



TO BE  
YOUR  
LAST

rae kennedy

Copyright © 2020 by Rae Kennedy

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or used in any manner without written permission of the copyright owner except for the use of quotations in a book review. For more information, address: [raekennedystudio@gmail.com](mailto:raekennedystudio@gmail.com)

FIRST EDITION  
RAKE Publishing

[www.raekennedyauthor.com](http://www.raekennedyauthor.com)

# CHAPTER 1

MY SISTER IS STUNNING. WALKING DOWN THE AISLE WITH OUR grizzly bear of a father, her slender arm wrapped in his, all eyes are on her. Even my dad, who should be looking ahead, can't help but beam down at her. Unshed tears glisten in his eyes and the apples of his cheeks protrude from his thick, red beard in a big grin that crinkles his features.

The lace and beads of her simple, white column dress shimmer in the sunlight. Tendrils of blonde hair soften the edges of her face while the rest of her long, blonde hair is braided into a knot at the nape of her neck. The setting sun bathes her in warm light and she is glowing. Everything from her bright blue eyes to her megawatt smile is radiant. Perfect.

And now she is marrying the perfect guy, and together they will have the perfect life. They will have gorgeous children and live in their beautiful, newly renovated mansion where he will work from home and coach basketball on the weekends and she'll be an elementary school teacher. Everything about them—perfect.

Many people might say I'm perfect too. I'm just as blonde, blue-eyed, and bubbly as my sister—maybe more so. A cheerleader. Popular. Straight-A student. And that was all true—when I was in high school.

Since returning home from my first year at the university last week, everything has been so hectic and everyone so focused on Court's wedding that they haven't taken much notice of me. But that will all change tomorrow. Tomorrow, everyone will finally find out how much of a failure I, Gracie Gallagher, truly am.

\* \* \*

The moon is a bright white spotlight and stars are just starting to dot the expansive navy sky. A hazy green glow beyond the distant hills is all that lingers from the forgotten sun. The night air is warm but the breeze that washes through my thin peach chiffon bridesmaid dress is cool. It ruffles the little cap sleeves, creating goosebumps on my bare shoulders reminding me that though it's the end of May, summer is not quite here yet.

My stomach grumbles, finally surrendering to hunger. I haven't had much of an appetite these last few weeks.

I walk across my parents' backyard. The lush, green expanse of lawn sloping gently toward the festivities. People are gathered in groups. Some standing chatting, laughing, yelling over cups of beer and champagne glasses. Others sitting at tables, eating dinner by the flickering light of the tiny votive candles in the centerpieces.

The tables are scattered around the yard, surrounding the stage and dancefloor in the center which is brightly lit by thousands of string lights crisscrossing above head. Each strand painstakingly put up by my three older brothers yesterday. It

took them all day, a case of beer, and only one almost-fist fight. Impressive, really.

I make my way to the food table—it's next to the dance floor, directly across from the stage. I peruse the buffet. My mom and I made all of the food. Planning, shopping, prepping, and cooking it all in our century-old, tiny farmhouse kitchen. Beef short ribs, brisket, glazed carrots, potato salad, corn on the cob, giant slices of watermelon, and buttery cornbread muffins. It all looks wonderful but nothing sounds good to eat. Maybe I'll just wait for cake. The bride's cake is white angel's food with a lemon glaze and the groom's cake is a chocolate pound cake covered in thick dark chocolate ganache and white chocolate shavings. Definitely going for the groom's cake.

"How is everybody doing tonight?"

I turn toward the voice—it belongs to a guy walking across the stage carrying a mic and a guitar. Mom had made a comment about the band Court and Tuck decided to go with being "unconventional" but looking at this guy, I don't see it.

He's in a black suit, black tie, white shirt. Average height and build. His brown hair is curly and tousled back out of his eyes in a carefree sort of way. Like he just rolled out of bed and ran his fingers through it. He has big brown eyes and even a little dimple in his chin. His face has a sweet, boyish charm to it, though he's probably in his mid to late twenties. He's cute.

He waves out to the guests and flashes a big white smile. He's *really* cute, actually.

"Are you ready to have some fun?"

A couple people hoot from their seats and the guy on stage points them out and winks as he continues. Other guys in the same black suits come on stage and take their places but I'm focused on bed-head guy and his amazing smile.

