



# Cake

A Bitterroot Novella



A sexy romance about two women,  
one inconvenient wedding,  
and a shared love of cake.

*Joe Belle*

# CHAPTER 1

Kelly sipped her coffee. She was on her second cup, and if her brother, David, didn't arrive soon, she was going to take off. She'd left her employees in the middle of prep for three separate orders to meet with him, and she grew more anxious with each minute she was away. If it wasn't so unusual for David to call her up in the middle of the week and invite her to meet, she would have said no. The ten-year difference in their ages meant they were more like polite acquaintances than siblings.

"Another refill?" The waitress gave her a flirty little smile, something she'd been doing more and more lately. If it continued, Kelly might ask her out.

Kelly tipped her mug and checked the level of her coffee. She was down to the dregs at the bottom, but it was a strong brew. If she indulged in another cup, she'd be all jittery at work for the rest of the day. She shook her head. "Maybe just a glass of water?"

A moment later, David burst through the door. His tie was askew, and he straightened it as he scanned the diner for her. She raised her hand in an almost-wave to get his attention. He nodded perfunctorily and made his way to her table.

"Hi," David said as he slid into the seat opposite her. "Sorry I'm late."

"You're just in time. I was about to leave."

David was a mystery to Kelly. At forty-two, he had a well-established career selling insurance with their father at Miller and Son, but otherwise acted like he was still in his twenties. He lived in the studio apartment above their parents' garage, rode a bike everywhere instead of driving a car, and their mom still did his laundry.

"Thanks for waiting. Really." David signaled the waitress for a cup of coffee.

"Sure. What's going on?" Kelly scratched at the chipped finish of the tabletop. "You said you have news."

"Yeah, right." David nodded with an exaggerated swooping dip of his head. "I met someone."

"Oh-kay." Kelly drew the word out. David dated a lot, so this didn't really qualify as news. For a guy who didn't fold his own underwear, he managed to pick up some beautiful women. "Is that the only reason you called me?"

"Nope," David said with a popping P sound at the end that made Kelly want to pop him.

"David, I have work..."

David's chest puffed up and he wiggled in his seat like an excited puppy. "I'm getting married."

Kelly stared at him and waited. Clearly, this was a joke. After several moments of him staring back at her expectantly, she took a deep breath and said, "Huh?" It wasn't her best comeback, but married? Seriously?

"I'm. Getting. Married." He stared at her expectantly.

"I don't understand." Obviously, she knew what he meant. She just didn't think he really meant it. The last time she talked with him, he wasn't even dating seriously, never mind getting married seriously. "You're doing what?"

“Kelly.” David shook his head, still smiling like a lunatic. “You’ve done lots of cakes. You know what I’m talking about.”

Kelly blinked. “Yes, I have.” She spoke slowly, with a carefully neutral tone as she tried to figure out what the hell game he was playing. “Congratulations?”

The waitress brought David’s coffee and refilled Kelly’s water, and Kelly decided to leave her a huge tip because the timing gave her a chance to regroup. Even though she thought David was insane—like a candidate for committal to an asylum—she needed to muster up some enthusiasm for his news. She smiled and nodded to encourage him to continue, but she felt lukewarm at best.

“Her name is Brianna, but she goes by Bree for short. She’s twenty-eight and she’s a dancer.”

“A dancer?” Kelly purposely avoided her age. Brianna was fourteen years younger than David. With anyone else, Kelly might worry about what he saw in her. With David, though, she was more concerned about him being too immature rather than the other way around.

“Yes, she toured with the Russian Ballet and everything.”

Kelly looked at him, her lukewarmth turning to cold skepticism. David continued, unperturbed.

“She injured her knee a few years ago, and now she teaches. It’s adorable. She’s really tall and her students surround her like little, fluffy, pink ducklings.”

“Ducklings?” Nothing about this made sense. The conversation had started out absurd and was deteriorating rapidly.

“Yeah, that’s how we met, actually. Feeding the ducks.”

“You were feeding ducks?”

