

RULES OF LOVE AND RULES OF THE HEART

GEORGE AND AIDEN SHORT STORIES FROM
RULES OF PLAY

LANE HAYES

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RULES OF LOVE, A GEORGE AND AIDEN SHORT STORY

George-

“Yo, baby, get those shoes on. Let’s go.”

I turned slowly on my barstool at the kitchen island and eyed my peppy boyfriend suspiciously. Aiden’s workout ensemble of navy nylon-poly blend shorts, a UCLA tee, and running shoes told a story, but I figured it was always best to clarify.

“Go where?”

“Jogging. We talked about this yesterday. We’ll go slow and walk when we get tired. C’mon, G.” He clapped enthusiastically, the way he sometimes did when a cool play unfurled during a televised sporting event.

However, he didn’t usually try that with me.

“Jogging is trotting at a sustained albeit leisurely pace. Sadly, that’s not one of my talents. Have fun, honey. I’ll start dinner while you’re gone.” I blew him a kiss then turned back to my laptop.

“Not so fast.” Aiden pulled a baseball cap on and put his hand on the island beside me. “I need you for moral

support. I'm trying to get back into shape and it is not easy. Donuts call my name, waffles with maple syrup know my phone number, and don't get me started on french fries. I want to eat all those things and somehow look like fitness model...for you."

"I don't want a fitness model. I want you." I leaned sideways and kissed him. "Try to be home in an hour. The new episode of *Good Omens* is on and—what are you doing?"

He disappeared in the general direction of our bedroom, returning a minute later with a pair of shorts and the only pair of sneakers I owned.

"Stand up," he commanded, setting my shoes on the stool beside me before motioning for me to obey.

"Aiden, I'm working."

"You're looking up nebulas. You can do that later. I need you, G. Come on."

We engaged in a ridiculous stare-down with Aiden making goofy faces and holding eye contact while I glared at him menacingly. Of course, he won. It was probably the raised brows and crazy Cheshire cat grin combo. Either way, I laughed. No one did silly quite like my man.

"Fine. But I'm wearing my cape."

"Awesome."

"Really? Aiden, I don't run. I may not make it to the corner," I protested as he pulled me to my feet and unbuckled my belt.

"Sure you will, but if you get winded, we'll stop. This isn't about setting any world records."

He proceeded to undress me in a no nonsense fashion then held up the shorts, wordlessly requesting me to cooperate. I stood there with my arms crossed in my boxer briefs, a Science is Like Magic But Real tee, and black socks looking like a cranky overgrown kid. Aiden wasn't deterred. He met my gaze, smiling when I stepped into the shorts.

I waved him away when he tried to put my shoes on for me too.

"Then what is it about?" I asked, shoving my feet in my sneakers and tying them in precise double knots.

"You're helping me get into the habit of exercising after work. And I appreciate it." Aiden wrapped his arms around my waist and squeezed my ass. "We won't be long. I promise to make it up to you later."

"Is there a blow job involved?"

"Definitely." He released me then peeked inside my computer bag and drew my cape out. He shook it loose and held it up for me.

"I probably shouldn't wear it. My feet will get tangled and I'll trip, scrape my knees, twist both ankles, and land on a neighbor's lawn. They'll never invite us over for potluck again."

"We won't be going fast enough to do any damage. But if you do fall, aim for Whitby's lawn. That guy loves us." He kissed me soundly and reached for his phone and a house key. "Let's do this, baby."

I grumbled without heat, following him outside.

We stood on the front porch of our bungalow, stretching our calves...or something like that. I didn't know what I

was doing, but I played along with Aiden's impromptu gym session because for some reason, my presence was important to him.

I couldn't tell if he was in the midst of a mini crisis of confidence or if he really just wanted me to help him stay motivated. That didn't make sense though. After he quit his uncle's garage last summer, he'd started working out regularly. I hadn't. Sure, we walked all the time, but jogging? Ew.

Either way, I obviously needed to get to the root of any mysterious new fitness fetish involving me.

I held on to the porch railing and glanced up at the new buds on the liquid amber tree in our front yard. It was late March now. Within two weeks, the tree would be in full bloom and the roses lining the wide pathway leading to the sidewalk would be a riot of color.

