

Book Club Kit

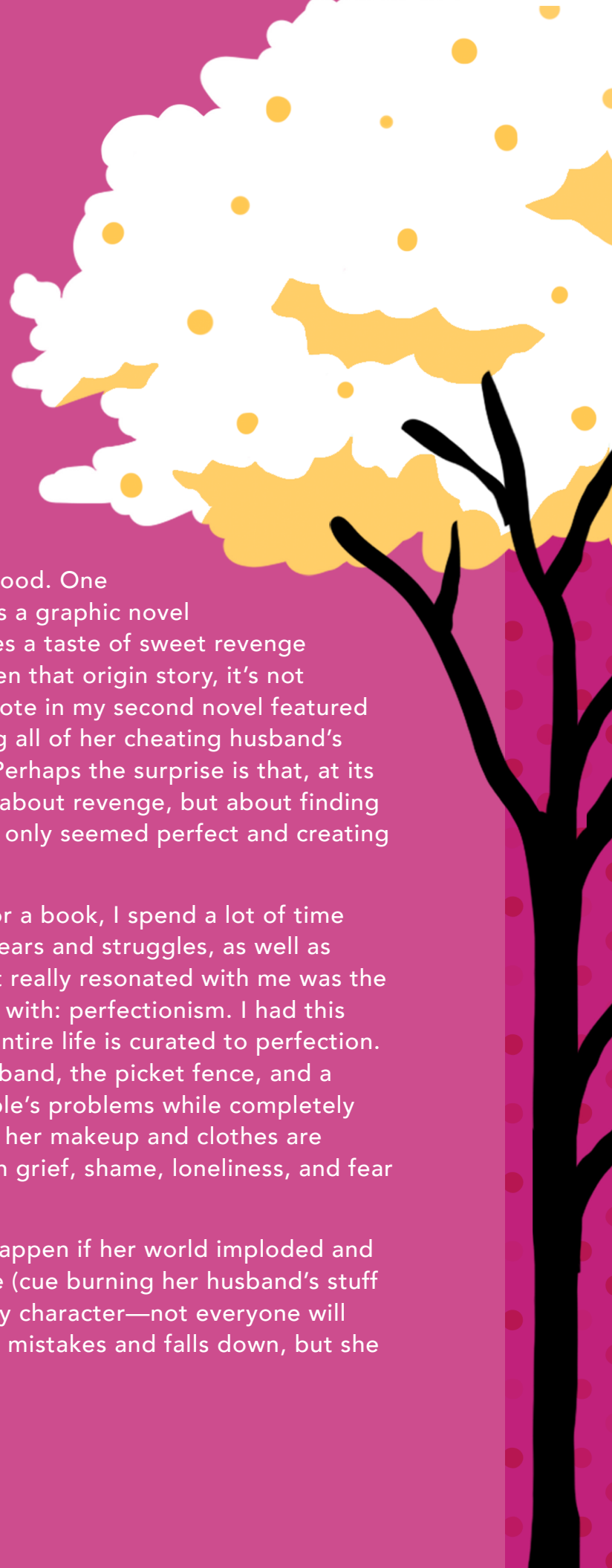


Dear Book Club Member,

Like many writers, I can trace the natural history of my career as a novelist all the way back to childhood. One of the first things I ever wrote was a graphic novel about a girl who gives some bullies a taste of sweet revenge in the form of karate. I guess, given that origin story, it's not surprising that the first scene I wrote in my second novel featured a refined advice columnist burning all of her cheating husband's prized possessions in the street. Perhaps the surprise is that, at its core, *If You Ask Me* is not a book about revenge, but about finding oneself in the rubble of a life that only seemed perfect and creating a full, authentic life.

When I'm coming up with ideas for a book, I spend a lot of time thinking about my own personal fears and struggles, as well as issues that are universal. One that really resonated with me was the compulsion so many of us wrestle with: perfectionism. I had this vision of Violet, a woman whose entire life is curated to perfection. She has the handsome lawyer husband, the picket fence, and a thriving career solving other people's problems while completely denying her own. On the outside, her makeup and clothes are flawless; inside, she struggles with grief, shame, loneliness, and fear of being judged.