“No. Of course I wasn’t.” David looked at her like she was nuts. “Bree was feeding them. I was on one of those long rides that I take, you know? On the return trip, I detoured through her town for food and just to look around because that’s the whole point of those rides, to see something new. Anyway, I saw her and just had to stop and say hello. She’s beautiful, Kelly. Really beautiful.” David’s voice adopted a softness that she’d never heard from him before, and she began to think this whole getting married thing was more than a prank.

She decided to play along. “So, when’s the big day?”

“In three weeks at Saint Vincent’s.”

Kelly spluttered. She’d taken a sip of water just as David answered, and things involving cold liquid and her windpipe went haywire. “Three weeks?” Apparently, this duck-feeding-turned-true-love was for real. “Seriously?”

“As a heart attack. She’s the one, Kel.”

“Have you told Mom and Dad?” Kelly used her parents as a barometer for all things David related. He only told them about the goings-on in his life when he needed money. Or when something was really, *really* important. As far as she knew, he hadn’t taken a girlfriend home to meet them since his senior year in college.

“I’m meeting them for lunch. I want to bring her for dinner this Sunday. Can you make it?”

Kelly nodded slowly. David had officially caught her off-guard, and she was a bit dazed with his news. She mentally reviewed her schedule. She had orders for Monday that she’d start prepping this weekend, but she could easily fit in a meal.

“There’s one other thing.” David started to shred his napkin, tearing it apart in strips until all that remained was a clump of crumpled confetti. He looked at her hopefully. “Will you make the cake?”

Ah, there it was. The reason David so urgently needed to see her was wedding cake, not a desire to bond with his sister. He was talking to her because neither of their parents was a baker. Still, she smiled and said the only thing she could. “I’d love to.”

\* \* \*

Elana shut down her laptop and slipped it into her messenger bag. Her good deed for the week was done and she couldn’t wait to return to her regularly scheduled life. Only sixteen more weeks of this bullshit left to go.

“Umm...” One of her students, a Latina with gorgeous long dark hair that made Elana wish she hadn’t cut hers a few weeks ago, fidgeted nervously next to her desk. Another woman waited a few steps away.

“Yes?” Elana arched her eyebrow. She’d done her time and now she wanted to get the hell out of here. Chatting with the locals was not a part of the deal.

The woman shifted her weight and glanced over her shoulder at her friend. Or maybe girlfriend? Whatever. After a moment, the woman sucked in a breath and got to the point. “You said you’re a life coach, right?”

Elana stopped fussing with the bag and focused on the conversation. Inmate 4723891, according to the label stitched to the woman’s shirt. Somewhere along the line, she’d done something that landed her here. At that point, she’d stopped being a person and became a number. “What’s your name?”

The woman smiled politely, but it was more a reflection of happy rather than the actual emotion. Elana decided then that she liked her. She'd felt like that, as if she'd forgotten how to make her emotions fit her expression, too many times in the past year. It was something they shared in common.

"Liz." She blew her bangs out of her eyes and huffed out an almost-sigh. "Am I right? Life coach?"

"Inmate." Karin, the guard responsible for escorting Elana to and from the lobby, stood just inside the open door. She folded her arms over her chest. "Time to wrap it up. You don't need to waste this woman's time."

Karin spoke in the modulated, emotionless voice that all the guards seemed to use, and Elana wondered if they taught that in guard school. If guard school was even a thing. Objectively, Karin was attractive, with tightly clipped hair, strong shoulders, and just the right amount of curve to her waist and hips. And they were definitely on the same team, so to speak. Any other time, Elana would have made a play for her. Hell, pre-Bree she would have laid odds on how quickly she could usher her into bed and how many fingers it would take to make her come.

Recently, though, since Bree left, all she had room for was the persistent ache in the middle of her chest. It was obnoxious, really, how much she let Bree dump her life on its head. She needed to pull herself together and get the hell over it already.

Yeah, right.

"I'm just asking a question." Liz didn't sound petulant, exactly, but there was a defiant edge to her tone. She

stared at Elana, almost as if she was daring Elana to stand up to Karin.

