

A close-up photograph of a muscular man's torso and right arm. He is shirtless, showing his pectoral muscles, abdominal muscles, and a well-defined navel. His right arm is extended downwards, holding a basketball. The basketball is orange with black lines and is positioned in the lower-left corner of the frame. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey. The text 'REMI GREY' is at the top, and 'Out of Bounds' is written in a large, red, cursive font across the man's chest. At the bottom, it says 'LOVE FOR THE GAME BOOK 3'.

REMI GREY

*Out  
of  
Bounds*

LOVE FOR THE GAME BOOK 3

# **Out of Bounds**

REMI GREY

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The following story contains mature themes, strong language, and sexual situations. It is intended for mature readers.

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## **About the Book**

### **An Alpha Male Steamy Sports Romance**

#### **Kara:**

It was great to see my old friend James again at my brother's party.

I haven't seen him in about three or four years.

I was about to head off to college and he was in the middle of the first year of his basketball career when we first met each other.

I have never been the type to fall in love instantly but once our eyes met, I knew we had an instant connection.

#### **James:**

I remember the first time I laid eyes on Kara.

Not only is she stunning, but she's also my teammate's little sister.

She had an innocent demeanor about her but also a mysterious side that I wanted to get to know. When we met, her brother Larry warned me ahead of time about her. He hates the idea of anyone in the NBA, let alone the entertainment business, dating or getting close to her.

Out of Bounds is a sweet and steamy short story romance. No Cliffhangers! If you love short romances with insta love, alpha men, hot love scenes, and a sweet story, then this one is for you!

# Chapter 1

## James

“How does it feel to have your first win of the season, Aaron?”  
Aaron is our newest teammate for the Cleveland Bullets basketball team.

“It feels great,” he answers as he grins from ear to ear, but the poor guy hasn’t even been properly initiated in the brotherhood of the team. Not yet, anyway.

Larry, a good friend of mine and fellow teammate, throws the best parties. It’s time to celebrate with the fellas. The other teammates and I have established the fact that you are not initiated as our brother until you celebrate with us at one of Larry’s parties.

“Oh yeah, Aaron?” I question him like the smartass I am. “Well, does it feel like this?” I have prepared for this moment, and when I open up the door to Larry’s bachelor pad, at least three beautiful women to walk out onto the patio for Aaron. With a surprised look on his face he clutches his drink in one hand and opens his arms to let the women embrace him.

While they all giggle to themselves, their hands roam all over him not caring where they move to.

That’s how initiation works...and then some. It’s up to you what you do and how you react. I learned that with my own initiation. I was initiated when they locked me in a huge suite with a jacuzzi and two Brazilian models. It’s every man’s dream, right?

“I feel like a winner already,” Aaron mentions as he is getting his hair stroked while being dragged back inside. One of the women leans in to plant kisses all over his face. He turns red and is instantly taken. If there is temptation this bad at a party, you could only imagine what it’s like

everywhere you go and what you'd have to worry about if you were trying to be faithful in this business.

Where there's money, fame, big houses, and traveling, there will always be groupies and their friends trying to take advantage. It's hard to remain loyal in this business but it's equally hard to find the right woman to settle down with because you can never be sure who really wants you for you and not for what you can offer them.

As much as I wanted to reflect how we gave the opposing team such a devastating defeat, there was something else that captured my mind instead.

While getting back to the party outside, I see a familiar face — one I haven't seen in a long time. If anyone could get my mind off of today's events, it's her. She was sitting poolside with only her legs in the pool enjoying a conversation with her big brother, Larry.

"Hey James, look what the cat drug in." Larry yelled at me. He must have known I was standing behind him in between the sliding doors.

"Kara's here. Come say hello but make it quick." What was Larry thinking when he told me to come say hello to her? For God's sake his little sister is gorgeous, just like I remembered her. A headful of shining brunette curls. Curves for days, wearing a black string bikini. The girl is in perfect shape, drop-dead gorgeous. I already knew she was in her mid-20s.

*Kara could pass as a model and Larry wants me to say hello and make it quick. I hate being put on the spot. I want to say more than hello... if he only knew.*

As I move closer to the pool area, I devise a plan that would make Larry not so suspicious of the way that I am looking at her. I walk to where she is and wave. "Hey."

Usually, I am a smooth talker and rarely get tongue tied but it's all I could come up with at the moment.

"Is that who I think it is? James? You haven't aged a day."

So, not only is Kara hot, but when it comes to putting on an act in front of her brother, she is a true professional.

Larry is the overbearing brother that will give her a lecture if she so much as looks at a guy with a simple smile on her face. He will give the guy hell just for being an innocent bystander and smiling back. Many guys have gotten in trouble with him for this exact thing, so I have to play it cool around him.

"How are you? How have you been?" She hops out of the pool and walks over towards where I'm standing.

"I'm pretty good. I can't complain." I respond waiting for Larry to either walk away or turn his head.

"I see. How's your sister, Caitlyn?" I know exactly what was happening here. Caitlyn and Kara were friends before Larry and I became friends. She's using the topic to prolong conversation with me while Larry is near. I can see it because she keeps checking in her peripheral vision to see if he is still there.

"What part of make it quick don't you guys understand? Wrap it up." Larry interrupts the conversation. He's my boy but he is super annoying when he acts like this.

Before I get ready to walk away, Kara says, "You know what, let's walk and talk. Tell me about Caitlyn." She then reaches out to grab my arm like she is trying to snatch me up and we both walk away from Larry to a quiet area knowing what is about to happen.

"Kara?!" Larry yells after her.



“I’m 24, Larry. I’m a big girl. Damn it!” I never knew Kara had it in her. Every time Larry got on her case about a guy, she always kept silent and tried to grin and bear it, trying to not be embarrassed.

“Don’t worry bro, I’ll be right back,” I assure him. He gives me ‘the look.’ The look is a facial expression that says, “don’t try anything with my sister or I will kill you with my bare hands.”

