



Cupcake of Love
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Chapter 1

Cupcake of Love

“Love ISN’T!” declaimed Kyle, gesturing grandiloquently and – in general – making a complete arse of himself.

“Huh?” slurred his flatmate Lachlan, bleary-eyed.

“There’s no such thing,” explained Kyle. “It all makes sense now.”

“Ohhhh...” said Lachlan. “Go to sleep, ya bugger”

But Kyle was hungry. He grabbed another cupcake from the fridge and broke a piece off. Chocolate... not exactly original, was it? But oh, so good! That bakery downstairs was bloody fantastic. He started to break off another piece, and paused. A corner of folded white paper was sticking out of the cupcake where he’d broken the original piece off. He pulled it out, scattering a few crumbs over their already-grotty carpet.

You will find true love tomorrow. The princess awaits.

“Oh, Lordy!” Kyle groaned. “Someone’s been getting drunk at work and putting the fortune cookie fortunes in the cupcakes! Well, hey, up their pipes fer origi – orangy – or-i-gi-nal-i-ty.”

Lachlan stirred again.

“Wha?”

“I found a fortune in my cupcake!”

“Like, a dollar?” Lachlan giggled.

Kyle rolled his eyes. “Never MIND!” Then he got it and laughed.

Kyle woke, groaned, and stumbled to the bathroom. After a shower (drying himself with yesterday’s tshirt) and dressing in clothes belonging to him but found deep in Lachlan’s wardrobe, he felt slightly better. He decided to head down to the bakery downstairs for a croissant and coffee.

With a muffin (they were out of croissants) and half a mug of espresso inside him, Kyle was starting to feel better again. Almost human. He sipped his coffee and contemplated his life – failing university, suffering a vicious hangover at 2pm on a Tuesday... maybe he should try doing assignments instead of smoking pot tonight. Although he couldn't remember where his assignment list was, or what the next one was on, or – for that matter – what the last few lectures he'd attended had actually been about.

“Shit,” he said quietly, and stared at his muffin.

A sound like quietly tinkling bells started just over his left shoulder. He rolled his eyes and sighed. Did he want to know? Suddenly, the tinkling changed to a business-like single PING! A puff of air whooshed over Kyle's bare neck in the sudden silence. He looked at Miguel, the bakery owner... who was staring at something over Kyle's shoulder. The Miguel disappeared from view with a THUMP.

“Oh dear,” said a sweet, motherly voice. Kyle was even more on guard than before. He knew that sweet motherly voices belonged to sadistic serial killers almost as often as they belonged to sweet motherly people... if not more often. In fact, he didn't remember ever meeting a sweet motherly person. He turned around, ready to defend himself to the death.

Standing behind him was a plump, sweet, motherly-looking woman dressed in pink and clutching a purple fluffy wand with a sparkly star on the end.

“Some people just DO not cope with the paranormal,” she tsked. “Now you – you look like a sensible lad. No fainting for YOU!”

Kyle fainted, out of sheer bloody-mindedness.

He woke up, still in the bakery and lying on the floor, with the pink-suited woman bent over him. She was tapping the purple fluffy wand on his forehead.

“TA-DA!” She announced, proudly. “Awake!”

Kyle groaned and closed his eyes. Too sparkly. Too cheerful.

“What do you want?” he said.

“Is that any way to speak to the woman who saved your life?”

“You didn't, you daffy dame... you just scared me into a brief coma!” Kyle riposted.

“Oh, have it your way,” she said, elevating her nose “Anyhow, I'm your fairy godmother.”

Kyle closed his eyes. His headache was a lot worse now, and he really didn't need this. Fairy godmother?

"Everyone has one, you know!" she continued brightly. "They're not always lucky enough to meet theirs in the flesh, though!"

"OK, I'll bite," Kyle said, sighing. "Why am I lucky?"

"Because you're about to meet the woman of your dreams! An absolute princess!"

That didn't sound good, thought Kyle. Princess?

"Ummm..."

"And if you don't pay attention this time, you'll end up miserable, miserly, bitter and alone for the remaining 50 years, 3 months and 9 ½ days of your life!" she trilled.

"OK... OK, I'll keep an eye out, and I'll fall in love, alright?" Kyle said. "Now... will you leave me the hell alone and get back to your psych ward? They must be worried about you by now."

"Well, I..." the fairy godmother stuttered, outraged, "...I NEVER!" And she disappeared, somehow managing to make the tinkling and PING sound offended.

There was a THUMP from the direction of the counter as Miguel fainted again. It was going to be one of those days, Kyle mused, as he gently tipped a glass of water over Miguel and copped a right hook to the jaw for his trouble.

Miguel opened his eyes, focused blearily on Kyle, and muttered something.

"What, mate? It was a weird disappearing senile chick, if that's what you're asking."