Elana's mouth curled into a half-smile without her meaning it to. Yep, she definitely liked Liz. To show that she wasn't in a hurry, she set her messenger bag on the floor and leaned one hip against the desk. "Yes, I'm a life coach." That was the most basic description of what she did, but it worked for this conversation. She tucked a loose strand from her bangs behind her ear where it belongs. "Why do you ask?"

Karin made a dissatisfied noise, but didn't interrupt.

Liz glanced at her friend again, who nodded encouragingly and smiled like a besotted fool. Christ, talk about a women-in-prison movie fantasy. Two attractive young woman meet behind bars and fall in love. Elana wondered how long that love would last when one of them got paroled.

"What does that mean, exactly?"

"What? Life coach?" Sure, Elana had to explain her job to people—like at every single family gathering when her Tia Midi said "I just don't understand" for the twentieth time—but Liz had such an earnest expression on her face. Elana wanted to make sure she answered properly.

"Yeah, life coach. They don't have those where I grew up."

"Are you sure?" Elana wasn't surprised that Liz hadn't heard the title "life coach" before. "You didn't have anyone in your neighborhood who everyone else looked to for advice?"

"Oh, you mean Señora Mendoza? She kept a pig, two goats, and a flock of chickens on the roof of our building.

Some city guy told her she had to get rid of them, so she butchered them all one day, and the super let her put all the meat in a giant freezer in the basement that some meth dealer left behind when she evicted him. You mean like that?”

Elana blinked. She had no idea where to even start with that answer. “Sure, I’m like Mrs. Mendoza. Only without the livestock.”

Liz nodded. “After the guy from the city came by to do his final inspection, she got new goats and chickens. No more pigs, though.”

Karin snorted.

“Why are you asking, Liz?” Somewhere around freezer, Elana’s interest in the conversation wavered. Now she wished she’d taken the out when Karin had offered it.

“Can you do that? For me, I mean?” Liz blurted out the words and, judging by the look on her face, wished she could pull them back in.

“Do what?”

“Coach me. I have plans. You know, for when I get out.” Liz smiled again, and this time the effect was dazzling. She reached for her friend’s hand. “We—Charlie and I—we have plans.”

Elana waited. There had to be more information. When Liz didn’t offer any further clarification, Elana cleared her throat and said, “Umm, I don’t know if that’s allowed.”

She had sixteen hours of community service left to complete over the next sixteen weeks, but she doubted the judge would approve private coaching as a way to pay off her debt to society. As it was, she alternated groups of inmates and wouldn’t see Liz for another two weeks.

“Oh.” Liz’s shoulders slumped. “Okay, well, thanks.” She turned to leave.

“But I can,” Elana said before she thought better of it, “tailor our group lessons to focus on life after Bitterroot.”

“Yeah?” Liz looked hopeful again. “You can do that?”

“Sure. And I’ll ask the warden if I can use a portion of my time to address individual questions.”

Okay, so that deviated from what the judge instructed her to do, but the look on Liz’s face reminded Elana of her baby sister. She’d never been able to tell her “no” either.

“Okay, that’s enough. Time for you two to let Ms. Verdad go.” Karin spoke in such a way that even Elana, who wasn’t in tune with the moods and tones of the guards, knew not to argue this time.

“Right, thanks,” the friend, Charlie, said. She guided Liz out of the room, still holding her hand.

“You ready?” Karin asked Elana.

Elana picked up her bag. “As I’ll ever be.”

She followed Karin through the hall and tried to admire the line of Karin’s body and her tight controlled movements, but her heart wasn’t in it. Finally, Elana gave up trying to find her inner perv and opted for almost-polite conversation instead. “So, you come here often?”

Yeah, it was a bad joke, but Karin laughed. “Ten hours a day, four days a week.”

After that, Elana had no idea what to say. God, she used to be good at this, chatting up women. Fucking self-confidence. There had to be some way to get it back. The possibility that Bree had ruined her forever was too much to even consider.

When they were almost to the checkout point, Karin asked, “Big plans for the weekend?”

“Sorta.” It was exactly the subject she’d been trying to avoid thinking about. “My ex is getting married.”