I remember the first time he introduced me to Kara some years back. She had an innocent demeanor about her but also a mysterious side that I wanted to get to know.

She looks almost the same as when I met her except that she grew into her clothes- literally. She’s always been petite but now she looks full grown with a few curves on her and she’s not so innocent-looking anymore.

When we met, Larry warned me ahead of time about her. He hates the idea of anyone in the NBA, let alone the entertainment business, dating or getting close to her.

I can understand that from a big brother’s point of view. If anyone tried to pursue Caitlyn and I knew about it, the outcome would not be good. I know that and Caitlyn knows that, but I prefer not to intervene in her social life.

Larry has this idea that everyone in the NBA are players on the court and players in the streets. He has tried to embed this idea into Kara’s head, but our history is a bit more complicated than that. He would never understand.

## Chapter 2

### Kara

It was great to see my old friend James today. I haven't seen him in about three or four years. I was about to head off to college and he was in the middle of the first year of his basketball career when we first met each other.

I have never been the type to fall in love instantly but once our eyes met, I knew we had an instant connection. James wasn't like anyone I'd ever met back then. He was tall, in-shape, extremely handsome, and was the type that was respectful and kept to himself.

His brown eyes stared into mine while his chestnut colored hair complimented his chiseled face so perfectly. It gives me chills just thinking about the way he used to look at me. It was the sexiest look ever.

And I know that my brother doesn't want me anywhere near James.

What Larry doesn't understand is that I am my own person and I no matter how old I am, I can date whomever I want to. I don't mean to be rebellious, but our mother raised us to follow our intuition and to date whomever you like regardless of any issues that arise. It's just something that I live by.

I can't remember how many late-night talks my mother and I have had in regards to Larry treating me like I can't handle myself when a guy comes to pay me attention. It's not like I pursue any guy that stares at me.

I have never had whorish ways. If anything, I've always sculpted a good girl image that only I knew about. The people around me, even Larry for instance, think they know what's best for me based off the image that I

project, but he has no clue and neither does anyone else. It's my life, after all.

In fact, it's sad the way that me and James parted a few years back. Before we went our separate ways, we would always sneak out and meet each other without anyone knowing. We got to know each other really well, but there was always one thing that kept us from truly being together like we both wanted: Larry.

James and I both knew that our love would be completely forbidden so the night before we hopped on separate planes to go our own ways, we made a pact to always remember each other and cherish our memories. We sealed the deal with a kiss and a night of passion that damn near left me in tears.

I really wanted us to be together and to see where our fondness for each other would lead but unfortunately, we never got the chance to reconnect until now.

Now that I am an adult there is nothing stopping me from living my life the way I want to. I dragged him from Larry for one reason and one reason alone. There was a question that I was dying to know.

"Has anyone snatched you up yet?" I ask James while sipping slowly on my strawberry daiquiri. I'm a little afraid of the answer judging by his facial expression. It looks like he's deep in thought.

"Nope, I'm still single. As always," he replies.

"Always? Why always?" I ask, hoping he wouldn't think I was being too invasive.

"I just never found anyone as serious about me as I was about them. What about you? Are you single?" There goes that sexy stare down again.

“Now, when you ask me am I single do you really want to know or are you asking with the intention of picking up where we left off?”

His eyes are so irresistible that I question him while leaning in closer to his face. I find myself to the point where I get close to him and wrap my arms around his waist. Instantly my body is pressed against his. I tilt my head back to look up at his face.

“What do you think?” He responds as he wraps his arms around me to pick me up and gently kisses me on the lips. I instantly feel his hands around my waist gripping my body into place.

His warm breath smells like the bubble gum he had been chewing. As his gentle lips meet mine his hands grasp my hips tighter as he senses I want him back. His lips press harder against mine which causes me to grab his hands and allow them to roam around my body.

My mind starts to wonder about where we were and who could see us, so I frantically pull away from him. I feel his hands lift my chin up to match his eye contact.

“What’s wrong, babe?” he asked.

“I’m still babe, huh” I joke.

“You will always be in my eyes if only I can really make it official,” he says, making me blush even harder as the memories of our secret times together begin to come back to me.

“Let’s go find a spot that’s not so out in the open.” We dart off to find a spot where Larry won’t see us together so easily. Eventually we make our way back inside Larry’s bachelor pad into one of his bathrooms that doesn’t get much use and lock ourselves in.

“What if they start to wonder where we are?” I ask, a little panicky knowing how my brother is. Our clothes haven’t even come off yet, but I

want to feel secure when they do. It would be highly annoying if he came looking for us. To be honest, I don't think I'd even open the door.

I can feel my lower half getting hotter by the minute the longer I wait being next to James. Being next to him makes the heat within me turn up.

"You're right. Not here." He comes to his senses and catches his breath. "This isn't the way to reconnect, not with your brother here and especially at his place at that."

"You wanna go to my hotel? It's only a couple of blocks from here," I ask.

"Sure, meet me out front in five minutes," he tells me.

The five-minute wait seems like it takes forever. The moment we get in his SUV, we can both feel the magnetism between us. It's almost as if our animal instincts kick in.

Between the sensual touches, stomach rubs, belt loosening, lip biting and lip locking, James is barely able to focus on the road. Here we are, finally out by ourselves again with James's warm, masculine fingers underneath my dress and inside my black lace panties.

With deep in and out motions he manages to bring out my inner goddess with subtle moans that get stronger with each motion, my leg propped up on top of his leg while he is driving with one hand. His multitasking abilities turn me on even more and brought me one step closer to heaven.

Who would've thought that his hands alone could bring me to the brink of orgasm? When I feel myself about to lose it, I pull James's wrist away and my hands roam to his pants, which were already unbuttoned. I move my hands along his body, finding his erection which tells me that he's more than ready for this.

