



Undeniably Yours: Book Two of The Kowalskis

By Shannon Stacey

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Beth's tending bar at a wedding when she comes face-to-face with a tuxedo-clad man she never thought she'd see again. She tries to keep her distance from Kevin but, by last call, she can't say no to his too-blue eyes or the invitation back to his room. Then she slips out before breakfast without leaving a note and, despite their precautions, she's pregnant.

Kevin quickly warms to the idea of being a dad and to seeing where things go with Beth. After all, he's not the player she thinks he is. But she's not ready for a relationship and, given his reputation, it's going to take a lot to convince her to go on a second date with the father of her child...

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Editorial Review

Review

"Books like this are why I read romance."

- Smart Bitches, Trashy Books, on Exclusively Yours

"This is the perfect contemporary romance!"

- RT Book Reviews, on Undeniably Yours

"Sexy, sassy and immensely satisfying"

- Fresh Fiction, on Undeniably Yours

"This contemporary romance is filled with charm, wit, sophistication, and is anything but predictable"—
BN.com Romance Blog on Yours to Keep

About the Author

New York Times bestselling author Shannon Stacey lives with her husband and two sons in New England, where her favorite activities are writing stories of happily ever after and riding her four-wheeler. The Stacey family spends many weekends on their ATVs, making loads of muddy laundry to keep Shannon busy when she's not at her computer. However, she prefers writing to laundry and considers herself lucky she got to be an author when she grew up. Visit her at www.ShannonStacey.com.

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October

Every time the New England Patriots chalked one up in the win column, Kevin Kowalski got laid.

A score for them was a score for him. Not that he was always looking for a companion on a Sunday night, but the offers weren't scarce. As he slid a foaming mug of Sam Adams down the polished surface of the best damn sports bar in New Hampshire's capital city—which just happened to list his name as proprietor—he caught a blonde watching him. The Pats were lining up at first and goal on the big-screen, but her eyes were on him, letting him know the New England quarterback wasn't the only guy in scoring position.

But tonight he was having a hard time concentrating on the blonde with the chemically enhanced lips, surgically enhanced boobs and alcoholenhanced sex drive giving him the *you could go all the way* look.

He was too busy keeping his eye on the brunette at the other end of the bar. It wasn't just the fact she was pretty, with a mess of dark brown hair falling to her shoulders and eyes to match. Or that her fisherman's sweater and jeans hugged her body in all the right places, though that certainly didn't hurt.

Mostly he was keeping an eye on her because her date was going downhill in a hurry. Either the guy in the uptight, button-down shirt and khakis had had a couple before he'd walked into the bar or he had the alcohol tolerance of a high-school freshman, because it had only taken a couple shots of Scotch for Drunken Asshole Syndrome to kick in.

Now there was some body language going on between the couple, and her body wanted away from his body. His fingers would start looking for a soft place to land. She'd deflect. Rinse and repeat.

Jasper's Bar & Grille had three rules. No smoking. No throwing beer mugs, even at the Jets fans. And when a lady said no, it meant no.

The Patriots scored, and the glasses shook on the shelves as a triumphant roar filled Jasper's. The blonde hopped up and down on her bar stool, her boobs testing the bungee ability of her bra straps.

And the jerk with the wandering hands raised his empty glass to wave it in Kevin's general direction.

He made his way down to the couple but ignored the glass. "We won't be serving you any more alcohol, but you're welcome to a coffee or a soda, on the house."

Uptight Guy's face turned as red as a Budweiser label, and Kevin sighed. He was going to be one of *those* guys. Jasper's had a zero-tolerance policy, so as the guy's ass lifted off the stool, Kevin gave Paulie the signal and watched her roll her eyes as she reached for the phone.

"I'm not drunk and I want another goddamn Scotch!"

The woman put her hand on the guy's arm, as if to push him back onto his seat. "Derek, let's—"

"Who the hell are you to tell me I can't have another goddamn Scotch?"

Uptight Guy's badass act was diluted a bit by the weaving. "I'm the guy who reserves the right to refuse you service."

"Beth, tell this asshole to gimme another drink."

Kevin shook his head. "You're cut off."

It happened fast. Kevin wasn't sure if the guy was throwing a punch or reaching in to grab him by the shirt, but his elbow hit his date and knocked her backward. She didn't fall, thanks to the guy sitting next to her, who was pleasantly surprised to find himself with an armful of brunette, but it distracted Kevin enough to allow the guy to land a weak, glancing blow to his jaw.

Uptight Guy, whom the woman had called Derek, sucked in a breath, as if he just realized what he'd done. Kevin watched as the guy's fighter-flight instinct kicked in and wasn't surprised when he chose flight. Sadly for him, Kevin was six-two and had some experience collaring yahoos, whether they were crooks back when he'd worn a badge or his four rowdy nephews. He reached across the bar, grabbed the guy by the scruff of the neck and yanked him back.

Derek was struggling like a pickerel on a hook and, when Kevin's grip almost slipped off the guy's collar, he jerked hard. Derek's head snapped around, and his nose exploded on the edge of the bar. Oops.

