

Faking Love for My Billionaire Boss Excerpt

A Fake Engagement Billionaire
Romance The Santa Barbara
Billionaire Boys: Book 2

Sienna Weaver

Sienna Weaver Contemporary Romance

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Chapter One

ZOYA

I PRESS THE ELEVATOR button for the umpteenth time and hiss when the damn thing doesn't respond. I look down at the watch on my wrist in irritation. At this rate, I'm going to be late for my interview.

I glance at the stairs' entrance. It's too high up for me to take the stairs. A frustrated sigh leaves my lips.

"Why does this company have to have its offices so high up when the elevator isn't even working?" I mutter.

I'd turn around if I had the option, but I'm broke and I need this job. This is the only interview I've been able to get since I started applying for jobs six months ago. It's for an assistant position, but at least it's in a cyber security firm where I have expertise in the industry. Being a secretary should be easy.

With a prayer to the saints, I try the button one more time. Relief washes over me when it finally opens, and I get in.

Briefly, it crosses my mind that I might get trapped inside. Luckily for me, the doors open without issue and I get out on the twenty-fifth floor.

I go straight to the receptionist, happy to have finally arrived. And with time to spare too.

“Hello,” I say. “I’m here for an interview.”

“You’re the first one today,” she says.

The others must’ve given up after failing to get the elevator to start.

You’d think a cyber security firm would be in a building with a functioning elevator.

“Wait there while I check if he’s ready.” The receptionist points to the steel bench a few paces from her.

I take my seat while she goes into the room on my left. My eyes scan the space. The reception area isn’t that big, which means the company is smaller than I thought. I don’t mind working here as long as the pay is good. My roommate is moving out soon, and I need to be able to afford rent because I’ll be the only one footing all the bills once she’s gone.

The door opens and the receptionist steps out.

“You can go in now,” she says.

“Thank you.”

I get up and move to the door she just came out of, but I stop in front of it.

Down the hall, there’s a door open and I can see the figure of a man. His back is turned to me and he’s on the phone.

Something about his shoulder-length hair and the wide set of his shoulders feels like *déjà vu*.

I shake the feeling off and open the door. My only focus should be on this interview, not on some man...no matter how good-looking his back is.

“Zoya Petrova?” the interviewer asks. He looks down at the file on his table.

“Yes?” I clear my throat. “I mean, yes.”

He points to the seat in front of him. He waits till I’m seated before he starts to ask me questions. “It says here that you don’t have any administrative experience but you’re familiar with the cyber security industry.” He glances at me.

A pit opens in my stomach, and I clench my thighs. My palms are starting to get sweaty.

Why didn’t I lie in that part?

This position at Sentinel was one of the many I came across while job hunting and I didn’t pay attention to the information I was filling into my application. I was just trying to apply to as many jobs as possible.

Lesson learned.

“Why do you think you’re a good fit? This job requires more than your knowledge of cyber security,” the interviewer goes on.

I lick my lips. I’m quite aware of what is required of an assistant. I create a schedule for the boss and sort out his calendar etc. But I don’t know how to put all that into words right now. I can’t exactly tell him my rent is due and since my roommate will be moving out in a few weeks, my landlord is breathing down my neck.

I blow out a breath.

Think good thoughts, Zoya.

The only thing I have going for me is that I’m great at hacking, and I used to be quite famous in the industry before I messed

with the wrong company and got slammed with a lawsuit that I spent all my savings paying. Hacking into the servers of different companies was my way of fun. It didn't matter that I could get arrested for it at the time. It was like a high for me.

I doubt my time as a gray hat hacker will be beneficial to me in this interview since it's for a white hat cyber security firm, but I have nothing else that might sway him.

So, here goes...

"Your firm is a small cyber security company," I start. "Aside from the administrative experience which I will learn on the job if I get the position, I'm a terrific hacker. I used to be *The Chimera*—"

"You're *The Chimera*?" he asks, staring at me with disbelief. His eyes sweep over my body, from my strawberry blond hair down to the white shirt I'm wearing, and back up to my face. "You don't look like her."

An image of my former look flashes before me. Choppy shoulder-length hair, black makeup, and fake piercings...I was quite the sight.

But it was all an illusion.

"I freshened up," I chuckle nervously. "You'd probably have turned me out the door if I came looking like that."

"True. If you *are* *The Chimera*, then we certainly need your skillset, but you're going to have to prove that you are really her."