“Oh? Is that a good thing?”

“I’m sure she thinks it is.” Elana didn’t mention the groom, David. She didn’t feel like explaining *that* much.

“Sorry.” Karin smiled sympathetically and held the door open. “See you next week?”

“Right.” Elana let the door fall shut behind her and made her way through the parking lot to the bus stop. Big weekend plans, indeed.

## CHAPTER 2

The ambient noise that filled the air at Ball Crusher used to be comforting to Elana. It was an auditory reminder that she was in *her* place. Lately, though, post-Bree, the subtle noise of people playing pool mixed with the music and laughter coming from the makeshift dance floor only made her feel glaringly alone and naked in a crowd of people who were coupled up.

She needed to figure out where all the single lesbians hung out. How had she managed to lose track of vital information like that?

She sighed and signaled for another beer.

“That bad, huh?” The cute dyke on the barstool next to hers raised her pint in a symbolic toast. “I’ve been there.”

Elana evaluated the woman. She was a few years younger, with sexy, long dark hair that curled loosely at the ends, and when she smiled, it revealed a slight gap between her front teeth. Elana wasn’t sure how sexy the woman would be tomorrow, without the benefit of several beers and a pep-talk worthy of an after-school special, but she returned her smile anyway.

“I’m Elana.” She offered her hand just as the bartender brought her drink. “Can I get you another?”

“I’m Carla, by the way.” As the woman shook her hand, she also shook her head. “No, I’m sorry. Another time, perhaps. I’m meeting a friend tonight.”

*Of fucking course she was.*

“I understand.” Truthfully, Elana was meeting someone else, too, but she didn’t think Reagan, her best friend, would mind being ditched in favor of a hot chick who might be able to wake up her girlie parts.

Elana paid for her drink and, with a tilt of her head toward Carla, headed back to her table to wait for Reagan. There was no point in hanging at the bar if Carla’s answer was no. She wasn’t interested in making a new friend.

“Who was that?” Reagan met her halfway and pulled her into a brief, sideways hug.

Elana glanced over her shoulder to find Carla watching her closely. She shook her head. “Nobody.”

Reagan laughed. “There was a time when nobody was enough.”

“Yes.” Elana led Reagan to their table. Situated in the corner with a good view of both the entrance and the pool tables, their booth was large enough to seat four. Elana slid into one side with Reagan opposite her. She didn’t explain how nobody would ever be enough again. Reagan had heard it all before, and Elana wasn’t in the mood to be comforted.

Reagan stole a sip of Elana’s beer and casually asked, “What’s on your agenda for this weekend?”

Of course, Reagan already knew the answer. Or, rather, she knew enough to know she shouldn’t ask that question.

Elana looked at her sharply, but didn’t answer.

“Oh, come on, El. You can’t honestly think going is a good idea.”

On the contrary, Elana knew it would be absolute disaster. But that didn't mean she'd be able to stop herself. She sighed. "I know."

"But you're going anyway."

Elana shrugged. Rather than pursue a discussion they'd already had and would never agree on, Elana reclaimed her beer and took a healthy swig. She raised her bottle toward Reagan. "Do you want one?"

"Sure." Reagan gave her a crooked smile and took the drink from Elana. "Thanks."

It wasn't exactly what Elana meant, but she let it ride. If the price of Reagan dropping the subject of Bree's wedding was a half-empty pint of beer, Elana was okay with that.

\* \* \*

Kelly's goal for the next three hours was to keep her head down and her mouth shut. She didn't have to approve. She simply had to show up and smile when appropriate. The pew was harder than she remembered and she squirmed in place. Her mom shot her a look that made Kelly feel like she was seven and just got caught messing around during Sunday service.

"And then you'll step up to join David..." the priest said in a dull drone. Kelly's mood reflected his tone perfectly. They'd already gone through this part twice and Bree, for all her dancer's grace, couldn't remember the basic moves that would take her from single to married. Kelly thought they should take it as a sign from the Universe and call the whole thing off.

With a sigh, she shifted in her seat again. This time, David glared at her. "Come on, Kelly. Stop trying to ruin it."

