

He Said

Tucker Bailey could be called a man of mystery. As a video game tester and reviewer he tends to keep to himself. When he finds himself craving something that is not considered for human consumption Tucker encounters a woman that he would rather forget. Or so he assumes.

She Said

Kallie Rose is trying to start her own catering business. Her world starts spiraling out of control after an incident with a stranger that leaves her confused. She soon discovers that she's not the only one with secrets better left concealed. After all, she's not the only one to deal a certain time of the month.

CHAPTER 1- He Said

It was a dark and stormy night. The lightning crashed, the thunder boomed and I was all out of Milk Bones. Okay, so I'm no Stephen King or Washington Irving but I'm trying here. Where was I? Oh yeah, I was all out of Milk Bones which isn't exactly the best thing around that time of the month. Damn cravings. So there I was scratching at imaginary fleas as I paced around the house grumbling over the missing item on the top of my forgotten shopping list. It had been left at home, probably ditched with last night's Chinese.

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I shouldn't even think of going out at this time. I mean I have steak, pork tenderloin, bacon... damn manufactures' have to make the stupid doggie treats addicting. I practically growled wanting to tear apart the empty box with my teeth. Whose bright idea was it to forget the list at home anyway? Oh yeah. It was mine.

I guess I should explain why I want dog biscuits so bad. My name's Tucker Bailey and I am addicted to Milk Bones. I'm also a werewolf. Wait! Let me clear my name before my front door gets knocked down by fifty guys armed with guns and silver bullets.

All those stories about werewolves eating people are completely untrue. We're not Jeffrey Dahmer. Just the thought of eating a little old lady is enough to make me want hurl. Also, silver bullets, well, I do have an allergy to silver as a lot of non-werewolf people do. As for the bullets... well they can kill if they hit say the heart no matter what they are made of. We do transform during the full moon; don't really know why though.

So, what have we learned today, kids? Werewolves don't eat humans and have allergies. Now that that's settled, I will continue with my dilemma.

Okay, I either stay home and try to concentrate on doing a review for the newest first person shooter game, potentially doing a crappy job or go out into torrential rains for my treats. Of course with the last option I risk smelling like a wet dog. God, I hate this time of the month.

I continued arguing with myself for the next ten minutes before I grabbed my keys from my coffee table, threw on my jacket, and finally headed out. Damn inner dog won again.

* * *

I stared through my rainwater drenched windshield gripping the steering wheel of my truck in a strangle hold. “We may not even expect to get any rain from it,” quote the weatherman. Nevermore. Ha! Well someone needs to get the storm some damn Prozac or something because this isn’t my idea of a good time. If this keeps up any longer I may need to get a boat. I shoved a cap over my dark blonde hair gritting my teeth as I got out of the car prepared to face Mother Nature in what felt like a bad bout of either PMS or hot flashes that I have heard so much about from dear old dad. He normally hides out in his work room in the garage when mom’s on a rampage as he calls it. That’s just another reason why I moved out of my parents’ place. They’re great to visit, but just like how I feel about California, I just don’t want to live there.

The bell jingled as I wrenched the door open to *Furry Friends and More*. It’s a nice little pet shop and supplies store run by a rather hot looking lady who just so happens to be taken. Too bad. At least her fiancé is a pretty good guy even though he swears his complete allegiance to

Playstation. Um, did I mention that I am also addicted to video games and make a living by testing and writing reviews for games? So, there I was soaking wet and miserable when I suddenly caught a scent that I least expected and even less wanted to smell again. Kayla.

I grabbed two boxes of dog biscuits from the shelf and stormed up to the counter, my mood sourer than milk that has been expired over a month. I'm sure that if I were in wolf form I would have been foaming at the mouth.

Adele smiled pleasantly as she rung up my purchase. "Rough night?"

"Or something like that," I sighed as I dug out my wallet.

