

## Hot Spell Excerpt

JORDAN WINCED AS Liddy grabbed the mini snow globe off the dresser—the one Frank had bought her on their lovers’ getaway to San Diego—and threw it at the wall. The trinket shattered into a million pieces and tiny shrapnel flew halfway across the room.

“Ugh!” her friend bellowed, and slumped down on the end of her bed. “What a prick!” Soon the huffs of anger turned to sobs.

Jordan grabbed tissue box off Liddy’s nightstand before the snot from her nose dropped onto the carpet. “Here.” She handed a fresh tissue to her friend. “That snow globe didn’t go with the rest your collection anyway.”

Tears streamed down Liddy’s cheeks from her red, swollen eyes. She looked like hell. “I just can’t believe it.” *Blow. Sniffle.* “I really thought he was the one.”

Jordan glanced at Sam to see her eyes roll. Translation, *how many times have we heard that line?*

Sam rubbed her back. “I know.”

*Blow. Sniffle.*

“Things were going so well between us,” Liddy choked out.

*Well, it appears not.* Jordan didn’t mean to be cold, but how many of Liddy’s breakups had they endured?

Lydia Michelle Drake was a sweetheart. Truly kind and fun-loving, but clingy as shit. After a few months—sometimes weeks—men caught whiff of her clinginess and high-tailed it out of there. Kudos to Frank for lasting six months.

“Sweetie, do you want some hot tea?” Jordan asked.

“Sure.” *Sniffle. Blow.*

“Sam, give me a hand, would ya?”

Samantha followed her into the kitchen, and they started their routine of making tea. They’d pulled this ritual often enough, they knew where everything was.

“It’s different this time, Jordan,” Sam observed. “She’s taking it a lot harder.”

“I know. Probably because Frank stayed with her for so long,” Jordan whispered back.

“We gotta fix this.”

“Hell, if I know what to do,” she replied as she dug out the creamer.

They worked side-by-side in silence. Sam found scones and set them on a platter. Jordan brought down plates and cups from the cabinet.

“I got it,” Sam said with a smile on her lips.

“What?”

“A vacation.”

Jordan tapped her lips, the gears grinding in her mind.

“Let’s go somewhere. Get her the hell out of here. Change of scenery and all that.”

“Yeah, that could work.” The words came out slowly. “It’s been almost a year since our last vacation.”

“Yup. Worked wonders for me. Got me out of my funk.”

“Not that you would admit it at the time,” Jordan said with a grin.

“Okay, Miss Priceline, go work your magic. Find us a good deal to go somewhere.”

“Where are you thinking, Florida? Or New York for a girl’s weekend?”

Sam hesitated. “No, I think we need farther. Like, out of the country.”

Jordan nodded. The thoughts already brewed on high steam.

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JORDAN HAD A mission as she booted up her computer: find a fix for Liddy's broken heart. A good distraction could help her sweet, naive friend realize she and Frank weren't meant to be forever.

Speaking of which, when was her last, er, distraction? This vacation could be good for her, too.

The usual column of ads populated the right side of her screen. She immediately went to her favorite discount vacation site. A few images of Mexican beaches quickly popped up. She typed in the search bar.

*I wonder if Europe is on sale this time of year.*

She scrolled down the page. Way too many zeros involved. *Okay, perhaps we won't be going that far away.*

*Maybe Australia. Wait, isn't it winter there now?*

She opened another site—more ads for Mexico.

“All right, all right,” she told the computer.

She clicked on the various deals: Cozumel, Cancun, *oh*, Puerto Vallarta. *Now isn't that a great looking resort?* The all-inclusive property shaped in a big U was situated right on the ocean. They flouted a private beach, several pools, bars and restaurants, a nightclub, spa packages, and shuttle service from the airport.

“Puerto Vallarta it is,” she said to no one.

She'd been to Mexico a few times; it was a relatively easy trip from San Francisco. Never been to Puerto Vallarta.

Although she could see the Latin in her dark brown eyes, olive skin, and brown wavy hair every time she looked in the mirror—she didn't speak much Spanish. All the Latin blood came down from her father's side. Retired military, her dad had instilled his intense work ethic in Jordan at an early age.

School was out for the summer, and her coaching duties for high school cheerleading camp weren't for another six weeks. Sam ran her own online software firm, and could manage it from anywhere, even across international borders.

The only real question was Liddy. Could she get the time off from her retail job? Would she even try, with how reclusive she tended to be after a breakup?

Jordan glanced across the room, at her various gymnastics trophies and plaques. The bronze medal dangled from the arm of one trophy, from the Olympic trials her senior year in high school. She'd missed her final vault, and lost her spot on the official team . . . by three tenths of a point.

She stood, stretched out her muscles and touched the floor, keeping her legs straight. Her ACL protested. It was an old injury, but sitting too long exacerbated it.

She picked up her phone and shot a text to Sam.

*Get your passport. Puerto Vallarta awaits.*

Sam replied quickly. *Ole!*

Jordan smiled and dialed Liddy's number.

“Hello?” Her friend sighed, so depressed in her quiet, monotone voice.

“Hey sweetie. How are you doing today?”

Another sigh, longer than the first. “I'm alright.”

Not likely. “Well, you will be. Let’s get away. I found a great deal for us at an all-inclusive resort. We leave next week.”

“Oh, I remember you guys talked about it, but I don’t know, Jordan . . .”

“Baby, you sound like crap, which means you feel like crap, which means your work is like crap.” She exhaled. “Ask your boss. I bet Bernie would be thrilled to have you take a week off. C’mon, it’ll be good.”

“I’ll ask, but don’t book anything until I know for sure.”

“Call me back.”

They disconnected and before Jordan could get back from her kitchen with a green smoothie, Liddy replied.

*I can’t believe it. He said take as much time as I need.*

“That’s my girl.” Jordan spun in her seat to face her screen. “Beautiful Mexico, here we come.”