"Great," I say with a smile.

He smirks. “Don’t be so excited. Your task will be to break through this firm’s firewall, and I’ll warn you we had the best cyber security personnel in the industry build that firewall.”

“I’ll do it.”

My spine is starting to tingle and excitement thrums in my belly. I do love a good challenge.

“Follow me.” He gets up and buttons his jacket.

He leads me to a nice office with an air conditioner and a fancy computer. The chair is soft on my butt. The black, white, and gold design of the room with geode resin artwork on the wall behind me all create a cool atmosphere. If this was my office, I’d never leave.

I turn on the laptop. The interviewer—whom I now know as Josh—bends over my shoulder to watch me work. I hate having someone breathing down my neck when I’m working but I’ll have to make an exception in this case.

“The password is—” Josh starts.

“Don’t tell me.”

I try a few combinations and scoff when I unlock the computer on my second attempt. Within ten minutes I’ve broken into the company’s database and accessed all their information.

I turn to Josh with a satisfied smirk. So much for having an impenetrable firewall.

“That’s awesome,” he laughs. “You’re simply amazing. Tell me, what did you do there?”

“Not a chance. Only if I got the job.”

“I have a different proposition for you.” He waits to see if I’m interested before he continues. “The original position is for an executive assistant, but how would you like to be one of our Cyber Security Specialists? We could really use someone like you in our firm.”

“So, this means I get two jobs?”

“In a way, yes.”

My eyes narrow at him. He’s been sketchy. I’m not doing free labor. “What do you mean in a way?” I ask.

“What I’m trying to say is, you’ll be an assistant but be a part-time Cyber Security Specialist.”

Hmm. Still sounds like free labor to me. “I’m only accepting that deal if I’ll be paid for both jobs.”

He thinks about it for a moment, then nods. “You’re hired.” He holds out a hand for a shake and I take it.

I can’t believe that worked. Maybe being on the other side of the law wasn’t so bad after all.

“Come with me,” he says excitedly “Let me introduce you to the boss.”

I did a little research on the firm before applying but all I got was that it’s a small cyber security company that deals with the integrity and vulnerabilities of their clients systems, and there was nothing about who owns the firm. I didn’t bother digging deeper when I wasn’t sure I was going to get picked and I had other vacancies to apply to.

Josh leads me down the hall to the office I’d seen open earlier. He knocks lightly on the door.

“Enter,” says a voice from inside.

Josh opens the door, and motions for me to follow him.

“Tyler, you won’t believe who I just interviewed,” Josh gushes.

It kind of makes me feel like a celebrity. I look around the office. It has the same minimalist style as the last one I was in but there’s more black in here.

He looks up and I freeze.

Long brown hair, blue eyes, and the face of an angel.

It can’t be.

The first time I met him plays in my head like a movie reel. I saw him at the bar a few months ago and we had a one-night stand. It was the best night of my life. I felt we had something. We’d exchanged numbers, and he’d promised to call me as I left his hotel room but he ghosted me. He never picked up any of my calls or replied to my text messages.

I felt stupid for falling for such a trick. Of course, a guy like him only uses girls for his pleasure and discards them when he’s done. He just happened to have a penthouse in a hotel close to the club.

The club was probably his hunting ground, and that penthouse was the place where he took all his hookups. I’ve never been the type to make reckless decisions when it comes to men, but the first time I let myself go, I fall for his pretty face and sexy voice.

Anger rears its head once more, but I refrain from glaring at him.

Why couldn’t I have gotten a job at a different company?

Why is *he* my boss?

If I didn't need the money so badly, I'd walk out right now and never look back.

"I got you an assistant who's also a Cyber Security Specialist. She's none other than the infamous hacker - The Chimera. It's not the assistant you requested but she broke through our fire-wall in ten minutes. I thought she could be both your assistant and one of our CS Specialists," Josh sings my praises while I gnash my teeth in silence. "Meet Zoya Petrova."

Tyler's left brow shoots up and he looks at me with renewed interest. I expect to see shock on his face, or surprise or...anything. But all I get is genuine interest.

He's either a very good actor or he doesn't remember me. My blood simmers at the thought. He's been at the back of my mind for the past six months, and he doesn't even remember me.

"Hi. I'm Tyler Harrington."

He thrusts his hand at me.

I look down at his perfectly manicured nails and my nose twitches.