"That dog of yours must be eating you out of house and home." She sniffed and made a face. "Were you trying to wash him? You kinda smell like a wet dog."

"Yeah. He was very resistant because I was out of snacks. You know how that goes. We argued and in the end, stubbornness won out."

She laughed, her hazel eyes sparkling as she tucked a wavy strand of auburn hair from her face. "You must really care for him to brave this storm just for a couple of boxes of treats."

"Yeah. Well, he's like family." I scratched the back of my neck uneasily. I hate lying but if I told her that they were for me, I would probably never be able to shop in her store ever again.

"Well, I better go before I find myself short a couch cushion."

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“Take care, Tucker.”

“You do the same. And, uh say hi to Ryan for me.” I gave her one last grin and headed around the various cat toys and doggie sweaters nonchalantly then found a petite woman with raven hair studying a little blue crocheted ball with a bell in it. My nose never lies.

“Funny finding you here a day early. But I guess a greedy bitch like you just lives to make people miserable. I would have expected you to melt in this downpour.” I glared at her as she spun around dropping the ball, which rolled jingling lightly under a display for heart warm pills. Her jaw dropped as her green eyes widened in bewilderment. I rolled my own eyes at her. “Oh, so now you want to be an actress. I guess Hollywood could always use one more backstabber in their midst.”

“What? Who-”

“Don’t play dumb with me. Lucky for you, I already got paid so here.” I practically threw the envelope at her and sneered. “Nice hair. Extensions? You don’t look quite so evil anymore. Human in fact. Well, have a nice day and watch out for any falling houses.” I sniffed in disgust as I stalked out of the store and back into the rain.

CHAPTER 2- She Said

What just happened? I stared stunned, long after the angry man had left. I don't think I have ever been chewed out by a complete stranger before. I suppose he shook me up rather good because I didn't even hear Adele call out my name the first time.

"Kallie? You okay back there?"

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I spun around as though having woken up from a rather screwed up dream. It was almost like having been Alice who was just slapped stupid by the white rabbit. I ran a hand through my hair and slowly nodded. “Yeah, I think so.”

“What happened? You don’t look okay.” Adele crossed her arms over her pale green blouse as she walked in my direction. Funny, I was pondering the same thing.

“I-I was looking for a ball for Mittens and then this guy walked up to me and started yelling! Do you get crazies in here often?”

“Crazies?” She frowned as she pulled a few boxes of cat treats forward. “No. Everyone is usually well behaved in here including the animals. Why? What did he say to you?”

I rubbed at my temples and winced. “I don’t know. Something about being a major bitch, and multiple connotations to the witches in *The Wizard of Oz*.”

“Glinda?” She offered helpfully.

“If it was Glinda, would I be making such a fuss?”

“Good point. Although I think some people might take offense to her squeaky voice.”

“That’s fair.”

Adele made a serious face as though trying to solve some big mystery. “Okay, so the guy called you several ‘itch’ words. Anything else?”

“No.”

“Well, sounds to me like it might just be a case of mistaken identity or something. It can happen.”

“If you say so.”

“Kallie?” She put her hands on my shoulders and looked at me. “Are you sure?”

I laughed lightly and tried to shrug it off. “You know what? Maybe I just imagined the whole thing. I mean I’m trying to run a business for crying out loud! Maybe my mind just decided to take a momentary vacation to some place that is not here so I don’t run around stark-raving mad.”

“Kallie...”

“No, it’s okay. Having an overactive imagination is a good thing, right? It keeps the creativity running. I mean as long as I don’t wind up in a room with padded walls and guys in white coats... Maybe I’ve been working too hard.” I gave Adele a hug even though she was staring at me in confusion over the words falling out of my mouth that I doubt I’ll remember having said an hour later. “I think I’ll go home now. Mittens needs me.”

She blinked several times as I released her. “Mittens is a cat. Cats take care of themselves.”

