This book is a work of fiction. All names, characters, locations, and incidents are products of the author's imagination and have been used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, locales, or events is entirely coincidental.

DRAWN TO YOU

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Sweet Acacia Press

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ISBN-10:1505229758

ISBN-13: 978-1505229752

Sweet Acacia Press

To readers.

Find love.

Live joyfully.

Be happy.

Drawn to You

On the night she discovers her ex's engagement, Rachel meets Landon, the most attractive man she's ever seen, who, for some reason, mistakes her for a hooker. The thing is, he's so sexy, and it's just one night...what harm can there be in giving in to the desire to lose herself in his touch? She's never going to see him again, even though he has given her the most intensely pleasurable night of her life.

Landon prefers his women beautiful and sophisticated, with no desire for commitment, so when his brother ignores his protests and sends him a hooker on his birthday, he's surprised by how willing he is to continue paying for her services. It should be easy, except she's no hooker, and she has no intention of letting him into her life.

As the billionaire owner of Swanson Court Hotels, Landon is used to getting what he wants, and Rachel is not going to be an exception.

Chapter 1

"YOU should totally hook up with Chadwick tonight."

"What!" I exclaim. "No way!" I look up, meeting my cousin's gray eyes in the mirror. She's standing behind me, fixing up my mass of blonde-streaked, deep copper hair in preparation for Chadwick Black's birthday party, which she's practically forcing me to attend. Right now she's looking at me with her own particular expression of exasperation.

"Seriously, Rachel," she says, inserting another pin into my hair to hold up the style she's creating. "You need to have some fun, and from what you've told me, Chadwick is cute, sexy, and eager to give you just what you need."

"Me and every other girl in New York," I scoff. "Come on Laurie, it's not that bad. I have fun. I have you, Brett, all those beautiful books on my ereader, and an amazing job." I pause. "Well, not so amazing, but whatever."

Laurie laughs and pushes her back-length curly black hair over her shoulder. She'd just returned from work when I told her about Chadwick's party and at the time, I wasn't sure I wanted to attend. Immediately, she'd dropped everything and started to help me get ready, insisting that I had to go. She must be tired after a long day at the law firm where she works, but she still looks stunning. I like to think we look alike, at least features-wise—our fathers are identical twins after all—but in coloring, we take after our mothers. My skin is pale and a little rosy on a good day, while Laurie's has an absurdly beautiful light caramel tone.

"I'm sure you know how pathetic it is when me, my boyfriend, books, and work are your only claim to a fun-filled life," Laurie says, still smiling. "PS, when I said fun, I didn't mean the PG version." She meets my eyes in the mirror and lowers her voice to a theatrical whisper. "I meant sex."

I chuckle. "I'm not going to have sex with Chadwick. It's more than enough that you're practically forcing me to go to his party."

"Well, Brett is spending the night, and I don't want to worry about being loud." She smiles mischievously. "Anyway, we both know that if I don't force you, you'll just sit in your room pining for you-know-who."

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I shake my head. "I don't pine, and you can say his name."
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"I know I can, I just wish you would forget it." She sticks another pin in my hair. "Forever."

"His name is Jack Weyland," I say stubbornly.

She rolls her eyes. "And he's an asshole."

"He's not."

"Is too."

We both laugh, reminded of when we were children. We practically grew up together, and have been inseparable our whole lives.

Her laughter ends in a small chuckle. "I don't know about you, but when a guy asks you out, leads you on, spends two months making you fall in love with him, and then when you finally tell him how you feel, he tells you that he loves you too, but...what were the exact words again?"

I don't reply. I don't want to remember. Sometimes, it's still too painful to think about.

Laurie is right—I spend way too much time thinking about Jack Weyland, the most renowned features writer at Gilt Traveler, a world-famous adventure traveler, and the man I've been in love with, silently and unrequitedly, for the last two years.

Immediately after college, I got a job at Gilt Traveler, one of the many publications owned by Gilt Magazines. I fell for Jack on my first day in the building post-interview when he walked past me in the lobby. I was starting as an assistant to Mark Willis, the senior features editor, and was on my way to the elevators when a tall, dark-haired, confidently handsome guy sauntered toward me, making me stare. He winked at me, and I almost tripped in my three-inch heels.

