

# ONE SMOKING HOT FAIRY TAIL

book one in the Water Kingdom Series

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## The Past is Not Always The Past

Sabrina dreamt about that night all the time. Sometimes tiny details were changed—the kind of car she was driving, the name of the corporation she targeted, the amount of animals she saved—but it always ended the same. After so much excitement, so much thrill and pleasure, she always forgot to pick up Cade’s camera. *That stupid fucking camera.*

She remembered every detail about it: its brand, its resolution, the lens size, that it was made in Japan. It haunted her so much that she had bought several cameras identical to it since, just to smash them to bits. Her first therapist said that it might help, but except for giving her a brief moment of delight when the tiny circuit boards and chips spilled from the cameras like a slasher-film victim’s guts, it really did nothing to alleviate the pain of the past.

The dream came tonight shortly after she’d collapsed in bed half-naked and fully drunk—at least she was alone and not making another mistake like the one she had made with the new host of *American Idol Replay*.

Sabrina had wanted to touch herself, but her hand only made it as far as her lower stomach, her long, pink and white fingernails just inside her panties, before she passed out. However there could still be satisfaction to come. The dream was not entirely bad, after all. It may have featured the catalyst to the worst night of her life, but it also contained some of the best sex she’d ever had.

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Sabrina dashed across the parking lot, looking between the mesmerizing flicker of a dying street lamp and the building behind her. The emptiness of the parking lot, the stillness of the air—it all seemed surreal, like something out of an old horror film. But she was not afraid of movie monsters—not when she knew real ones existed.

Sabrina was out of breath, both panicked and energized. She coughed harshly for a moment, irritated to have the exhilaration of the moment ruined by her hack. *I really need to fucking quit smoking.* She took one last glance behind her at the pharmaceutical corporation's lab. There was no alarm blaring, no flashing security lights; they had succeeded. Those poor lab animals were finally going to be safe.

"Tell me again, Cade, why you made me park so freaking far away?"

"I destroyed the surveillance cameras on the east side of the building where the loading docks are, but that pink car of yours... it's like a damned billboard advertising America's sweetheart, Sabrina London, is here," her boyfriend replied.

It had only been six months since they'd met, but it felt like longer. As much as she hated the term "whirlwind romance," it applied to the two of them. It had been the best six months of her life. She was in love, but she wasn't sure if he knew that yet or felt the same. The undead—their emotions could be nearly impossible to read, even for someone as empathic as her.

"Slow down!"

Cade pointed his tiny HD camera at her feet and grimaced. "I wouldn't have to slow down if your boots didn't have heels. What are those, five inches tall?"

"Three and a quarter inch, actually, and very sturdy. I mean, they better fucking be for eight hundred bucks."

"When I told you to wear boots tonight, I meant combat boots or work boots."

"Jimmy Choo doesn't make combat boots."

“Who?” Cade snickered. “Never mind. Keep running, my sweet sunshine. We don’t want to be here when the authorities arrive.”

Sabrina smiled; she loved when he called her that.

“Wait,” Cade said, suddenly serious.

“What? Did we forget something?” Sabrina nearly choked on her fear.

“You wore combat boots with the camouflage bikini in that one magazine protesting the war in the Middle East.” Cade smirked, running his tongue over his teeth. “I remember that photograph very well. It was my favorite to—”

“I remember that one too,” Sabrina interrupted. “Good pay. I kept the bikini but not the boots. I hated those boots—heavy things, made my toes all yucky and sweaty.”

“They *gave* you the bikini?”

“Well, I *normally* get to keep what I wear.”

“So you stole it.”

“I didn’t *steal it*, Cade. That would be wrong.”

“You say that now,” he laughed.

A truck roared nearby as they reached her car, a pink Lamborghini Gallardo with opalescent rims. The sound assured them their accomplice was making his escape, speeding down the main road, away from the building. Both tracked the vehicle until it was well past the two traffic lights and out of sight.

“Good. He’s clear.” Cade nodded. “Let’s make haste.”

Sabrina jumped in and floored it—racing out of the parking lot in the opposite direction of the delivery truck. Not a minute later, Sabrina caught Cade’s eyes on her legs as they worked the pedals. His lustful stare reminded her of the promise she had made: his help with this excursion for a night full of passion—a night that, even in his long life, he would not soon forget.