"Don't fall in love with the princess, Señor!" Miguel shouted, then closed his eyes again.

Kyle sighed. He was used to weird trips, but they usually happened because he'd been smoking something. Not because a bakery decided to run a Psycho Special.

Merryl, Miguel's baker, bounced in the door and stopped dead.

"What happened?" she yelled, "You didn't do this, did you? Were there robbers? Are the takings gone? They didn't steal the bread, did they?"

Now that's an impressive obsession, thought Kyle. Who on earth steals bread these days? He explained the afternoon's happenings to an amazingly credulous listener, who simply rolled her eyes at his description of the fairy godmother and muttered something which sounded amazingly

like, "silly bint!". Together, they got Miguel on his feet and, propped up by the counter, to Miguel's mind perfectly able to serve customers.

Merryl pulled Kyle out the back, into the bakery's storeroom.

"Tell me something," she said, "The mad woman with the wand – she kept mentioning a princess?"

"Yup," Kyle said morosely, staring at the oven and wondering if the weirdness was over for the day. And whether she'd make him a fresh croissant if he piled on the 'I'm so traumatised' act.

"Oh, well then.." she said, "You're screwed. I'm the princess, and I'm irresistible!"

Kyle looked up. She was grinning at him, but he wasn't entirely sure that last bit had been a joke.

She leant over, pulled him out of his slouch, and kissed him slowly and carefully. She tasted, he realised dimly, like chocolate cupcakes.

"Ummmm..." said Kyle when he finally got his breath back. "Princess?"

Bet she wants a pumpkin carriage to take her to the wedding, too, he thought cynically. Too many women with princess fixations these days, thanks to Disney. Although maybe he could cope with it from Merryl... dear God she was hot! And that kiss...

Before he could slide completely into a dream world, Merryl slapped him gently around the face and answered. "Yup, bona fide pedigreed princess of the blood royal here. No money – our country disappeared into myth centuries ago – but I've got the proof right here. Only two craftsmen in the entire world know how to craft them these days."

"You carry a tiara in your handbag?" Kyle asked, feeling very, very sceptical.

Merryl unbuttoned her jeans and pushed them down, revealing a cute black lace gstring. Kyle's eyes widened, and he forgot what they'd been talking about. She turned around and slapped the ornate crown tattoo on her butt cheek.

"That's my proof!" she said, grinning as he staggered "It's less conspicuous than a tiara!"

"Less conspicuous?" he murmured. "I'm going to remember that the rest of my life!"

"Of course," she said, still grinning, "but it's different with you. It's your destiny to fall in love with me, dude."

Kyle grinned back. This weird-arse day was taking a fantastic turn for the better. He slid an arm around Merryl and inhaled. She smelt like vanilla cupcake. Odd.

"That might not be so bad a fate," he whispered in her ear, "if you fall in love with me too...?"

"Gracious no!" she exclaimed, whirling out of his reach. "That's not in the plot at all! I fall in love with a prince only – you commoners fall in love with me all the time though, it's awesome being a princess!"

"Huh?" said Kyle.

"You're not of royal blood!" she explained slowly and patiently. "I am. You fall in love with me, I don't fall in love with you. It's just the way the world works, kid."

"Well" he said bitterly, "I can see why Miguel told me not to fall in love with you. You're a bit of a bitch, to put it mildly!"

Merryl stared. She'd never been called a bitch before. A princess yes, by people who shouldn't have known she was one – but she'd always taken THAT as a compliment. Obviously breeding was showing, she figured. But - a bitch?

"Errr..." she managed, but Kyle had already stormed out.

A few days later, Kyle and Merryl came face to face in the bakery again.

"Hey, I've been thinking," she said as she handed over a dozen scrolls and a croissant.

"Oh yeah?" sneered Kyle, "Does your brain hurt from the unusual exercise?"

"I was a bitch," she said through gritted teeth, "and you're a complete prat. I just wanted you to know that I realised that!"

She walked out the back to get her composure again. When she got back, Kyle was gone, a pile of coins lay on the counter, and a long line of customers waited very impatiently for their lunchtime bad-but-oh-so-delicious carbs.

Kyle answered his mobile to hear Lachlan's languid tones.

"Hey, maaate... that chick at the bakery was asking after you! She's hawwwwt and I think she has a thing for you... gonna go for it?"

"Nup." said Kyle. "She's a nutcase, and everyone around her's psycho too."

"You're not? Are you NUTS? Have you seen the butt on that woman? Peeeachy!"

Kyle sighed and hung up. He sure had. And no, he couldn't get it out of his head. She was gorgeous, but she was a psychotic spoiled brat with a princess complex. Then again, she was gorgeous... and clearly nuts

about him, no matter what she said. Maybe he could deal with the psycho thing. Other guys seemed to manage just fine.