I didn't know who he was at the time, but I found out soon enough. By some divine providence, he also worked at Gilt Traveler. He was a gifted writer, good-looking, charming, and nothing like the guys I'd known in college. He asked me to dinner, making me the envy of all the girls at Gilt, because he had never dated anyone from the office.

It was magical—or so I thought. By the end of the week, I was sleeping with him. Before long, I knew I was falling in love with him. Stupidly, I told him how I felt, and he responded by telling me I was sweet and he loved me too, but that he could never commit to any one woman and would only hurt me in the long run if he tried.

"I mean it when I say I love you," he said earnestly, with the passionate expression that

had always made me feel as if I was the most special person in the world to him. "It would mean a lot to me if we could be friends after this."

Laurie is still waiting for me to respond. I close my eyes, trying to block out the sad memory. "He said he can't commit to just one woman."

"That," Laurie says. "When a guy does that, he's an asshole, and you don't stay friends with him for any reason. You wouldn't even be going to Chadwick's party tonight if Jack was in town to say 'Hey Rachel, why don't we go hang out at this-or-that café. I'll be so charming and funny while I take pleasure in the fact that in just two months with me, I made you incapable of falling for anyone else."

We've had this fight a couple times, the one where she tells me how unhealthy my friendship with Jack is for me and I try to defend Jack and the fact that two years after he broke my heart, I'm still in love with him.

When I don't reply, Laurie—uncharacteristically—lets the matter rest. She sticks one final pin in my hair and steps back, looking at her handiwork. Most of my hair is held up in an up-do that's intentionally messy but stylish, with a few strands framing my face. It's lovely.

I meet Laurie's eyes in the mirror and smile my appreciation. "Thanks."

She smiles back. "No biggie. Now go to that party and have fun." She winks. "In case you change your mind and decide to rock Chadwick's world, I left a present in your purse."

Eyeing her suspiciously, I go to my bed and pick up the black clutch, opening it and rolling my eyes at the 'present'.

"I definitely won't need these," I say with a laugh.

Laurie shrugs. "The night's not over yet. Allow me some hope."

* * *

LESS than an hour later, I'm in front of the Oyster Room, an exclusive restaurant and bar on the second floor of the Swanson Court Hotel. From the exterior, it's impossible to guess that there's a party going on inside.

Pausing in the corridor outside the doors, I catch my reflection in the glass and thank my stars for Laurie. She also helped pick out my clothes: a dark green dress the same color as my eyes. It has a suggestive décolletage and a hemline that ends just above my knees, paired with black heels that add four inches to my modest five-foot-five frame.

Satisfied that nothing is out of place, I push open the doors and step into a quiet anteroom

occupied by a smiling hostess, who directs me to another set of doors that open directly into the restaurant. Inside, the party is in full swing, seemingly containing all the stylish, artsy, and creative young people in New York City. That's not surprising—Chadwick Black, the celebrant, is an award-winning photographer who sometimes does work for Gilt Traveler.

From the entrance, I glimpse a few people from the office and then Chadwick across the room, whispering something to an impossibly slender blonde who's giggling at whatever he's saying. Typical Chadwick. He loves to flirt, and he's been trying very good-naturedly to get into my pants for ages. I take a glass of champagne from a passing waiter, my eyes still on Chadwick. He's good-looking—very good-looking—with long brown hair, caramel eyes, and a charming smile that gives him the appearance of being the harmless, friendly-yet-incredibly-hot guy next door. I know better. His love for women is generous, nondiscriminatory, and definitely not monogamous.

He looks up from the blonde's ear and notices me. Grinning, he excuses himself and comes over. "Rachel honey," he exclaims above the loud pop music then kisses me on both cheeks before leaning back to look at me. "You look stunning."

"So do you," I reply, dodging a second round of kisses. "Great party."

"I know, right?" He takes my hand, and there's a flash as someone takes a picture. I don't have as much social clout as some of the other girls at Gilt, so I'm not worried that my picture will appear in any of the fashion or gossip columns.