It's just as I remember it. He's not small at all. He's a bit above average when excited and wide which is more of my type.

I usually don't get this excited while intimate as I'm usually too shy but I want to take him into my mouth. My hand can barely fit around the girth of his cock. I wrap my seatbelt around my back, adjusting to make more room as I lean in to taste him.

My mouth encounters pure hotness as my tongue explores his ridges. I am able to feel his veins growing thicker the more my mouth grips his manhood.

Unable to fit him entirely in my mouth, I take whatever I can get and keep tasting him until we arrive at the hotel parking lot.

"You sure are making this really hard for me," he blurted, barely able to speak.

"What?" I responded innocently, as if I didn't already know what he was referring to.

"Shit, I have to have you now... you're going to make me cum already. I have to hurry up to this hotel."

Within minutes, we arrive at my hotel. Not able to get out of the car and head up to the room after so much passion, he instead drives to a dark area in the back of the hotel parking lot.

He makes a noise with his teeth clenched as if he is sucking air in through them.

We take off our seatbelts quickly as if they were holding us hostage. As I look over at him, he begins adjusting his seat for more space.

Neither of us want to wait again and getting out of the car would take too long, so he helps me over to him to sit on his lap, facing him. We don't worry that anyone will see us since James has the darkest tint that anyone could ever have.

"Better yet, let's climb across to the backseat for more space," James insists.

He helps me get over the console to the back of his SUV then follows right behind me. He sits comfortably in the seat after pulling his pants off while leaving on nothing but his tank top. I can see that his hard erection never died and he's ready to work. I straddle him and in doing so his cock leans against my stomach as his hands immediately roam all over me as if he was a hungry animal.

He then slips my dress off and my bra and panties follow. My hands are all over his chest when he takes one of my breasts into his mouth and start tonguing my nipples fast as a butterfly like no one has ever done before.

My arms are resting around his shoulders and his back while my legs are wrapped around his flanks. My pelvis is writhing in anticipation of him being inside of me.

"Oh, James, you're making me so hot. I can feel the wetness drip from me," I moan.

James holds onto my waist and adjusts me on his lap. Then he grabs my neck to kiss my lips passionately. With the other hand he glides his cock inside of me.

I can feel an instant fullness that hurts in the best way possible. His kiss gets firmer with each of his pelvic thrusts. My moans are masked in his kisses, muffled until he is fully inside of me.

He lets go of my neck and breaks the long, searing kiss. My breath is still taken away as the urge arises to gyrate my hips on him.

A simple technique of lifting my hips up and bringing them back down while gyrating them in a circle, over and over again, is enough to set us both off.

I find myself clutching his shoulders and digging my nails into them.

“Let’s cum together,” James moans with passion.

“Ahh James, I’m already there...”

We’re both unable to control ourselves as we reach an exploding orgasm. Dripping in sweat, I stare out of the window not believing what happened again between us. I start to feel a little guilty for Larry’s sake until James breaks the ice as we sit in the back seat holding each other.

“Are you sure you’re not a dancer?”

“Yeah. Why?” His questions take me by surprise until I realize what he was talking about. “Oh, that little trick? I snuck off to a few clubs a time or two.” I giggle to myself. “I still do.”



## Chapter 3

### James

Why do I have such a bad headache? I wake up with a groggy feeling. When I stretch out on the bed, I look around to find that I'm in a room that isn't mine and Kara is lying beside me.

That's when I remember what happened last night. Catching up with an old friend took a complete turn. Last night after what went down in my SUV, we both took a shower, talked a little more, and had a nightcap back in her hotel room. That is all I remember.

I have to admit that I do still have feelings for her. Seeing her again yesterday made me realize that being a young bachelor isn't all it's cracked up to be.

Don't get me wrong, I love meeting beautiful women and showing them a good time for one night but there may be something written in the stars for me and Kara. It worries me to actually think like that because out of all of my friends, I'm the only one who thinks about having a significant other and settling down despite having a lavish lifestyle.

Most of the guys would laugh or think I'm crazy but I never really cared what they think. What I am more worried about is, what am I going to tell Larry? After all, I did tell him that I would be back but here I am in his sister's hotel room lying in bed next to her.

I hope he had too much fun at the party to even notice our disappearance. There's not much sense in trying to hide it from him. The best thing to do is to tell him somehow.

We can't keep this hidden forever. I know he'll hate me for it, but I'd rather tell him when the time is right than keep secrets from my best

bro. He's never done anything to hurt me so this will be a hard pill to swallow.

Maybe I should have just stayed away from Kara. I want to say that the first incident was a mistake, but it couldn't be. I wanted to get to know her just as much as she wanted to get to know me.

Maybe, I should just break things off with her immediately. I really don't want to do that, but it might be best. This could be what Larry was telling her — that any man in the NBA will break her heart.

The bottom line is I don't want to break her heart. She's a very beautiful and sweet woman. Now, if only I can get Larry to understand that.

It's 10 A.M. and I'm due to hang out with Larry in the next couple of hours. I leave Kara a handwritten note on the dresser telling her that there's business I need to tend to and that I'll call her later.

I leave the hotel, make a quick stop at my house, before then head to hang out with Larry. We hop in his Maserati and go to our favorite bar, Mangos, and sit at our usual table.

Everything seems normal between us through a flow of casual conversation until the dreaded question comes up.

“Where'd you go last night? You didn't show back up.”

I felt an instant lump in the back of my throat. Here it goes, the moment of truth.

“I went out for some air and went for a joy ride. I was going to come back but got occupied.” What sort of truth was that? Did I just really fix my lips to lie? The hole just gets deeper and deeper.

“Look dude, I don't know where you went but are you okay? You're starting to become more and more antisocial nowadays. When we go places you barely want to hang out with me or the rest of the guys,” he says.

“I’m fine. I don’t mean to be antisocial, but I guess I’d rather spend time by myself sometimes. It’s nothing personal.” I try not to look him in the eye.

