

SUGAR RUSH

by
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Phoenix Lane was handing out brownies in her sixth-grade Biology class. Not because she wanted to—she didn't know anyone in the class and hated the dissections, which she had to do alone—but because it was required of her and of every other student in the class to bring in snacks at least once during the school year. And today was her turn. She'd stayed up late baking the damn things, too, so people had better be appreciative of her treat-making awesomeness.

"No, thanks," a blond boy said, a smirk playing on his face. Phoenix moved on without even looking at the next kid. She thought it was a mistake to even approach boys. They would never accept cookies from a girl because it would invite unwarranted teasing from other children on the playground. If she had given it much thought, she should have realised she couldn't win over boys by offering them brownies. What she needed to do was approach girls. Girls were suckers for sweets of every kind.

"Can I have two?" a certain popular girl asked, looking extremely hopeful and unfairly gorgeous, a combination that forced Phoenix's heart out of rhythm. It never failed to make Phoenix a bit miffed by the effect it had on her.

Even so, enough of the boys had turned down her brownies, so it would've been mean to deny this girl. "Sure," Phoenix said, holding out the tin.

The girl carefully picked out the two biggest pieces and jammed one into her mouth, closing her beautiful eyes just as an expression of intense pleasure came over her face. Phoenix sniggered to herself, knowing exactly what the girl looked like when she was having an orgasm. The knowledge did not displease her.

"These are *amazing*!" the girl mumbled, spraying brownie crumbs all over her desk. "Oh my God."

"Uh... Th—Thanks," Phoenix stammered and walked away, trying to calm her overly-impressionable-self down.

After she was done handing out her delicious baked goods to the undeserving masses of giggling schoolgirls, the teacher started up the lecture. Phoenix sat alone at her desk, taking notes on the circulatory system of frogs, which they were dissecting in the next class, when, out of nowhere, someone catapulted themselves into the desk beside her.

"Hey," the gorgeous girl said. "Have any more brownies?"

Phoenix stared at her blankly as if hypnotised until coming to her senses. "Uh, ye—yeah, sure, take some."

"Awesome, awesome, awesome," the cute girl moaned and commenced mowing down the remaining brownies, which were accompanied by the same orgasmic face as before. "I love you," she groaned.

Phoenix felt her face turn red. "Uh, thanks."

When the girl finished the last brownie, she didn't immediately return to her group of friends but instead made herself comfortable in the chair beside Phoenix. "So, what's your name?"

"Phoenix Lane."

"Are you a porn star?" The girl looked surprised.

"No! Of course not."

The girl smirked, slightly offended. "You don't have to lie to me," she said. "If you don't want me to know your name, that's fine."

"No, my name is really Phoenix Lane. And- And I'm not a porn star."

"I think you're lying."

Phoenix glared at her, and the girl raised her hands, though she still looked dubious. "Fine, fine, I'm sorry," she said defensively. "You can be Phoenix Lane if you want. I'm Kimi, by the way."

Shaking her head, Phoenix returned to colouring the frog's heart red, which is what they were supposed to be doing instead of galloping around the classroom, devouring brownies, and denying truths, like this gorgeous girl was doing. Phoenix expected her to leave in a moment, and not only because she was making her heart skip a beat. But nooooo! Instead, Kimi leaned into her personal space and breathed into her ear, "Phoenix Lane, will you marry me?"

Phoenix's hand jolted and created a long red line across the paper, which made the frog's heart look like it exploded.

"What?" she blurted, annoyed.

"Seriously, marry me and bake me brownies every day. I'll do anything for you."

"Girls don't marry other girls, you dummy."

"Of course they do. This is the 21st century, you know?" the beautiful enchantress protested Phoenix's rebuttal.

"I don't feel ready to settle down with you yet," Phoenix voiced her hesitation, starting to feel like the girl was pulling a cruel joke on her, like in one of those eighties movies where school kids tormented innocent yet geeky girls because they were quiet and intelligent and never fought back. She'd hoped that this girl wasn't like that. "We've only known each other for about thirty seconds," Phoenix added timidly.

"Be my girlfriend and make me brownies," Kimi demanded as if she were a princess, her green eyes limpid with devotion.

Phoenix's heart skipped a beat, but she stayed firm. "No."