Chadwick is still talking. "I have great friends who realize there's nothing more important than celebrating the fact that twenty-eight years ago, I came into this world for the benefit of women everywhere," he proclaims.

I chuckle. "You're so full of it."

"Yeah," he replies with a charming grin, "but you love me."

"I do."

"Then why won't you let me show you just how crazy I am about you?"

I swat him on the arm. "Because I love myself too much."

He sighs exaggeratedly. "Come on then. Let's introduce you to some of my friends." Pulling me across the room, he leads me over to a group of people talking and laughing over drinks and finger foods.

"Guys, this is Rachel," Chadwick announces, "into whose panties I'm trying to get." He

winks at me, unrepentant, as his friends hoot.

Someone pulls at his sleeve and whispers something in his ear. "I'll be right back," he tells me before leaving to take care of whatever he's needed for.

One of the friends, a guy with messy brown hair and an unshaven face, tells me his name in a crisp British accent. He also introduces the rest of the group. There's a painter, a curvy brunette who works at a tabloid, a food critic, and the typical blend of writers, artists, and other creative types. "We mostly went to college with Chad," British guy says. "How do you know him?"

"He does some work for us...for the magazine where I work."

"Which magazine?" The question comes from the painter, a petite woman with a pixie cut.

"Gilt Traveler," I reply.

"That's a good one." The tabloid writer, I think her name is Annabel, seems impressed. "What do you do?"

"I'm a features associate," I tell them. It's the official title for my real job, which is to write the tiny little articles the real features writers can't be bothered with."

"Sounds like a nice gig," someone says.

"Yeah, it is," I agree with a shrug.

"I can't wait for the moment when a bikini-clad model pops out of a cake," British guy declares, finishing his drink and immediately picking up another from a passing tray.

"Is that going to happen?" I ask, interested. I've never seen anything like that outside of the movies.

"Not likely. It's not a frat party." He sounds wistful.

Chadwick returns. "So have you guys convinced Rachel I'm worth at least a night of her time?"

"Are you?" one of the women says, tossing her hair. "Not from what I remember."

The rest of the group bursts into laughter, and I join them. Chadwick tries to look annoyed but fails.

"Chadwick, darling!" The soft voice comes from across the room, and we all look in that direction. The speaker is a vaguely familiar woman, tall and slender with a wild mass of dark blonde hair and mile-long legs shown off in a tight jumpsuit.

"Here comes Claudia," I hear someone say.

But I'm not listening. My heart is hammering, my eyes locked on the man standing beside the new arrival.

Jack Weyland.

What is he doing here? I think, panicked and elated at the same time. He's supposed to be in England, skydiving with Reese Fletcher, the sixty-year-old electronics billionaire daredevil. We spoke on the phone only a few days ago, and he didn't mention anything about returning to New York.

Yet here he is, with the most beautiful woman at the party, no less.

He hasn't seen me yet, so I have time to look at him. He's standing back, watching his date as she throws herself into Chadwick's arms, his expression that irresistible combination of boredom and mystery that only some guys can pull off. His dark hair is short at the sides and back, longer in front, with an appealing forelock falling onto his forehead. His body—perfect in a stylish shirt and dark pants—is fit and athletic. My heart catches in my throat, filling with the familiar, bittersweet ache I feel whenever I see him.

"Who's her companion?" Annabel asks.

"That's Jack Weyland," British guy supplies. "Now there's a guy who suffers from wanderlust. He's been all over the world. There was a three-episode special of his experience at the Spanish bullfights early this year. Never gave a damn before, but now I want to go to Spain." He stops his narrative to look at me. "He writes for Gilt too, so you should know him."

"Yes," I say quietly, still looking at Jack. Sometimes, like now, I still question why I agreed to stay friends. At the time, I thought that was what it meant to be sophisticated, to be able to act as if I didn't care, even when my heart was shattered. I've paid a high price for that sophistication in the last two years, smiling on the outside but dying inside while he went from assignment to assignment, writing magnificent articles, appearing on TV, and having affairs with women from all over the world.

He still hasn't seen me. His eyes are on his date, and I don't blame him. By now, I've placed her face. She's a famous British model, and she's beautiful. Exactly his type.