I loved our neighborhood. It wasn't as quiet as my old 'hood across town, but it was a great location. We were within walking distance to Old Town and close enough to visit family and friends whenever we felt like it.

Honestly, I hadn't been sure what to think when Aiden bought this house with my brother, Simon, last fall as an investment property. Their plan had been to fix it and sell it immediately. But when they ran the numbers, Aiden realized that with his new job as a junior sports analyst at the university, he could afford the mortgage. And since we planned on living together eventually, it would be even more affordable if I was on title too. So yes, this was my house too.

I'd slowly started bringing my things over after escrow closed, but I'd officially moved in at the beginning of the year. Not gonna lie, I was a little nervous about living with my boyfriend. I couldn't say why. Aiden and I had known each other forever. We already spent a ton of time together too. But cohabitating was different—and as cute as this bungalow was, it was small.

Thankfully, I had nothing to worry about. Aiden was easy to live with and even easier to be with. He was good-natured and big-hearted...and sexy as fuck.

I bent my knee to my chest and studied him as he lunged forward, noting his muscular thighs and his talented hand resting on his knee. I had a rogue memory from this morning of those fingers teasing my ass in the shower while he tongue-fucked my mouth, our cocks trapped between us. I'd ended up with my hands flat on the tile wall with his dick inside me a minute or two later, begging him for more...harder and faster.

Ugh...focus, George. Now was not the time to perv on my man. I needed to be sharp if I was going to get to the bottom of whatever incited him to invite me on a jog.

I lifted my arms above my head and hopped down the steps, making sure my cape flowed behind me theatrically. "Lead the way, Baker."

"All righty." He side-stepped around me and clicked his heels together before jogging to the street.

I chuckled as I followed him, sucking in a deep breath of spring air.

It was a beautiful night. The sky had taken on the dusty blue sheen of early twilight. Any second now the remaining

sunlight would reflect off the wispy clouds and paint the horizon in shades of pink and orange. Kind of like the night Aiden had rescued me on the freeway.

“Did you know that it’s been a year since Willy broke down on the 210?” I asked conversationally. “That means it’s been a whole year since our first kiss.”

“Ah, yes...the night you stuck your tongue down my throat out of the blue. That was hot. You turned me gay, Murphy,” he teased in a dreamy voice.

“Yeah, right.” I snorted, waving to Mr. Whitby, the retired octogenarian who lived on the corner.

Mr. Whitby was super chatty and he loved to talk about cars. When he found out my boyfriend knew his way around an engine, Mr. Whitby sought him out regularly to discuss his '47 Woodie. Listening to two grown men talking about Woodies never failed to amuse me. But I was a mission tonight and diversions wouldn't help. Thankfully, Whitby was halfway inside his house before he noticed us.

“Another plus of running. You just got out of a Woodie conversation.”

“Now that’s disappointing. I love to talk about wood.” I glanced both ways at the stop sign, bumping his arm as we jogged across the street.

“Pervert.”

“Hmph. We’re a block away from the house and I’m already tired. Are you going to tell me what’s on your mind or am I guessing?”

He didn't reply for another half block. Then he blurted, “I’m old.”

“Excuse me?”

“You heard me. I’m old.” He hooked his thumb toward Whitby’s house. “My best bud in the ‘hood is eighty. Case closed.”

“And that’s why I’m jogging?”

“No, I’m—” He sighed heavily and continued, “I love my job, but I’m the oldest junior stats man on the team. We just hired two college kids who’re graduating in two months. They’re twenty-two, young, and hungry...and I’m—Methuselah and I feel it.”

“Aiden, you’re twenty-eight. That’s not old.”

“Yeah, I’m gaining on thirty at warp speed. I feel like I should be further up the ladder and I’m not there yet. Which is stupid ‘cause I’m a newbie too. I tell myself to be patient and work hard, but some days are easier than others, ya know?”

My heart gave a lurch of sympathy. “I do. I’m sorry you had a bad day.”

“I didn’t. It was fine.”

Nope. If it was fine, I wouldn’t be his running partner of choice. I didn’t say that aloud, but I stopped abruptly and clutched my side. “I can’t go on.”

Aiden jogged backward then set his hands on his hips and gave me a “What am I gonna do with you?” look before fussing with the tie on my cape. “Okay, we’ll walk.”

“And talk. How can I help?”

