

RECIPE FOR PASSION BY L. MOONE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



L. MOONE

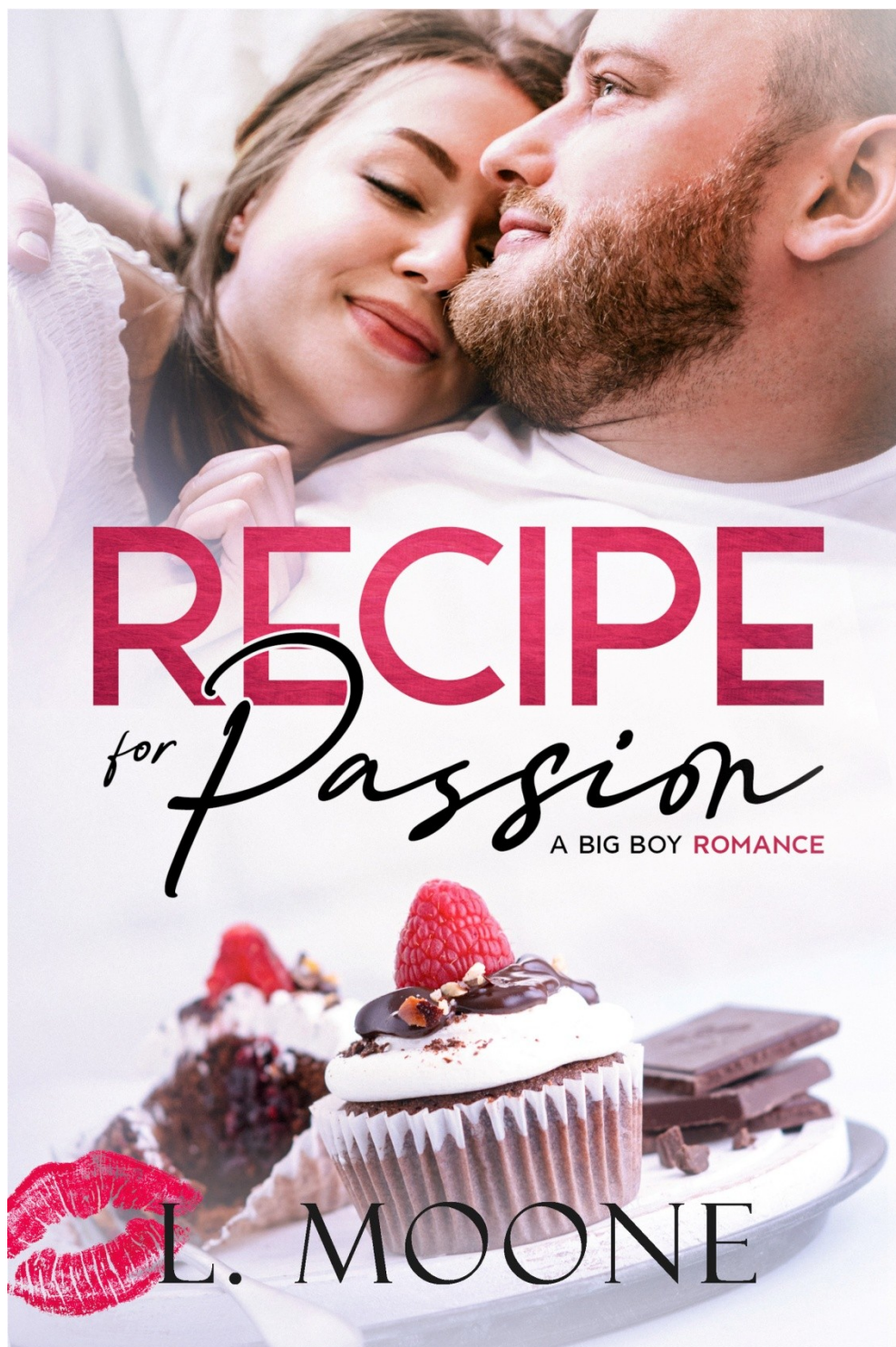
Happy Endings for
Underdogs

L. Moone is a Contemporary Romance author based in rainy England. Addicted to caffeine, chocolate and impure thoughts, she loves to write body positive romances featuring husky men, curvy heroines and everything in between.

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ABOUT THE BOOK



RECIPE FOR PASSION

**A man who makes food like this...
has got to be great in bed.**

Sarah: I've landed the job of a lifetime: to write a profile about the Heartthrob Chef himself, Byron Ainsworth. Too bad he's a slime ball in person. No, the real hero on the set of Decadent Desserts is Ethan, Byron's deliciously cuddly sous-chef, and I'm making it my mission to spend my time at the studio mostly with him. Let's call it background research.