"Chadwick photographed Claudia for some rodeo campaign back when they were both beginners," British guy is saying. "Made her famous as the 'risk-taking' model to watch back then. I think she's the only woman he never tries to sleep with—no offense to you, of course."

"None taken," I reply distractedly. I've already forgotten about Chadwick. I look from Jack

to Claudia. She's only the latest in a long line of women he's dated over the years. With each one, it becomes more and more unlikely that one day he'll realize that maybe, just maybe his feelings for me are more than those of just friendship.

"If Chadwick is trying to sleep with her, he's in for a huge disappointment," Annabel says.

"I heard she got engaged to some writer, maybe this hunk she came in with."

I take a sharp breath, my ears burning at the word *engaged*. At that moment, Jack sees me. There's a brief flash of surprise in his eyes, then he smiles and my whole body fills with longing.

"Yup, he's the one." One of the women holds up her phone, which has a popular gossip site open on the browser. I force myself not to look at the headline or the pictures.

Claudia is busy introducing Jack and Chadwick, and as I watch, Chadwick starts to lead them both toward us.

"I'm going to go to the bathroom," I say to no one in particular. Finding a nearby table to place my champagne flute, I turn my back on all of them and find an exit. Outside the restaurant, I lean on the railing, breathing in cool, filtered air as I try to regain my composure. I let my eyes travel from the crystal chandelier hanging from about a floor above, down to the magnificent entrance lobby on the ground floor. It's a beautiful hotel, with classic architecture and evidence of careful, unstinting maintenance—too bad my first visit has been spoiled by having to watch the man I love with yet another woman.

I take a deep breath and start for the elevator, knowing I don't want to go back inside and see Jack with his beautiful date again. I'll have to apologize to Chadwick later, but I doubt he'll mind too much. There're probably one or two women already waiting to go home with him.

"Rachel."

Jack's voice stops me in my tracks. I turn around, trying to control the intense longing that fills me as my eyes land on him. "Hi Jack." I force a smile. "Didn't know you were back."

He shrugs. "It was kind of sudden." His gray eyes, travel over my dress then come back to settle on my face. "You look incredible."

"Thanks."

There's an awkward silence. Usually, we have so much to talk about. By now, I'd be quizzing him about his trip, about skydiving with Reese Fletcher, and he would be giving me his typical funny answers—but not today. Does he have any idea how I'm feeling? Is he aware of how much being his friend has cost me these two years? How painful it is for me whenever I see

him with other women?

I doubt it. After he rejected me, I became much better at hiding my feelings.

"It's nice to see you," he says, moving closer. His lips curve in a small, familiar smile. "I wasn't expecting you to be here, but I'm glad you are. Don't tell me you're leaving?"

"I... Yes I am, actually."

"That's a shame." He looks disappointed, and for a moment, I imagine that maybe he was looking forward to spending time with me. That hope goes out the window with his next words. "You didn't meet Claudia."

Claudia Sever, the model he came with. The void in my stomach widens. "Is it true?" I ask. "Are you engaged?"

He smiles. "It's crazy, isn't it? Who would have thought I'd ever settle down?"

"Yes," I agree, my heart breaking. "Who would have thought?"

The silence stretches again. I'm supposed to wish him happiness, like a good friend would do, but I can't bring myself to say the words, not when I was still holding on to the hope that when he finally took that step, it would be with me.

I force a small laugh, and even to me it sounds fake and sad. "So what happened? You told me you could never settle down with any one woman."

He frowns. "That was a long time ago."

My eyes cloud. It's hard to understand how your feelings for someone can be everything to you, yet nothing to them. "Sometimes it still hurts like it was yesterday," I say softly.

"Rachel..." He closes the distance between us and places comforting hands on my shoulders. "You know I do love you."

The words come out of his mouth so easily, words that in other circumstances would mean the world to me.

"Then why..." I stop before I make a total fool of myself. Why can't we be together? Why do you keep breaking my heart?

"Rachel," he says firmly, "we're friends. You should be happy for me."