I wanted to explore what would happen if her world imploded and instead of coping, she went rogue (cue burning her husband's stuff in the cul-de-sac). Violet is a messy character—not everyone will understand or like her. She makes mistakes and falls down, but she



also learns how to stand up and discovers her own voice. And of course, she finds love too, with Dez, the firefighter who shows up that fateful night and keeps showing up afterward—this is a love story, after all.

While Violet's story deals with some difficult and painful topics, ultimately, I wanted *If You Ask Me* to be a hopeful book. One that sparks discussions about the ways in which we hide our true selves and stay quiet when we most need to be seen and heard. And perhaps through witnessing Violet's journey of self discovery, where sometimes even the worst mistakes lead to something good, you'll feel inspired to let go, be yourself, and take a chance.

In the words of the great Dolly Parton, the way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain!

I'm so honored that you picked up my book. Thank you for reading!

*Sincerely,
Libby*



Dez's Love at First Bite Croissants

INGREDIENTS

Croissants

1 package of purchased puff
pastry
1 egg
1 teaspoon water

Almond filling

4 tablespoons butter, softened
1/3 cup granulated sugar
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon almond extract
1/2 cup plus 1 tablespoon almond
flour
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon milk

Topping

Sliced almonds

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Thaw the frozen dough following the package directions (make sure to keep it cold).
2. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Use parchment paper to line a baking sheet.

Make the filling:

1. Combine the butter and sugar in a bowl. Whisk thoroughly to combine. Add the egg and the vanilla and almond extracts. Whisk until smooth.
2. Add the almond flour and all-purpose flour and stir until smooth.

Make the croissants:

1. Unfold the cold but thawed puff pastry dough. Cut into three equal-size rectangles, and then cut each rectangle diagonally to make two long triangles. Cut a small slit in the base of each triangle.
2. Scoop roughly two teaspoons of the filling onto each triangle and spread it. Reserve the leftover filling.
3. Starting at the wide end, roll the dough into croissants (you'll need to spread the dough a bit at the start to get the right shape).
4. In a bowl, combine the egg and water and mix well to create an egg wash. Brush it over each croissant. The wash should lightly cover all surfaces of the croissant except the bottom.
5. Bake for about 12 minutes.
6. While the croissants are baking, add the milk to the almond filling.
7. Remove the croissants from the oven and brush with the thinned almond filling. Sprinkle with sliced almonds.
8. Bake an additional 5–10 minutes, or until medium golden brown. Enjoy!

Violet's Burn the World Playlist

[Click Here to Listen](#)

"Wild Enough" ELINA

"Where We Started" LOST SKY, JEX

"Rolling in the Deep" ADELE

"Babe" SUGARLAND, TAYLOR SWIFT

"Set Fire to the Rain" ADELE

"Since U Been Gone" KELLY CLARKSON

"Back That Thang Up" JUVENILE

"Fake a Smile" ALAN WALKER, SALEM ILESE

"Stronger (What Doesn't Kill You)" KELLY CLARKSON

"Sit Still, Look Pretty" DAYA

"OK Not to Be OK" MARSHMELLO, DEMI LOVATO

"End Game" TAYLOR SWIFT, ED SHEERAN, FUTURE

"Lose You to Love Me" SELENA GOMEZ

"Delicate" TAYLOR SWIFT

"There's No Way" LAUV, JULIA MICHAELS

"There for You" MARTIN GARRIX, TROYE SIVAN

"Meant to Be" BEBE REXHA, FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE

"Lovely" FLY BY MIDNIGHT, BETTY WHO

"Fire on Fire" SAM SMITH

"Broken & Beautiful" KELLY CLARKSON

"Message in a Bottle (Taylor's Version)" TAYLOR SWIFT

"Sippin' on Fire" FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE

"8 Letters" WHY DON'T WE

"Little Do You Know" ALEX & SIERRA

"Hoppípolla" SIGUR RÓS

Advice to Self Activity

Think of a time in your life when you really could have used a professional advice columnist. If you could go back and write the advice you needed, what would you say?

Dear Friend,

*If you ask me, that mortifying
event you've been replaying
in your mind, everyone else has
forgotten about already.*

*Sincerely,
Me*

Dear Me,

*If you ask me, you don't need to
be better, smarter, prettier.
You are enough as you are.*

*Sincerely,
Someone who loves you*

Dear _____ ,

If you ask me, _____

Sincerely,