“I don’t know. This is a ‘me’ problem. I have to stay sharp so those freaking whippersnappers don’t jump ahead of me.”

“Aiden. You’re mind-fucking yourself. They haven’t even started work yet. You’re halfway through the college season

and you're doing well. The pro baseball season will starting soon—" Yes, because of Aiden, I knew shit like that. And of course, the second I said it, I knew I'd uncovered the real issue. The stats Aiden gathered for the university would be used for future draft prospects. His real test as an analyst was coming up just as the new hires began. "And that's why you're nervous."

"Damn, you're a genius." Aiden cast a sheepish smile my way. "Yeah. I'm helping to 'package' these athletes. My analysis over the next few weeks will impact careers. It's very stressful. I'm used to fixing flat tires and picking up vampires on the freeway at rush hour. I'm not used to this."

I linked my fingers with his and squeezed. "You'll get used to it. You love the sport and you love your job. You'll be amazing. I know you will. You're smart and you're not afraid to work hard. Good things will happen. You'll see."

"Thank you." He paused and lifted our joined hands and kissed my knuckles. "I need that."

"I would have told you all that without jogging, you know."

He snickered. "You really love me, don't you?"

I smiled, staring into his eyes like a lovesick puppy. "Oh, Aiden. You have no idea."

"Yeah, I do 'cause I love you too, G."

I lay my head on his shoulder for a moment then kissed his neck...vampire-style. "You know, worrying about things you can't control is against the rules."

"Oh yeah?"

"Definitely."

“And lucky for you, I know a much better de-stressing methods than jogging...clothing optional.”

Aiden smiled. “I’m in.”

I pulled my cape across my mouth then pointed in the general direction of our house and gave my hokiest vampire impression, “This way, human. Bwahahaha.”

RULES OF THE HEART, A GEORGE AND AIDEN SHORT STORY

A iden-

THIS WAS NOT how I envisioned spending my day off. I dusted soil from my shorts and glanced over at my boyfriend humming happily as he pulled weeds a few feet away.

“Are we done yet?”

George arched his brow and tsked. “This was your idea, Baker.”

“Well, it was a dumb idea and I don’t want to do this anymore,” I grumbled, flopping onto my ass. I lifted my face to bask in the late afternoon sunshine, well aware that I sounded like a cranky toddler, but I couldn’t help it. “Gardening is harder than it looks and I’m hot.”

“It’s July. What did you expect?”

“I expected a freak hailstorm to ruin this experiment.”

George snorted. “Oh, darn. Looks like the weather isn’t cooperating.”

I studied the canopy of endless blue skies and wispy clouds above with a sigh. “Right? It’s another fuckin’ beautiful day. Which is good, but why didn’t we do this gardening crap in the morning before we could cook an egg on the damn sidewalk? And what is so funny?”

George’s pretty hazel eyes creased at the corners as he chuckled merrily. “You. You’re so grumpy. It’s kinda cute. But quit being an asshole and finish up your section. We’re almost done and according to the Gardening Gal, our bed has to be clear before we can plant our seeds.”

I lowered my sunglasses and fixed him with a lecherous once-over. “I want to go plant my seed...if you know what I mean.”

“Smooth one, babe.” He shook his head ruefully as he crawled across the patch of grass between us and sat beside me. He nuzzled my neck playfully. “I’ll help you. I’m done with my section.”

“Nah, I’ll do it. Let’s just take a short break. Who is this Gardening Gal and why are we listening to her?”

George straightened his legs in front him and motioned for me to rest my head on his lap. When I obeyed, he slid his fingers through my hair, bending to kiss my forehead.

“She’s an online gardening guru. Simon and Toph swear by her advice and you’ve seen their veggies. Their tomatoes are like perfect round, juicy balls and their eggplants and cucumbers are huge and—” He broke off with a laugh. “I’m describing farm-to-table porn, aren’t I?”

“Yeah, don’t stop. I’m interested now. But I’d rather talk about your eggplant.” I reached behind me to rub his crotch meaningfully.

“Behave,” he scolded without heat. “Anyway, we’re almost done here. The irrigation system is in place, so as soon as we finish weeding, we can plant our garden. With any luck, we’ll be able to pick our own herbs and veggies by next spring. Maybe sooner. I know it’s a pain in the ass, but I’m so glad we did this. Our yard looks awesome.”