“Oh, so you’re having some issues.” He sips his drink. “You wanna talk about it?”

*Now is the perfect time to tell him about Kara, but somehow, I skip out on the perfect chance.*

I’m quick to say, “nah.”

“Alright, I offered. You know who else didn’t show their face again last night?” Larry asks while staring at the TV and drinking his beer.

“Who?” I ask, like I didn’t already know.

“That sister of mine. It seems kind of weird that the both of you left and neither one of you ever came back,” Larry explains. “It’s almost as if you two – “

I interrupt Larry before he could get another word in. “Wait, what are you trying to say?”

He looks at me and pauses. “Nothing. Maybe it could’ve been a coincidence.”

“Yeah.” I give out a shy laugh. Trying not to make the mood awkward I say, “She is a pretty woman, but I know you would hate me if that happened.”

“Have you been looking at my sister again?” He asks as if he was having an epiphany moment. “You do remember what we spoke about the last time you mentioned her right?”

“Yeah, yeah.” I feel like I’m getting lectured and scolded by a parent when he talks like this. “I got it. It was meant to be a compliment.”

“A compliment? What sort of compliment?” Larry looks at me like he can see straight through me.

“Larry, chill out. The compliment is that your mother makes pretty children...all except you.” I offer this statement hoping he would calm down. I even chuckle a bit at the end.

After a bit of silence, he catches his composure and rethinks his attitude with a smile. He throws his hands up and says, “You know what? Maybe I was overreacting but let me reiterate; you know the rule. I’m dead serious about my little sister. I don’t wanna have this conversation again.”

I nod, and am able to change the topic of conversation but in the back of my head I can’t help but to think, how am I supposed to work this out with him when he doesn’t even want to bring the conversation up anymore? I’m just going to have to get creative.

## Chapter 4

### Kara

I didn't want to come off too anxious but somehow, I wind up at James' front door. At first, I was hesitant about going to his place instead of calling but there's something I have to get off my chest.

As I stand at his doorway, I take a deep breath and try to gather my thoughts before knocking. After the second knock, he finally opens the door and there he is, standing in front of me. He looks so relaxed in his sweatpants and a tight-fitting long-sleeved shirt.

"Hi, I know you weren't expecting me, but I have to tell you something." I say.

"Look if it's about Larry don't worry about it. It's not your fault. You've done nothing wrong," James assures me with a sympathetic look. "Calm down, okay?"

He offers me his hand to come inside.

"I know I shouldn't worry but I can't pretend like you two aren't best friends. The only reason why you two don't agree is because of me." James still has an unbothered look on his face. "Doesn't that bother you?" I ask him thoughtfully.

"No." James says gently as he wraps his arm around my shoulders, leans in, and kisses me slowly.

"When I met you, it was never my intention to hurt you in any way." James murmurs as he leans his forehead against mine.

“I understand, babe. Let’s change the subject, okay? But, I have one more thing I have to tell you. I’m leaving to go back home in a couple of days to go back to school. I just need to know if you still want to be with me as much as I want to be with you.”

“Kara, you know I want to be with you. It should go without saying. I know that you being in town wasn’t going to be permanent but yes, I still want you here. I want to focus on us and see where a relationship can take us. Since you have to leave, I guess there’s only so much we can do while you are still here.” He pauses, looking at me in a way that made my entire body warm. “Let me take you out tonight. It’s the least I can do to show you a good time,” James says after a moment.

As soon as James mentions taking me out tonight, I felt super excited. It gives me a reason to dress up. I almost feel like a teenager again when I think of the fact that James wants to spend more time with me.

“I would love that,” I answer. Before I get to express more of my excitement, James’ phone starts ringing.

“Hello?” James answers. He puts his hand over the phone and silently mouths the words to me, “it’s Larry,” then returns to the phone call.

“Hey Larry, guess what?” he says excitedly, looking at me.

“Do not mention I’m here,” I whisper loudly to him hoping that he'd hear me, but Larry wouldn’t. I’m not sure if James is going to tell Larry that I’m here or not but the thought of him mentioning my presence is enough to scare me.

“I found the perfect container of protein powder we talked about,” James says, doing his best to come up with something to say to my brother.

While he’s finishing up his phone conversation with Larry, my mind drifts away. I’m very surprised that he’s so unfazed by what happened. I know deep down inside that it does bother him but the heart wants what the heart wants.

The whole purpose of me coming to his home was for me to tell him that I wasn't worried about Larry's opinion, but I guess it turns out that I care more than I let on.

It's just hard to believe that James doesn't want to talk about telling Larry about us anymore. I don't see why not, though. Getting all of these secrets out in the open can be a good thing.

We could tell Larry together at least. At the same time, I can see how it would complicate things because Larry doesn't even know about the first time anything happened between James and I a few years ago. If he knew, he would lose it. So James doesn't seem to want to tell him, and I realize now that I'm more worried about all of it than I originally thought I was.

For the past few months, I have been thinking about meeting someone and possibly settling down with them, but I always shied away from the thought. I always told myself that I wanted a career first, find someone to marry, then maybe children will follow.

I'm currently in a nursing program at my college but the ironic part is that I am not excited at all about it. It comforts me knowing that I'll have a career, but the medical field doesn't sound too exciting to me anymore.

I have thought about finding a new career or something that I am actually good at and actually like to do. The only reason I entered the medical field is because my parents always had these high expectations for my siblings and me.

They had pretty good jobs and made good money and wanted us to follow in their footsteps financially. Of course, my brother Larry has done a wonderful job, but I feel like a black sheep sometimes.

There's always one in each family. I'd rather just reconsider my college options and find something else. I haven't broken the news to

anyone in my family because I doubt they'd understand but I feel like I can tell James anything.

Between reconnecting with James, dealing with my worries about Larry's response, and trying to decide what to do with my life, I'm a mess. But at least I know James cares about me as much as I care about him.