"Please?" the girl asked. "You are cute, and your cookies are so delicious."

After a second of thought, Phoenix reluctantly admitted to herself that this ditzy, annoying girl with a sweet tooth was adorable, but she wasn't using her good looks responsibly. "You can be my friend," Phoenix finally allowed.

Kimi looked genuinely pleased about that. "Really? Will there be food in this friendship?"

"I can bring you some cookies tomorrow."

"Really? *Really?*" Her voice skipped up a couple octaves and kept getting louder. "That's awesome! I LOVE YOU!" She threw her arms around Phoenix in an embrace, which Phoenix ducked away from in time. As she did, she reflected that if she had known that cooking for others would make her friends happy, she would have baked brownies for the entire school a long time ago.



The next day, Phoenix brought to school a lunch box with three cookies inside it. She sat by herself in the hallway, listening to music on her phone while pretending she wasn't waiting for Kimi to walk by. She was pretty sure the infatuation the crazy girl was having with her was just a phase where a beautiful person forgot their place on the totem pole of ranking and came down to visit the lowly commoners. Not only that, but she was probably going to end up eating the cookies herself. Life was sad.

"Phoenix!" someone yelled and came skidding to a stop beside her.

Phoenix looked over and saw a pair of beautiful green eyes beaming down at her. "Hi," Kimi said.

"Hi," Phoenix replied. "I brought you cookies."

"You're the best!" the girl squealed, dropping down beside her. Phoenix timidly handed her the lunch box, watching as the girl tore it open with enthusiasm and chomped down on the first cookie.

Once again, it amused Phoenix to observe Kimi's eyes drifting closed as the soft, contented hum emerged from her throat. Phoenix could probably make quite a bit of money selling pictures to a porn magazine if the girl kept up with her orgasmic expressions.

"The cookie has peanut butter inside it," Phoenix explained.

"I want to marry you. Like, for real. I'll buy you a nice present, too."

"How nice?" she asked.

"Like, a pony or something."

Phoenix raised her eyebrows. "Can you afford that?"

"I'll sell my body; I don't know," Kimi chomped down on another cookie. "Ommm... *This. Is. So. Good.* I want to have epic sex with your baking skills."

Phoenix started to turn red again, but this time Kimi noticed and made a sheepish smile. "Sorry," she said. "Sometimes I have really creepy thoughts when I eat delicious sweets and no mental filter, so, you know, sorry in advance for all the stupid stuff I'm going to say. But we're friends now, so I guess you'll understand what I mean. But still. We can always be more than friends. Like... if you marry me."

"No," Phoenix said.

"Be my girlfriend?"

"No." Phoenix could picture it now. Everybody in the school who knew Kimi and how popular she was with everyone, wondering why she was dating a dorky loser who had no friends and no life but had awesome baking skills. As much as the proposal tickled her imagination, the sheer amount of taunting and ridiculing she would receive from everyone made her shudder. "No," she said again. "Not your girlfriend. But... you can hold my hand if you want to."

Phoenix even surprised herself by offering a gesture like that. It wasn't like her to say things like that; she wasn't one of those romantically inclined schoolgirls who drooled over their classmates of either sex. Nope, that definitely wasn't her, yet here she was offering Kimi to hold her hand because... because... well, it just felt right, and Kimi was kind to her, and there was something about this girl that made her want to smile to herself even though she dreaded the prospect of being discovered.

"Best friends?" Kimi asked hopefully, quickly snatching Phoenix's hand before she could change her mind. It felt soft, and warm, and welcoming, as if made to be held by another girl.

Phoenix sighed. "Fine."

"Yay!"

The happy outburst from her newest best friend compelled Phoenix to add, "I... I'll bring you some other food tomorrow."

"I love you!" Kimi gasped. "I mean it."

"But... but it's not because I want to marry you or anything."

"I know, I know. But I still love you!" the girl said sincerely.

"Uh..."



After having munched on her cookies, Phoenix expected Kimi to head back to her friends, but instead the girl remained sitting with her while she talked the rest of the class about her ambitions in life—to marry Phoenix, to live in Amsterdam, to smoke pot and create art for living, in that order—and her surprisingly insightful comments on the high-school hierarchy, all the while possessively grasping Phoenix's hand in hers without any intention of letting it go.

