

Cafe Obsession

by Melissa Howgate

Chapter 1

'Sara you are late. Again.' Simone's eyes narrowed as she fixed her newest employee with an accusatory glare.

"I know, I'm sorry, I will get myself sorted out soon I promise," Sara rushed out her apology as she ran to get changed. Sara had thought her tardiness would improve when she started her new job in the café. But it seems that old habits die hard.

She quickly changed into her uniform, brushed her blonde curls into a disheveled bun and looked into the bright green eyes gazing back at her. Taller than average, Sara was slightly built for her height, with neat curves and a small waist. 'Time to face the music,' she sighed to her reflection. She had tried to be on time, she really had, but things never seemed to work out that way. She had only moved to Melbourne to study journalism two months ago and this job had saved her from living solely on tinned spaghetti and toast, not the most nutritionally balanced of diets.

"Sara, now that you have finally graced us with your presence, can you please clear booths five and eleven?" Simone requested from behind the espresso machine. Café Obsession was a booming business. Located in Melbourne, it boasted the best croissants and coffee in the northern suburbs. Sara's afternoon shifts were always busy as the La Trobe University crowd was finished for the day, the booths and tables quickly filled as students searched for nourishment.

Sara grabbed her apron from the back and set to work. Clearing tables wasn't a glamorous job, but at least it was better than dish washing. She headed towards the booths at the back of the restaurant, greeting regular customers as she went. Her housemate Nicole was sitting in booth six, talking animatedly on her mobile phone as she sipped her coffee.

"No I haven't found anything to do for New Years Eve as yet, but you know me, I like to keep my options open. See you tomorrow." Nicole waved Sara over as she finished her call. "Hey, that guy you like is over there."

Sara spun around. How could she have missed him sitting by the window? Dark, brooding and with his broad shoulders clad in a stunning leather jacket, Liam's presence in the room was almost tangible. He was tall, taller than her at just over six feet, with

jet-black hair that was longer at the back than the front. He also possessed the most piercing pair of blue eyes Sara had ever seen. Liam came to the café to write and had been doing so since before Sara had started.

Sara sighed and turned back to Nicole. "Not like it matters, he'll never be interested in me."

"Don't say that hon, maybe you're what he has been looking for his whole life and that is why he comes here every afternoon," Nicole replied as she packed her papers back into her bag. Short and dainty with long flowing red locks, Nicole herself was a guy magnet. Men felt a need to protect her from the world. Sara wished a certain someone wanted to protect her.

Sara sighed again. "I already know that is not true. He's just here to write and to see Ally play." Ally was the resident musician who performed nightly in the bustling café. Ally and Liam had been friends for years.

"Possibly, but maybe you should ask him out instead of standing around like a stunned mullet and staring at him." Before Sara could protest, Nicole continued. "I know you don't like to make the first move, but you are going to have to sometime. The perfect man is not going to just fall into your lap one day."

Sara shook her head. "Yeah well, we can only hope." She watched Liam nod as Simone delivered his coffee. Just looking at the man made her giddy.

"What do you want to do for New Years Eve? I have a few options, though none are really appealing."

Sara climbed out of her reverie and wiped absently at the table. "I'm not sure, I don't really know anyone yet and I feel bad about tagging along with you and your friends."

Nicole shrugged. "Well at the moment I am not doing anything, so please don't feel bad about joining me. Surely we can find something to keep us entertained."

"Lets just see what comes up ok? I better go and do something constructive before Simone kicks me out for good." Sara smiled at Nicole and went back to work. She cleared the booths of empty cups and set about arranging the tables for new patrons.



Sara was nearing the end of her shift. Liam was still sitting by the window, alternating between writing furiously and signalling for more coffee. She was refilling the muffin display when she noticed Liam beckoning her over.

"Oh my goodness," she said under her breath as she nervously wiped her hands on her apron and tucked her hair behind her ears. She pulled her notepad out of her pocket as she hurried over to Liam's side.

"Hi, what can I get you Liam?" Sara rushed out breathlessly, then silently cursed herself. She hadn't officially been introduced and she had just called him by name. What a freak, she thought. I must seem like a total stalker. Sara started chewing on her pen nervously and she peered at him through her eyelashes. It was then that Sara realized that Liam was staring intently at her chest. Sara's breath quickened, his gaze causing her blood to hammer through her veins and colour to rise to her cheeks. "W-w-what are you looking at?" she stammered at him.