It really did. We’d planted lemon and olive trees near the back hedge and roses closer to the deck I’d refinished before George moved in with me last January. The new patio furniture looked damn good too. We’d arranged the black wicker sofa and lounge chairs in front of the outdoor TV and grill area, hoping to cultivate an indoor-outdoor vibe in our little bungalow. I thought we’d done a nice job.

The best part about our yard was that it was surprisingly private. The previous owners had lived at the property for forty plus years and the hedges they’d planted around the perimeter were eight to ten feet tall. Our neighbors would have to stand on pretty tall ladders to spy on us. Not that they would. We lived in a very respectable hood...thank you very much.

And it’s not as if we’d ever done anything wild and crazy anyway. Okay, well I did waltz through the sprinklers in my birthday suit last week. But in my defense, it was really fuckin’ hot and yes, a childish part of me had just wanted to make George laugh. It worked.

He’d come home after a long day at the lab exhausted and irritated about traffic and something Newton said. I’d

reminded him that traffic was always rough at five p.m. and Newton was always a little irritating. The shoulder rub hadn't done the trick, so I'd stripped and went for a backyard jog. I didn't bother hiding my shit-eating grin when he nudged up and joined me. I'd pulled him into my arms and held him like we were in a giant shower, alternately making out and chuckling at how ridiculous we were.

Of course, one thing led to another. We'd dried off and moved to our room, writhing and grinding along the way.

Just thinking about it made me horny. I adjusted the chubby in my shorts and turned to bury my nose in his crotch. When he tugged my hair, I sat up quickly and pounced.

I cupped his face and slid my tongue between his lips as I covered him, slowly crawling on top of him until he lay flat on his back. Then I held his wrists above his head and devoured him, sweeping my tongue inside in long hungry strokes. George moaned as he opened his thighs and wrapped his legs around me.

Damn, this was good. So good.

It still blew me away that this man was mine. We'd been together for over a year now and had lived together for almost half that time, but our history made every minute seem sweeter somehow. I never in a million years would have dreamed up a scenario that ended with me falling for my best friend's little brother. But here we were. I was deeply, madly in love with George Murphy, the coolest, weirdest brainiac I'd ever met. And crazy enough, he loved me too.

We'd built a life together, complete with a new house, and soon...a garden.

I sucked his bottom lip and rocked my hips, dragging my cock over his. Even through a few layers of fabric, it felt pretty damn amazing. "Wanna fuck you, baby."

"Yes. But not out here."

I rained kisses all over his face then bit his earlobe and whispered, "No one can see us."

George pushed at my chest and gave me a stern look. "It's ninety degrees out here, Aiden...on the itchy grass. And the lube is inside."

I narrowed my eyes thoughtfully. "I'm hearing maybe."

He snickered as he threw his arms around my neck, shifting his weight with enough oomph that I took the hint and let him switch positions. I was a few inches taller and outweighed him by...a lot. He couldn't overpower me, but I had to admit, I loved when he tried. And I loved giving him the reins every once in a while. Which shocked the hell out of me.

I, Aiden Baker, loved cock. More specifically...I loved George's cock and I enjoyed taking it for a ride every so often.

Okay, this was not helping my horny situation.

George straddled my torso and set his hands on my chest. "Very funny. Let's finish up here and take a shower. We're supposed to meet everyone at Topher and Simon's house for dinner and—"

I groaned. Loudly. "What happened to my sexy time?"

George went still and his expression turned serious. "Oh no. I sound...old."

“Well, you *are* twenty-five now,” I joked.

Wrong thing to say.

George was more agitated than ever. He let out a jagged stream of air and nodded like a manic marionette.

“The average twenty-five year old male in a committed relationship has sex up to four times a week. We usually exceed that amount, but it’s been a hectic week. I haven’t been doing my part. I’ve been working long hours at the lab and when come home I worry about groceries and planting vegetables and—oh, my God. Who am I?” He covered his mouth in horror. “I sound like I’m one hundred. I do not want to turn into my parents. Not yet anyway. I should want sex anywhere, at any time, and the only eggplant I should worry about is yours. So...okay. Let’s do it.”

He tugged at the elastic on my workout shorts. I caught his wrist and shook my head.