The guy screamed like a girl...and the crowd went wild. Jasper's didn't attract a real rough crowd, but everybody loved a good fight.

"Good fight" being relative, of course. Derek cupped his hands over his face, trying to staunch the blood and let out a high-pitched keening sound that made more than a few of the patrons wince.

"Shut up or I'll knock your ass out," Kevin yelled at the guy which, of course, got everybody in the bar

chanting. *Do it...do it...do it...*

"Oh, my God, his nose!" Derek's date untangled herself from her neighbor and grabbed a couple of napkins off the bar. She tried to get to Derek's nose, but he kept pushing her away.

The crowd quieted when a couple of police officers walked through the front door. Derek's keening changed pitch when he saw them, from a pain-filled squeal to an *oh, shit* desperation.

"Hey, Kowalski," the older of the two cops said.

"Hey, Jonesy. Your old man like those tickets?"

"Are you kidding me? Tenth row, fifty-yard line? He was in heaven. Said to tell you thanks and give you his best."

"Glad to do it," he said easily, still holding on to Derek's collar. He fostered a friendly relationship with the local P.D., not only because he'd been on the job once down in Boston, but because any good businessman did. Especially businessmen who served alcohol. "Got a live one here."

"What happened to him?"

"Hit his face on the bar. You know how it is."

In the split second between Kevin releasing him and Jonesy grabbing for his wrists, Derek stupidly decided to make a break for the door.

The rookie made a move to stop him at the same time Beth did. She accidentally—at least it *looked* accidental—tripped him, and the young cop fell on his face. Jonesy jumped over his partner and did the nearing-retirement version of a sprint after Derek.

Beth was practically hyperventilating.

The rookie scrambled to his feet as Jonesy took down his prey in a half-ass diving tackle that made the crowd roar in approval. Rookie had his handcuffs out, but it looked as if Uptight Guy was going all-in on a resisting charge.

"Why are you doing this to him?"

Kevin's gaze swiveled to the woman, who looked almost as pissed as her date. "I didn't do jack to him, lady. Did you forget the part where he hit *you*?"

"He didn't hit me. He bumped me trying to hit you."

Yeah, that was so much better. "How about the groping? How many times were you going to tell him no?"

She actually rolled her eyes at him. "I had it all under control."

"No, now it's all under control."

"Look, it's not what you... Forget it. You have to help him, though."

Since Derek had two hundred pounds of veteran cop kneeling on his head while the rookie tried to secure the

cuffs, there wasn't much Kevin *could* do for him, even if he wanted to. Which he didn't.

"It's not what you think," she insisted.

"I'm going to sue you for everything you've got, asshole," Derek screamed over his shoulder. "And you, you dumb bitch, you're fired!"

Oops. Kevin looked at Beth. "I thought he was just a bad date."

She climbed onto a stool and dropped her forehead to the bar with a thunk. "You just cost me my job."

Only several years of fine-tuning his brain-to-mouth filter behind the bar kept him from pointing out she was maybe better off without it. "Want a beer?"

A beer? Rambo the bartender here thought a beer was going to fix the mess he'd gotten her into? Beth Hansen curled her hands into fists to keep from reaching across the bar and shaking him like a martini.

So Derek was a drunken ass. So what else was new? It was nothing she couldn't handle. She handled it once a week or so, as a matter of fact, and had been for three months.

After work, Derek would leave the office and walk down the street to have a drink. He'd call his secretary—that would be her—with some bogus excuse requiring her to stop by the bar. A paper that needed signing. A fax he'd forgotten to read but absolutely had to before he went home. She'd show up, he'd try to get in her pants, she'd put him in a cab and the next day they'd pretend it didn't happen.

Sometimes, like today, he'd even drag her out on a weekend. Maybe not ideal working conditions, but she'd suffered worse.

But this time Derek's usual bar was closed for renovations, so he'd kept on walking until he'd come to Jasper's Bar & Grille. Now her boss had a broken nose, and she had no job.

A beer wasn't going to help.

She lifted her head and propped her chin on her hand. "Did you have to call the police?"

"Yup."

"You could have let it go."

He rested his palms on the edge of the bar and looked her in the eye. God, he was tall. And that wasn't all he had going for him. Besides the height and the blue eyes and the dimples, he had broad shoulders straining the seams of an ancient Red Sox T-shirt and thick brown hair that had that careless style of a man who didn't want to fuss with it. Probably mid-thirties.

"Lady, he punched me in the face."

"It wasn't much of a punch," she muttered, since she couldn't deny it. "I almost had him talked into a cab, but you had to go and make it a big deal."

"Hey, Kevin," a younger guy called out. "Can we make a mimosa?"

"This is a sports bar, not Easter brunch." He turned back to her, shaking his head. "All I did was tell him he

was cut off. Not only do I have the right, but when a patron's visibly intoxicated, I have the obligation. And I ain't exactly a turn-the-other-cheek...

Users Review

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Jennifer Gallant:

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