"We are Wicked Road and weddings aren't our normal gig, but we're friends of the Best Man and are excited to entertain

you and celebrate love.” He slings the bright red guitar over his shoulder and runs his fingers through his disheveled hair. His curls look like they’d feel nice and soft between my fingers. *Wow. Chill out, Gracie.* “I’d like you all to welcome, for their first official dance as husband and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Tucker and Courtney Collison.”

Everyone claps as my sister and her new husband step onto the dance floor hand-in-hand. All eyes are on them as the music begins to play. It starts slow, with a simple baseline and rhythmic guitar. It’s a familiar tune but I can’t quite place it.

Court is statuesque as she wraps her arms around Tuck’s broad shoulders and he beams down at her, whispering something in her ear that puts a dazzling smile on her face.

Then the drums start in, low and then hard. I dig the beat. I glance to the stage and whoa. The drummer’s arms are a blur of bright color. He’s not wearing a jacket, the sleeves of his white dress shirt are smashed up revealing arms covered in tattoos in brilliant shades of red, orange, and green. His face is squinted in concentration, a neon yellow mohawk on top of his head. Okay, maybe this is what my mom meant by “unconventional?”

The man standing front and center at the mic has his head bowed to the ground. I assume he’s the singer but he hasn’t started singing yet and I can’t see his face. He sways slightly to the melody.

Just beyond him is the bassist. He’s in the same black suit and he has the same dark brown eyes as the guitarist. But while the guitarist seems to have a partial smile on his face while he plays, the bassist wears a scowl. He has the same brown hair, but his is shorter and slicked back. He even has the same chin dimple. The bassist, however, has a metal piercing above that chin dimple, another one in his septum, and in the bridge of his nose. Their faces are so similar, yet different. Brothers, maybe?

A deep, smooth voice pours into the air, overwhelming everything else. Chills immediately prickle down the back of my neck and raise goosebumps on my arms.

I snap back to the front man as he sings a cover of Cyndi Lauper's *Time After Time*. The tone of his voice is unique and haunting. It's beautiful and just, wow. I want to close my eyes and listen to him sing, concentrate on the steadiness and clarity, the easiness with which he changes pitch, but I can't look away from him.

He's in the black suit, skinny black tie. His hands hold the mic stand, black tattoos swirl out from his jacket cuffs, covering the backs of his hands to the knuckles. More black tattoos twist out from his crisp white collar on the sides of his neck, disappearing behind his ears.

Big, black gauges are in his lobes. His hair is also black and cut very short. His eyes are shadowed under heavy eyebrows, almost menacing. He has a square jaw and a square nose. His lips are pouty and pink and ohmygod so pretty.

He lifts his head and he looks out beyond the dance floor, which is now full of guests slow dancing. His eyes are the most amazing shade of royal blue I've ever seen, surrounded by thick, black eyelashes. They are...mesmerizing. Hypnotic.

My eyes are locked on his and it is like he is looking right into my soul.

Is he...is he looking at me?

Yes. Yes, he is staring directly at me.

And I'm staring right back. I should look away, right? Act like I'm not caught in a gooey trance watching him.

But it's like he's singing to me. Only me. Each line, word, note, is meant just for me to hear. An invisible connection. There's an undercurrent of melancholy in his voice. And desire. Need.

“Oh there you are Gracie Lou!” Mom walks up to where I’m perched against the buffet table and I jump up, quickly tearing my gaze away from the singer and his blue eyes.

“You look so lovely dear,” she says, smiling with that *I’m just so proud of my grown-up baby girl* look she’s started giving me since going to college. I wonder if she’ll still give me that look after she finds out tomorrow.

“Thanks.” I straighten and smooth out my dress.

She sort of fusses over the now askew table cloth and straightens it out. “Oh! The potato salad is getting low. I better go get the other batch from the house. It’s Tuck’s favorite, you know.”

“I’ll go get it. You stay and enjoy the party.”

“Are you sure honey?”

“Of course.”

“Oh thank you Gracie Lou. It’s been so nice having you home again this week, you’ve been so helpful with all of this, I don’t think we could have pulled off everything without you.”

I offer a small smile.

“I feel like we just got you back and now you’re leaving again.” She’s giving me that smile again. The proud one. But this time she looks like she might cry too.

Shit.