“Whoa. Hold up, G. You’ve got that wild scientist look in your eye and I need you to listen.”

“I’m listening,” he replied, plucking at my T-shirt.

I smacked his hand gently then kissed it. “There’s no ‘should’ here and we’re not counting our weekly sex average. That’s odd and unhealthy. Working hard and wanting to make things nice at home doesn’t make you sound old. It makes you sound like someone who cares.”

“But you come first. Always.”

I caressed his cheek. “You come first for me too, G. But you don’t have to have midday sex on the grass with me in summer to prove anything. I was just caught in a horndog moment.”

“I know and I promise I’ll make it up to you when—”

“Make it up to me? No, no, no.” I shook my head sternly. “That’s not how it works. We’re not keeping score. We communicate, remember?”

George nodded and sat beside me. “Yes.”

“So, what’s on your mind? I can tell you’re thinking too hard.”

“You’re going to laugh,” he sighed.

“I won’t laugh.”

“Okay...I’m afraid of how good things are,” he admitted, plucking at the grass. “I’m afraid to lose it and I’m afraid of taking it for granted. And I’m afraid I’ll get sidetracked worrying about all the wrong things. The thought of you *not* wanting to have sex outside on a random weekend in summertime scares me. Does that make sense or am I unraveling?”

I shifted to face him then draped my legs over his thighs, and set my hands on his shoulders. “I understand what you’re saying, but there’s nothing to be afraid of here and nothing to worry about, baby. Nothing at all. I’m exactly where I want to be. That will never change. You’re all I want.”

He rubbed his thumb over my lips and smiled. “Do you ever think that you can’t believe this is real? Because I do. I think...wow, this our house, that’s our olive tree, that’s Aiden in *our* bed—and I get so...overwhelmed. In the best possible way.”

I kissed him softly, running my fingers through his thick hair. “I feel that way all the damn time. But I’m not going to question my luck. I’m just going to do whatever it takes to make sure it sticks. If that means I have pull weeds on a

hot summer day to be close to you, I'll do it. And I'll do again tomorrow and next day and the day after that."

George chuckled against my lips. "That won't be necessary."

"Thank God. Hey, I love you, G. You know that, right?"

"Yes. I love you too. C'mon, we can do this in the morning."

DINNER AT SIMON and Toph's was fun. Asher and his boyfriend were there, along with Holden, Tommy, and their new roomie. Si barbequed steaks and bragged big time about his damn garden veggies. Not gonna lie, I got a little jealous.

I shrugged off my button-down shirt, dropped it on the chair in our room then scratched my junk through my boxer briefs and padded toward the master bathroom.

"Those squash blossoms were amazing. We have to put those on our list."

"We will," George replied from somewhere in the living area.

"Where are you? I thought you were in here." I picked up my toothbrush, added toothpaste, expecting George to walk in at any second.

He didn't. And he didn't respond.

Oh, well. I finishing my usual evening routine, thinking about the cheese they'd used to stuff the squash blossoms. I was pretty sure it was pecorino...or was it cheddar?

George would know. I wandered into our room with my exciting question on the tip of my tongue.

But he wasn't in bed.

I called his name and followed the sound of his voice down the hallway to the darkened living room. He wasn't there, but the sliding glass door was ajar.

"I'm out here."

"What are you—" I stopped short at the edge of the deck and set my hands on my hips as a megawatt grin split my face in two. "You put up a tent? I didn't even know we had a tent. This is so...wow."

George parted the opening a little wider, motioning for me to join him. I walked across the damp grass, shimmied inside, and sat in the middle of an air mattress covered with beach towels. He flopped beside me, propping his arms behind his head.

"Surprise. What do you think?"

I gazed up at the starlit sky through the roof flap and hummed in approval. "I think this is pretty fucking awesome. How'd you do this without me noticing?"

"My dad did it."

"What?"

"I told him we were thinking about camping and asked if he'd bring one of his tents over...and set it up for me to let it air out. All I had to do was deal with the air mattress," he replied smugly.

"Nice. Do you want to sleep out here?"

"No. I just I wanted to show you the stars." He leaned on one elbow and pointed at the heavens. "The moon is in its first quarter."

“What does that mean?”

“It means it’s traveled a quarter of the way around the Earth since its new phase, or new moon. You can see the tip of Virgo on that side and Libra on the other.”