“Are you sure he’ll do what we asked? I mean, can he be trusted not to, you know, eat any of the animals?”

Cade lifted his eyes from where they had been glued to her inner thigh and answered, “You know Nicodemus.”

“Sure, I’ve seen him out a few times these past two weeks, but the guy just creeps me the hell out.”

Cade laughed.

“Shut up.” Sabrina smacked his leg. “You know I’ve waited a very long time to do this.”

“I know.”

She paused to catch her breath; the adrenaline that had burned inside her moments ago had begun to wear off, and with its absence came the urge to yawn.

“You and Nico have talked a few times. You should already know he’s honorable,” Cade said.

“Honestly, Cade, the old man can be a little hard to communicate with. I swear, when I talk to him, he just looks straight through me.”

“Well, he still has trouble with English... especially its modern incarnation.”

“Still?” Sabrina replied. “I just don’t want to find out tomorrow that he ate them all.”

“He promised me all the animals would be distributed, safely, among the five pet rescues you provided addresses for. The colonel takes *all* his jobs seriously. You have nothing to worry about, my love.”

“Good.”

“Regardless, I made sure he ate before the mission.”

She looked at Cade’s smiling face and laughed. “Thanks.”

Sabrina shifted gears and the engine growled in that way that always made her feel more... *alive*. When the speedometer hit sixty-five, she pretended to look for cars behind them while she checked her makeup in the rearview.

"I still don't understand why, after all this time, you two are besties. I mean you guys are so... different."

Cade shook his head. "You and Moselle are different."

"I know..." Sabrina wanted to have a better comeback. "But he's like sixty. You guys look like you could be father and son."

"We are father and son—well, as near as our kind can come. You know Nico is the closest thing I'll ever have to a—"

"I don't like when you say that."

"Sabrina, I told you when we first started dating that our love, no matter how grand, would never create a child."

"I know. I know." Sabrina pushed the thought out of her head. "Can you honestly say people have never thought you two were maybe—"

"Sabrina, if it was you who had spent the entire winter with Nicodemus in Stalingrad..." Cade trailed off.

"Are you okay?"

"Stalingrad." Cade shivered. "It brings back a flood of memories. Gun fire, explosions, screams, death, blood. So much blood."

"I'm sorry." Sabrina patted Cade's knee.

"Don't be."

"Let's talk about something else."

"The more I think of it, there's no one I would rather share a foxhole with than Nicodemus."

“Gross,” Sabrina let slip.

“Mother Russia,” Cade sighed.

“Someday, you’ll have to take me there.”

“Perhaps. I haven’t returned since World War Two.” Cade pondered a moment. “I hear the Cold War ruined much of its history and splendor.”

Sabrina glanced over at Cade. She still had to remind herself he was centuries old, regardless of how young he looked. When a twitch crawled across his handsome, clean-shaven face, and ended in a wince, Sabrina knew something was wrong.

“Hey, you okay?”

“Pull over.”

“Why? What’s wrong?”

“Sabrina, please, pull the vehicle over.”

Sabrina turned down a side street and parked behind an abandoned building. The surrounding area was filled with shadows, but with her high beams on, enough of the place could be seen that she felt safe. As soon as she put the car in park, Cade was out the door so fast a pile of receipts she had stuffed in her cup holder were knocked loose.

“Cade?”

He was gone for a moment but reappeared several feet in front of the car. Awash in the bright headlights, he fell to his hands and knees, the look of pain on his face clear in the harsh glare.

“What is it?” Sabrina asked as she stepped out of the car.

“The pull. The pull is too strong.”

“The what? Cade, stop fooling around.” She approached him cautiously.

By the strain on his face and the way the lean muscles in his arms bulged, she would have sworn he was in the midst of a heart attack or a stroke. When he did not answer her pleas, Sabrina shouted, "What the fuck is wrong?"

"Too long. I cannot fight it much longer..."

Sabrina wrapped her hands around his arm and tried to help him up. Cade was heavier than he looked, but she tugged until he was finally standing.

"What the hell do you have in your pockets, Cade? Lead?"

"Bullets."

"Bullets?"

Sabrina reached into his jacket pocket and withdrew a handful of bullets. "You weren't fucking kidding."

