

HUMILIATING REVENGE

A Contemporary Young Adult Romance

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The following story contains mature themes, strong language and sexual situations. It is intended for mature readers. All characters are 18+ years of age and all sexual acts are consensual.

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Chapter 1

Olivia Crawford was blasted with obscenities, yelling, jeering, and cheering as soon as she stepped into the packed arena. Her midnight blue eyes widened and her gut tightened at the pandemonium all around her. Her body stopped and braced itself at the onslaught of unfamiliar sights and offending smells. The guy behind her didn't appreciate her sudden stop.

"What the fuck? Move your ass!"

The snarled command and the beer being absorbed by the back of her Chambray shirt-dress got her feet moving hastily to the top of the arena. She didn't look back, but kept both ears alert to the sounds behind her. When she didn't hear any footsteps or obscenities following her she took a deep breath and tried to calm her erratic heart and frantic breathing.

The dimmed lights made it difficult to see the row numbers, so Olivia had to squint and bend to find her nose-bleed seat. She found her row and shimmied her way to the plank, wood seat and pulled it down. Keeping her elbows off the shared armrests she hugged her leather purse and studied the fighters in the chain link cage. They weren't Calum, so she turned her attention to the distinctive smell of beer radiating from her. Scooting forward she reached back and peeled the back of her dress away from her skin as she looked around at the sights and sounds of her first mixed martial arts fight. Well, her first *live* MMA fight. It was a little different than watching it on the screen of the library computer.

The first thing that hit her was the smell of dirty socks and beer. Opening her mouth to breathe, she felt the intensity of the crowd radiating with testosterone. Everyone was either standing or sitting at the edge of their seats riveted to the action in the cage. Almost all of the men were yelling and 'coaching' the seasoned fighters. Simultaneous shouts of frustrated obscenities and excited cheering erupted at what looked like brutal hits. A fight seemed ready to break out at any moment and her feet wanted to get up and leave, but she kept them firmly planted. She hadn't come this far only to leave before she saw Calum.

The rigidity gradually eased in her body when the fight finished. It was like the whole arena took a deep breath and the tension dissipated as soon as the fighters left the cage. Instead of feeling like a riot was about

to happen, Olivia could feel and see the relaxed comradery. The lights came up and she studied the crowd.

As a woman, she was in the minority and she stuck out like a sore thumb wearing leggings, ankle boots, a dress, and jewelry. Ripped jeans, flip flops, and tank tops seemed to be the dress code. She breathed a sigh of relief she was so high up and no one was looking at her. Since she had come from her father's house, her choices had been limited. She thought about changing in the car, but she couldn't think of an explanation as to why she would have extra clothes in her car if her father walked her out when she left. Which meant he would search her car and find them.

There was a mandatory supper every Saturday at her father's house. If she didn't go, Miles Crawford made it a point to intrude even further into her life than he usually did. She tried to see him and talk to him as little as possible. Unfortunately, he did not feel the same. He wanted, no demanded, that he know everything happening in her life.

She was going to have to figure out a way to ditch her current clothes before she left the arena, otherwise her car would smell like beer. Her father had given her a brand new, white, BMW coupe almost four years ago for high school graduation. He called it a gift, but in her mind, it was a loaner. The sooner she got rid of it the sooner he would have one less hold over her. It could not smell like beer when she went to his house tomorrow. The questions that would cause suspended her breath for a moment, right in the middle of her throat.

Those questions would be nothing compared to what would happen if Miles Crawford knew she was here, at a Mixed Martial Art match. Olivia's hands clung to the edge of her seat and she swore her back started throbbing exactly where the old wounds had been. He thought wrestling was for blue-collar hillbillies who couldn't afford a real sport.

Her brain was telling her to go, but her heart was telling her to stay. Her brain usually won internal battles, but this time she wasn't going to let her fear win. She kept her sweaty grip locked on the seat and her feet glued to the floor. It had been five years since she'd seen Calum in person instead of through a screen, and she wasn't going to let her wussiness get in the way.