“I don’t know what I’m looking at, but it’s cool,” I sighed happily.

“Well, you look for the Big Dipper and follow the curve of the handle to that bright star.” He drew a line in the air to guide me. “The star is called Arcturus. It’s better with a telescope, but I didn’t want to ask my dad to set mine up. He would have asked questions and there’s no way I was going to tell him the tent was a ruse to seduce you.”

I rolled on my side, resting my hand on his hip and slipped my fingers under the elastic of his briefs. It was tempting to make a crack about him rocking a Captain Underpants look in his cape and tighty whities, but I was still processing the tent seduction thing. It was so...George.

Quirky and amazing.

I squeezed his ass and licked the column of his neck. “Seduce me, eh? Are you proposing backyard sex, Murphy?”

He moaned when I pushed his underwear down and traced his crease. “Yes, and if you’re interested, I brought lube.”

“Oh yeah, I’m interested.”

I shoved my boxer briefs off and practically jumped on top of him. I was all need, zero finesse. I couldn’t get close enough. He must have felt the same.

We fumbled in the dark, arching against each other with entwined limbs. Sweet kisses soon gave way to a hungry

fusion. I gripped us both in one hand, stroking languidly as I sucked his tongue. Then I smeared our combined precum over the head of his cock and licked a trail down his beautiful body, pausing to play with his nipples before continuing south over his ribs and belly button. I rubbed my beard on his inner thigh, loving his low moan of approval.

“Suck me.”

“You’re the vampire. You’re supposed to suck me,” I teased, twirling my tongue over his crown.

“Mmm. More.”

I didn’t have it in me to hold back. In fact, I was impressed that I wasn’t balls deep inside him already. I wanted this man more every day. The intensity of my desire for him scared me sometimes. I never thought it was possible to connect so completely with another human. Till George. I knew him better than I knew myself some days.

I fondled his balls and flattened my tongue over his shaft, licking him from base to tip, then swallowing him whole. He tilted his hips, opening his legs in invitation. I took as much of him in my mouth as possible. My gag reflex was better these days. I was close to being able to deep throat him and yeah, I was kinda proud of that.

When I couldn’t breathe, I pulled back, rested my tongue at his slit...and did it again. And again. I paused to slick two fingers with excess saliva and slipped them between his crack, massaging his hole as I blew him. Just a slight press against that sensitive spot.

He grunted and writhed...and begged for more.

I kissed released him with a pop and kneeled between his thighs. "Gimme the lube, babe."

George handed it over, propping himself on his elbows. He sighed happily when I pushed a single digit inside him. "Oh, fuck, yes."

He grabbed his cock and stroked himself as I finger-fucked him, whispering dirty sweet nothings in the dark. "That's it, baby. Ride my finger."

"Mmm. More."

I obeyed, added a second digit, then the tip of a third.

The shadowy darkness was frustrating, but it added a sensual element. The sound of his soft purr of pleasure and the feel of his ass tightening around my fingers was a powerful aphrodisiac. No kidding, my cock had a heartbeat of its own. Everything in me begged me to make a move, slide inside my lover and take what was mine.

I pulled my fingers out and added more lube. Then I splayed my free hand on his upper thighs, and set my cock at his entrance. I dragged my tip over his pucker a few times, teasing us both mercilessly before slowly pushing inside my man.

"Holy fuck, you feel good," I groaned, pulling out then surging forward again.

I didn't have it in me to be patient or tender. I was a horny, needy mess. I didn't just want to be inside him, I wanted to possess him, control him, own him. On some level, I knew I was the one under his spell. But he'd given me the power to please him and I was up to the challenge.

I slammed into him, crashing my mouth over his as I pumped my hips double time. There was no leisurely pace,

no sweet caresses. This was an inferno now. We sucked at tongues, biting and clawing at skin as we met each other thrust for thrust. At some point, George broke our feverish kiss to switch positions.

He arranged his cape over his shoulders as he lowered himself on my cock. I reached for him, stroking his shaft as he rode me. My beautiful vampire. My sexy geek. The love of life.

The same man who was currently riding me like a fucking bronco.