"Gun's worthless without ammo," he grunted.

"Cade..."

Sabrina didn't know whether to yell at him or hug him. She had no idea what was going on and he was being his normal, stubborn, uninformative self.

"I'm sorry, my love, all this excitement, and I haven't eaten all day. I'm just hungry."

"You scared me. I thought something was seriously wrong, like you were having a stroke or something." She slapped his shoulder.

"You know how I get if I don't eat."

Sabrina frowned, but a sly grin was forming on Cade's face—one she had come to know meant trouble.

"I love you."

"I love you." Sabrina finally relaxed. "Cade, I think I've had my fill of excitement tonight."

"Are you sure? Because I do recall you saying something about going back to your place to—"

She stopped him before he could say it. “Yes, I did. Let’s hurry, okay?.”

“Why wait?”

The moment Cade’s hands wrapped around Sabrina’s waist, she was his. His touch, though cold, sent heat all the way to her core. She could feel the desire rise from her belly to her chest, where it was trapped along with the breath in her lungs. Cade’s eyes drilled into hers as he took possession of her mouth. She shivered, but not from the chill of his lips. To kiss him was to flirt with danger.

Sabrina tilted her head back and moaned into his lips; the sensation of her breath being stolen was as pleasurable as it was painful. The blue-black sky was all she could see, and she fixed her eyes on the brightest star. *Don’t focus on the coming pain*, she told herself. *Don’t focus on the pain.*

With a yank, Sabrina’s hoodie and shirt came off. She hoped he hadn’t torn the hoodie; it was one of her favorites—given to her by the owner and head designer of Rebel Spirit Clothing.

“Cade...” her voice softly faded away.

He gently slid his hands up her back but then yanked again, ripping her bra off as well, leaving her hardened nipples open to the cool night air.

Sabrina’s body tensed up as Cade’s cold tongue worked the tight buds. She anticipated the first bite, knowing it would hurt. She tried to think of anything else, to concentrate on his flicking tongue, but was still jolted with irrepressible fear when his long fangs brushed her flesh. The first bite was always the hardest. Cade did his best to control his nature, but his hunger for her love was often outweighed by his hunger for blood. Sabrina gazed down at her breasts in his hands as he massaged them, running his tongue up her quivering chest to the base of her neck.

“Fuck, Cade!” Sabrina yelped as he penetrated her breast where it met her armpit—one of his favorite spots.

“Sorry.”

Sabrina blinked her tearing eyes and whispered, “Someone might see us.”

Cade smiled and revealed the tiny video camera clutched in his hand. When he pointed it at them both, he chuckled. “Smile, my love.”

“You’ve got to be fucking kidding me, Cade,” Sabrina grumbled on.

“Not at all.”

She swatted the camera out of his hand, the small electronic thing, no larger than a credit card, landing on the ground beside them.

Sabrina thought to grab it and turn it off, but in the blink of an eye, Cade had spun her around and bent her over, her hands the only things at rest on the hood of the car.

Running his fingertips down her bare back, he leaned in and whispered, “I want you to release—”

“Not here,” Sabrina replied over her shoulder, her long blonde hair shielding her embarrassment.

“Why not?”

“I don’t want anyone to see me—us.”

Sabrina heard his frustrated sigh; it was deafening to her. She did not want to disappoint him, not after all he had done for her tonight, so she peeled her tight leather pants off slow and steady.

“What are you waiting for?” Sabrina asked huskily. “Aren’t you going to fuck me?”

“Yes.”

Sabrina jumped when she felt something cold slide up her inner thigh, to the softness of her folds, and then scrape up her back, to her right hip. When her panties began to move, she realized exactly what she was feeling.

"Don't cut them," she said sternly.

It was too late; a simple flick of Cade's hand severed the elastic band. Now completely naked, Sabrina spun around to face him and poked him in the chest.

"I don't think you realize how many pairs of my panties you ruin, Cade."

"Maybe I do."

"You know what I mean!"

"Should I buy you some new bloomers, sweetie?"

Sabrina wanted to say something witty back, but all of a sudden his icy hand was cupping her, caressing the very area the small article of clothing had just been covering. Cade began to spread her open, soothing the ache that had been building between her legs since the night started.

"Do you remember our first time?"