## Chapter 5

### James

“Larry?! What are you—” I can’t believe what is taking place right now.

“Save it,” Larry says, sitting on a bench on my front porch waiting for me as I arrive home after my date with Kara. “Now, when we had that talk about Kara did you even listen to what I said to you?”

“I—” Before I can even speak, Larry goes on.

“Apparently, it went in one ear and out of the other,” he says with a hard look and a raised voice. “I do recall telling you that I did not want to have this conversation anymore but yet I’m having to talk about it again. You, sir, are supposed to be a friend to me. Not someone who goes behind my back and tries to date my sister against my wishes. Were you even my friend in the first place?” he asks and I want to answer but he just keeps going. “You know what I expect, James. I ask you for one thing and one thing only: to leave my sister alone. You had one job. You know how we live, James. Any woman in this industry can get their feelings hurt easily but my sister is not any woman for you to play with.”

“Larry, what is your deal? I am not like any of these men you see playing bachelor with a wife at home. When have you ever known me to be that way? Just because I’m single and make myself available to pretty women you think I go around breaking hearts or something? And FYI, your sister is not a child anymore. Nowhere near. She can handle herself without big brother hovering over her all the time. You’ve grown up, how come she can’t?” I ask boldly.

Suddenly Larry steps up to me and asks, “How long have you been seeing her? Don’t lie to me.”

“She’s only been in town for a couple of days,” I remind him.

“Is that why you two never came back to the party? You’ve been seeing her since she came to town? What the hell is wrong with you?”

“Look, it’s complicated, all right?”

All of a sudden Larry balls his hand into a fist and punches me in the stomach leaving me to kneel to catch my breath.

“You want to know how I found out about this?” He starts pacing around thinking to himself like a madman. “I was on a date with a super hot journalist and in the middle of an interview in the Palm Hotel restaurant when I saw the backside and shadow of two people whom I thought I knew very well! They looked familiar, James. I had to excuse myself to the bathroom to verify it was you and Kara. Do you know how long it took me to gather myself and settle back into that interview?” Larry starts laughing to himself, as if he can’t believe how pissed off he is.

“As many times as I’ve tried to bring up the conversation over the years, Larry, you just never wanted to hear it.” I’m up and ready to stand my ground.

“Years?!” Larry charges at me and I grab his hands and push him back. I’m a little heavier and I know my own strength. He pushes me back with all his strength and I find myself punching him in his mouth unable to contain my composure any longer. He checks his lips to see if there is any blood. When he notices there’s blood, he starts breathing heavily and says, “If I see you with my sister again I will kick your ass until hell won’t have it anymore.” He stares at me, pauses, and walks off.

I didn’t mean to cause all this mayhem between everyone. I just don’t see the big issue in dating a grown woman who can make choices for herself. I was able to understand years ago when we were all going separate

directions in life and she was a little younger but Larry needs to open his eyes.

If I am his best friend he would have noticed that I don't play around when it comes to women and their feelings. I've always been a blunt, outright person when it comes to talking out my feelings with anyone.

Why would he think to include me as a player when it comes to women? You'd think he know me better than that. I guess I was wrong. Maybe I'm the one to blame here but I'll take accountability. I have no clue how to fix this.

## Chapter 6

### Kara

I heard what happened last night and I feel awful. I feel responsible for getting James into this and breaking up a perfectly good friendship.

James and I made an agreement that we wouldn't feel sorry for having feelings for each other but it's much easier said than done. I know my brother comes from a good place, but it just eats me up that a friendship is ruined over something so ridiculous.

As I'm sitting in the stands watching the game between their team and the Charlotte Magic, I can sense the tension on the basketball court between James and Larry.

Instead of taking their aggression out on the other team, they take it out on each other with Larry hogging the ball acting as if James isn't open to pass the ball to. James raises a fuss because he knows that Larry is purposely ignoring him.

The coach is beyond frustrated and makes it a point to tell the men that they both need to leave personal business at home. The whole team is starting to get stressed out by the behaviors of these two.

By the end of the third quarter, Larry's put out of the game and on the sidelines until he gets his head back in the game.

The Cleveland Bullets end up getting another win, but this was barely a win if two friends are losing a war.

Neither Larry or James have any idea that I was in the stands watching the game, so I decide to head back to my hotel quietly without

being discovered. I already know what Larry will say to me and I am not sure that I want to hear it.

I am going to let him approach me if he wants to speak about this, but I will not bring it up to him because there is no need for me to. As far as James...well, I'll give him some much needed space. I personally hate confrontation but it's something that has to be done, just not now.

The next day, Larry calls me to say exactly what I thought he might say. When he calls, I didn't show any signs of knowing what went on between him and James.

In fact, I think I played it cool...too cool. He keeps a pleasant, calm tone but claims to know what went on between James and I which leads me to believe that James may have told him the truth finally.

I would rather not discuss my love life, so I choose not to confirm it or answer any of Larry's digging questions like how long have we been seeing each other or what happened to listening to him?

I simply tell him politely what James, the rest of the family, and I have been trying to tell him along — to politely fuck off. It isn't his business to know so I don't tell him. What I do tell him is that James is a kind soul whom I got to know and that I like him. I tell Larry not to ruin it for me.

If that isn't what Larry wants to hear then I'm not sure what is. I end the conversation by telling him that I love him, but James is not like other men I've dated.

## Chapter 7

### James

I'm awakened early by Kara tossing and turning in her sleep next to me in bed. When she finally wakes completely, she has tears welling up in her eyes.

I try to calm her down, but she is not easy to console.

"What's wrong? You had a nightmare?" I ask, comforting her.

"Something like that." She snuffles and looks around the room as if she is trying to avoid eye contact with me. "

"Do you want to talk about it?" I ask trying to move my head to see her eyes.