“Uh...yeah.” My hair falls, covering half my face as I turn and look away. I really should have told them earlier. I’d originally justified the secret so I wouldn’t take any attention away from Court and her big day but with every passing week, day, hour that I’ve been hiding this I can feel the weight of it pressing harder and heavier against me.

I trudge back up to the house, across the faded wood deck and through the back door, letting the screen door bang shut behind me. Inside the house is warm. A singular lamp is lit in the corner of the living room and down the hall, light is glowing from



the kitchen, but otherwise it is dark. Dark and quiet and still. No band, no rowdy dancers or loud conversations. Not even the soft hiss of the wind—only the occasional snort or whimper from our elderly hound dog who is currently napping under the dining room table.

I run up the stairs, the old wood planks groan and creak with each step. I flip the switch in my room, the light flickers twice before crackling on. I ignore my collection of dance ribbons and trophies, the pom-poms on my dresser, and the collage of photographs from high school on my wall—mostly selfies, to get to my phone charging on the bed.

Me: *are you still coming to the reception?*

Kyla: *Yes! I just got here, sorry I'm late...Grandpa.*

Me: *No worries. I'll be the one carrying a bowl of potato salad the size of Jupiter*

Kyla: *Do you need help?*

Me: *Nah, I'll meet you down there in a few*

On my way out I pass the suitcase sitting at the end of my bed, ready and waiting to leave with me tomorrow.

It's empty.

I race to the kitchen and the giant-ass bowl of potato salad is, in fact, only marginally smaller than Jupiter. It proves difficult to manage while opening the door to the yard. *Maybe I do need help.*

The air outside is fresh and I am surrounded by crickets chirping as I huff it toward the party. Kyla waves at me from the buffet table. She's been my best friend since we were awkward twelve-year-olds with braces and knobby knees. I'm glad we grew out of that phase.

She's wearing a flirty emerald green dress that is stunning with her auburn hair and bright hazel eyes. Her shoulder-length hair has the perfect amount of natural wave, one side is tucked

behind her ear revealing a peacock feather earring that hangs to just above her collar bone.

“Hey!” She runs up to me and helps carry the bowl back to the food table.

“Hi, thanks,” I say, a little out of breath.

“I feel like I’ve hardly seen you!” she pouts and squeezes me around the middle. “You look great by the way I could never pull off the color peach I’m so jealous of your complexion.”

I chuckle at her rapid-fire compliment. “You look beautiful, Ky. Love the earrings.”

“Yeah? Me too.” She fluffs the giant feathered earrings. “I saw them and I was like yes these are perfect because I am going to be peacocking the hell out of tonight.”

“Peacocking?”

“Yeah, like when peacocks display their feathers to get a mate’s attention. Peacocking. It’s a thing. Anyway tonight is the night I’m going to finally get Wes to notice me.”

“Tonight’s the night you make your big move?”

“Yep. I mean he’s been pining over your sister for how many years and she is now officially off the market so he has no choice but to move on right?”

“Right. Totally.”

“But enough about Wes finally realizing we are soulmates I’m just so glad we get to hang out tonight before you leave me again I’m so sad.”

“Um...” I need to tell someone already. “About my trip—”

“Are you so excited? I mean it obviously sounds like a lot of work but you’ll have so much fun I’m so jealous of all the adventures you’re going to have out in the world! We should celebrate tonight. Hey there’s some champagne let’s sneak some champagne!”

Champagne is for celebrating. “I don’t want champagne.”

Kyla tilts her head toward me, a little crease forming between her eyebrows. The look isn't because I turned down alcohol—that's not new—but she can read even the subtle changes in my tone.

"I need to tell you something."

She steps closer to me. "What's up G?"

"I'm not leaving tomorrow."

"Huh? Why?"

"I...I lost my spot in the program."

"How? What happened?"

"My grades last semester didn't meet their requirements so they gave my spot to someone else."

"Oh, Gracie, I'm sorry that sucks." She puts her arm around my shoulders. She always smells like citrus. "I didn't know you were having a hard time in school."

"It's not... I just... Yeah. It hasn't been great."

"And your parents...?"

"I haven't told them yet. But they'll know tomorrow. Everyone will know. It will spread through the whole town like every other piece of gossip does and people will be talking about me behind my back again. The worst part about failing school is it was supposed to be my way out, so I don't get stuck here."

"Hey, I kind of like it here."