“I’m close. So close...I’m—”

Cum shot over my fist and across my stomach. I squeezed his cock and lifted my hips as I emptied myself inside him. Pleasure coursed through my veins, sending a tingling sensation along my spine and my limbs. I couldn’t stop shaking. I pulled him against my chest, slipping my hands under his cape, gluing him to me in a mess of sweat and cum.

We cleaned up with one of the beach towels then laid back and stared up the stars.

“Thank you,” I whispered.

I could practically feel his smile in the dark. “It was a good idea, huh?”

“Very good.”

“This was a little more private and a lot cooler than rolling around in the grass.”

“I wouldn’t have minded that either.” I kissed his forehead before continuing. “You know what you said earlier...the part about being afraid of losing this?”

“Yeah?”

“I want to propose a new rule. We’ll call it something snappy like...a rule of the heart.”

He lifted himself on his elbow and rubbed his thumb over my bottom lip. “Oh? And what is this rule exactly?”

“We have to trust us. Trust your heart and trust mine. You never have to worry about me not loving you enough to know that not every day is going to be perfect. As long as I’m with you, that’s all I need.”

“I like that rule,” he replied huskily. “And I love you, Aiden.”

“Love you too, G.” I held him closer then pointed up at the piece of sky visible through the open flap of tent’s roof. “What that star called?”

“That’s not a star. That’s Jupiter.”

“No shit?”

“No shit. You can see a couple of planets without a telescope. It depends on the weather and of course, your location. If you’re in highly populated area, artificial illumination becomes an issue and...”

I closed my eyes and listened the sound of his voice. I wouldn’t admit it to George, but I didn’t give a fuck about Jupiter. This was all I cared about. This man, this moment.

I wanted to look back on tonight when we were old men and remember what it felt like to have the future ahead of us. This was forever. This was a lifetime commitment with the person I loved and cherished more life itself. Somehow, I knew we’d be all right if we played by rules of the heart.

**COMING SOON- THE JOCK SCRIPT -
SEPTEMBER 2021**

Geeks rule! Get ready for Book 3 in my new geeky series,
The Script Club!

**EXCERPT FROM THE JOCK SCRIPT- COMING
SEPTEMBER 2021**

“Sounds like a date. The game is at ten at Westgate. I’ll text you the address.”

“Okay. I have questions, like...where do I sit and what should I wear? Also, is what are the rules?”

I smiled. “Sit wherever you want and wear whatever you want. The idea is to have fun. Well...and to kick OC Lutheran’s ass. As for the rules...the goal is to put the ball in the net more times than our opponent. You’ll be able to follow along.”

He didn’t look convinced. “I’ll do some research. Now, what about us? Do you want me to be there and not speak or...are you going to introduce me? And if so, what will you say? I need to rehearse my lines.”

“Lines? This isn’t a play, Ash. We’re friends, so I’ll introduce you as my friend.”

“And if someone asks where we met, I’m allowed to improvise, correct?” he teased.

“Correct. And after the game, I’ll take you Home Depot and show you some power tools. We can grab some supplies and make something simple.”

“That’s a whole day together,” Asher said, taking a big bite of pasta.

Too big of a bite. He slurped a rogue piece of tagliatelle with wide eyes then covered his mouth with his napkin. It was pretty freaking cute. I pointed at the sauce on his cheek. When he swiped at the wrong side, I hooked my finger and motioned for him to lean in.

I wiped his cheek with my thumb, underestimating the intimacy of the gesture. The strong current of heat and desire sizzling between us threw me off guard, rendering me speechless. I froze for a moment and met his eyes.

Of course, when I found my voice, I sounded breathless.

“I know. You’ll probably get tired of me.”

“Probably.” He licked his lips, darting his gaze over my face nervously.

I didn’t want him to be anxious and I definitely didn’t want to make this awkward. So, I killed the moment by pinching his cheek like I was his eighty-year old great-aunt, chuckling when he smacked my hand.

“Sorry. I couldn’t resist. It might be the bow tie. You’re cute and hot at the same time,” I commented unthinking. I covered up my lameness with a lame question...as one does and asked, “Is that a clip-on?”

Asher huffed irritably. “No. I taught myself how to tie a bow tie when I was twelve.”

I smiled. “I like it. Something tells me you’re wearing red for a reason.”

“Red is power color in business. I figured it was best to treat our alliance as such.”

Okay, I didn’t like the sound of that.