Ever since their high school break up she had been a persistent, silent, stalker. Olivia had been a junior and Calum a senior when they broke up. The first year after their breakup, she couldn't get close to Calum, but had made it a point to keep up with the gossip about him.

When she was a senior, Calum was at college and it was actually easier to gather information. Thanks to their time together, she knew where the wrestlers hung out. She would slink there and try to make herself invisible to catch any news of Calum. Olivia was so excited for him when she

had scrounged up enough information to realize Calum had left college, and Colorado, to help an up and coming MMA fighter train. Then, she had started stalking him on the internet.

It was in her best interests to forget about Calum, but she couldn't seem to do it. She never uttered his name or asked questions, but with the internet, she didn't have to. Six months after he left college, Calum was training to become a MMA fighter himself. A little bit of the guilt she would forever possess eased with each win.

This was Calum's first fight in the Martial Arts First League, the premier league in the MMA, and it was in Denver. A short thirty-minute drive from Brullington. She was bursting with excitement for Calum. He had accomplished so much in the five years since he'd been gone. Her latest internet stalking revealed that Calum was staying in Colorado after his premier. Olivia knew Calum was close to his family, so she was happy he was back in Colorado after traveling the world. The article she'd read didn't say where in Colorado, only indicated it would be his home base.

A little more guilt eased when she read he was returning. Now it was time for her to get on with her life. This match was Olivia's last 'stalking' before she bid Calum goodbye for good. She had tried over the last five years to forget him. But every few months she found herself at the library computers checking up on him. She could stop worrying. He was in the big leagues now and his name was becoming well-known.

Olivia was in her fourth year of college and finishing her degree in accounting. Each day, as graduation drew closer, the knot of fear in her stomach loosened a little more. It was almost time to separate herself from Colorado and her father. She had the education she needed to get a job and not be dependent on anyone but herself.

Four years ago, when she graduated from high school, she thought about leaving. She ached to. But when she started looking for jobs, finding one that would pay enough for her to live on was bleak. Especially since she would have nothing with her. Every towel and dish would need to be purchased.

She decided to go into accounting because it was a skillset she could put to use anywhere. Depending on the size of the city, it might just be a bookkeeping position, but she could still find a job. But there was another reason she chose this field; accountants were in high demand. If she couldn't find a job, even with a college degree, she would still be in the same predicament she was before college.

The booming announcer's voice startled her out of her thoughts. "Fighting in the blue corner, undefeated middleweight at 7-0, weighing in at 175 pounds, issss Carrlos, The Truck, Satia."

The shouting swelled in the arena as The Truck made his way to the cage. This was it. She leaned forward and kept her eyes glued to where The Truck had come from. Silently, she willed the crowd to stop yelling so Calum could be introduced.

Finally, the announcer started talking. Her heart beat faster and she stood up to her full 5'6", straining her neck and eyes for her first sight of him. "Fighting in the red corner, in his first Martial Arts First League match, at 180 pounds is Caluum, Stooic, Breen."

There, there he was. Olivia pushed to her tip toes, soaked him in, and felt that ever-present longing in her ease. She tuned out the boos and greedily ran her eyes over him as he made his way to the cage. He was bigger, but there was not an ounce of flab on his body. No matter where you dropped a quarter it would bounce back. Each muscle was clearly defined and ready to be utilized at a moment's notice.

There was a tattoo on his left pec. Olivia squinted her eyes to try and figure out what it was, but he was too far away. She made a mental note to figure out what it was later. A quick scan didn't reveal any other ink.

His midnight hair was cut closer to his head. Not quite a buzz cut on the sides and longer on the top. A memory skittered through her head and her body buzzed remembering the first time she had tentatively reached up and ran her hand through his hair. She had been surprised at how thick and soft it was. Calum's answering laugh was a far cry from what she was seeing now.

There was no showboating for Calum as he made his way to the cage. There was a calm, confident intensity radiating from him. His focus was on the cage and not the screaming crowd. She was as far away from the action as one could be, and his presence was still intimidating.

The easy-going charm that first drew her to Calum was nowhere to be seen. When he was wrestling, he would be bouncing with excitement and turn to her and wink before his match. The playfulness she remembered was nowhere to be seen. Even in the interviews she had read and watched it wasn't present.