I laughed at her response. Probably a little too much like a loon because her eyes widened even more. “Not my Mittens. I think she may have separation anxiety. Maybe I should take her to a kitty shrink. I mean her favorite place to sleep at my parents’ place was Charlie’s bowl!”

“So she napped in the dog’s food dish. So what?”

I threw my arms up in the air in exasperation. “Charlie is a Great Dane! He could have eaten her by accident. Crazy cat.”

Adele winced. “Oh, that’s probably not a good thing.”

“Nope. So I better go home and hope she doesn’t try to sabotage my catering business by destroying my recipe cards.”

“Have a safe drive.”

I smiled back and left, completely forgetting about the kitty toy I was thinking about buying until I was back on the road. I guess Mittens is just going to have to do without... again.

CHAPTER 3- He Said

Half a box of milk bones later and I was still in a rotten mood. By some miracle I made it home in one piece. It would have been just my luck that the wicked witch would be my undoing. Well, she sent me over the edge diet wise. I ate way more of the doggy treats than I should have.

In an attempt to drive the memories of the evil bitch away I popped in one of my favorite first person shooters into my Xbox 360. Usually shooting digitalized zombies would put me in a better mood. Unfortunately, *Left 4Dead 2* just made my frustration increase making me play worse than ever before. Rather than allow a horde of zombies to mob me again, I turned the game off. Watching my character being killed by the undead because I'm too pissed off at running into my ex was not going to make me feel any better.

“This is pathetic. No, *I’m* pathetic. I’m letting her control me again damnit!” I slammed my fist down on the coffee table and sighed. Things were not supposed to be this way.

Just as I was getting a good brood going, my phone rang. I picked up the handset then groaned at seeing my cousin’s number glowing in bright green. Deciding against ignoring it I sucked it up and answered. “Hey Corbin.”

“Hey Tucker.” He paused then added. “What’s up? You don’t sound so good.”

“Just ran into Kayla. What’s up with you?”

“That sucks. Anyway, Bryant, Shawn, and I were wondering if you wanted to join us for some *Halo*. Bryant wants to break in his new 72 inch screen.”

I narrowed my eyes at the 32 inch in front of me. Bryant always loved showing off any chance he got. “Nah, I’m not really in the mood. Besides in case you haven’t noticed we’re in the middle of a tropical depression.”

“The storm didn’t stop you from going out for treats.”

“Well, no-”

“Wallowing in self pity is not going to do you any good,” Corbin scolded. “You need a distraction.”

I rolled my eyes. “Dude, you’re not the one being blackmailed by some heartless, self-absorbed bitch.”

“Didn’t I try to warn you about said bitch?”

I shrugged. “She had the right smell.”

“That doesn’t always mean something.”

I growled softly. The urge to hang up on my annoying, nosy cousin grew by the second.

“I’m not in the mood to play any games right now. Why don’t you ask Shane?”

“He had to work late,” Corbin replied.

“Wow, the twins actually aren’t joined at the hip after all.”

“Tucker, you need a break, man”

I drew a deep breath. “Dude, just drop it. I don’t want to go to somebody else’s house and play any damn games.”

He paused a moment. “Then I guess we’ll just have to go over to your place instead.”

“Wait! No!” I gritted my teeth. This was not going as I hoped it would. Why can’t Corbin get off my damn back for one freaking second? I had to think fast otherwise the entire crew was gonna come over and interrupt my brooding time. “How is Bryant going to show off his new TV if you come over here?”

“He can just deal. See you in fifteen, cuz.”

Then the phone went dead before I could even begin to argue my way out of it. Well, hell! This was one of the last things I wanted. Now I would have to put up with not only Corbin but Bryant the Bragger and Shawn the Class Clown. All I needed was his twin, Serious Shane to complete the set. Could things even get any worse?

CHAPTER 4- She Said

“Where is that stupid bow? It’d be nice if I knew whether it was a weapon or a hair accessory.” I frowned at my laptop screen scanning my eyes over a picture of a seamstress shop that was scattered with various oddities such as a fish, a chess piece, and sandwich just to name a few.