"Yes."

His fingers, although chilly, were welcome inside her and she guided them in deeper. Cade moved, slowly at first, gliding gracefully in and out, making her quiver.

"What do you remember most?"

As one hand fondled the warm, soft space between her legs, the other cupped her breast, giving it a squeeze while lifting it to his mouth.

"I remember how much it hurt, how the pain suddenly shifted to pleasure."

A long kiss stole away time. She only felt Cade; the rest was nothingness. Sabrina's eyes fluttered open when she felt his hard length brush against her wetness. Their eyes locked as he entered her. Sabrina smiled. With each push inside her, he brought her closer to the edge, blocking out thoughts of anything but their physical connection.

"What else?"

"What else do I remember?" she asked.

He did not answer. By the look on his face, he was in ecstasy. Sabrina took great pride in knowing how good she could make him feel. The notion amazed her. It had such beautiful meaning—she was everything her man needed: body, soul, and...

“I remember the blood.”

With that, Cade bit her again, sinking his teeth into her shoulder as he increased the tempo of his thrusts.

She wrapped her arms around him and whispered, “Never let me go.”

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Waking up in her bedroom after the dream again, Sabrina screamed. *The camera, the fucking camera.* Grunting in anger, she reached down the front of her underwear. Tonight, the dream was unsatisfying in every way. Tonight, Sabrina needed to take control.

## Fame

Something seemed wrong. Sabrina had always been sensitive to the world around her as well as its minute changes, and her whole body was telling her: something was off.

Dressed in her pink Agent Provocateur bikini, Sabrina stared down into the buzzing city of Beverly Hills from the balcony of her Rodeo Drive penthouse apartment, twisting her jeweled silver bangle. It had become a habit over the past few years, one that normally surfaced when she was anxious.

The wind fluttered the pages of an old *People* magazine beside her. Startled out of thought, she listened to the tips of the glossy paper as they struck the white wood of the French bistro table.

That magazine—she would never forget the day it was given to her. One year ago, Sabrina had stood on that very spot—set to end her life. Her wealth, her family, her job—everything was at risk, with the exception of her fame. Fame was like a highway, and one year ago, like it or not, Sabrina was traveling in the fast lane.

“I swear, Mira, I feel like there’s something big happening out there, you know? Something that requires my attention.”

Mira, her best friend, was treading water in their small, indoor pool. Mira lived to swim, and together the girls did a hundred laps in the thirty-foot indoor pool each day. Though Sabrina credited her tight, athletic form to swimming, Mira did it simply for pure enjoyment. On days the pair were not busy, she would stay in the pool as long as Sabrina would allow it.

A gust of wind whipped Sabrina's pale blonde hair around her face. A helicopter's spinning blades thumped louder as it drew near. It had been months since a desperate photographer tried to make a buck off a photo of her in a skimpy bikini, if that were the case today, she would give him exactly what he wanted.

Sabrina placed her hands on the railing of the balcony, spread her legs shoulder-width apart, and bent over slightly at the waist. Chest pushed out, she quickly adjusted the bra's sailor's knot detail at the center of her cleavage. She wanted to make sure that if this photo showed up on the tabloids and social-networking sites, it was a damn good one.

Surprisingly, the helicopter passed by, its red and white blades a blur of motion as it sped off in the direction of the highway. *Fuck me, probably another car accident*, she thought while relaxing her stance.

"Isn't today the day?" Mira called from inside the penthouse.

"Yes, the funds I transferred into your account should be good now. You know what to do."

"I already found a no-kill animal shelter in Nacogdoches, Texas, that could use the money desperately."

"Great."

"Are you sure you don't want to donate it yourself, Sabrina? The press you would get from it would be incredible."

"No, Mira. It has to be completely anonymous, untraceable to me. I seriously don't want to read on some asshole's blog that I'm trying to buy back my celebrity status."

Mira nodded; Sabrina knew she understood.

A sudden chord of music from Sabrina's favorite heavy metal song alerted her to an incoming call. Snatching her cell phone from the table where it sat next to the weathered *People* magazine, she pressed accept with a quick glance at the unknown caller ID.

“Sabrina, at your service.”

“Greetings, Sabrina,” a sultry voice licked at her ear.