Still looking down, Kara says, "This is going to sound silly, but I had a dream that we were both asleep and you had your arm around me. Then I woke up and you were gone. Nowhere to be found."

"I'm not going anywhere," I assure her. I'm not sure how to respond to her because I am not really used to women telling me about their strong feelings, so I just prefer to listen rather than talk.

"I know you won't leave me, but I just can't get this situation out of my mind. My stress level is through the roof. I just want to be together without all the worry," she says, wiping teardrops from her cheeks.

I know what subject she is about to bring up and I would rather avoid it but it won't get addressed that way.

“I know you don’t want to talk about it but my brother called me yesterday and I felt like he was trying to dissuade me from being with you. It’s like he wants to paint this picture of you like you are a bad guy who has every intention of hurting me. And I know it’s far from the truth, but I feel like I can’t live my life comfortably anymore without being tormented by brother dearest.” Explaining this to me, she sounds ticked off. I, for one, think she should just either stand up to Larry or distance herself a bit if he’s not supportive but that is not my call. If anything bad happens to their brother-sister relationship I don’t want to be responsible for it.

“You remember the reason we had to leave each other the first time?” she asks.

“Your brother never wanted us to be together, let alone be friends with each other. We also had different jobs in separate places. We were all too busy and wanted different things out of life,” I say, trying to take all the weight off of Larry.

“You’re right. I guess I can’t blame it all on Larry the first time. Your career and my schooling played a big part of it. I just don’t want history to repeat itself, you know? I don’t want us to part ways just because I have school to go back to and you have to resume your career. If we are really meant to be together nothing should get in the way of that. It’s why I’m dreading having to go back home tomorrow,” she says.

“School is important, Kara,” I explain to her. “What are you trying to say?” *What could she possibly have against college?*

“I know it’s important, but I feel like there’s more to life than college. I’m missing out. Before you say anything, I haven’t told anyone that I wasn’t interested in college anymore because my mom won’t understand, and Larry would probably kill me. I am not as passionate about nursing as I once was. The spark is gone, and I’d rather pursue other things.” She pauses and looks at me. “Most importantly, because I feel this way it wouldn’t matter if I was to stay here in town or leave. I’m not sure

what to do. I would feel guilty leaving knowing that there is a mess down here that I am probably responsible for that needs cleaning up.”

Once again, I’m not sure how to comfort her other than hold her and reiterate that she is in charge of her own life. We can always keep in touch, but I am confused myself about what to do. Larry has always had my back and I don’t want to keep feeling like I’m betraying him. My head tells me one thing the heart says another.

Damn, I hate being a hopeless romantic.

So far, days have gone by and Larry and I have barely said one word to each other. When I did try to initiate an apology to him in the locker room, he told me I could shove it and that I was only interested in preying on his younger sister because she was too naive to know any better. I felt there was nothing more to say so I nodded my head with a slight, “okay,” and that was the last thing we said to each other.



## Chapter 8

### Kara

“Will you at least talk to him? He’s your best friend,” I follow Larry down the hallway not accepting no for an answer. I decided to pay Larry a surprise visit to his home when I heard the news about him not talking to James. It may not be my place to talk to him about it but I just thought I’d mention it. After all, if it means a lot to me then I know it matters to Larry. I managed to speak with him before he had to leave for a meeting even if it was a quick talk in the hallway in front of his front door.

“I am not going to repeat myself,” Larry answers back.

“Why not? Is it because of me?” I ask, needing to know.

Larry stops in his tracks and turns around to face me. “No Kara. In my eyes you can do no wrong, except ignore my wishes for you. I only wanted you to be happy and not get hurt by men who only care about money, parties, and groupies but you have made it clear to me that you do not care for my opinion. You’ll just go and do your own thing.” He starts walking away again but I refuse to let him make me feel guilty.

“Have you ever once asked me what I want?” I ask loudly while staying put.

He looks around and says, “what *do* you want?”

“I just want to be happy. You can’t shield me from every danger in life. I just want to live. I like James. He’s a great guy and you’re going to have to deal with that. Neither Me nor James wanted any of this to go down like it did. We care for you, but we would like your support too.”

“The both of you will not have my support,” Larry butted in.

“You’ve already lost your best friend. Is it worth losing me over, too? Get your head out of your ass and see what’s in front of you and stop trying to isolate me or you’re going to be lonely yourself.” I’m not sure where that came from, but Larry looks at me as if he’s just seen a ghost. I don’t want to see the look on his face any longer, so I leave him standing in the middle of the hallway all alone.

I exit his house and leave to pay James a visit to try to clear up the air.

I already know what is going to happen after today. Larry is going to eventually accept me and James’ relationship out of fear of losing us. I am one hundred percent sure about this.

I know Larry like the back of my hand. When he thinks, he actually thinks long and hard. I feel like I’ve done what I could to turn this bad situation into something more understandable. I feel like I have actually accomplished something. Hopefully, James doesn’t have to worry because progress has been made to mend his broken friendship. He, on the other hand, doesn’t see it that way.

“This whole situation is exhausting. I really don’t want to think about or put much energy into it. Just face the fact that Larry will never accept us being together and leave it at that. I’ll always have feelings for you. You’re a beautiful, smart woman but it’s just not going to work out.” Unbelievable. I can’t believe how stubborn and stupid James is being.

“So that’s it? You’re just going to leave me high and dry? I get it, James. Maybe you lost a best friend in the process, but I would at least like to think that I’ve gained one: you.” My eyes start to well up with tears that I am trying to hold back.

“Kara-” James starts.

“Just stop it.” At this point the tears came on their own and my voice starts to break. “I’m willing to sacrifice a relationship with my brother only for you to feel obligated to leave me? You want me to just pack up and go, don’t you?”

I doubt James knows what to do under these circumstances when a female he really likes is crying but he does seem to be trying his best to calm me down again by holding me.