Behave yourself, a voice warns at the back of my head. *You need this job.*

"Zoya." I plaster a smile on my face.

"Nice to meet you, Zoya." He returns the smile and I swear his white teeth glint. My stomach twists. "I have a feeling we're going to be great friends."

My grin turns into what feels more like a grimace on my face.

What a charmer. Anyone would think he was a nice guy.

Asshole.

Chapter Two

TYLER

“HEY, ZOYA,” I GREET her as I stop in front of her desk.

She spares me a glance and goes back to typing on the laptop in front of her. “Good morning, Tyler.”

“Lovely day today, isn’t it?” I ask.

She shrugs. “If you say so.”

I frown. She’s been cold towards me ever since she started working here. I’m trying my best to be friendly to her. I’m friends with all my employees. The best way to build a functioning system in a workplace is to have a cordial relationship with your employees. It builds loyalty, and I need all the loyal people I can get.

“What are you doing?” I move behind her and her back stiffens.

“I’m checking the new firewall for cracks.”

It almost sounds like she’s talking through gritted teeth. I look down at the curve of her neck. It’s like a swan’s. Long and elegant. There’s a mole at the top of her chest, just between her neck and collarbone. Her strawberry blond hair is packed in a ponytail today.

Cute.

It triggers a memory in me that I can't get a grip on. Something about her features feels familiar. I want to ask if we've met before, but the only way we could've met is if she's one of the many girls I've hooked up with. But, I'd remember someone like her if I did. She has this fierceness, a certain tenacity that warns you off messing with her.

I don't go for such type of girls. They're trouble.

I watch the way her fingers move on the keyboard. She has small hands with clipped nails. Perfect for gripping a coc...

I frown.

Why am I thinking of her like that?

It's not like she's shown any interest in me since I saw her yesterday.

Her hand stills on the keyboard and she looks back at me. Her gray eyes are big and round. They're also cold, and there's a slight pinch to the middle of her brows like she's irritated.

"I don't like having people behind me when I'm working."

Her Russian accent is sexy as hell. I recall someone moaning my name in a sultry voice much like hers once.

"Of course." I move away. "What's my schedule like today?"

She minimizes the app she was working on and opens my calendar.

"Your schedule for today is free but I'm still working on the one for the week," she replies.

Efficient and sexy. I like her.

She's going to be a great asset to this company. She might just be what I need to make Sentinel one, if not, the best cyber security company in the country.

"If I'm going to be checking every system and still be your secretary, you'll have to pay me salary for both jobs," she says.

Josh had already filled me in on the terms of her contract. I guess she's just checking to be sure.

"That's not a problem. Carry on."

I enter my office and sit behind my desk. I take out my phone from my pocket and go through the messages on my social media accounts. There are a few from women who commented on my posts. I ignore those and move on to another app.

I guess now that I have a secretary, it'll be her job to field these messages and answer them. I turn my chair around and look out the window. My office is not as big as the office I have at Harrington Hotel's headquarters. I've only ever been to that office once and I decided right then that I wouldn't be going back.

It was too big, and everything about it felt wrong.

I started Sentinel a year ago, and it's been gaining momentum ever since launch. No one other than my friends knows I run the firm. It's hard to build a company from scratch when all my family cares about is continuing their legacy. I'm tired of being the rich kid who has everything handed to him.

Being the biggest hotel chain in California and neighboring states, the name Harrington opens doors for me but they're always the wrong doors. I want to build a name for myself in

the tech world, but my family already has a legacy in hospitality industry. Also, everyone keeps mistaking me for my brother, Jeremy.

We look nothing alike, not to mention our different names, but once they hear Harrington, the first thought that comes to mind is Jeremy. It's annoying.

I don't want to get stuck in my brother's shadow forever. Every step I've taken towards being my own man so far has been seen as an act of rebellion. I'm labeled as the black sheep of the family but I don't care. Not after what they did.

There's a knock at my door.

"Come in," I call.

Zoya walks in. I didn't see her entire outfit before because she was seated but now... *Damn!*

She's smoking hot.

Her black pants are tight, and they bring out her curvy figure. I'd noticed that she's curvy when Josh introduced her to me yesterday but I'd been more focused on who she was rather than how she looked.

The Chimera is famous for breaking into tough security systems. There's usually no loss of data but she leaves the systems crippled for 24 hours and no one is ever able to fend her off when she decides to sink her claws into a server. She goes for Fortune 100 companies. I always thought The Chimera was male, until she got busted last year and her identity was revealed.