I heard a tentative meow behind me. “Yes, I know I was talking to myself, Mittens. You don’t have to rub it in.”

Mittens hopped up onto my desk then stared at me with her sharp blue eyes. I sighed and gave her a scratch under the chin. I knew I should have been doing something more constructive with my time rather than play hidden object games but I was still too wound up over the incident at the pet shop to be able to focus on anything else. Besides, the games were so addictive.

I rubbed at my head, a building headache had yet to break and I was out of any possible remedies to prevent it from blooming into a full out migraine. Any chance of creating possible menus for my catering business seemed to deplete by the second.

“Meow?” Mittens looked at me with what seemed to be concern. The gray fluffball leaped to my lap then curled up purring.

“I’m okay. Just under too much stress I guess.” I picked up the cat cradled her in my arms as I headed towards the sofa. “You know, you’re lucky. All you have to do is keep yourself entertained when I’m not here and count on me to provide you with all your kitty needs.”

Mittens purred as I sat down with her. I gazed down at her envious. She didn’t have to find a means to provide money for food or bills. She also didn’t get yelled at by a total stranger for no good reason. I replayed the scene in my head then frowned. He threw an envelope at me. I didn’t take it with me, did I? I frowned, digging into my pocket. Mittens hissed as I nearly bucked her off my lap when my fingers caressed the stiff paper. I quickly yanked it out and stared at it for a moment. I supposed I must have been in a state of shock when I shoved it in my pocket after he stormed off. Should I open it?

I debated a moment. There was no name or return address written on the envelope. I guess it wouldn’t hurt to take a peek. Drawing a deep breath, I opened the flap and nearly screamed. Several Benjamin Franklins were staring up at me. There had to have been a least a grand in that envelope. Just who did he think I was? An ever better question was what should I do with the money?

CHAPTER 5- He Said

I gritted my teeth, firing away at another zombie before he could get the jump on me. My skills seemed better than previously thanks to using my ever growing frustrations on game play. Just as I reached the next stage my doorbell rang. I sighed. I considered leaving my house, but knew it would have been a short victory; they would have tracked me down sooner or later.

The urge to ignore it was also strong, instead I quit the game, then answered the door.

“Hey, Tucker.” Corbin greeted with a sympathetic tone. His gray eyes were hard with determination. I knew turning him away would be next to impossible.

“Hi,” I replied with a dry smile. I wasn’t keen on having a buddy intervention on my crappy luck.

“Yo, Tucker. How’s it going?” Bryant gave me a cocky grin. I restrained myself from decking him. There was something about the guy that made me think back to school yard fights that usually ended up in us getting detention, grounded or all of above.

“Just the usual mauling of my heart by some stupid bitch. I’m sure your day is going much better.”

“Whoa chill, dudes,” Shawn interrupted. His auburn ponytail swung behind him in the breeze. “At least let me get inside before you start trading blows. My fur is gonna take forever to dry!”

Bryant and I stepped aside to allow Shawn entrance into my house. We exchanged glares then I allowed him in as well. With a growl I slammed the door shut then spun around, temper flaring. “Look, this whole bro bonding thing is not how I want to spend my evening. I don’t care to talk about being betrayed by that bitch or how much of a loser I am so unless you have anything else to talk about get the hell out of my house.”

Corbin crossed his arms as he sat on my couch. His ebony shoulder length hair stuck to the sides of his face. “You need some help, Tucker whether you want to admit it or not. You’re letting a relationship that had gone toxic to still control you. That’s not healthy, man.”

I rolled my eyes as I paced the room. “It’s not like I enjoy it. The fact that she’s blackmailing me doesn’t make things any easier!”

“You shouldn’t have told her you were a wolf in the first place,” Bryant scoffed.

“I didn’t tell her, she found out somehow!”