“I don’t want you to just pack up and go, Kara. I want us to be together as much as you do but it’s not easy to make a decision like this.” He resumes helping me to pack my bags. “I’m sorry. You have been a good friend to me, but I don’t want you to have to sacrifice your brother for me. I have morals, you know?”

“I know that but what you failed to realize is that we both said my brother’s opinion didn’t matter yet here we are arguing about it when we knew what was coming the whole time. The hypocrisy at play here.”

I walk to the nearest corner of the room with my back turned against James waiting for him to come and comfort me. It takes him about three minutes while I try to get myself together.

“You know what? You’re absolutely right. I know it can’t be easy for you to deal with your brother and me fighting over you constantly. It’s selfish of me to not see that. If you’re willing to work through this then I am, too. We’ll work it out.” James stands behind me like he wants to grab me but doesn’t want me to pull away. I look at the ground then I look back up at him.

“We’ll work it out?” I ask him in my baby voice sounding hopeful for once in my life.

“Yeah, we’ll work it out.” He hugs me from the back and gives me a tight bear hug. “I promise.”

“Does this mean that I can stay?” I ask, hoping to get an honest answer out of him.

“That’s up to you,” he answers.

“Do you want me to stay?” I ask. looking at him curiously, almost afraid the answer might not be what I want it to be.

“Yes. Just make sure it’s what you want to do,” he replies lovingly. “Think it over some more and let me know.”

I reach for James’ face and give him a long, hard kiss. He picks me up in response until his cell phone starts ringing. He puts me down and takes it out of his pocket. “I’m sorry, I gotta take this.” He walks into the other room to talk.

While he is on the phone, I decide to utilize phone time too. I call my mother up and ask her how she’s been. She’s slowly getting to that age where she needs constant reminding to do some things. She senses something in my voice and asks me what’s wrong.

My mother is the type of person that if she asks you what's wrong, she knows that something is wrong and will insist that you tell her. I tell her about my overbearing brother once more as if she hasn’t heard about it a dozen times. She lets me know that he came to see her today and he took her shopping and they had a little talk. He brought up the subject with her and she spoke to him about it one on one.

She told me the story of when our father passed away, Larry started becoming my caretaker in place of him. She assured me that she told him that he did a damn good job of equipping me for adulthood because of it but there is only so much he could do now that I am older.

She mentions he went out for a walk by himself after they spoke. Knowing Larry, he doesn’t go out for night walks unless something is

weighing really heavy on his mind which is confirmation to me that I was right all along. Everything will be okay now. Larry just has to come to his senses.

I wait for James to arrive back in the room for about forty-five minutes. I walk to the living room to see what's keeping him. As I suspected, he's off the phone and asleep on the couch. So much for makeup sex.

## Chapter 9

### James

The next morning, I wake up to a phone call from someone I thought would never come around: Larry. At first, I prepare for the worst because Kara and I had been together yesterday, so I wonder if it was related.

I ignored the first phone call because I had been too stressed out for the past couple of weeks. When the phone went to voicemail the first time, I received a text from him stating, “do you want to hang out or not?”

Once I saw that I felt a sense of dread and relief at the same time. I didn’t want to talk about the subject but at least Larry wanted to talk to me. I found relief in the fact that maybe he found his peace and if I was going to talk about it, I could do it openly instead of having to hide or spare someone’s feelings. Only time would tell until I met him for breakfast downtown.

When I finally arrive at our spot, I find Kara sitting at a table. “Aren’t you supposed to be headed home right now?” I ask her, in shock that she is still in town. I know we talked about it yesterday, but I at least thought she would be headed home to work out arrangements or to retrieve her belongings.

“I was getting ready to head out, but Larry invited me to breakfast this morning, so I cancelled my flight. What are you doing here?” she asks, looking around.

“He invited me too,” I reply.

“See, I told you things would work out,” she says me with an ‘I-told-you-so’ look on her face.

“Just because he invited us here doesn’t mean that all is well yet,” I tell her.

“James you’re supposed to be his best friend and you don’t know better than that?” she says staring at her menu.

“The Larry I know has proven himself to be a very spontaneous, bipolar guy. Anything can happen.” She shrugs off what I say to her and we both look around to find Larry approaching.

“Whatever you do, act normal,” Kara says with a sly grin on her face that turns into a serious face when Larry sits down with us.

“Now, I know you are both wondering why I brought the both of you here today. If you think I am perfectly fine with you two seeing each other, don’t push it. I know that I have been a piece of work lately, but I have good reason.”

He turns to me to give me a serious blank look. “James, you know I don’t want to see my sister hurt in any way, shape, or form. If you so much as hurt her, I will kill you. If you so much as send her the wrong flowers, I will kill you. If you so much as-”

“I got it, Larry. I got it. I have no intentions of hurting her,” I assure him with the same expression he is giving me. Kara starts to heartily laugh.

“Good.” He turns to Kara and gives her the same look only this time she doesn’t return his look. “Now onto you. I know how old you are. I get it. You are past the age where your hormones are out of control and you already had the sex talk. Trust me, I got it. But if you ever so much as fix your lips to talk back to me again, you won’t like me.”

Now he turns to the both of us together. “If you two want to date go ahead but James, keep it off my court and Kara, go home and finish your

studies. You are to get married and stay married and children should follow after. No excuses.”

“I was meaning to talk to you about that,” Kara says to Larry.

“What? You two breaking up already? No, no, unacceptable. You wanted to be together so bad you got your wish.”

“No, not that. The studies part. You see, nursing sucks. I’ve put much thought into it and I want to pursue a different career. I just don’t know what yet. I put off telling anyone in the family because I know I won’t get the reaction I’m looking for,” Kara says nervously.

“Then do something different with your life if it’s not what you want to do. Simple as that,” Larry replies with no hint of disappointment.

“That’s all? You’re not going to shame me or tell me that it will be a big mistake if I just up and leave the program?” she asks with an astonished look on her face. “All this time I’ve been worried for nothing?”

