

KELLY
WEEKERS

AS GOOD
AS IT GETS

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This book is for those who love deeply, desire recklessly, wonder who they might have been if they chose differently, or quietly hope that a special kind of love is out there for them.

If you'd asked me a few weeks ago whether I was happy I would've said yes. Two beautiful kids. A loving partner. A solid relationship. A house we once dreamed of. A flourishing career. Everything I'd worked hard to build. Everything I would never risk losing. But a few weeks ago, I didn't know who would sit across from me on a random Monday.

The alarm goes off at 6:30, but I've already been awake for fifteen minutes. Not because I'm stressed. Not because anything's wrong. Just because I have a brain that likes to wake up before my body does. As always, it starts the day by running through everything: client sessions, edits for the book, remembering to RSVP to that school thing. Then comes the sinking realization that Zara's sports leggings are probably still in the laundry basket and she has to wear them today. *Shit.*

I slide out from under the duvet carefully, slow enough not to wake Mark, and pad toward the bathroom. My feet leave the rug and hit the cold tiles. *We should've gone for underfloor heating when we had the chance*, I think to myself once again. I turn the shower on and crank the hot water all the way up. Mark says my showers feel like stepping into molten lava. To me, it's just perfect. Ain't nobody forcing that cold-shower hype on me. Steam fogs the small window above the tub. Outside, it's still pitch-dark. Rain taps lightly against the glass, steady and insistent. It always messes with my head, waking up in the dark makes everything feel sluggish, like it's the middle of the night even when I know it isn't.

From downstairs, I hear the familiar blend of laughter and shouting. The girls are already up, and whenever they're not asleep, there's always this razor-thin line between being best friends and mortal enemies. For now, it sounds like they

are besties, which buys me a few extra minutes. I pull on my favorite Levi's and an oversized white shirt. Ankle boots I can actually walk in. Crisp, clean and comfortable. Polished enough for clients, but still me. I put on simple gold hoops, a watch, my grandmother's signet ring, a necklace, and I'm done. When I look in the mirror, I feel good. I'm almost thirty-five, and even though a few years ago I thought that was old, I actually feel pretty young. I don't really recognize the insecurities most women talk about. Not anymore, at least. Sure, there's always something that could be better, but there's also a lot I like about myself.

Long, thick blonde hair. A fit body, thanks to years of healthy habits. And a fresh face for my age thanks to those habits, some good genes, and the fact that I don't shy away from a little help when it comes to maintenance. My excuse? As a psychologist, I spend my days thinking long and hard about other people's problems. The least I can do is make sure my face doesn't look like every single one of them is mine.

As I walk down the wooden stairs of our London townhouse, hand grazing the banister we still haven't bothered to fix, it's clear the chaos is already in full swing.

"MUMMMY!" I step into the kitchen to find Zoe, my youngest, having somehow smeared peanut butter on the dog's ear. "I just wanted to feed him!" she shouts. "Cooper loves peanut butter!" She's also trying to shove her older sister's headband onto her head.

Zara, nine going on fifteen, screams, "Stop touching my stuff, it's mine!" which immediately triggers another round of shrieking.

“Well,” I say, taking it all in, “good morning to you too.”

I need caffeine. I reach for the kettle and manage a half-smile. You’d think with a four-year age gap they’d fight less. You’d be wrong. I always tell myself their strong personalities will get them far in life. I mean, what’s that book called again? *Nice Girls Don’t Get the Corner Office?* But on the other hand, it takes every ounce of patience I have to raise these little savages. I know gentle parenting is a thing. I’m a millennial *and* a therapist. I’ve read the posts and the books. We should validate their feelings, get down to eye level, breathe through the chaos. But sometimes I feel the gentle parent leaving my body after asking them to stop fighting for the eighteenth time before 8 a.m. Honestly, I think only people with gentle children can be gentle parents. Mine demand that you step up your game.

“Breakfast, please,” I say, nudging plates into place while herding them toward the table. “You can’t go to school hungry.”

Zoe immediately makes a beeline for the lower drawer.

“And no, vitamin gummies are not breakfast, Zoe.”

Mark wanders in just as I’m wiping toast crumbs off the counter, phone in hand, laughing at something he’s just watched. “You have to see this,” he says, holding up his screen.