The intensity of the crowd ratcheted back up as the two opponents stood in the middle of the cage staring each other down. Carlos Satia was bouncing on his feet sneering at Calum. He had a hard time standing still. Calum was the exact opposite. He stood motionless at his full height of 6'3". Only his eyes moved as he steadily scrutinized his opponent's antics and then seemed to dismiss him by calmly turning his back before the last words left the referee's lips.

A shiver ran through Olivia as she watched The Truck's face when Calum effectively dismissed the seasoned fighter. At 26, Carlos had been fighting for four years and was undefeated in 'The MMA league'. Olivia

didn't think it was a smart idea for Calum to piss off his opponent off before the fight began.

What did she know? Three minutes into the third round Calum won the match. He delivered a jaw-breaking uppercut to The Truck. As soon as The Truck staggered back Calum swung around and kicked him in the chest. Calum tracked him around the cage as The Truck struggled to get to his feet and stay up. Just as Calum started leaning over The Truck, who was on one knee, the referee stepped between them and declared Calum the winner.

The crowd was stunned into a momentary silence before it erupted. There was some booing, but most of the outpouring was now congratulatory cheering. Calum calmly strode back to his coach amongst the chaos and walked out of the arena.

Olivia watched him, silently mourning the loss of him with each step taking him out of her sight. She would always feel guilty, but it was time for her life to begin. It was obvious Calum was fine and he didn't need her to worry about him.

It had been worth the risk to come and watch him. The way he had moved during the match had been unbelievably fluid and focused. There hadn't been a sudden catching of his breath or a flinch when his opponent struck him. It didn't even look like his breathing was labored. Just a stoic man who flawlessly executed a plan.

With one last lingering look and a silent good-bye, Olivia knew it was time to figure out how to get rid of her dress. The smell was starting to turn her stomach and it was drying on her skin. It was a good thing her auburn hair was gathered up in a loose bun, otherwise it would also be smelling of beer. She made her way down to the souvenir stands she had passed in the lobby. She knew exactly which Calum Breen t-shirt she was going to buy.

Chapter 2

Most of the traffic had cleared out of the parking lot by the time she made her purchase and changed. She quickly hopped onto the freeway, drove back to Brulling, and made her way to *The Hangout* where she worked and lived.

She had told her boss, Shelly Anderson, she was going to be late tonight, but it was already almost 11:00. The college bar would be hopping and she still needed to change into her uniform of jean shorts and a t-shirt with the bar's logo.

Gathering all her stuff, Olivia took a look around the alley to make sure no one was hiding in the shadows. Brulling had a population of 50,000 and there wasn't a lot of crime, but stepping out of her car into a dark alley still gave her the willies. *The Hangout* was in downtown Brulling, and it was the only business open late at night within a couple block radius. The street lights out front didn't extend to the alley, so there were lots of places to hide. Still, Olivia had practically begged Shelly to give the apartment to her.

It was perfect. No one micro-managing her life, no roommate to worry about, and a job that allowed her to get lost in the crowd and not stand out. Olivia stepped out of the car with her mace in one hand and her keys in the other. Her shoulders relaxed when she got to the steps and the motion light came on.

By 11:15 Olivia went back down the stairs and used the bar's rear entrance to make her way to Shelly. She quickly got sucked into the mayhem. It was always busy on a Saturday, but this was ridiculous. She took baby steps on the old, scuffed, oak plank floor and squeezed her way between groups of people to make it to the bar. The bass of the music was underneath her feet and she heard the blaring of a song, but she couldn't tell what song it was with the noise of the crowd and cavernous open-rafter ceiling.

The bar was one of the older buildings in Brulling. It still had the original floor and a shared interior brick wall with a restaurant on the other side. There were a few booths, but mostly tall tables and backless bar stools with leather padding were scattered throughout. All of the wood gave the bar a warm, welcoming feel. The décor was all college paraphernalia. Old

and new college banners and flags ran across the rafters. Pictures of students and campus life lined the walls.