“The invisible dog to explain the doggie treats isn’t always a fool proof plan,” Shawn chuckled then sank in his seat sheepishly. “Sorry.”

“Regardless,” sighed Corbin. “You’re in a funk and need to get out of it before you do something stupid.”

“I’m not going to do anything stupid. Cut me some slack for once in my lifetime damnit!”

Shawn squirmed on my recliner. “Guys, maybe we should just drop the subject and play some Halo. I mean that’s what the original plan was, right?” He paused then grinned.

“Somewhere on one of those maps is a rocket launcher with my name on it!”

“It would have been better on my new flat screen,” sulked Bryant.

“Quit your whining. You sound like a kicked puppy when you do that and no one here is gonna give you a shred of sympathy,” I sneered, at the brunette. Normally I wasn’t so quick to pick a fight but my bad mood wasn’t going to go away with a few pats on the back from my cousins.

“You’re the kicked puppy,” Bryant threw back at me as he rose from the arm of my couch.

“Great comeback. Did your mommy teach you that?”

Before Bryant could launch himself at me, Corbin tackled him to the ground. Stormy eyes flashed at me with boiling rage. “Will you two idiots knock it off before I knock both of you out instead? I am sick of the childish bickering! No wonder neither of you can find a mate!”

“Hey! You’re single too.” I snapped in protest. “In fact all of you still are. I’m the only one that had bagged a female.”

“And you know how well that turned out,” Bryant growled. Corbin smacked him in the head.

“Then perhaps we all have some maturing to do. In the mean time we’re all going to sit down and play the damn game!” Corbin got up and threw a controller at Shawn then smirked at everyone. “I bet you I’ll snipe all your asses before you can even blink.”

“You’re on!”

CHAPTER 6- She Said

Mittens flicked her tail at me in curiosity as I gaped at the large sum of money in my hand. Why would some total stranger yell at me then angrily throw an envelope filled with cash at me unless... It was for some sort of fee he didn't want to pay like a charge for a bill, maybe rent, some sort of service... or blackmail.

My green eyes widened at the concept. The guy seemed furious when he saw me. Maybe Adele was right. It could have been a case of mistaken identity. He did comment on my hair after all.

I stashed the money in a lock box in my desk then paced the room. I hated the idea that even though the guy was very rude to me, he was now short on cash needed to pay whoever he thought I was. I couldn't take the money to the police; they wouldn't be of any help. I could try asking Adele if she remembered who came into her store around the same time I had, but there was no guarantee that she had actually seen him. He may have kept to the front of the store. Did

he have a shopping bag in hand? I frowned trying to rake my brain for the correct answer. I couldn't remember. I suppose it wouldn't hurt to go back to the store. Unfortunately it would have to wait until tomorrow. It was already nearing 11pm. Adele would have closed down the shop by now.

I kicked myself for spending so much time on the hidden object game. If only I had remembered the envelope sooner I could have called up Adele and asked her about my mystery man. Now it would have to wait until tomorrow. Hopefully Adele's memory was better than my own.

In the meantime I decided to return to my hidden object game before the migraine decided to set in. Once I cleared the seamstress shop I groaned at the next puzzle. Gears. I hated gears! Maybe my plan for the evening wasn't going to work after all. The gears always slowed me down by at least two hours. Since I didn't want to stay up until 4am yanking my hair out over a silly game I decided to quit and go to bed. I was already swimming in way too much stress as it was. The last thing I needed was to make it worse.

CHAPTER 7- He Said

“Damn... what time is it?” I rolled over in my bed to squint bleary-eyed at the alarm clock which I forgot to turn on. Damnit! It was past 10 in the morning. I overslept again. I really needed to stop making it a habit. Wait. What day was it?

I yawned, climbed out of the bed, and grabbed my cell phone. Saturday. Guess I didn't oversleep after all. Rather than crawl back into bed, I decided that a shower would be a good idea. It would be the best way to wash away the disaster that was yesterday.