Kelly rolled her eyes. Her brother was old enough to get married, just not old enough to keep from whining to get his way. Typical.

“I still don’t know why you refused to be in the wedding party.” Her mom took up the baton of harassing Kelly. “You would look so lovely in the bridesmaid’s dress.”

The actual bridesmaid, a vapid-looking gum-popper whose name Kelly couldn’t remember, preened.

“She’s right, pumpkin,” her dad said gently. He rarely raised his voice. “Your brother’s only getting hitched the once. You should be up there.”

Kelly crossed her arms over her chest. She’d already explained this at least twenty times since her brother announced his plans a few weeks ago. They’d managed to coordinate the ceremony with the ruthless efficiency of a shotgun wedding, but none of that changed one basic fact. Kelly didn’t know Brianna. Certainly not well enough to stand next to her as she recited her vows. Perhaps if David and Brianna had waited longer than twelve seconds to get married, Kelly would have had a chance to develop a relationship with her future sister-in-law. At this point, though, Kelly wasn’t even sure she wanted to. In the past hour, she’d gone from indifferent to borderline homicidal.

“We’ve gone over this.” Kelly kept her voice even, trying to sound as flat and lifeless as the priest. She came close. She decided not to mention the bit about not knowing—or liking—Brianna. Instead, she said, “I’ll be busy with the cake, remember?”

It wasn’t expressly true since they’d arranged for the caterer to pick the cake up the night before the wedding, but she wasn’t about to remind anyone of that little detail.

“If it’s so much trouble for you, you should have said no. We could have hired someone.” David stood to the right of the priest, arms crossed to mirror Kelly’s. Kelly smirked, but remained silent. The cake she made wasn’t something he could get at the local grocery for a few hundred dollars. That’s why he’d asked her. Finally, he looked away. His voice was much softer when he spoke again, this time to Brianna. “Let’s just get through this.”

Her mother left her position in the front pew and joined Kelly a few rows back. She sat next to her with a heavy sigh that put Kelly’s to shame. “Why can’t you be happy for your brother?”

Kelly wasn’t *unhappy* for him, exactly. She just didn’t see a happily-ever-after happening after they said their I dos. “Mom—”

“Stop. I’ve heard it all. None of it changes the fact that we’re here. Your brother has made his decision and he’s asked us to be a part of the moment. Nobody asked for your approval.”

“I don’t *know* her.” Kelly gave one last shot at explaining herself. Yes, she’d already said it. So many times the thought of saying it again made her temples throb. “Hell, *he* doesn’t know her. He didn’t even ask her to sign a pre-nup, for God’s sake.”

The priest made a sharp *tsk*-ing noise at her use of the Lord’s name, but it didn’t change Kelly’s thoughts on the matter. Not that she’d tell him, but she’d gotten up to much bigger sins in this building. A little taking the Lord’s name in vain wasn’t going to land her in hell any faster than making it to third base in the confessional booth with her ninth-grade girlfriend.

“Kelly Elizabeth Miller.” Her mother over-enunciated each name, clipping it off sharply at the end. “That is enough. You *will* be happy for your brother, starting now.”

Regardless of how absurd her mom’s words were, there was no point in fighting it. Kelly pulled her lips back in what she hoped was a convincing smile and said, “Yes, Mom. So happy.”

## CHAPTER 3

“This seat taken?” a woman asked as she scooped up Kelly’s program and purse and dumped them into her lap.

“No, please, feel free.” She opted for the polite answer, but added a touch of frost to her tone because it was more fun than just taking it.

The woman tilted her head and evaluated her. She gave a tight nod as she dropped into the seat she’d just cleared. “Thanks.” Then she stuck out her hand as though this qualified as a perfectly normal social interaction. “I’m Elana.”

Kelly turned and made a show of looking at all the available seating left in the church, then she smiled picture perfect and took Elana’s hand. Yeah, this woman was presumptuous, but with her dark hair and even darker eyes, she was also pretty damned attractive. Her hair was cut short, almost to the skin at the sides and back, but long enough to flop over her eyes in the front. It gave her a deliciously androgynous look that Kelly found incredibly tempting.