An apron was thrown at her as soon as she ducked under the bar counter. She stopped the tray sliding toward her and looked up. Shelly was grinning from ear-to-ear in her usual outfit of skinny jeans and the same t-shirt all the staff wore that showcased the bar's name and logo. Only the owner of *The Hangout* would be happy about the crammed crowd. A quick glance at the other three bartenders showed forced smiles and well-coordinated, but fast paced pouring of drinks.

Shelly yelled in her ear. "Good to see you Olivia. Gotta love the hometown boy winning his MMA fight! I had to pull Carla behind the bar. Go take her place in section 5." No further words were spoken, and Olivia put on her 'I am so happy to be here' smile and started taking drink orders.

A couple of hours later, while her drinks were being prepared she sat down to give her aching legs a rest. The crowd had not thinned and Olivia was tired of smiling, but she patted the wad of money in her pocket and ignored the thrumming in her head. Her arm was numb from constantly holding a tray of drinks, but she sucked it up and reminded herself it was only one hour until closing.

She sighed heavily after delivering her drinks and realized a new table had arrived. Judging by the crowd gathered around the table it must be someone popular. Forcing the smile back to her face and reminding herself more people meant more tips, she approached and raised her voice to be heard. "Does anyone want a drink?"

The crowd parted and the real world stopped. Slowly, her stunned body filled with joy. Calum, was here, in front of her. Her eager eyes ran the length of him absorbing him up close. His dark jeans and simple red t-shirt did nothing to hide his strength and magnetism. Briefly, her eyes paused on his left pec hoping to be able to see through his shirt and get an up-close look at the mysterious tattoo.

Olivia's feet were in the process of taking involuntary steps forward to throw herself in his arms, when her eyes met his cold, hard, green ones. This was what hate looked like. His fists were curled up at his sides and it looked like he was having trouble restraining himself from coming over and putting his hands around her neck. She gripped the tray to her chest, as if it would wield off the fury radiating from him.

She thudded back to reality and swallowed the lump rising up in her throat. Calum hated her, still. He had for six years, but with his surprise appearance, she had forgotten. She felt a vice tightening around her heart as she wrapped the familiar cloak of caution around herself. It would be best if she walked away and asked someone else to wait on him, but she

couldn't make herself move. After five years of no Calum she wanted to suck up every nuance of him, even if he couldn't stand the sight of her.

Someone jostled her from behind, breaking her unnerving connection to Calum and she used the excuse to get her breath and common sense back. Nothing good could come of her being around Calum.

She needed to get out of here, but it was too late. People started rattling off their orders. Ignoring the fury radiating from Calum, and his glower burning a hole in her back, she frantically tried to clear her rattled brain enough to write everything down. Desperately, she prayed Calum would not choose this setting to confront her about the past. She needed every second to comprehend and process that he was actually here. If he talked to her, she had no idea what would come out of her mouth and that was dangerous. Every move she made was watched, and if she ended up in the middle of a confrontation it would get back to her father.

The crowd started thinning out around her as their drink orders were taken. She looked down at the paper on her tray and hoped her wobbly handwriting would make sense at the bar. It was just a mass of jumbled letters to her.

A high-pitched snarky voice called out to her. In a daze, she raised her eyes from the pad. "Are you going to take *our* orders anytime soon?"

Olivia watched red-manicured fingers gesture to herself, Calum, and another woman sitting at the table. Scrupulously, she avoided looking at Calum, but raised her eyes to examine the women he was with. It was like seeing a carbon copy of the women at the MMA match.

Her hair was smooth, platinum blonde and she wore more makeup than Olivia owned, but it was flawless. It was obvious there was no bra under her white tank top and Olivia could see the pockets of her ripped shorts sticking out the bottom. She should look slutty, but instead, she looked put together and composed. The woman's exasperated question reminded her to pay attention.

"Do you know who this is?"

Olivia's eyes followed the long red nails as she laid one hand on Calum's shoulder and the other on his chest. "You should be thanking your lucky stars he is in this bar." Olivia fought the envy rising in her. She wanted to be the one who had the right to lay her hands on him.