"I didn't mean it like that. I love this town...I just want more. I want to see more, have more experiences. I've barely been out of the state. But right now, what I really want, is to run away."

"Ahem—" Someone clears his throat behind me.

I jolt away from the food table. *Jesus, Gracie, you're completely in the way.* "I'm so sorry, I—" I look up and am met with dark brown, smiling eyes. Bedhead hair. The guitarist.

I glance at the stage, which is empty, the band must be on a break.

“No need to apologize.” He flashes me bright white teeth that stand out against his tanned, olive skin. He’s holding a plate full of food and is eyeing the watermelon at the end of the table. The watermelon I had been standing so inconsiderately in front of a moment ago.

“Hi!” Kyla steps up next to me, chin held high, chest proudly puffed, hand outstretched toward him. “I’m Kyla. This is Gracie.”

“Hey Kyla. I’m Logan.” He shakes her hand and nods, then looks back to me. Before I know it, my hand is wrapped in his warm one. “Gracie...” He glances down briefly at my dress and warmth rises from my chest to my ears. “Bridesmaid?”

“Yeah. I’m the bride’s sister.”

“Right!” He bobs his head like this should be totally obvious to him. I guess I do basically look like a miniature version of Court. “It’s nice to meet you, Gracie. You too, Kyla.”

It is at this moment my stomach decides to let out the loudest, gravelliest growl known to man. I am probably red as a beet right now. *Please let it be dark enough he doesn’t notice.*

“Hungry?” he asks.

“Have you not eaten yet?” Kyla looks at me with her overprotective I-will-cut-a-bitch face.

“No, I keep getting distracted by this and that.”

“Shit, girl—” Logan gives me his plate so quickly I almost drop it before I realize what he’s doing. “Here.”

“You don’t need to give me your food, really.” Like, really this is a little weird.

“I’ll get more, come on.” He waves me over to where he’s standing by the fresh bowl of potato salad with a heaping ladle full.

I eye the already overflowing plate of food in my hands. “I’m good.”

He gives me a scoop anyway. And adds a couple slices of watermelon for good measure.

“He’s hot ohmygod Gracie he’s totally into you did you see him eye-fucking you out of your dress?” Kyla says as soon as we sit at a table. Also, something to note—Kyla does not know how to whisper.

I’m trying—unsuccessfully—to get her to chill out about hot guitar player when he walks up to our table, all nonchalant and running one hand through his wavy hair while holding a plate piled with food even higher than mine in his other hand.

“Can I join you ladies?” He flashes his gorgeous smile.

“Um...”

“Of course yes you can here take my seat!” Kyla chimes in, standing and pulling out her chair for Logan.

“Ky,” I say in a low tone and I stare at her with wide crazy eyes. She knows what the crazy eyes mean. She ignores them.

“I was just about to get up anyway. I’ve got peacocking to do. I’ll come find you in a bit.” With a wave, and a not-so-subtle wink, she walks away.

“Peacocking?” Logan asks.

“Yep.” I really don’t want to expand any further than that.

He just shrugs in acceptance and starts tearing into his food. “Oh my god.” He talks between bites of food, licking his fingers. “This is so good. Have you tried the ribs yet?”

“Yeah, I helped make them.”

“No shit? That’s so cool.”

“Thanks.”

“Seriously, it’s so nice to have a home-cooked meal like this right before we head out. We always eat like crap on the road.”

“You guys are going on the road, like on tour?”

“Yep, all summer, thirty-one shows, all across the country.”

“Wow, that sounds exciting. I’ve hardly been anywhere.”

“This is our fifth tour, but yeah, still just as exciting as our first time.”

He continues to tell me a bit about the band and their past tours as he polishes off his plate. I'm done eating—though you wouldn't know it by the mountain of food still sitting in front of me. Logan casually reaches over and takes a remaining short rib off my plate without skipping a beat in his story about when they were playing a teeny tiny venue in New Jersey and a fire broke out halfway through their set. No one was hurt, thankfully, and they stuck around and played the rest of their set acoustic outside the club in the sprinkling rain for whoever wanted to listen while they waited for the first responders.

"So," he says leaning back in his chair. "The bride's sister, younger I'm guessing?"

"Yeah." That's obvious, I'm six years younger than Court and I have a naturally heart-shaped baby face.