As I enjoy more of Ethan's company and my article begins to take shape, I realize two things: I need to tell Ethan how I feel about him before it's too late. And something feels wrong about Byron. I just don't know what it is yet.

Ethan: The moment Sarah walked onto the set, she didn't just steal a piece of my heart, she took the whole thing. But she's not here for me, she's here to interview Byron. I might be the better chef behind closed doors, but he's the star of the show, whereas I'm a nobody.

Still, Sarah's presence infects me like a sickness. She leaves me obsessed and full of yearning, but I know she deserves so much better than me. Every minute spent with her sucks me deeper into delight and despair, and yet I continue to seek her out. Maybe, just maybe, I can use my talents in the kitchen to woo her? Because if I let her slip away, I know I'll regret it forever.

Recipe for Passion is a steamy body-positive romance featuring an adorable teddy bear of a plus-sized hero and a strong-minded heroine who loves him exactly for who he is.

DETAILS:

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EXCERPT

A man who makes food like this has got to be great in bed.

That's what I've firmly believed ever since I watched Byron Ainsworth's debut on the Home TV Network with his show, *Decadent Desserts*. Only six months into his whirlwind career and he's become a household name who's made it onto many a bored housewife's Celebrity Cheat List. Mine too, if I weren't painfully single.

For this very reason, I was thrilled when the assignment to write an exclusive profile on him landed on my desk. Did I want to spend a whole week at the famous Pinewood Studios on the outskirts of London, shadowing the man who had fueled many a delicious late night fantasy of mine already? Hell yeah! I can't think of a more perfect way to combine some of my favorite things: journalism and beautiful men. Oh, and chocolate of course.

Plus, this could be *the* assignment to get Tom to take me more seriously and start giving me better work at the office. Finally, an exclusive byline just for me. A chance to see my name on the frontpage, even. He's underlined repeatedly how important this opportunity is, so I can't afford to blow it.

All I have to do is capture the essence of how amazing Byron Ainsworth is in person. How hard can it be?

It's Monday morning when I arrive on set for the very first time. With a spring in my step and a bubbly feeling in my chest, I head out of the visitor parking where I've left my car and right towards the entrance gate of the studio complex to introduce myself.

"Sarah Walker, from *Celeb Roundup*, here to visit the set of *Decadent Desserts*. My office called ahead last week?" I flash my ID and press pass to the guard.

He checks his clipboard and nods. "Right. Go ahead, it's in TV One, just over there."

"Thanks!" Another surge of excitement washes over me as I pass through the open gate and towards the large hangar-like building the guard pointed out. The sun is out, and thanks to the heat wave we've been having, it's uncharacteristically warm for mid-May. I'm taking it as a sign.

Even the weather matches my mood. I smile to myself and try to remember to breathe deeply and slowly.

It's my first time on a TV set, not including a one-time experience as an audience member on a talk show when I was still in college. Although I've never been much of a fan girl of anything, the prospect of meeting Byron Ainsworth is unlike anything I've ever experienced. Despite spending a couple of years at *Celeb Roundup* already, I've only ever had desk assignments. I've never actually met a real life celebrity before, never mind interviewed them. Finally, I get to do the kind of work I've always dreamed about.

A girl who looks to be in her early to mid-twenties stops in her tracks in front of me just as I open the unmarked door.

"Is this the *Decadent Desserts* set?" I ask, showing her my press pass as well.

She nods. "Yep, this is it."

"Great." I don't get the chance to properly introduce myself before she vanishes.

"Claire! The reporter from that gossip website is here." I can hear her voice deeper inside the dimly-lit building. After the bright sunshine outside, it takes my eyes a moment to adjust.

As a table of bottled water and other refreshments comes into view just by the door, that same girl returns, accompanied by someone else—someone a bit more senior looking.

"Hi, I'm Claire. I'm the executive producer here," the bespectacled blonde, perhaps a couple of years older than me, introduces herself while we shake hands. She looks me over, as if to size me up. Yep, she's definitely used to being in charge and comes across as slightly intimidating.

"Sarah Walker, *Celeb Roundup*. Nice to meet you. I guess someone from the office spoke to you already?" I ask.

"Indeed. And you're just in time to meet Byron before we start for the day. Jill, be a dear and check if he's ready." Claire's voice is firm and matter-of-fact. I'm not getting much warmth from her, but then again she's probably just busy and my arrival is yet another thing for her to manage this morning.

I hold my breath and smile through my nerves. "Great!"

Jill, presumably Claire's assistant, flits away again, and I'm left waiting with my heart in my throat. I've been wondering what Byron is like in person... and now I'll find out.