Olivia's mind vaguely registered the blonde's announcement to Calum, "What an idiot. Why the hell is she just standing there?" She knew she was making a fool of herself, but she couldn't seem to pull herself out of the alternate universe her shocked body was occupying. The woman on the other side of Calum got her attention.

"Yo, bitch, get your eyes off our man and take our fucking order."

Mortified, Olivia realized she had been staring at Calum's chest and arms, so she quickly lowered her gaze to her tray with the jumbled mess of orders on it. She dragged in a breath, but still couldn't stop trembling. To escape, she needed to take their order, so she turned to the irritated, blue-haired girl who had spoken to her last.

This girl reminded her of a biker chick. The first thing you noticed, besides the shoulder length blue hair, was her black rimmed eyes. The only break in the black was the white surrounding her dark brown irises. Her red tube top was covered with a black leather jacket. There were so many holes in her painted-on jeans, the question of how she got them on flitted through Olivia's brain.

Olivia couldn't pull a smile to her face when she was feeling so dazed and confused. Hopefully she didn't look as discombobulated as she felt. "Sorry, what can I get you?"

"Sex on the Beach." Blue-hair girl dismissed her and pushed her chest into Calum's and murmured something into his ear. Olivia turned her attention to platinum-blond girl and took her beer order.

With her eyes on her pad, and her pulse hammering, she asked Calum, "What can I get you?" The silence was maddening, and Olivia waited with her trembling pen on the pad. Slowly, she realized Calum was waiting for her to look at him. Gathering all her courage, she raised her head and saw Calum's determined face.

"Look ladies." He spoke to the women with him, but his eyes held her prisoner. "It's the mayor's daughter. Now this night is complete. Will you be waiting on *us* the whole night?" He mocked.

"Yes." Olivia pushed the answer from her lips, while her dreams died a slow death. There was still a little part of her that wished Calum would see her and want to be with her, regardless of the past.

Somehow Calum must have heard the whispered answer. His eyes radiated with satisfaction as he stood up from the bar stool. After digging in his pocket, he extended his hand to her, loaded with one hundred dollar bills. Confused, she looked up.

"I wouldn't want you to think I wasn't going to pay my own way and take care of these lovely ladies," Calum drawled and then added in a harder tone. "It's amazing what I can pay for as a professional fighter."

Unbidden, tears came to her eyes and she failed to hide the flinch caused by having her words thrown back in her face. She deserved it, but it was still hard to hear. Calum was watching her closely while the two bimbos on either side of him pushed their boobs further into his side and cooed some nonsense to him.

Reaching out her hand, she quickly grabbed the cash and inhaled at the punch of energy she felt with the brief contact. Hoping to conceal her

trembling hand she stuffed the money in her apron pocket. Striving to keep her voice even she said, "I'll start a tab for you." As she was turning to go, the blue-hair bimbo stopped her.

"Don't you want to know what Calum wants to drink?" Her tone clearly said 'you idiot'.

Olivia plastered her professional smile on her face and turned back with her eyes glued to her tray. "Of course, what can I get you?"

"What do you recommend?"

Olivia knew he was trying to goad her and it was working. All she wanted to do was leave, but Calum was doing everything to keep her there. What he had endured was more humiliating than this, so she swallowed the uncomfortable emotions swirling in her stomach trying to crawl their way up her throat and played along.

"Do you prefer beer or hard liquor?"

Calum pretended to think about it, which stretched her nerves to the limit. She just stood there, eyes on her pad, and waited him out. Platinum blonde bimbo chose that moment to help prove the myth about blondes. "Calum, I've never seen you drink anything but beer. Are you going to venture out and try something stronger?"

Yep, platinum blonde was her favorite. Sneaking a peak, she saw Calum's eyes narrow at her and then he snapped his glare to the blonde. "Candy."

Seriously, her name was Candy? Olivia quickly lowered her head to hide the grin she could not contain. She missed the rest of what he said, but was aware enough to hear him grind out, "Just get me a light beer."

Olivia was relieved to get away and escaped to the bar. While Shelly filled her drink orders, Olivia's anxiety returned.