“Moselle!” Sabrina cheered. “I didn’t recognize your number.”

“I had to change it again, my friend. It has a way of falling into the wrong hands.”

“I understand.” Sabrina rolled her eyes; she too had been the victim of such annoyances.

“What’s up, babe?”

“Do you recall the texts I sent you last month, telling you my father would be opening a new Club Afterlife? Well, forgive me for not calling sooner, but the red carpet grand opening is this Friday.”

“Really?” Sabrina bounced with excitement. “When and where?”

“I will text you all the details.”

“Great. I’m there.”

“Will you be bringing a date?” Moselle inquired.

“I’m kinda single at the moment, so Mira will be my date for the evening. How about you, sexy? Still eating men alive?”

“I *have* found someone special.” Moselle replied. “I will introduce him to you at the club.”

“Oh, no juicy details?”

“All I will say is that he has beautiful eyes and smells so delicious, my mouth waters at the mere thought of him.”

Sabrina laughed. “I can’t wait to meet him. See you there, babe.”

With the *People* magazine rolled tightly in her hand, she marched inside to tell Mira the news.

“What’s today’s date?” Mira asked when she saw the rolled up magazine in Sabrina’s hand.

“You know what day it is.”

“Then it’s time you got rid of that stupid thing.” Mira pointed from the water where she bobbed up and down.

“I know.”

Sabrina took one last look at the cover: *Sabrina London, People Magazine’s Most Beautiful Woman*.

“Sabrina...” Mira prompted again.

“Yeah, I know.”

Sabrina pictured herself a year ago—weak and disheveled, with wind-scattered hair sticking to her tear-stained makeup. It was the night the video of her freeing the test animals went viral. CNN called it a crime—her father called it unforgivable.

Sabrina’s heart seized as the painful memory played out further—her mind burned with the hurtful words that filled her ears that night.

The same old, dangerous thoughts echoed in her head as she watched her past self climb the slippery railing and slide her bare feet to the edge. *If only the pharmaceutical corporation would have accepted my bribes. If only Cade wouldn’t have filmed us. If only he hadn’t left his camera lying in that fucking parking lot where anyone could find it.* It had been a long time since Sabrina considered just how close she was to giving up and jumping.

*Cade is gone. Those days are gone.* Sabrina couldn’t think about it another second. She swallowed her sorrow and, with all the strength she could muster, pitched the magazine over the balcony, out into the empty sky.

“Done,” she said.

“Done,” Mira repeated.

Sabrina took a deep breath and pulled back her shoulders. “Well, we better get dressed; Moselle invited us to her father’s new club opening.”

“Where?” Mira asked as she climbed from the pool.

“Back east.”

“Not tonight?”

“No, Friday.” Sabrina dashed by her friend.

“Oh, then what’s the rush?”

“I want to hit the Christian Dior sale before noon, and if that skinny bitch from *The New Hills* is there buying up all the embroidered platforms, I *will* punch her in her newly sculpted nose!” Sabrina shouted from her room.

“Sabrina, must I remind you that you’re trying to clean up your image before you launch your career as a pop star? Fighting reality show stars will only lower your q-rating.”

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Mira wrapped a towel around herself and tucked a corner over the top edge. She shuffled carefully across the marble floor of the pool room, through the hallway, to the main living room. Mira always squinted when she passed through the living room, which was the center of the radial design of Sabrina’s apartment. She worried that the bright pink, white, and black color scheme would burn her corneas when the sun shone through all four skylights. Sabrina’s furniture had been special ordered from overseas, before Mira knew her, and she often wondered where she found a company that made couches with such vivid pink leather upholstery.

*Who am I to complain?* Mira thought, crossing the tall, white shag carpet to the hall where her bedroom was.

“What shoes should I wear?” Sabrina yelled from her room.

“Not sure,” Mira responded, uncertain about anything to do with fashion, as usual.

“Well, I can’t just go to buy new shoes wearing old ones!” Sabrina yelled from her walk-in closet where Mira knew she was rummaging about on the floor.

“If you say so.”

Mira took a long look at herself in the full-length mirror. The mirror was exquisitely crafted, covered with ornate designs, but Mira rarely saw anything other than the plain girl reflected before her.