"I've been here for a month," Kimi said. "And it's kind of weird, because nobody ever talks to anyone outside their specific group. And I like talking to people, even though they think I'm mentally challenged because I go off on rants like this so often you wouldn't believe it."

"I've been here for six months," Phoenix said, not adding that without the gifts of charisma and style, nobody was inclined to include her in their group.

Kimi beamed at her. "I'll introduce you to my friends! They'll like you."

The school bell for the next period rang, and Phoenix gathered her stuff. "Wait," she said as Kimi hopped to her feet.

"Yeah?"

"What—what if they don't like me?"

Kimi beamed. "You're gorgeous, Phoenix, and with your baking skills everyone will fall in love with you," she said. "Besides, I will look after you, so don't worry about it." Kimi ran off into the night—well, down the hallway, really—but it had the same effect on Phoenix. She gleamed with delight as she watched Kimi's departing figure in the crowded hall.



The next day, at lunch, Phoenix brought a whole tin of date squares. As soon as Kimi saw her, she took her hand in hers and led her to the cafeteria table where all the prettiest and most popular girls sat. "Ashley," she said, plopping herself down next to a pretty girl with pink hair and black-rimmed glasses. "This is Phoenix Lane, my future wife."

Ashley chuckled gleefully at Kimi's unexpected remark, then eyed Phoenix for a second before her gaze dropped to the box she was holding. "Hey!" she called out. "What's that?"

At a loss for what to say, Phoenix took off the lid and offered the sweets to her. "I made date bars," she said. "Want one?"

"See? She is amazing," Kimi said cheerfully. "And loquacious as well, after you talk to her for a while. Sit down, Phoenix. Take the bar, Ashley."

Somewhat dubiously, Ashley took the bar and examined it, then shrugged and popped it in her mouth. Phoenix sat down, feeling her stomach squirm uncomfortably, and wondered if she should just leave and avoid the embarrassment of being ridiculed by the popular kids.

Ashley stared at her. "That was the best date square I've ever had in my life," she pronounced each word carefully, licking her ruby-red lips.

Phoenix, unable to hide her smile, looked down at her lap.

"I told you," Kimi chirped, looking pleased as she grabbed a bar for herself. "I told you she was amazing."

Ashley couldn't make herself look away from her. "Phoenix," she said slowly. "What are your feelings about coming to live with me?"

Abruptly, Kimi started scowling. "No way! You can't! I have first dibs. She is my future wife, not yours, you jerk."

"Maybe she doesn't like you," Ashley stood up in protest. "Maybe she likes me better. Have you thought about that, huh?"

"Don't flatter yourself. If you were a cookie, you would be a Whoreo!"

Both of them looked expectantly at Phoenix, who was turning into a tomato.

"Uh—" Phoenix's face turned red with blush. "I... I don't want to be anyone's wife."

"What's going on?" One of the other girls joined their table. "Oh, hey, can I have one of those?"

"Sure," Phoenix said, completely at a loss of what to do about Kimi and Ashley, who were both giving her weird looks that seriously freaked her out.

"Cool, thanks," the new girl said and stuffed one date bar into her mouth. "Hey, these are pretty good. What's your name?"

"Phoenix Lane."

"Wow, cool. Are you a porn star?"

"I am *NOT*! Ugh!"

"I'm sorry, I really like your name," the girl quickly apologised. "I'm Hannah; nice to meet you."

"She's my future wife," Kimi added quickly, before raising her eyebrows at the other girl as if daring her to say otherwise.

Ashley snagged another date square. "Or mine. She still hasn't answered us yet."

"Really?" Hannah asked, intrigued. "Hey, Phoenix, marry me instead. I give awesome back rubs, and I'm the bestest kisser in the school."

"I'm not marrying anybody, you selfish lesbian freaks! I'm only twelve," Phoenix cried out in outrage, turning completely beetroot red.

The boys in the cafeteria were all giving her half-confused, half-envious looks, but it never registered with Phoenix. By the end of the lunch break, she knew all the girls at their table, and despite all of them still quarrelling about which one was going to marry her, she had promised to bake a pie for everyone the next day.



"Marry me. Please. I will love you and care for you."