“Business?”

Asher nodded, raising his glass in a toast. “To the business of self-betterment.”

I started to clink it against his, but lifted it out of reach instead. “That sounds...cold and kinda boring. We can do better than that.”

He furrowed his brow. “What do you suggest?”

“Why don’t we go with how we met, instead of what we’re doing?”

“The business of sexual gratification doesn’t have a pleasant ring,” he replied primly.

“True, but ‘booty call’ business does. BCB for short.” I tapped the binder meaningfully. “Write that down.”

“Not a chance. This is a formal endeavor.”

“Are you gonna call me Mr. Johnston? Or Coach J?” I squinted as if mulling over the idea. “I could be down with either of those.”

Asher rolled his eyes, but he couldn’t quite hide his grin.

THE SCRIPT CLUB SERIES-NERD/JOCK ROMANCE

Check out the first two books in the series!

FOLLOWING THE RULES, Book 1

The geek, the jock, and a new set of rules...

Topher-

My friend's brother needs an academic assistant and I need a job. Problem...jocks are my weakness. Seriously. I lose my ability to speak coherently around muscle-bound hotties. Oh yeah, I lose my inhibitions too—not a good look for a guy with a genius IQ. So what am I going to do about Simon?

Simon-

Finishing college isn't high on my list of priorities, but my future in professional football is looking bleak. I need a plan B or C, and I could use some help navigating life as an undergrad. Topher is perfect. He's also a little strange...but in a good way. And I like the way I feel when I'm around him—as though anything is possible. Maybe if we follow

our hearts, we'll find what we're looking for. But that means changing the rules...

Following the Rules is a MM, bisexual awakening romance starring a lovable nerd, a cool jock, and some extracurricular fun.

RULES OF PLAY, Book 2

The genius, the ex-jock, and a new playbook...

George-

My brother's friend is hot—if you're into flannel-wearing lumbersexual former jocks who eat donuts for dinner and still scribble to-do lists on their palms. I'm not. I'm a serious scientist in my final year of grad school. Okay, I admit I have few quirks of my own. I also have a broken truck and a boss who thinks I can help him find love. I'm in over my head. Help!

Aiden-

A few quirks? Really? George is the weirdest dude I know. He wears capes in public, brings a book everywhere he goes, and loves all things spooky. He's also the smartest person on the planet—who somehow thinks I can help him write a How-To-Get-A-Date playbook for his boss. Yeah, that sounds suspicious. I know baseball; I don't know anything about love. But I can't say no. The thing is...I've always had a soft spot for George. But falling for my best friend's brother is against the rules, isn't it?

Rules of Play is an MM bisexual awakening story where opposites attract and shenanigans ensue!

OUT IN COLLEGE SERIES

Out in College is my new adult series set in Southern California. Each book has a sports theme and though some characters will be featured in other stories, these books can be read on their own and in any order. So far, we've got water polo, football, baseball, ice hockey, volleyball, a little skiing...and coming soon, surfing!

Check out the entire series...

Out in the Deep, Book 1

Out in the End Zone, Book 2

Out in the Offense, Book 3

Out in Field, Book 4

Out on the Ice, Book 5

Out in Spring, Book 6

Out on the Serve, Book 7

Out in Winter, Book 8

Out for the Holidays/Out for Gold, A Derek & Gabe

Short Story - Book 9

More coming in 2022!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lane Hayes loves a good romance! An avid reader from an early age, she has always been drawn to well-told love story with beautifully written characters. Her debut novel was a 2013 Rainbow Award finalist and subsequent books have received Honorable Mentions, and were winners in the 2016, 2017, and 2018-2019 Rainbow Awards. She loves red wine, chocolate and travel (in no particular order). Lane lives in Southern California with her amazing husband in a not quite empty nest.

***Join Lane's reading group, [Lane's Lovers](#) for immediate updates!**



ALSO BY LANE HAYES

The Script Club- Nerd/Jock Romance Following the Rules

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The Jock Script- September 2021

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Starting From Scratch

Starting From Here

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The Real Baxter- Book 1 in The Baxter Chronicles- Fall 2021

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Out in the Offense

Out in the Field

Out on the Ice

Out in Spring

Out on the Serve

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Leaning Into a Wish
Leaning Into Touch
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