"You're like, what, twenty-two, three?"

"Nineteen."

"Huh. I would have guessed older. Not because you look it, just you seem mature...I don't know, like there's a depth in your eyes."

Not often have I—as a bouncy blonde cheerleader—been called deep, but I'll take it.

"I kind of have a lot on my mind right now."

He nods knowingly. "Is that why you said you wanted to run away earlier?"

"You heard that?"

"Yup. I also heard you say you wanted to see new places, have new experiences."

"Does that make me sound lame? Like I'm a sheltered girl from a small town who hasn't seen or done anything?" I guess that's exactly what I am.

He puts his hands up in apology. "Hey, no judgements here. But you don't seem like the kind of girl who would run away."

"I'm not. Maybe that's why I want to so badly."

He looks at me for a beat, running his index finger along his jaw, a spark in his dark eyes. “You could run away with us.”

“What?” I nervous-giggle, but he looks completely serious.

“Come on tour with us. We’re going to leave tonight around two a.m., heading for LA. You’ll get to see the whole country. It’ll be an adventure.”

“Oh no, I couldn’t.”

“All right. Hey, I’ve got to go announce they’re cutting the cake, but—” he pulls a black sharpie out of his pocket and scans the table. Not finding what he’s looking for, he takes my hand and starts writing on my palm. “—here’s my number. Text me if you change your mind.”

# CHAPTER 2

“OHMYGOD OHMYGOD OHMYGOD HE ASKED YOU TO GO ON TOUR with them? I told you he’s so into you now do you believe me? Are you going to go? I think you should go.”

I drop the fork full of decadent chocolate cake to my plate. “Are you serious? Of course I’m not going.”

“Why not?”

“Ky. It’s crazy. I don’t even know these guys, following them on tour would be reckless and possibly dangerous. Don’t you watch Dateline?”

“Gracie. These are the years in our life when we’re allowed to be reckless. Take a risk! You don’t always have to be the perfect daughter or the perfect friend or the perfect student. I mean you have the whole rest of your life to settle down and be boring so go have some fun now while you can! Plus, aren’t they good friends with Tuck’s best friend?”

“Yeah, that’s true. I still just don’t think it’s a good idea.”

“What’s the worst that could happen? If you’re not having fun you can get a plane ticket home I know you have money saved up that was supposed to be for your summer school program—just think of it as being used for a different kind of learning experience.”



Actually, the worst-case scenario is that I get sold into some human sex traffic ring, but I keep that thought to myself. I hate how she's actually making some sense.

"Just imagine what any one of those guys could teach you...I bet they're really good at eating pussy."

"Kyla! Oh my god!"

"What? I bet they are."

I look over to the stage, still brightly lit along with the dance floor while everything beyond is blanketed in black. Half of the guests have already left but the band is playing a cover of *When You Say Nothing at All* and several couples are dancing—Court and Tuck, the best man, Cade, and the maid of honor, Haley—who are definitely going to go bone immediately after this, my two eldest brothers and their wives, and my parents. Wes and my other brother, Eric, are chatting near the corner of the stage, both dateless.

"I'm going to go talk to him," Kyla says, standing up and licking her fork clean.

"Good luck."

She saunters away and my gaze drifts back to the band. They're good. Logan's fingers move effortlessly over the strings as he keeps a mischievous grin on his face. He seems like a genuinely nice guy. Which is why I feel bad when I find myself staring at the singer again. His voice rolls through my body, I'm drowning in it and can't get up for air. I'm drawn to him, when he closes his eyes and pours every emotion into a single note. And when he opens those eyes, they are so intense.

Then a deep green dress catches my eye. A smile breaks across my face as I watch Kyla lead Wes out to the dance floor by the hand. He puts his hands on her waist, her arms go around his neck and she is beaming as she looks up at him.

She finally made her move.

She took the risk.

I'm going to do it.

Screw anyone else's expectations. I want to go.

I'm going to run away with the band.

\* \* \*

Kyla squeals and jumps up and down when I tell her.

It's almost one in the morning and everyone left over an hour ago. Kyla stayed to help me and my brothers clean up. She really is the most supportive friend I could ask for, even if she talks nonstop and has zero filter.

"Hey." Eric runs over to us as we're carrying the last of the chairs to the shed. "I'll take these for you, ladies. Thanks for staying to help, I know it's late and you're leaving in the morning."