She was in the news for a few days before they moved on to another topic. After that, I lost interest. I still can't believe Zoya is The Chimera. She looks so different now.

She stops in front of my desk and stares at me with slightly hooded eyes. I know that look of disappointment quite well. It's always on my brother's face.

"I was hoping we could work on your schedule for the week," she says.

"Sure. Please, sit." I point to the chair in front of me.

She sits and crosses her legs. The position makes my stomach flip. I can picture her bent over my desk with her pants at her knees and her curvy ass in the air.

"I was going through the mail," she says, "and I saw a message from a potential client requesting our services and I found it odd. Don't you have a sales team?"

"Not at the moment," I say... "I'm in charge of getting the clients."

"Right." She nods. "Why do you need a secretary since you seem to have everything covered?"

"Not quite. I go to events to get these clients. I spark their interest and my Cyber Security Specialists do the rest."

Her lips turn down at the corners. I thought she'd be impressed but she looks even more disappointed.

"So, you go to parties and cozy up to them," she says.

"Uh...That's not really it."

She looks down at her tablet and starts to type.

Why do I feel like she just brushed me aside?

“There are a few more of those here,” she says as she scrolls up. “Looks like you’ll have a busy week. Shall I go ahead and set a schedule or would you rather give them a more...convenient time?” Zoya looks down at my closed laptop and back at my face.

“You can create a schedule and I’ll cross-check.”

“Okay.” She stands and heads for the door.

“Will you be free for lunch?” I blurt out and she turns around with a frown. She probably thinks I’m asking her on a date.

“I take all my employees out for lunch on their first day at work to get to know them better,” I explain.

“All your female employees?”

I clench a fist. She’s so stubborn.

“No. *All* my employees.”

“Oh! I’m afraid I’ll be busy the whole day.” She gives me a full smile. “If you’ll excuse me, I’ll get back to work. You may carry on with what you were doing.”

Zoya walks out of my office and I blow out a breath.

It’s official. She definitely hates me.

Chapter Three

ZOYA

I WATCH TYLER'S FACE as he works on the bid for a proposal. Ever since he saw the offer in his mailbox, he's not been himself. He's been wracking his brain trying to find the right words to use for this proposal. According to him, Henry Constantine is his biggest client ever, and getting this deal will change Sentinel forever.

If you ask me, I don't think one man can do all that. But then again, I've never heard of Henry Constantine, so I'm not one to talk.

I think I'm only here so he makes a good impression with my knowledge of cyber security because that's all he's asked about since.

My gaze moves from Tyler's pretty face down to his shirt. He'd taken off his jacket a few minutes ago and popped the first few buttons of his button-down. I can see the top of his chest. It brings back memories of our night together.

I remember how toned his body was. I think he's gotten bigger now. His hair is shorter too. Tyler has lean muscles. It doesn't look like much when he's clothed, but when he takes it all off...Phew!

He's packing underneath.

The tattoo on his chest peeks out. It's a musical note right above his heart. My finger had followed the curves while I listened to his heart beating after having sex with him. The moment was intimate. It's one of the memories of him that made me think we had something special and I wanted to see where it would lead.

I bet he sleeps next to all his hookups and cuddles them till they fall asleep. Anything to get the illusion of affection going and then the next morning he'd sweep the rug out from underneath them. What annoys me the most isn't that he left afterward. It was consensual sex and we both enjoyed it so there wasn't anyone using the other, but he could've called. Or send a simple text to tell me that we had meant nothing, and I didn't need to keep my hopes up.

Thinking about it again makes me mad. If I plan on having a successful career in this firm, I better get my feelings in check and forget all about that night.

He doesn't remember it, so why should I?

Tyler turns the laptop to me. "Check this."

I skim through the proposal. I hate to admit it, but he's crafted a good proposal here. Maybe he's not as lazy as I originally thought. He's certainly shown that he cares about his firm a lot.

"This is good," I tell him. "You can send it."

He turns the laptop around and sends the email. He visibly relaxes in his seat and cracks his knuckles.

"We're done," he says.

Yeah, it only took you hours. Nothing major.

I stand and crack my stiff back. My butt feels like I've lost all the blood in that section.

“Goodnight, Tyler.”

