty. Not about Trevor, at least. They weren't an item. If they needed to talk to extra-officially break up, she had no problem with that. If it was a talk to rekindle something, she'd find a way to let him down. Her weekend with Jon was a surprise, but it had one thing clear. She wasn't going to settle for less than fireworks again.

But even if she didn't feel guilty about Trevor, and even if Jon insisted that it was no problem with Carol, she felt a little something at the prospect of showing her face downstairs again.

She showered and dressed and put on her most neutral expression, one she hoped didn't shout "Damn, your husband/boyfriend/whatever has a great dick!" She didn't know how to act, but she'd take her cue from them. This was supposed to be fun, right? Totally different from her usual self. Which meant no overthinking allowed.

"You look relaxed," Carol said when she walked into the kitchen.

Oh, God. Was it that obvious?

"I can't believe how long I slept for." Leah exaggerated a yawn, trying to act as normal as she could.

Carol laughed. "It's the sea air."

"And your cooking. What's that smell?"

"Pasta puttanesca. I made too much thinking Jon was going to be around."

"He took off?" No matter how hard she tried not to react, Leah couldn't hide her surprise. And disappointment. *Dammit.* Had she really scared him away that quickly?

But it was better that he was already gone, so she didn't have to work on letting him go. A one-night stand was one thing. Long term, she knew that she wanted monogamy. It was just the way her heart had been formed.

Or that was what she told herself as Carol stirred the fragrant sauce. Be glad for no awkward goodbyes.

"He's shooting a wedding in Hyannis," Carol said, dipping her spoon in for a taste. "His assistant was supposed to get everything set up, but

it turns out Jon had to head over there early—some problem with the bride.” She rolled her eyes. “Not like he can solve it. But I’m just the big sister, what do I know?”

Leah’s mouth went dry.

Lost in the Sahara Desert dry. Performing oral for six hours straight dry. Shocked in a way she’d never been before.

“Big...sister?” she croaked, and sank into a kitchen chair.

“By a whole three minutes.” Carol laughed. Leah stared.

And stared, and stared.

The same dark hair, strong jaw, even the line of their brows. That way they had together, the easy banter, comfortable in a way that went beyond even friendship—like each was an extension of the other. Jon’s confusion, his insistence that he and Carol could do what they wanted and everything would be fine.

How had she missed that they were *twins*?

She didn’t know whether to feel silly or just laugh and laugh. When Carol invited her to stay for dinner instead of finding a restaurant in town, she practically shouted. *Yes!*

But her excitement faded in the very next breath. What was she thinking, acting like this was a good thing? Like it mattered at all? She needed a serious reality check.

Because Jon wasn’t here tonight. He hadn’t even woken her up to say goodbye.

She was leaving tomorrow, and she wouldn’t see him again. Before she knew it, she’d be back in the real world, with papers and tenure and stress and one shitty date after another. What did it matter whether Jon was single or not? This had been fun, but clearly that was it.

“Oh, before I forget,” Carol said suddenly, wiping her hands on a tea towel. “Jon said to give you this.” She pulled out a business card from her pocket and handed it to Leah. “He has an amazing portfolio. You should definitely check it out.”

The way Carol was looking at her, though, she had to know Leah was interested in more than Jon's work. And her sly, sisterly grin said she was A-Okay with it.

Leah turned the card over in her hand. The front said *Jonathan Graham Photography*. The back had a phone number scrawled in pen along with a single question she already knew the answer to: *Call me?*

"Go sit by the fire," Carol nudged. "I'll let you know when dinner is done."

Leah sank into the couch with a glass of wine and the Kindle she still hadn't gotten around to turning on all day. Just another way she'd been bad.

But not too bad, it seemed. Not as bad as she'd feared.

Or hoped. She was almost disappointed that she *hadn't* spent her day in an illicit embrace unlike anything she'd ever imagined doing before.

On the other hand...

She reached for her phone. The pictures on Jon's website were beautiful, saturated with light. They were like the man who'd made them. One look just wasn't enough.

She knew she had two very different calls to make, but she also had time to figure out what to say—how to let Trevor down gently, and how to tell Jon that yeah, she wanted to see more of his work. And a lot more of him.

But there would be time to figure all that out later, and to let things unfold as they would. Right now, Carol was calling her into dinner, pouring more wine, filling her plate.

"Did you have a good day?" she asked as she served the salad.

Leah reached for a roll fresh from the oven, recalling the warmth of Jon's skin. Good was one way to put it. *Incredible* was another. But she didn't need to put it all into words. She simply smiled, a secret, private heat radiating inside her, filling her in a way that she knew would last more than a day, more than a weekend, more than time could measure.

She broke open the roll, inhaling the steam. “You know what?” she said, spreading a soft pat of butter. “I really did.”



The End



Join Rebecca’s monthly newsletter¹ to get her fun travel updates, free reads, plus always be the first to hear about her new releases.



Keep reading for a sneak peek of ABOVE ALL, a Heart of the Adirondacks Novel about a thirty-four year old artist who runs a campground in the Adirondacks and falls for a pastry chef eight years her junior...



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1. <http://rebeccabrooksromance.com/>

2. <http://hyperurl.co/MakeMeStay>

Excerpt from Above All: A Heart of the Adirondacks Novel



It shocked her how cold the water could get. Cold to make your teeth clench. Cold to make your bones hurt. Cold that made you cry out in pain.

It was the cold she came for. The knife of it, slicing through her lungs. When the endless ache of winter had long left her faded and numb, the searing cold sent a reminder—her heart still pumped. That first gasp as she hit the water let her know that she was alive.

