

Prologue

Kelly

I'm shaking as I leave him, still in shock over what just happened. I'm pretty drunk and have no idea where I'm going or how I'm going to get there. A moment later, his Jeep peels out of the parking lot and speeds down the street.

I shake my head, pull out my cell phone, and make a call. "Can you come get me?" I ask.

My friend Sol sounds like I woke her up, "Kelly? What's going on?" I'm probably the last person on Earth she was expecting to hear from this late. I'm sure she thought I was a booty call.

"I don't want to talk about it; I just need you to come pick me up," my voice starts to crack, and I'm afraid I might start crying.

"This is about that jackass, isn't it?" She sounds angry.

"Sol," I plead. "Please, just come get me," I say and give her the address.

I hang up the phone and sit on the curb. Fifteen minutes later, Sol pulls up with her hair in a do-rag and no makeup on. I realize I haven't seen her without makeup since 1995.

"Nice do-rag," I say.

She looks at me and smiles as she responds, "Get in, dumbass."

Kate

I haven't admitted to anyone that I've been stalking my ex-boyfriend. I know there's a chance I could get caught, but until then, it's my dirty little secret.

Tonight, I pull onto his street, turn my headlights off, and wait. A few minutes later, Jack's front door opens and he walks out. He's dressed in a light blue, button-down shirt and black slacks.

Is that the shirt I bought for him last Christmas?

I reach under my seat for my binoculars so I can take a closer look. I bought them at Sharper Image for their 140x zoom feature. (You can never have too much zoom!) I adjust the lenses and zoom in on his front pocket to see if his initials are monogrammed on it. Yep—there they are—JAC. It's the one I custom-ordered from Italy last year. Just seeing him wearing it makes me miss him even more.

I let out a sigh of relief. *Well, at least he's alone.* My chest tightens, and my heart starts pounding as I see a beautiful woman walk out behind him. She's tall and exotic-looking with long, dark hair. She's the type of girl I'd always imagined him with. She looks like she just stepped off the runway, and I instantly feel ugly.

Damn that Amazon woman!

He touches the small of her back as he helps her inside his black Cadillac Escalade. He's looking at her like she's the most beautiful girl on the planet, and I realize I've never seen that look before.

Damn Amazon gets my look!

I slump down in my seat so they can't see me as they drive by. I wonder, where is he taking her? I should follow them! But what if Jack sees me in the rear-view mirror? How will I explain myself? I'm starting to feel panicked as his SUV gets farther and farther down the road. I'm going to lose him—again. What's the harm in following him?

It can't be as bad as breaking into his email account, which I was doing up until he finally changed the password last week. I turn my car around and start tailing Jack and his Amazon. I know that I've hit an all-time low. But I can't seem to stop my foot from pressing the gas pedal, my arms from steering my car in the exact same direction as his.

I decide to call my sister, Kelly, hoping that just maybe she'll tell me that what I'm doing is okay. Just maybe she'll understand why I'm doing this, why I still need answers.

"You're doing what?" Kelly yells into the phone.

"I'm sort of following him," I mumble softly.

"Pull your car over immediately and park. You're in no mental condition to drive," she says sternly, making me feel like a naughty child.

"But..."

"Do it now!"

"But, Kelly, you need to listen to me. I'm trying to understand how he's moved on so quickly and dating already. If I watch him, maybe..."

Kelly interrupts me, "Kate, get a grip. You're stalking him. You've crossed the line!"

I reluctantly pull over, and as Jack's taillights fade into the distance, I start to cry.

What does the Amazon have that I don't have? Why wasn't I good enough for him?

"Kate, you've got to let him go. It's been how many months now? You have to accept that he's moved on. If you continue to pine after him, you'll miss out on the man you're really supposed to be with. I'm sorry, but Jack is not the one, and someday you're going to be able to see that."

"You make it sound so simple, like I can just snap my fingers and magically be over him. You have no idea how rejected I feel. You have no idea what I'm going through. I'm sorry, but I can't talk to you anymore."

"Did you pull over?"

I hang up without answering her. I slump down in my seat and replay the day we broke up, three months, sixteen days, and eight hours ago.

Jack ended the relationship at my Lasik eye surgery appointment. For some reason he thought it would be acceptable to dump me right after hot lasers seared through my eyeballs.

“You’re going to look darn cute with these goggles on!” Jenny the technician giggled, and I forced myself to laugh with her.

I glanced over at Jack. He was looking out the window, and I could tell by the way he was shifting his weight from foot to foot, he had something on his mind. He was probably thinking about the fact that he’d rather be at work than with me.

“I’m sure your boyfriend will love your new look too!” Jenny said as she swung the goggles in the air. It was obvious she was expecting Jack to turn around and acknowledge her because she lingered in the room awkwardly.

Jack, surely sensing he’d better humor her or his perfect boyfriend façade would be foiled, turned and smiled at Jenny.