I shoot him a quick glance. “Can you grab their school bags?”

He nods, sets his phone down, and heads for the hallway.

“Where are they?”

I swear, men can walk past the same thing for years and still ask where it is.

From the hall, I hear him again. “Found them!”

He walks back into the kitchen, and I glance at him. Dark hair, slightly unruly, a button-down shirt with the sleeves rolled up, jeans, a belt. Finance casual. His signature look.

“Dad, did you pack the sunflower seeds?” Zara asks, already zipping up her backpack with the kind of speed and independence only a nine-year-old fully in charge of her own world can pull off.

Zoe, perched on the edge of a stool mid-bite, looks up. “Sunflower seeds? What sunflower seeds?”

Mark reappears, phone magically back in hand. He blinks. “Wait. What’s with the sunflower seeds?”

I rinse out the girls’ lunchboxes from yesterday, which were somehow still hiding in the bottom of their bag.

“They’re doing a planting project. It was in the parent app last week.” I say dryly.

“I’m not in the parent app,” Mark says, like that explains everything.

“But you’re my parent,” Zoe says matter-of-factly, swinging her legs like she’s just discovered a major flaw in the system. “Why aren’t you in the app, daddy?”

Exactly! Why not? The class has twenty-five kids, twenty-five mums in the app, and maybe two dads drifting through the chat like occasional guest stars.

I look up at Mark and raise my eyebrows over the sink. He opens his mouth like he’s going to answer, then closes it again. I shrug. Strong personalities, I remind myself. Future CEOs, both.

“Oh—and Mila’s birthday party is tomorrow,” I say,

checking the time while mentally reshuffling the day. “We still need to get her a gift.”

Mark looks up from his phone. “Right. Want me to grab something after work?”

“You’ll be back at?”

“Seven.” Mark says.

“I’ll get it,” I say, like I don’t already have enough on my plate, already plotting a detour between my last client and the toy shop.

Sometimes — often — it’s easier to just do things myself than to ask for help and then spend the whole time acting as the support-hotline while someone else does it. Honestly, it’s insane how much there is to keep track of. Birthday parties, show prep, sports schedules, parent apps. Running a school-age household feels like having a second full-time job. One you never applied for, but everyone expects you to manage flawlessly.

The hallway explodes into the usual morning chaos: jackets yanked from hooks, shoes fished out from under furniture, Zoe making a last-minute sprint to the bathroom. Cooper barks, convinced this must mean he’s going out for a walk. I crouch to zip up a coat, kiss the top of Zara’s head, then Zoe’s, and pull them both into a quick squeeze.

Mark leans in and gives me a light kiss. “Good luck, doc.”

“Love youuuu,” I call after them as he herds the girls through the door. It closes behind them with a final thud.

Welcome to fifteen minutes of me. I exhale as I lean against the kitchen counter. Cooper thumps his tail against my leg.

“Okay, Coop. You’re still here. And at least you don’t want anything from me. Not right now, anyway.”

I walk over to the coffee corner and press the espresso button. *Is there anything better than freshly ground coffee? I don't think so.* I make a cappuccino, carry it to the kitchen table, open my laptop, and click straight into my inbox. Same routine every morning. And as always, there it is: Emma's email. If I didn't have Emma, I'd probably lose my mind. She's my virtual assistant and handles everything business-wise so I can actually focus on doing the work.

Subject: TODAY – Overview + Details

Morning Sophie,

Here's your schedule:

- 10:00 – D. Reed (session 8)
- 11:30 – A. Lemaire (session 6)
- 13:00 – Call with publisher (check-in on progress)
- 14:00 – Your mental health walk with Cooper! :-)
- 15:00 – NEW client. James Carter.

Note: No intake form received yet. His assistant scheduled the session without further details.

Let me know if anything changes. I'll be on.

Emma.

I take a sip and stare at the name. *James Carter.* Nothing about it rings a bell. No form. No background. It's funny how some people skip the intake form. For some, it's a hurdle. For others, a way to stay private, or to keep control over what they reveal. And then they sit down with me and spill their deepest, darkest secrets in the first ten minutes.

I glance at the clock. *Time to go.*