“Kelly, nice to meet you.”

Elana nodded and smirked in a way that made her look even sexier. “I’m pretty sure the pleasure is all mine.”

Kelly hummed, but didn’t really respond. Time would judge the accuracy of that statement, and she wasn’t in the mood to demure.

Elana brushed her hands over her shirt and adjusted her stylish black suspenders and matching tie. Not that she needed to do that. The shirt was a stark white, sleeveless tuxedo shirt that had clearly been starched and pressed to perfection. Elana carefully adjusted her hair, smoothing it into place with her bangs tucked behind one ear. When she settled, she leaned close to Kelly and said, “Friend of the groom?”

“In a manner of speaking, yes.” Most of the time, Kelly didn’t even like David, so saying they were friends was a bit of a stretch, one she wasn’t entirely comfortable with. Not that he was a bad guy. He just valued different things than Kelly did. And, even though Kelly was here in support of his wedding—an affair that took them all by surprise—she doubted she could say the same of him if their roles were reversed.

Elana arched an eyebrow and almost smiled. “Interesting.”

“David is my brother,” Kelly clarified. “Are you friends?”  
“No. I’m here for Brianna.”

Kelly nodded and studied Elana a little closer. Brianna was exactly the kind of girl Kelly would have been friends with in high school. But now, ten years later? She didn’t have anything in common with her. She was a little too... *everything*...for Kelly’s tastes. In other words, she and David were perfectly matched. Not that they should be getting married ten minutes after meeting, but Kelly’s protests had been shot down. Now all she had to do was smile and nod and pretend to be supportive.

“How do you know Brianna? Are you friends?”

“In a manner of speaking, yes.” Elana echoed Kelly’s answer back at her, and Kelly smiled. Elana was cheeky

and *that* worked for Kelly as well. Elana was pushing all of Kelly's buttons. Flirting or not, so far, Elana was perfect.

"Oh?"

"She's my ex-girlfriend."

Kelly almost laughed, but managed to hold it in. Finally, something to hold against Elana beyond just poor manners. She remembered, vaguely, Brianna telling her about a beautiful, sexy ex-girlfriend. She wished now that she'd paid closer attention. At the time, however, she'd assumed that Brianna was doing the thing that all straight people do where they tell her a story to assure her that they were "down with the gays" or whatever. She usually blocked those stories out because they were more irritating than anything, and Brianna wasn't exactly a captivating storyteller.

"Her ex? Does she know you're here?"

Elana shrugged. "She sent me the invitation." She wrinkled her nose a bit. "Of course, it had a Care Bear sticker where the stamp normally goes, so..."

Kelly gave in and laughed at that. She didn't know Brianna well, but it wasn't surprising to hear she'd sent a wedding invitation without including postage. "That sounds like her."

"She's just... She thinks differently than most people."

"Yes." That was a very succinct, and yet completely vague, way to describe Brianna. "So why are you on the groom's side?"

Kelly was really impressed that Elana had made it past the ushers without being guided to the other side of the aisle. They'd zeroed in on Kelly the instant she walked in and had been less than pleased when she insisted on

sitting toward the back of the church. She was messing with the balance of their seating order and they didn't appreciate it. Maybe that was because they all knew her, but she didn't think so. She'd seen others seated with the same determined efficiency.

Elana scanned Kelly's body deliberately and winked. "Because you are."

"Excuse me?" Kelly narrowed her eyes because *that* was just a bit too blatant for her liking. The comment implied that they knew one another, which they didn't. Or perhaps Elana thought of Kelly as a foregone conclusion, which she definitely wasn't. As much as she liked the idea of getting to know Elana better—at least certain parts of her—the assumed familiarity still made her bristle.

"Relax." Elana waved her hand dismissively. "All I meant was that I looked for the hottest woman in this place." She smiled and Kelly had to admit that she found Elana charming even though she really shouldn't. "And so, here I am."

"You sat next to me because I'm hot." Kelly moderated her tone, unimpressed by Elana's determining criteria of her worthiness. This was a wedding, not ladies night at the local club.