"You can keep your bag over there if you like." Claire points at a row of chairs facing a heightened platform right in the middle of the cavernous building, before vanishing in the buzz of activity all around.

On stage I spot the kitchen cabinets with the signature cottage-style oak wood finish I've seen so many times on the show. So *that's where the magic happens*, as they say.

Crew members are darting back and forth, setting up cameras and adjusting spotlights, but the stage itself is still pretty dark. It's funny how everything looks make-shift and incomplete like this. I imagine that'll change once the lights go on.

"Sarah? Over here." Jill waves at me from the other side of the stage.

I stumble into action and join her by a door with a forbidding yellow 'Private' sticker right in the center.

She knocks twice and peeps inside. "Byron, she's here."

"Come in!" he booms.

What a voice!

Jill gestures at me to go ahead, and I swallow the butterflies in my stomach, pushing the flimsy hardboard door fully open before making my way inside. A part of me wishes she'd accompany me inside, but she doesn't. Into the lion's den I go. And there he is, in front of the lit up mirror, getting his face touched up by a timid looking make-up girl.

“Good morning, Mr. Ainsworth—or, is it okay if I call you Byron?” I ask.

He looks up at the mirror, his reflection revealing a row of blindingly white teeth. They even look a bit fake, especially in this light.

“Byron is fine.” He brusquely makes a shooing gesture at the girl to stop what she’s doing, prompting her to quickly gather her things and throw them in her bag before leaving us alone. “And your name is?”

I hold my breath while he turns his chair to face me and gets up. He’s tall, and a bit lankier than he looks on TV, his face appearing more angular. Is this really the same man? I suppose the make-up makes him appear a bit weird right now, but that’s probably necessary or his features would look washed out on camera.

He sticks his hand out in my direction, and I take it.

“Sarah Walker. From *Celeb Roundup*.”

“Right, Sarah. Nice to meet you.” His grip is weak and cold, almost creepy. He holds on to my hand a little too long for comfort, which makes the hairs on the back of my neck stand up.

I can’t put my finger on what it is exactly, but my spidey senses are tingling. This moment isn’t at all how I thought it would be. He doesn’t sweep me off my feet with his charismatic personality and winning smile. He doesn’t even impress me.

Hate at first sight would be a good way to describe it. A visceral sort of repulsion. The kind of reaction you’d have to the smell of rancid food or the sight of a fat spider lurking in the darkest corner of the shed. The disappointment is immense. As excited as I was only moments ago, now I’m just... deflated.

The small talk that follows feels like pulling teeth. He’s trying to play the game—be charming, even compliment me multiple times—but that’s only making me retreat more. So, *he’s* the Heartthrob Chef? Nuh-uh, I don’t think so! I still can’t get over how unpleasant he was when he sent that make-up girl away. His arrogance is staggering.

A large part of me wants to bolt right now. Unfortunately, I still have a feature to write. With my room at a nearby Premier Inn booked for until the end of the week, and time cleared in my schedule, it’s too late to change my mind. I was desperate to get this job. It was supposed to be easy. I’m learning pretty quickly what major regret feels like.

This is going to be a challenge. I have no idea how I’m going to put a positive spin on my observations for our readers, who are all gagging to get the inside scoop on Home TV’s hottest rising star. And Tom was pretty clear when he gave me the job. *Make them fall in love, Sarah! I’ll settle for nothing less and neither will the network, or they’ll never give us another exclusive.*

To say I’m crushed during this first meeting would be the understatement of the century. Until the door creaks behind me, and someone else walks in, rescuing me from the unpleasantness of being alone with Byron.

“What the hell, Ethan? Where have you been?” Byron asks. “We’re about to start!”

I turn my head and am awestruck by the man who's currently blocking the door. At well over six feet tall, and with broad shoulders to match, he's almost bigger than the doorframe he just entered through. I wouldn't really call him muscular, though. He's more of a cuddly giant rather than a scary one, and yet I'm absolutely lost for words. My heart is racing and my eyes are glued to his. Blue with a hint of green; full, sensual lips and an even fuller head of dark blonde hair. *This*. This is what I'd hoped to feel during my first encounter with Byron. This is the sort of thing Tom wants me to write about.

The butterflies. The odd lump in my throat. The floaty feeling in my chest. How ironic. The feelings are completely right, but they're for the wrong guy.

He seems equally flustered by my presence. Or maybe he's just stunned by my mute psycho stare.

"This is Sarah, the reporter. Remember what I told you the other day, yeah?" Byron says. "Sarah, meet my sous-chef, Ethan."

PROMO IMAGES