I push away from him, letting his hands fall from my shoulders. "We were more than friends, and it was good. It was wonderful. It was the best thing that ever happened to me." I stop talking, seeing the situation for what it really is - me, yet again throwing myself at a man who has made it clear that he doesn't want me.

His silence adds to my shame. I close my eyes. "I wish you all the best," I murmur before turning away and hurrying toward the elevators. I can feel tears stinging at my eyes, and I blink furiously to keep them from falling.

God! I should have thrown his friendship in his face when I had the chance.

Laurie tried to tell me, so many times. "He knows you're in love with him, and he wants to keep you that way, so you'll always be there. It's an ego thing. As long as you let him, you're going to be stuck in the same place while he chases the women who present a real challenge."

I didn't listen. I was too eager, too willing to take the little Jack offered. I thought if we spent time together as friends, he would surely see that we were meant to be more than that.

How pathetic!

The elevator doors slide open, and luckily, the car is empty. I step inside and press the button for the ground floor, unable to control the tears gathering as the doors swish closed again.

The ride is short. After only a few seconds, the elevator stops on the ground floor. By then, my face is wet with tears, and a glance at my reflection in the mirrored walls tells me I'm not fit to walk into the lobby. I dab at the mascara smudges on my bottom lid and without looking, I press a button to send the elevator back up. Hopefully, the ride up and back down again will give me some time alone to repair the damage Jack has done, both to my face and my heart.

* * *

BY the time the elevator stops at the top floor and beeps, my face is under control again. Now I just want to go home and forget everything about tonight—not that it will be easy. I'll still have to face Jack at work, and I have no idea how I'm going to do that. I sigh. No matter what happens, I'm so done being his go-to companion.

I hear another beep and realize a small box on the elevator panel is prompting me for a code. I frown. At the top of the panel, the button marked 'PH' is glowing. I'm on the penthouse floor, and the elevator probably needs a code to open the doors. I don't have a code, obviously, so I pause, wondering what to do.

I didn't even realize I pressed the button for the penthouse. I just wanted time to fix my face. I press the button for the ground floor, hoping that will work. The prompt for the code beeps again.

Okay, so what am I supposed to do now? There must be an emergency button somewhere. I'm searching along the panel when suddenly, the doors to the elevator slide open.

And my breath stops.

Something happens. Either the earth drops, or it suddenly stops spinning. I feel unbalanced, as if I'm going to lose my footing. My hand finds the smooth metal handrail inside the elevator, and I lean on it for support while I stare at the Greek god standing on the other side of the open doors.

There's no other way to describe him. He's tall, at least a head taller than me, with long legs, lean hips, and broad shoulders shown off in a perfectly tailored dark gray suit paired with a snowy white shirt. There's no tie, and the top button of his shirt is open, exposing his throat and a little hint of well-muscled chest.

Dark gold hair frames his face. It's wavy and just long enough to tease his collar, with a few bright strands highlighting the dark waves. And his face! It makes me unable to remember what exactly I'm doing in the elevator. Dark winged brows, eyes a deep cerulean blue, and a Greek nose, slim and pointed like an arrowhead. His lips are full and sensual, and for some reason, they make me start to think of whispers, kisses, and those same lips tracing a path on my heated skin.

I stare, lost in the glittering depths of his eyes, and unable to tear mine away. Strangely, it seems as if everything that's happened before this moment has somehow lost all importance. As if he can feel it too, his brow knits, a puzzled expression entering the eyes that seem to be stripping me and looking into the very depths of my soul. At that moment, it feels as if I know him...as if I've known him all my life.

I step back, my fingers curving around the handrail and holding on. Finally regaining the use of my lungs, I take a long breath, unsuccessfully trying to dispel the effect his undeniable masculine sensuality is having on me. It doesn't help that he's still looking at me, his eyes traveling up and down my body as if he knows exactly what he's going to do with it.

I close my eyes, trying to arrange my thoughts and ignore all the carnal images that have taken over my brain. Okay, so he's probably the owner of the apartment, the man with the passcode. He looks as if he was on his way out. He must have opened the elevator from inside and is probably surprised to find me right outside his apartment, staring at him as if I've never seen a man before.

"Good evening," I start, trying to find the words to explain why I'm here.