It was obvious he was relishing the idea of her being at his beck and call the whole night. Karma had come back at her, and it was her turn to endure his cold, demeaning treatment. She knew it was deserved, but it was still hard to reconcile past Calum memories with the present Calum.

The Calum she remembered flashed an easy-going, charming smile at everyone. She couldn't remember him smiling at all tonight, even after he won his match. The closest thing to a smile had been when he knew she was his waitress.

The money he gave her burned a hole in her pocket and she got it out and handed it to Shelly. With the last drink on her tray, Shelly scooped the money up and her eyes bulged when she counted out six hundred dollars. "Is this from the wrestler guy?"

Olivia bit her tongue to correct Shelly. Calum was a MMA fighter. Through her years of following Calum's career she had learned MMA

training was intense and demanding and they hated to be labeled wrestlers. "Yes."

Shelly's baby blue eyes darted toward the massive crowd gaining in strength around Calum. More and more people were recognizing him. Olivia could see the dollar signs in Shelly's eyes and the drool forming in the corner of her mouth like a rabid dog.

Sudden inspiration hit Olivia. "Don't you think it would be a good idea for Emma to wait on him?" Shelly's questioning eyes swung back to her. "You know Emma likes to flirt with the male customers. She thrives on male customers."

They wore the same uniform, but Emma definitely looked better in it. Emma's shorts were a couple of inches shorter than Olivia's, real 'daisy dukes'. The black, logo t-shirt they both wore was lower cut and tighter on Emma. There was ample evidence Emma had plenty to show off, whereas Olivia had chosen a t-shirt that was one size too big. It made her uncomfortable to have people staring at her chest.

Olivia could see the wheels turning in Shelly's head and she felt the knots in her stomach loosen a little. Everything she had said was true, but Olivia was the better waitress. She sweetened the pot, "I'll take Emma and Carla's station."

"Done. You go deliver the drinks and I'll tell Emma."

The relief Olivia felt made her feel light-headed. She started on the perimeter of the crowd surrounding Calum, delivering drinks, and did her 'dance' to get closer to the center. She swore she could feel Calum's gaze on her, but it had to be her hyper aware nerves playing tricks on her. Carefully, making sure she didn't catch Calum's eyes, she made her way to platinum blonde's side with the three remaining drinks.

Just as she grasped the Sex on the Beach drink her tray started tipping. With one hand holding a drink she used the other hand under the tray to desperately try and balance the two remaining drinks. Despite her antics, she watched helplessly as everything fell to the floor.

For the second time that night, she was soaked in beer. Olivia stood there looking at the front of her wet shirt while holding the Sex on the Beach. When platinum blonde tittered, Olivia raised her disbelieving gaze and saw the satisfaction on the blonde's face. She had purposely tripped her tray.

"I'm so sorry. I didn't see you there. You are so easy to miss."

The inner circle's chatter stopped. When she became aware of how many people were staring, she felt her cheeks heat up. Being the center of attention was not something she liked, and it made her brain start functioning again. She handed the drink over and bent to pick up her tray

and the two empty beer mugs. As she stood, she pulled her soaked, clinging t-shirt away from her skin.

She looked up to tell Calum and blue haired girl she would be back and saw his gaze glued to her wet t-shirt. Instinctively, she put her tray up and covered up her inability to win a wet t-shirt contest. Calum's smug green gaze gave her pause.

Was it funny one of his girlfriends had doused her and embarrassed her? She watched as Calum reached into his pocket, pulled out five dollars, and handed it to her.

"Take this, so you can get a new t-shirt." Sadness welled up in her at more evidence of how he had changed. Old Calum would have jumped up and apologized. Now he seemed to revel in the 'soft' chuckles of both of his girlfriends.

Keeping the tray clutched to her chest, and ignoring Calum's outstretched hand, Olivia looked at platinum blonde. In a tight voice, she forced a smile and squeezed the pleasant words past her lips, "Accidents happen. No harm, no foul."

Just as she was getting ready to say she would be back with another beer, Emma swooped in to save her. "Here we are, these drinks are on the house for the disruption." As she passed out the drinks Olivia turned to slink away.