“Shaming is for *your* mother to do. Do you think she approved of me wanting to make a career out of basketball? She thought it was the equivalent of me wanting to be a musician thus throwing my whole life down the drain. It’s not until you actually show her that you can be successful by doing what you want to do despite how she feels about it. Look at me now,” explains Larry.

Kara’s mouth stays open in disbelief of the stress her mind put her through for thinking of this moment for too long. Larry turns to me and smiles after watching Kara become speechless. “Smooth,” I tell him.

“Now excuse me while I order. We’ve been talking for too long already. Who’s hungry?” Larry asks, browsing his menu and summoning the waitress.



# Epilogue

## Kara

It's funny how time flies by when you meet someone you instantly fall in love with. Despite how hard it was for James and I to be together at first we are more than grateful that everything worked out in our favor.

I am happy to be living in Cleveland with my dear husband, James. So far marriage has been a fairy tale, but I know it won't be like this forever. There comes a time in every marriage when arguments will occur, and you will never see eye to eye and everything your partner does makes you sick but right now I just want to enjoy life as it is.

While James is at practice, I take the time to clean the house and do laundry. Nowadays, I haven't been able to do much. I have been feeling a little sick lately so when James comes home, he tries to pick up some of the slack.

I know he doesn't mind and does it without complaining but I feel bad about being home all day and not getting much of anything done. Today, I am supposed to be working from home which is becoming increasingly harder and harder to do but it's better than suffering at an office with people watching me and wanting to know what is going on so that they can spread their workplace gossip.

I finally found a new career that seems perfect for me. I work as a public relations specialist for the Cleveland Bullets, which Larry and James find beneficial to them and their image. The family business, I guess you can call it.

It sure beats any office job that I ever held, and it pays just as well as nursing. You know, writing has always been my forte as well as figuring out ways to cover someone's ass when they get in trouble with the media. I

found the most happiness in being able to make a great living and paying down a good chunk of my student debt that I accumulated from not finishing my nursing degree. I find it's still worth it.

I managed to attend a virtual meeting that was scheduled today despite my head feeling queasy and a horrible bout of nausea. I was able to maintain a normal demeanor throughout the duration but as soon as the meeting ended, I headed straight for the bathroom with the worst upset stomach. Where are these symptoms coming from? It's like they are coming out of nowhere.

By 4 PM, I realized I need to get ready to attend a late doctor's appointment until my best friend, Gina, knocks on my door carrying two plastic bags. "It's me. Open up!" she calls from outside.

"Gina, I have a doctor's appointment I'm on my way to." She ignores my words and lets herself in.

"You told me how you've been feeling these past few days, and I have a remedy." She says putting her bag down and going through it. "This will only take a second." In the bag she takes out a bottle of apple juice. She turns the other bag upside down to let six different brands of pregnancy tests fall on the couch.

"Oh, no," I tell her knowing good and well what she wants me to do.

She picks one up and hands it to me and says, "you know what to do." I look at her as if she's insane, but she insists, "I am positive. I had *the* dream. The fish dream and you're the only person I associate with these days."

"Gina-" I start.

"Do it for my sanity, Kara. The quicker you take it the faster you can be on your way. I'll even drive you to your appointment." She offers the apple juice to me. "Do you have to go yet?"

I go into the bathroom without saying a single word and take the test not expecting much to come out of it. I guess I got the shock of my life because I haven't been keeping up with when my last menstrual was or the last time I ovulated.

I find out within the first two minutes that there is a clearly positive pregnancy test that showed up dark and bold right in front of me. I feel no emotions yet. I let Gina in the bathroom and take another test while she was on the other side of the bathroom staring at the results. I managed to save enough pee to take another one to confirm but I still have the same positive answer.

"And there you have it. My dreams never lie. My intuition is never wrong," she says in excitement. "Yay, a new baby!" She senses that I am not as happy as she is. "You may not be happy yet but as soon as we get you some relief from all these symptoms you will be."

Maybe she's right. She does have three kids but why did I have to pick out a best friend who seems gypsy-like? When I first met her in high school, I could have sworn she was at least pagan, and I was right.

Ever since then she has been helping me to get things I wanted in life like money, revenge, good luck, and now as adults she swears the only reason I'm married is because she cast a strong love spell on the day of the full blood moon with amplified crystals. I am starting to think she set me up for parenthood as well.

"I am happy that I am having a baby but was this your doing, G-I-N-A?" I ask accusingly.

"No ma'am. Magic can only help you conceive but you know what needs to be done in order to *make* the baby right?"

"Yeah. I guess I'm overreacting. It's just a bit soon, you know?" I ask while starting to pace in the bathroom. "I've been married a year and a

half now. I just started a new career after starting over in college and now suddenly a baby. Could it all just be a dream?"

"No, it's real mama. It's too early for you to start worrying. You and James are going to be great parents. You're going to do fine in your career too. The universe will make sure of that."

"Alright." I let out a sigh of relief. I am happy but it has not dawned on me as of yet that I am going to be a new mother. "Are you ready to go the doctor's office with me?" I ask Gina.

"I would but I offered to drive you *if* you weren't pregnant. Now that we both know you are let's not pay a doctor hundreds of dollars to tell you something that we figured out for under ten bucks," she responds.

She has a point. I log onto my laptop to go to my patient portal to cancel my appointment today and reschedule a prenatal appointment for a later date. First, I have to get my calculations in order to find out how far along I may be but first, how am I going to tell James and Larry?

I have an idea. I get on my phone and send a group message to them both: "What would you do if I had one of these?" I send a baby emoji beside it.

And now, to wait for a response.

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## About the Author



Remi Grey loves to write sweet, steamy, and spicy romances. She is obsessed with all forms of romance with a happily ever after. As an indie author, your support means everything. Thank you so much for reading.