"No," Phoenix said for the hundredth time, handing Kimi the pie. "It's apple, and I couldn't bring any ice cream to school because, well, it would melt, and I like having my ice cream to myself. And, by the way, I'm going to take a break from baking after this. You'll have to go back to school lunches."

Kimi's green eyes went wide, and she slowly turned the pie in her hand, as if unable to comprehend the sheer wonder of it. "My God," she breathed. "You really did make me a pie."

"I made everyone a pie," Phoenix corrected.

"I still love you the mostest, Phoenix," Kimi said, brimming with hope, looping her free hand around Phoenix's shoulder and leading her to the cafeteria, where all the girls waved at her. "Look, guys! A PIE!"

"Ow-mah-gawd! Really?" Ashley called, eyes wide.

"Really!"

"A PIE?" they all questioned, like they couldn't believe it.

"It is made from apples!" Kimi thundered, holding it aloft and effectively silencing everybody in the room. "And it's for us!"

"Yay!" Hannah called, punching the air.

Kimi carried the plate over to the table and placed it in the centre with the utmost respect. "We all get a slice," she said. "And we all say thank you to the love of my life, the baking master extraordinaire, Phoenix Lane."

"Thanks, Phoenix," they chorused, diving in. Ashley flashed her a smile, and Hannah licked her lips at her, which was either sexual or because she was really looking forward to the pie. Hannah was kind of weird.

"Phoenix," Ashley said, closing her eyes. "I'm being completely serious when I say that I want to go out with you. We could go to the movies, a concert, or anything you want. I will do whatever it takes. I adore you!"

Phoenix shook her head. "You're all sluts for baked goods," she said. "I need someone who will love me for who I am."

"Yes, you're right, and it's true." Hannah waved the fork at her. "But listen to me, Phoenix. I will do anything for another pie. Your wish is my command. If you want me to be your slave, fine; I'll do anything for you. Anything," she waggled her eyebrows.

"Stop talking to my beloved that way, you filthy little fiend," Kimi said, glaring at Hannah. She picked up a piece of the pie with her fork but didn't eat it, and her gaze went over to Phoenix. "Thank you, Phoenix," she said. "I really do like you. And not just for your baked goods. You are an amazing person."

"All right, all right," Hannah called down the table, and most of the girls laughed. "I didn't mean it, Phoenix. I love you too."

"Just stop it. All of you!" Phoenix blushed, embarrassed by the onslaught of compliments. But on the inside, she was all tingly and warm, like on the first day after winter, when the sun is warm for the first time in months and the snow begins to melt. She smiled at Kimi.

Smiling back, Kimi popped a piece of pie into her mouth. A dreamy look came over her eyes, allowing herself to be lost in Phoenix's gaze. She swallowed.

With unexpected speed, Kimi stood up, braced herself with both hands, and leaned across the table to plant a kiss on Phoenix's mouth.

Too shocked to react or even move away, Phoenix let Kimi's lips linger on hers despite the catcalls of everyone in the cafeteria—lips warm and soft against her own, tasting like apples and cinnamon. Phoenix closed her eyes and savoured the moment.

Eventually, Kimi pulled back, only to smile at Phoenix in a mental daze that announced her heart had skipped a beat and her knees had turned to jelly. "I love you," she declared in a whisper. "I don't care what everyone says. I've only known you for three days, but I think you are the mate of my soul, the penguin to my... well, my other penguin, the person I would sing awesome anime songs to at karaoke bars, and I will have to go stand outside your window in the rain with a boom box if you refuse to go out with me."

"Uh..." Phoenix said. "Seriously?"

"Yes," Kimi replied, green eyes teary but lips smiling and looking straight at her, all fired up with longing and great affection. "Please, Phoenix. Go out on a date with me."

"I don't know," Phoenix said with a certain mischief in her heart, watching Kimi's face collapse in slow motion. She waited, then grinned. "You might have to kiss me again."

All the boys at the table next to theirs hooted. After a startled second, Kimi's face split into a wide grin. She looked kind of funny smiling that hard—nothing like her usual model face—but Phoenix wanted to attack her lips with her mouth *so hard* at that very instant she almost blacked out.

"Phoenix Lane," she said, leaning forward again. "I think I can do that."

And so they made out, right at the table, while the girls ate the pie and the boys ogled, and Phoenix thought to herself how she knew baking those brownies was a good idea after all.

The End