He removes his denim jacket from the back of his chair and slides his arms into it. “Let me drop you off.”

And spend the next few minutes staring at your chiseled face and breathing in your cologne?

No, thanks. I'd rather walk home.

“No, it's good. I can get home myself,” I say and make a quick escape from his office before he tries to find logical reasons why I should go with him.

It's late already and I might not be able to catch the bus anymore but there'll still be some Uber or Lyft drivers nearby. It'll cost more, but I'm going to get paid for overtime anyway.

I make short work of arranging my desk and packing up my stuff, then I rush into the elevator. Thankfully, it's been fixed.

Just as the doors are about to close, Tyler gets in. I hold back a growl of annoyance at his silly smile. He doesn't smile half as much as he does with me when interacting with the other employees. If I didn't know better, I'd think he was trying to seduce me.

It's working though, isn't it?

No, it isn't. My heart doesn't patter every time he smiles and my breath doesn't seize when he casts those pretty blue eyes on me.

“Are you sure you'll be fine on your own?” he asks as we step out of the elevator.

“Yes.”

My heels echo in the quiet lobby as I walk away from him. I’m trying to walk as fast as I can without running. Hopefully, I’ll get a cab immediately after I step out of the building.

Can he not get the hint and leave me alone already?

“The weather forecast on my phone says it’ll be...” We step out of the building at the same time. “...stormy,” he finishes.

It’s raining.

How did I miss the pitter-patter of the rain on the asphalt?

Right. I was trying hard to tune out his voice.

I take my phone out of my bag to order an Uber but I realize it’s dead. Damn it! How did I manage to forget to charge my phone?

I grit my teeth. Not only is it raining but I can’t get a ride home. I can’t stay here waiting for a cab in the rain.

“I’m going to drop you off. My car is in the parking lot. Come with me.” Tyler tries to place a hand on my shoulder and lead me back inside but I move away.

“Thank you,” I tell him.

I might be forced to sit in the car with him, but I’ll be damned if he touches me.

When we get to the parking lot, he opens the door for me.

How chivalrous.

He gets in the driver’s seat, and I pull on my seatbelt. He starts the car and drives out of the parking lot.

“Would you like some music, or do you prefer it quiet?” he asks as we make it out onto the road and rain starts pelting the roof of the car.

“Music, please,” I say quietly.

That would stop him from attempting a conversation. He tunes to a pop song, and I look out the window, watching the rain pour down. I’ve always loved the rain. I’d walk home instead of getting a ride from Tyler if my apartment was within trekking distance.

When I was a little girl, I’d go out into the courtyard back at the children’s home where I grew in and dance in the rain every time it poured. It was something my mom loved doing. That’s the only memory of her I still have.

I remember how her hair would change from strawberry blond to ginger when she got it wet. Dancing in the rain was the only time we were ever happy together. That was before we left Russia for America and she got addicted to drugs. With how turbulent my childhood was with Mom, I’m not surprised I forgot most of it.

My finger trails the droplet of water outside the glass as it glides down the pane. From the corner of my eye, I notice Tyler staring at me and my stomach dips.

I hate it when I react to him like that. Yes, he’s cute but I’ve seen a lot of cute guys before. He’s nothing special.

“Where do you stay?” he asks.

“Downtown. Take the next turn from here.”

I give him directions till he makes it to my street. His eyes widen when he enters the street.

“Are you kidding me? I live here too. My house is...” He trails off as we notice the firetruck parked in front of an apartment building.

“That’s my apartment,” I shout.

I get out of the car and run towards the building.

“Zoya, wait!” Tyler comes after me.

“No, no, no!” I cry.

Despite the rain, there’s a fire raging in the building and the firemen haven’t been able to quench it. Only the middle section of the building is on fire and that’s where my apartment is.

All my stuff is in there. I try to fight my way through the crowd. My clothes are soaked, and my hair sticks to the back of my neck. I don’t know how I’ll do it but I need to get in there. My laptop, my clothes, everything I’ve ever had is in there.

“Get back,” shouts one of the firemen. He grabs my arms and pulls me back into the crowd.

“My stuff is in there,” I scream at him.

“Zoya,” my roommate, Betsie pulls me aside. Tears sting the corner of my eyes. I fight back nausea.

Why does this kind of thing happen to me?

“My laptop, Betsie. Do you have it?” I beg her.

She shakes her head sadly. “Everything is gone, Zoya.”