There's only a small flicker of his eyes to show he heard me. He considers me for a few

more moments, and I wonder if he's going to acknowledge my words at all. Then one of his perfect eyebrows arches up.

"Well," he says finally, in a voice that's almost whispery soft, yet deep, raspy, and so incredibly sensual, it sends shivers down my spine. "You're not what I'd have chosen, but you'll do."

Chapter 2

I don't understand a word he just said, but that might be due to the fact that my brain is still discombobulated by his blatant sexiness. I watch as he steps back and inclines his head in a gesture that tells me he wants me to come inside the apartment.

"Come in."

I'm already stepping into the foyer before I wake up from the effects of his voice. I stop and frown at him. What does he mean 'I'll do?'

"Um..." I start, looking for words. What will I say? I don't know who you think I am, but I was just hiding in the elevator while trying to repair the damage to my makeup from crying over a guy who doesn't give a rat's ass about me, and I ended up in front of your apartment. Now if you don't mind, I'd like to... I hesitate. What exactly do I want to do?

I don't want to leave, that's for sure. There's something dreamy about being ushered into a million-dollar luxury apartment by a man who looks as if he just stepped out of a 'sexiest man alive' photo-shoot. He thinks I'll do? For what exactly? I want to know, and somewhere in a shameless part of me, I desperately hope I don't disappoint him.

He sees my hesitation. "Come in," he repeats in that mesmerizing voice. "I won't bite." There's a short pause. "Unless you want me to."

There's suddenly a weird, achy feeling low in my stomach. I pull in a gulp of air, my legs propelling me into the dimly lit foyer. He clearly thinks I'm someone else, but whoever it is, I'm more than ready to play the part, at least for now.

He leads the way through the foyer into a large living room with floor-to-ceiling windows that look out onto the city. As he walks, he shrugs off his jacket, dropping it carelessly on a sofa to join a discarded tie. "Have a seat," he says, turning back to look at me. Without the jacket, his broad shoulders, narrow waist, slim hips, and the hard muscles beneath his shirt are obvious—too obvious.

"Would you like a drink?" he asks.

It takes a moment for me to tear my mind from thoughts of his body. "Um..."

"Brandy, water, wine...?"

"Brandy," I tell him.

He gives me a small nod then walks across the living room to a bar by the side, where he pours two glasses then adds ice cubes. I manage to tear my eyes from his body so I can look around my surroundings. The room is tastefully furnished, the classic architecture complemented by a décor that's luxurious without ostentation. It feels like a home, a place you expect a family to live.

I wonder if he's married.

Well, it's not as if I'm planning to sleep with him, I tell myself, continuing my admiration of the room. Some of the furniture are classic antique pieces, and the walls are covered in some sort of textured finish. Paintings and pictures hang here and there. There's a family portrait featuring a couple that's obviously his parents, based on his resemblance to the man in the picture, and two children, boys.

He's clearly the older one of the boys. It's the same perfect face, only younger. Next to the portrait, there's a large black and white original of a beautiful ballerina, her posture graceful as she leaps through the air. It's the same woman in the family portrait, his mother apparently. At the bottom of the frame, I recognize the Andrew Marvell quote "A hundred years should go to praise thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze."

"Here." I turn away from the image as that soft raspy voice pours over me again, making me shiver. He sounds like temptation, and I cannot imagine any woman who wouldn't agree to any suggestion made in that voice.

He hands me the drink, his eyes on my face, and I do my best to hold my hand steady when I take the glass from him. I almost fail when his warm fingers brush mine. It's just a tiny touch, but I feel it everywhere, from my fingers to my thighs.

Still watching me, he drops gracefully beside me on the sofa. I can't tear my eyes away from him. I feel almost as if I can look at him forever.

"You like ballet?"

"Hmm." I'm so lost in staring at him that it takes a while for his words to register.

He gestures at the print of the ballerina. "You seemed interested in the picture."

"I like ballet as much as any little girl who ever wanted to wear a tutu." I laugh nervously. Both Laurie and I attended classes, but I stopped only after a few months. I preferred to read, even then. "But I was looking at the quote in the picture," I continue. "It's from one of my

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