Mira tossed her hair from one side to the other, sighing loudly. Although her hair was long, it was dull and stringy, not voluminous like her friend’s. And her eyes matched her hair: brown—entirely unremarkable. Mira drew her shoulders back and pushed her less-than-ample chest out.

One characteristic Mira could not hide was her body’s clear strength. She was trim to the extent of having nearly zero body fat; her muscles, although lean, were cut at such tight angles their presence was emphasized.

“They’ll probably compliment you if you wear the ones you bought there last month,” Mira suggested, changing out of her competitive swimmer’s one-piece bathing suit.

“Nah, you can wear them. I wore them that one time out with that quarterback. He said they made my feet look scrumptious and he wanted to lick them. Gods, it was gross.”

“That is gross. Professional athletes are too cocky. The things they say.”

Sabrina entered Mira’s room holding the shoes by their straps; she had on a pleated miniskirt and bouclé keyhole-front sweater—together the price tags totaled over a grand, Mira guessed.

“No, silly Mira, I mean him licking my feet was gross.”

Mira looked up at Sabrina as she fastened her bra. She knew her friend was joking. Sabrina had been careful not to create any scandals recently.

“You’re wearing a miniskirt to buy shoes? I bet you’re not even wearing underwear,” Mira accused.

“Maybe... maybe not.” Sabrina shrugged.

“You slut!” Mira joked.

“I’m almost twenty-three years old now, Mira.”

“So?”

“So I prefer harlot, it sounds more...” Sabrina shrugged again. “I don’t know... classy.”

## Spoiled Contentment

Later that night, as the sun was setting on Beverly Hills, Sabrina sat on one of her large, leather loveseats, her legs dangling over the arm. She wiggled her toes while she admired the swirling crystal design on her new, black pumps. Music so loud it seemed like it would be impossible to think vibrated the room. Sabrina loved music and always said the only way to listen was to feel it. Although she wanted to become a pop star like the ones that were played all over satellite radio, she loved nineties heavy metal.

Mira paced the room. Sabrina had bought her a new pair of high heels, fuck-me pumps really. Sabrina peeked up from her feet to the spectacle of Mira marching back and forth. It made her smile; Mira was truly an awkward sight. It seemed as if Mira was testing the heels' stability with every other step.

Although Sabrina wore a look of contentment after a long day spent shopping and hanging out with her best friend, she was far from happy. Under her smile was a maelstrom of emotion, one that Sabrina had spent months burying and disguising. Her smile, like the rest of her façade, was mostly for show.

Once the nucleus of a close and loving family, Sabrina had been excommunicated by her mother and father, not only for breaking into the pharmaceutical company and freeing the animals, but also for what happened with Cade afterward—they found it inexcusable, embarrassing, and lewd. He may have been one of the world's most respected businessmen, but to Sabrina he was simply Daddy.

Sabrina had hoped the loud music would pound the thoughts from her head, but it didn't work; no matter how hard she tried to forget, her father's enraged voice seeped into her mind. *Not now. I can't.* His words echoed in her head, flashing and flickering like a neon sign that burned on her mind's eye. Sabrina screamed inside, her anger drowning out her father's venomous lecture before she had to hear it all over again.

Sabrina refocused on the music and thought of a time, not so many months ago, when, during moments of such introspective angst, she would have done drugs to get through the heavy emotions. Now when she felt her pain was showing through her mask, Sabrina deflected any suspicion with a well-timed snarky remark.

"When did you learn to walk, Mira? Last week?" Sabrina yelled over the roaring guitars.

"Ha ha!" Mira wrinkled her nose at Sabrina.

A sudden vibration in the seat of Sabrina's skirt alerted her to an incoming call.

Every time her phone rang, she prayed it was her father, finally calling to apologize after a year of silence. A wave of relief began to wash over her. She would be part of her family again. She knew it; all she had to do was answer her phone.

"Mira, shut the music off," Sabrina yelled as she freed the tiny phone from where she was sitting on it.

Mira stumbled to the remote, nearly tripping over her own feet. She mashed several buttons at once until the music shut off, just in time for Sabrina to look at the incoming call number. Her smile faded, Sabrina turned away from Mira, she did not want the disappointment on her face seen. This was not the call she had prayed for, but she answered it anyway, nerves braced, but dying inside.

"Sabrina at your service."