After the arguing between Bryant and I ended, I sat down with my cousins to have my ass handed to me in a few games of Slayer. Even scatterbrained Shawn sniped me! I had just gotten the rocket launcher and the next thing I knew my Spartan was dead waiting to respawn.

It wasn't until late when we decided to call it a night. I had to admit, the company was an unexpected welcome. I really didn't want to deal with my cousins yet they turned out to be a good distraction. I hate it when Corbin is right. He always was the level headed one.

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I finished my shower and with a towel wrapped around my waist I glared at myself in the mirror. Maybe today would go better. After all I wouldn't have to deal with paying Kayla for another month. There had to be something positive to say about that, right?

I got dressed and was about to head into the kitchen when my phone rang. I narrowed my eyes at Kayla's number. What the hell did she want? She already got her money.

"Hello?" I growled.

"Tucker, where the hell are you? You were supposed to have met me at the pet shop twenty minutes ago!"

"What are you talking about? You already got your money."

"No I didn't, you idiot. You're supposed to pay up today!"

"Did you hit your head or something? I gave it to you last night at the damn pet store!"

"I didn't go to the pet store last night."

"Stop lying! I saw you there and threw the money to you. You were even in the cat toy section since you seem to *love* throwing it in my face that I'm your toy now." I fought against throwing the phone in rage. "If you think I'm going to pay double--"

"You haven't even paid single yet, asshole!" She hissed, her voice becoming shriller. "If you don't pay me I'll share your little *secret*."

"I already paid you!"

"You have until 4pm. Text me when you're on your way. You better move that fine ass of yours. Banks will be closing soon," she added before hanging up.

“What the hell?” I slammed my phone down on the table then ran my hands through my still wet hair. Was she playing me? There was no way that I was going to give her more money! However, if she leaked my furry secret... Begrudgingly I grabbed my car keys. I guess the new washer and dryer would just have to wait just a little longer.

CHAPTER 8- She Said

I hummed to myself as I practically inhaled my cup of coffee. I had to ignore the sweet seduction of the hidden object game tempting me to spend my entire Saturday lost in its embrace. Nope. I won't let myself fall down that rabbit hole again. At least not this morning... Then again, maybe a half hour wouldn't hurt.

As I approached my desk in a lapse of self control I found Mittens sitting on top of my closed laptop. She narrowed her icy eyes at me in warning, refusing to budge even an inch.

"Okay, you caught me. If you move I'll give you a nice can of tuna," I smiled, hoping she'd give in to the bribe.

"Meow." She flicked her tail as though contemplating the offer then crouched lower.

"I'll only play for thirty minutes tops! I promise! I just want to finish the stupid thing so that it's out of my system then I can move onto something else. I'm probably nearly done with it anyways."

Mittens licked one of her white paws, ignoring my pleas. Apparently she knew me better than I thought because she leaned over and batted at the drawer where the envelope of money was; as if trying to remind me.

I took the hint. Plopping down on the chair I opened the drawer. “You’re right. I’m being stupid. It’s probably nearly eleven which means Adele’s should be open by now.”

I removed the envelope from my cash box and shoved it in my purse. As I turned to leave a gray cloud of fluff pounced on my leg. I was glad I was wearing jeans; she would have left nice scratch marks on my legs if they weren’t already covered.

“Fine. I’ll get you a toy this time. Will that make you happy?” I scowled at her then added, “Go eat your breakfast and try not to play in the bathroom while I’m gone. The toilet paper is not there for your amusement.”

Mittens hopped back on top my laptop, watching as I left the apartment.

* * *

“Kallie! What a surprise to see you again so soon,” Adele smiled up from the register. Her auburn hair was pulled back in a bouncy tail of waves. I always envied her perkiness. I could never pull it off to the degree she could. Today she also had a peach-faced lovebird sitting content on her shoulder. It preened itself as she rang up an elderly woman’s purchase.