She blushed slightly, mumbled something about checking a chart, and hurried off. Jack definitely had a way with women. They always seemed to melt in his presence because his good looks were straight out of the movies. He was tall, dark, and handsome with beautiful green eyes and dimples that made you want to cry. (Trust me, I know.) He was the type of guy that could make you fall in love with him and then break your heart in the same day. (Trust me, I know.)

As soon as Jenny left the room, Jack turned his back to me and looked out the window again. He wasn’t even attempting to hide his irritation about being there. I practically begged him to bring me to this appointment, and he’d been acting cold and distant ever since. I shivered slightly as I remembered trying to use sex as a way to get him to take me to the appointment. I’d straddled him in his chair and made an innuendo about repaying him. He seemed mildly interested at that moment, but then pushed me off him and said he had work to do.

I slumped down in my chair, feeling the Valium start to kick in. I tried to remember the last time we’d had sex, but I couldn’t. I didn’t even know the last time we’d kissed. I watched Jack as he typed an email on his Blackberry. He

hadn't spoken a word to me since Jenny left the room. I tried to ease the tension and test the waters.

"Jack, thank you for bringing me here today."

He didn't respond. Now he was reading an eye chart on the wall. I watched as he put his left hand over his left eye. And I had no idea if he was getting the answers correct because I couldn't see. But he sounded confident as he said, "D-E-F-P-O-T-E-C."

"Jack, honey, did you hear me?"

He finally turned around and sat in the chair next to me. He had a serious expression on his face.

"Listen, Kate," he started to say something, but Jenny walked in and interrupted him.

"Okay, sweetie, it's time to go fix your eyes!" she sang.

Did this girl just pop a few Valiums herself?

I got up to follow Jenny out of the room. Was Jack going to come with me?

It was as if Jenny read my mind. "Are you going to come in and hold her hand?" she asked him. It was clear by the way she was looking at us that she thought we were a couple who were very much in love. She must have been pretty clueless because even a two-year-old could've sensed the tension between us.

"She's a tough girl. She doesn't need me," he answered indifferently. "It's only four minutes an eye, right?" he asked as he checked his Blackberry again.

"That's right!" Jenny said.

"Well, I'll be right here when she gets out."

As Jenny led me away, Jack called after her, "Is it okay to use cell phones in here?"

I rolled my blurry eyes as she nodded in agreement; I was sure he was going to call his office. About ten minutes later, the procedure was done, and Jenny guided me back to the waiting area.

“Can you see me? How many fingers am I holding up?” Jack said as he waved his hand back and forth in front of my face.

Yes, I can see you, probably more clearly than ever before.

“Nice goggles!” he quipped, in his most playful, ‘I want this technician to think I love this girl unconditionally’ kind of way.

Clearly buying his bullshit, Jenny said, “I told you she’d look cute!” Then she asked me if I wanted some apple juice, and I nodded.

“Please keep your eyes shut, Kate,” she said over her shoulder as she walked away.

Jack had been standing but when she left the room, he sat on the couch next to me. “Listen, Kate, I started to say something before you went into surgery, and I’d like to talk to you about it now.”

I’m sitting here high on Valium, wearing funky black goggles with my eyes squeezed shut, but hell, no time like the present, right?

When I didn’t say anything, he continued, “This whole Lasik eye surgery thing really got me thinking about us and our future.” Then, probably for dramatic effect, he paused and grabbed my hand. “Surgery is a major thing, and I should *want* to take you to it, and I should *want* to take care of you after it. It’s not that I don’t care deeply for you, because I do, but this wasn’t somewhere I *wanted* to be today.”

I sat there with my eyes closed and didn’t say a word. What was I supposed to say to that?

“Listen, you’re truly an amazing girl, but you’re just not someone I can marry.”

Before I could answer, I heard Jenny skip into the room. “Here’s your apple juice!” she exclaimed. “You can open your eyes for a moment to take a drink.”

As I took a sip, I glanced over at Jack. The look on his face was crystal clear. Relief.

“You know I love you,” I said to him in my Valium haze.

“I care very deeply for you, too,” he said as he patted my arm dismissively. “I called Kelly while you were in your surgery, and she’s going to be here in a few minutes to drive you home.”

“So that’s it?” I said to him.

“Yeah, that’s it. It’s over,” he replied. “Although, I definitely think we should remain friends.” Then he gave me an awkward hug and walked out of the room without looking back.

I pull down the rear-view mirror and frown at my splotchy face and running nose. I can never relive the day Jack dumped me without crying. The only thing I can find to blow my nose with is a sock in my backseat, but I don’t care. I have no one in my life who will see my disgusting snot sock anyway. Sadly, this thought makes me cry harder. As I turn on my car and start driving slowly home, I wonder if I’ll ever fall in love again.