"Sara, is it?" Liam lifted his gaze to hers. 'Your nametag is on upside-down.'

"Oh." So that was it. He didn't like her breasts after all. Sara wished the floor would open up and give her an escape from her humiliation. "I'm so sorry. What can I get you?"

"Long macchiato." Liam narrowed his gaze. "Not so much milk this time. It's a macchiato not a flat white."

"Sure, sure, ok." Sara bolted to the safety of the counter, giving Simone the order before running out the back, her heart still fluttering. He knew her name.

"Well it's a start," Sara informed herself and began preparing to close the café.

Chapter 2

Sara and Nicole examined themselves in their large bathroom mirror.

"You are so hot." Nicole winked at Sara. Sara swished around in her full-length black evening gown. "Liam will have to notice you now"

"Do you really think so?" Sara frowned and fidgeted in the heavy black satin. "Do you think he will even be there? Will he really like my dress? You don't think it's too much?" Ally from the café was having a New Years Eve party and both Sara and Nicole had been invited.

"Calm down Sara. You look divine. Trust me, he will notice you. *Everyone* will notice you." Nicole's flattery was interrupted by a honk outside. "Taxi's here, lets go."

They had been at the party for two hours and he wasn't there. It was fifteen minutes until midnight and it seemed Sara was doomed to see in the New Year alone. She had lost her housemate soon after their arrival. Nicole had set her sights on a tall blonde guy and was determined not to leave without him.

Sara drifted aimlessly around the gardens. Her enthusiasm for socializing had dwindled as the clock ticked down, despite the obvious attention she was getting from both the single and not so single males in the room.

"Why can't Liam see me that way? Why can't he just see me?!" Sara muttered as she scuffed her dainty heels on the well manicured lawn. She looked around and decided to head down towards the creek running through the base of the property. "If I can't be with him tonight, I don't want to be with anyone."

As Sara meandered down the small incline towards the tree-lined river, fireworks erupted overhead. It was finally midnight and Sara was alone. Totally alone. Sara wandered towards the trees and stumbled to a sudden stop, her hand rushing to her chest. For there, locked in a passionate embrace, was Nicole and her conquest for the night. Nicole's conquest was Liam.

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Drive by movie

On a cool Friday night I recently ventured out to see a movie, spend a little time with a loved one and enjoy a little pop corn. I've been disappointed with cinema's over the last few years, they've become over popular, people packed into smaller theatres with medium sized screens. Lets not mention the inane chatter of the audience, mobile phone (whoops, forgot to turn it off!) and the limited "make-out" capacity in these small crowded spaces unless exhibitionism is your thing!

There is however a way to alleviate all of these problems that doesn't involve a phone in bomb threat.

The Coburg Drive-in can take you back to the halcyon days of movie watching.

Yes, drive-ins still exist in Melbourne and they are better than ever. Firstly, you don't need to get dressed up, pyjamas where easily the most popular attire at the screening I attended. You choose who sit next to you and the only conversation you hear is from the people in your own car - so choose your companions wisely. If its romance you want, then a drive-in is perfect to provide you with all the alone time you need with that special someone.

Opened in 1965, the Coburg Drive-in sports 3 huge screens, 33 metre across. It's the largest driven-in in Australia with 900 car spaces and a large dinner which servers both the usual cinema fair and more substantial meals like burgers and nacho's. Sound is provided via your car radio picking up a FM stereo broadcast, you get to choose the volume.

Now lets talk about price, as university students we often don't have the ready cash for a movie, particularly considering the price of beer. The guy's down at Coburg are now offering a rate of \$17 per car for people with a voucher found in this edition of the Moat. That's not bad considering the number of people you can squeeze into a small car these days, and remember, you can take some fold up chairs with you so people in the back can sit outside of the vehicle for a better view.

This was something I haven't done for years and I now realise it's a great way to see a film without having to deal with the idiots in the row behind you, talking and kicking the back of your seat every so often. The price is right, the food is great and it's all from the comfort of your own car.

Definitely worth a visit

Ed



155 Newlands Road, Coburg.
Session Times 93548633
www.villagecinemas.com.au

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 <p>May 27</p>	
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