I browsed through a cat magazine as she finished up.

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“Thank you, Barbara. I hope Prissy enjoys her new treats,” Adele said then turned to me as the woman left. “Wow, it’s been busy today! So, what’s up with you?”

I walked up to the counter after making sure there was no one around. “I was wondering if you could recall any customers from last night.”

She scowled at my request. “That’s an odd question. Gee, even with the storm, there was still quite a few especially people getting carriers for their pets in case they had to relocate them since Tropical Storm Helena looked questionable.” She pursed her lips in thought.” “Let’s see, there was Marcy who bought some flea shampoo for Dexter. Connie came in for a carrier for Lucky-”

“Do you remember any guys?”

“Guys?” She raised an eyebrow then giggled. “My, my, Kallie. Did you see some hot stud yesterday that made your heart go all a flutter?”

“No!” I could feel my face redden at the accusation. “I just need to know. I’ll explain why later but it’s really important.”

“Okay, sorry. I didn’t mean to embarrass you. Hmm, I think I remember seeing Mr. Rogers... Are you looking for someone in particular?”

I lowered my head with a sigh. “Yeah. Unfortunately, all I can remember was that he was in the cat toy aisle and was wearing a hat. Everything else is one big blank. He was in the store the same time I was.”

“Hm. You were here when we got hit with the heavy rain-bands, right?”

“I think so.”

I’m trying to think... There weren’t too many people at that time. Most of the crowds came before the rain hit...” She stroked the little parrot for a moment as though replaying the day in her mind. “Let’s see. You came in for cat toys for Mittens. We chatted then you went to that aisle. Just as I made it back to the register the door opened and in walked...oh! Tucker!”

“Who?”

“He’s a really sweet guy. Has a dog that seems to be eating him out of house and home as far as the dog treats go. Never buys anything else. Just those.” Her hazel eyes widened. “You have a thing for Tucker?”

“No! I don’t even know the guy! Can you tell me what he looks like?”

“Sure, tall, blonde hair, kind of looks like...” Adele began as the door chimed. She paused frowning as she gestured towards the front of the store, “that.”

I spun around barely catching a glimpse before he disappeared into an aisle. “I’ll be right back!”

“Go get him, girl!” Adele snickered as I rushed towards him then came to a dead halt as he stalked towards me with fury burning in his eyes.

“I-”

“You.” He growled, pointing at me.

“Wait! I-”

“Here. Now leave me the hell alone.” He snapped forcing another envelope of what I suspected was more money in my hand.

“It’s-” I protested as he turned to stomp out. I had to stop him. Without thinking I grabbed his arm. “Tucker! Stop! I-”

Just as he whirled around, Adele leaped between the two of us. I nearly gaped at the shock that flooded his face as she glared up at him. Did he have a thing for my best friend?

“Tucker! I don’t know what is going on, but hear her out!” She practically ordered before adding. “I don’t care what happened but no fighting or arguments are allowed in here. You’ll upset the animals.”

“Sorry, Adele, but-”

“Don’t make me ban you from here.”

“She’s the one that told me to come here!”

“No, I-” I began, feeling tears of frustration leak into my eyes. All I wanted to do was give him back his damn money!

“Tucker-” Adele scolded before she was interrupted.

“Stop lying, you money grubbing bitch! You’re ruining my life, Kayla!”

“That’s it! You’re out of here-”

I held up my hands as the name he said snapped into my mind. “Wait! Did you just call me Kayla?”

He threw up his hands in anger. “Do you want me to call you Your Highness now or something? How about Goddess Kayla. Empress? You know you really-”

“Her name is not Kayla,” Adele pressed her hand against his shoulder in an attempt to calm him.

I opened my purse then pulled out the envelope he had thrown at me last night, holding it out to him. I drew a deep breath in hopes that I wouldn’t start blubbering. “I just wanted to give this back to you. My name is Kallie. Kallie Rose.”