I just smile awkwardly and hope he drops the subject.

"I probably won't see you again before you leave, so—" He leans over and pulls me in for a hug while making a "grrr" noise, then he ends the hug and holds me firmly by the shoulders. "I know it's a school thing, but promise you'll try to have some fun too."

"Oh, she's going to have *lots* of fun," Kyla says over my shoulder.

I shoot her *shut the hell up* crazy eyes. She's unfazed.

\* \* \*

When we run inside the house, soft pings and clanks come from the kitchen where my parents are working on the dishes.

"Hey. Mom, Dad?"

They turn around with tired smiles on their faces. Mom's washing a bowl and Dad's drying a serving spoon.

"Sup, Gracie Lou?" Dad asks.

“Yeah, so I know you were planning on driving me tomorrow but Ky and I haven’t been able to really hang out since I’ve been home. So...I was wondering if I could spend the night with her and she can drive me in the morning?”

“Oh, but Dear, I was so looking forward to seeing you off.” A dangerously deep crease forms between my mom’s eyebrows.

Dad puts his giant paw of a hand gently on her shoulder. “Bev.” He tilts his head and looks at her with soft eyes when she turns to him.

She momentarily frowns but then sighs and nods. “All right, Honey,” she says, turning back to me. “Of course that would be fine.”

“Thank you!” I bounce toward them and they surround me in a warm, bear-hug sandwich.

Kyla and I race up the stairs to my room.

“Remember to call me!” Mom yells from downstairs.

I immediately rip off my dress and Kyla grabs my suitcase. I put on a pair of cut-off denim shorts, a soft white t-shirt, and my chucks then head to the bathroom to get my toiletries. Meanwhile, Kyla is throwing clothes into my bag in a frenzy. I walk back in and find my suitcase overflowing with possibly the most obscure clothing items I own—several shorts and tank tops, but also skirts I didn’t even know I had and a little black dress I haven’t worn in years—like, I think I was fourteen and I cannot put enough emphasis on the *little* part.

“I don’t think I’ll be needing this dress.”

“You never know,” Kyla says, digging through my top dresser drawer. “Where are your sexy underwear? These all look like your time-of-the-month underwear.”

“What? I don’t have different types of underwear.”

She shakes her head at me with a silent, stony look on her face. “I’ve failed you as a best friend.”

I roll my eyes.

She returns to rummaging through the drawer. “I know you have some thongs from cheer, where are they?”

“Try looking in the back.”

“A-ha!” Her hand emerges with a fistful of tiny thongs. She stuffs them in the corner of the suitcase. “Trust me, you’ll thank me for that.”

“If you say so.” I toss in my phone charger and hastily zip up the bag.

We dash toward the stairs, giddy and giggling.

“Wait—” I say.

Kyla’s already halfway down the flight of stairs when she turns.

“I just need one more thing. Go on down and I’ll meet you in a sec.”

I jog back to my darkened room and slip my hand between my mattress. I pull out my little leather notebook and tuck it into the side pocket of my suitcase.

\* \* \*

Bright blue lights display 1:45 on Kyla’s dashboard as she pulls into the dark parking lot. I rub my sweaty palms on my knees.

When I texted Logan earlier he replied almost immediately where to meet them followed by approximately a hundred emojis to convey his general excitement.

I’d been excited too.

In fact, my heart has been pounding the whole drive out to this motel on the outskirts of town.

There are only a few cars in the lot in front of the shabby one-story building. It has peeling mustard-colored paint and a red glowing sign with only the letters M and T still working.

At the far side of the lot is a large silver van. Three figures stand near it, silhouetted by a street light. They appear to be

talking, laughing even, and passing something between them. A puff of smoke billows out around one of the men's heads and gets swept away, dissolving into the breeze.

I recognize the relaxed posture and the way Logan runs his hand through his hair.

"That's them."

"You sure about this?" Kyla asks, her voice higher than normal.

Nope.

"Yeah."

Wasn't she the one convincing me to do this earlier? It's okay, I can hype myself. Once a cheerleader always a cheerleader, right? I'm only about to leave in a dark van from a seedy motel in the middle of the night with four men I don't know. Am I being kidnapped?

I reach for the handle and if I thought my heart was racing before, it is now a jackhammer against my ribs as I open the door and climb out of the car.