"Yep. The fact that you're his sister is a total bonus, though."

"Uh-huh." Kelly shook her head, but she couldn't quite produce the affronted outrage that she was trying for. It was far too amusing. She arched one eyebrow and asked, "Did I just become your date?"

Elana raised her eyebrows to match Kelly's and smiled roughly. "I think you did, yeah."

She offered her hand and Kelly took it. She let Elana hold her hand throughout the ceremony because the one time she let it go, Elana tried to put her arm around her. Attractive or not, Kelly didn't want to cuddle on a hard wooden bench. Especially not in church.

When she noticed Elana tearing up during Brianna's vows, Kelly patted her hand, tilted Elana's face toward her, and kissed her lightly. Maybe it wasn't the right time or place, but she wasn't the one getting married. That meant she didn't have to wait for the old guy in black robes to say "kiss the bride." Besides, it totally worked because Elana stopped staring at Bree as if she'd stomped her kitten and started looking at Kelly like she wanted to get to know her better.

By the end of the ceremony, when David and Brianna were presented to the congregation as husband and wife, Elana was smiling. That didn't even change when Brianna caught sight of her and physically stopped moving down the aisle to stare.

"Elana?" Brianna stuttered out the name while David tugged on her hand, pulling her toward the exit.

"Hi, Bree." Elana started to let go of her hand, and Kelly gripped even tighter. Elana looked like she was about to float away, and the couple of times Kelly'd felt like that, she'd wished someone had been there to keep her grounded.

David tugged hard enough that Brianna had no choice but to continue down the aisle. Still, she looked back over her shoulder at Elana.

Kelly waited a few moments before gently turning Elana's head back toward her with a couple of carefully

placed fingers at her chin. She smiled softly because it had to suck to watch your ex get married, and then, because Elana had stopped smiling and looked a lot like she was going to cry, she kissed Elana softly. Elana's grip on her hand tightened, and when Kelly ended the kiss, Elana started it again, nipping at her bottom lip before she finally allowed it to end.

Elana glanced down and cleared her throat. When the couple next to her left, she slid far enough away that only her knee touched Kelly's, and she rested her elbow on the back of the pew. She toyed with the ends of Kelly's hair. "Thanks. I needed that."

"Sure." The church was emptying out and people were watching them. A kiss or two wasn't exactly scandalous, but they were being regarded as if they'd set a small fire in the pew and the whole church was on the verge of going up in flames any minute. Which was silly, really, because any flaming that might happen between her and Elana sure as hell wouldn't happen on something as hard as that bench. "You ready for the reception?"

Elana took a deep breath. "I don't know."

Kelly eased her up until they were both standing. "You have to come. There will be cake. And Champagne."

"I'll need a full open bar," Elana grumbled as she led the way out of the church, still holding Kelly's hand. "And wedding cake always tastes like ass."

Kelly narrowed her eyes at Elana's comment, but slipped her sunglasses on before Elana could possibly notice. "This one doesn't."

They paused on the steps and faced one another.

"How could you possibly know that?"

“Because I made it.” Kelly tried not to sound annoyed and offended, but probably failed. She’d made too many wedding cakes for Elana’s ass comment to be anything less than insulting. She was good at her job, dammit. And Elana needed to learn that before the end of the day.

Elana gave her an appraising look, then settled for a simple, “What about the bar?”

Kelly laughed, even though it wasn’t really funny, but the negative energy in her chest had been displaced. That made her feel lighter, and laughter was a good response to that. She shook her head and tried to keep her tone dry and serious but couldn’t quite pull it off. “I’ve never made a bar, but if I did, it wouldn’t taste like ass, either.”

Elana shook her head and said, “Okay, so reception? You’re driving, because I took a cab.”

TO CONTINUE READING,  
PLEASE PURCHASE

# CAKE

BY JOVE BELLE

This excerpt is offered by Ylva Publishing.  
Its primary function is the orientation of interested readers.  
Ylva Publishing | [www.ylva-publishing.com](http://www.ylva-publishing.com)