Casey had been biding her time, telling herself she wouldn't go in the lake until Geller opened up the campsite to full capacity for the spring. That meant it was officially swimming season—even if no one in his or her right mind would put in more than a toe for at least another month. When summer finally sank in, the hot sun on the mountain peaks would send people to the water in droves. But for now, the whole sky-blue lake was hers alone.

Sucking in the damp morning air, Casey threw open the cabin door and ran down the path. When she reached the lake, she stripped off her clothes and raced in, stark naked, before she could change her mind. The freezing water cut up her legs but she made herself dive under, eyes pinched shut and lungs filled to bursting as a million icy pinpricks stabbed her skin.

But the cold couldn't stop her for long. She swam out toward the middle of the lake, corkscrew curls spiraling over her shoulders. She cut a swift seam through the water, still as glass. The lake this morning was a smooth, bright mirror reflecting pink puffy clouds overhead. Treading water, she admired the rounded top of Mt. Bonnet across the way, sunlight dripping down its sides. Sometimes it was so beautiful here it hurt.

Or maybe that was the cold sawing at her bones. She wanted to stay in the water forever, but she was shivering now and had to get out. Forcing her head under once more, she swam back and found her footing in the sand and leaves of the shore. She staggered out, teeth chattering so hard she was afraid something might break. It was stupid, of course, to go skinny-dipping at dawn in the Adirondacks when spring had barely come to the mountains. It was only the Friday morning kicking off Memorial Day weekend, the first day that Paper Lake Campground re-opened after the quiet winter months. But it thrilled her, as it would every morning until the fall. She stretched out the short swimming season as long as she possibly could.

Besides, it was her secret to keep. Her side of the lake was completely secluded, and at dawn the whole Adirondacks felt like her private backyard. Quickly she grabbed the towel she'd left on a rock and wrapped her hair up. Then she threw on warm sweatpants and a thick flannel robe, a present from her mother when she'd learned—horrified—that Casey wasn't returning to New York City at the end of her first season working at the campsite.

"Running away" her mother had called it. As in, "You can't keep running away." Casey's parents lived in southern California. They knew that cold existed—they just didn't understand why anyone would willingly choose to live through it.

Nor did they understand why Casey had "sequestered" herself in the woods for a year now, with no sign of leaving. It had been okay for her to get away for a few months after the breakup, but when was she going to get it together and leave "that dump," as her mother so graciously referred to Bonnet?

Casey was never sure whether she meant Bonnet the mountain or Bonnet the town, but included in the derision was certainly Paper Lake the campground and maybe all of upstate New York. The finer details of geography didn't matter—the point was that Casey was wasting her life, wasting her degree, and definitely not getting any younger freezing to

death alone in the mountains, not letting any man other than Mr. Geller say more than hello to her.

Mr. Geller was eighty years old and he and his wife kept Casey stocked year-round with homemade pickles and jams. For a boss and a friend he was certainly a catch. But Casey's mother was firm. Moving on was going to require leaving the woods and getting a friend set that didn't have gray hairs, hip replacements, and a few false teeth. That her closest friend in Bonnet, Lee, was younger than the Gellers by far hadn't earned Casey any bonus points. She was still older than Casey's parents by a good several years.

The breakup. Casey scowled as she hugged herself tight in her flannel cocoon. It had been a year now. Why did it still pop into her head at the most unexpected times?

Like now, when the light was beautiful and the mountain rich with new green. What her family and friends didn't understand was that she was happy here. Happier than she'd been in a long time. Happier than she'd been in New York.

And besides, she didn't need to move back to the city to meet a man. Because the other secret she carried around, in addition to her morning escapades in the cold, was that she wasn't going to fall in love. Not ever.

She wasn't hardwired for it, just as she couldn't run for miles or bake a cake that didn't fall or make her hair do anything other than frizz. She was five-foot-eight, had curly red hair that grew out rather than down, and was utterly incapable of love.

[Read the rest of ABOVE ALL: A Heart of the Adirondacks novel](#)

Also by Rebecca Brooks



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Think you might like sex under the stars, or in a tent? How about a fake relationship with a wildland firefighter? Grab *MAKE ME WANT*⁴ and get reading!

Enjoy second-chance romance? Bad boy musicians? New dads learning to love again? *MAKE ME YOURS*⁵ is a secret baby romance without any secrets—but plenty of heat to smoke up your e-reader! Get it today.

1. <http://smarturl.it/HowToFall>

2. <http://hyperurl.co/MakeMeStay>

3. <http://smarturl.it/MakeMeBeg>

4. <http://smarturl.it/MakeMeWant>

5. <http://smarturl.it/MakeMeYours>

About Rebecca



Rebecca Brooks¹ lives in New York City in an apartment filled with books. She received a PhD in English but decided it was more fun to write books than to write about them. She has backpacked alone through India and Brazil, traveled by cargo boat down the Amazon River, climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro, explored ice caves in Peru, trekked to the source of the Ganges, and sunbathed in Burma, but she always likes coming home to a cold beer and her hot husband in the Bronx.

She is the author of the Heart of the Adirondacks series, the Men of Gold Mountain series, and the Accidental Love series, coming soon.

Find her on Facebook², Twitter³, and Instagram⁴. Tap here⁵ to see all her books.

Join Rebecca's monthly newsletter to stay up-to-date with new releases, plus hear about Rebecca's hiking and travel adventures all over the globe. As a newsletter subscriber, you'll get access to giveaways, exclusive content, and free reads.



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