Kyle approached the bakery counter with trepidation.

"Ummm, hi..." he said.

"Good morning!" Merryl said cheerfully and insincerely, "How may I help you, sir?"

"Do you have any humble pie? Because... well, I've been acting like a jerk lately and I'll probably need to eat a whole one."

Merryl attempted to stop a smile escaping onto her face.

"As a matter of fact, sir," she said, straight-faced, "we do indeed! Best range in town, you know."

Kyle laughed sheepishly.

"Wellll..." he said, "I've got \$10 – want to join me in a slice? My treat."

"Just a sec – MIGUEL! I'm going off-shift!" she yelled in the direction of the back room.

She untied her apron, hung it on a hook on the wall, and vaulted over the counter. Kyle, impressed by the feat and reminded of the flash of her butt tattoo, took a few seconds to follow her to a table outside.

"Can't stand the smell of bread right now," she confided, and took a huge bite of her humble pie. "Hmmm.." she mumbled, mouth still full, "I think I needed to eat this as much as you did... well come on, eat up! Can't stand a fussy eater!"

Kyle laughed. This chick was kinda cute, and not particularly stuck-up right now.

"You're nothing like I thought a princess would be," he said, "For a start, I thought princesses were all stuck-up and had perfect table manners!"

Merryl snorted. "Only the new blood," she said dismissively, "My great great great great grandfather thought 'table manners' equalled not stabbing your guests at the table, and throwing the meat bones to the dogs rather than starting a food fight. That's real royalty."

"Sounds fun," Kyle raised an eyebrow and grinned.

Merryl leaned over the table and kissed him lightly on the lips.

Suddenly, Kyle's mind was blanker than usual.

Tinkle... PING!

"YES!" yelled the fairy godmother. "It's all going beautifully, folks! Carry on!"

A THUMP sounded from indoors - Miguel fainting again. Kyle beat his head against the table a few times. Merryl laughed.

"Oh, what the hell," Kyle groaned. "She's right, you know. I'm head over heels in love with you. Happy?" He got up to leave.

Merryl grinned, stood up, and launched herself at him. Hugging him madly, she bounced up and down.

"I'm so happy!" she squealed. "You're my prince, you idiot!"

Kyle got his balance back and stared.

"HUH?" he said.

"GAH, men!" Merryl said, "You're a prince. No one told you because it doesn't work like that. Ummm, don't ask me why. More romantic, I think. You know, Cinderella in reverse, prince and the pauper, poor orphan turns out to be heir to a duchy... "

"You distinctly told me I was a commoner, woman!" he argued.

"Well, you had to fall in love without expecting anything in return!" she beamed. "And I couldn't fall in love with you until you fell in love with me – it's against princess protocol! Didn't you ever notice the crown tattoo on your bum?"

"Umm... no... I don't look at my bum much," said Kyle absently, illustrating a key gender difference while trying to figure things out. "So – you baked fortune cupcakes for me?"

"No, that was Auntie Helgifna," giggled Merryl, "She thought I was getting a bit old-maidy. She's the one with the wand."

"You're related to the nut with the fluffy wand??"

"Yes, sorry – but she's sweet when you get to know her!"

Kyle grunted. Sweet like poisoned candy, he suspected.

One month later, Kyle and Merryl were married in the local park. Miguel catered the reception. Weird relatives from both sides attended, and tsked about the dodgy blood their respective relative was marrying into, and the shocking lack of taste in having a non-church wedding where people's stiletto heels sunk into the grass. Merryl was dressed in white. Helgifna was dressed in purple. And Kyle, in a tux, was still in shock every time he looked at the incredibly sexy woman he had just married. In the space of a month he'd gone from a pathetic pothead student to a prince of the blood royal with a modest stipend. And he'd just married the most beautiful woman in the world, and they were head-over-heels in love with each other. They were perfectly set up to live happily ever after.

From the same author on Feedbooks

DEAD(ish) (2009)

Linda's had a bad day. First her boyfriend killed her. Then she woke up, still on this boring plane of existence, and with an odd obsession about her missing body. Mike won't tell her what he did with her body, and she can't find the stupid thing herself. There's only one thing she can do - torment the bastard until he coughs up the information.

Red Riding Hood (2009)

Rosie dresses as "Little Red Riding Hood, all growned up" for a party at an exclusive adults' club. Roger dresses as the wolf. When they meet... sparks don't exactly fly.

This isn't a romance or erotic fiction, but it DOES contain adult themes. Consider yourself warned. :-)

Happily Ever After (2010)

"They all lived happily ever after" - except this is real life, and fairytale endings just don't last. What can Kyle and Merryl do when their marriage loses its magic?

Sequel to Cupcake of Love.



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