

Hold On Tight

Maria E. Monteiro

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Find Maria E. Monteiro Online:

www.MariaEMonteiro.com

<http://twitter.com/Mmonteiro33>

<http://www.facebook.com/MariaEMonteiro>

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*Dedicated to:
My husband Eddie and the best mother in the world, Maria Araya*

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

1

HANGING BY A MOMENT

“Court wants to talk to you, after school,” Adam states, as he prevents me from entering my last class. I open my mouth to object but he walks away before I can respond, I think I’m about to lose my lunch. Court Dobberson is the last person I want to talk to, especially after being ignored by him for the last couple of days.

It has been six days since Court and I shared an incredible kiss at Laura Burn’s party. For six days, I’ve waited for Court to call me, but he never did. For six days, I’ve waited for Court to talk to me, but he never did. And for six days, I have felt really guilty for kissing someone that was not Jason.

Now, after six long days, he finally wants to talk to me. He probably wants to tell me he regrets kissing me, I already know he’ll use the “*I was so wasted*” excuse. Well, I don’t care! I don’t even like him. In fact, as of a month ago, I hated him. If I hadn’t been forced to work with him on our economics project, I would have never even spoken to him.

Now, here I sit in history class trying to listen to Mrs. Levy explain the events that lead to the Korean War, but I haven’t really heard a word she’s said, instead I keep watching the clock on the wall. What is going on with it? Every other day the seconds seem to take minutes, but today the minutes seem to take seconds.

My stomach spins as the bell gets ready to ring. Somehow, I need to get to my car before Court even has a chance to look for me. RRIIINNNGGGGG! I grab my bag and rush down the

hallway, I don't even stop at my locker to wait for Britney, like I always do. She'll understand when I explain the whole situation to her. She thinks Court is a dick for dissing me after kissing me. Oh my god, did I just rhyme? I'm such a dork when I'm nervous.

I push open the glass doors, step outside, and absorb the hot sun. It's mid May but feels more like mid July. The high school parking lot is already full of teenagers eager to escape the walls that have held them captive for the last seven hours.

I make my way to my car focusing on the black steaming pavement, believing if I keep my eyes down, Court will not be able to find me. I know its a little egocentric of me.

Unfortunately, staring at the ground doesn't allow me to see where I parked my mom's car. I quickly look up and feel all the air escape my body--Court is speaking to Adam in front of my silver Toyota, right in front of the driver's side. Damn him!

I try to move, but can't. Air refuses to re-enter my lungs, I try to breathe again, but it doesn't work, I need this air to stop my heart from racing. *Come on Emma, you don't really care about what he has to say*, I tell myself. Who am I kidding? In a few seconds, the wrong words can easily shatter my heart.

For the last six days, all I've thought about has been that stupid kiss, trust me I've tried hard not to. After Jason, I never thought anyone else would invade my mind like this again.

It's all that damn project's fault. For two weeks straight I've worked closely with Court on it. At first I thought I would have to do all of the work, but I was wrong. Court ended up being incredibly smart and an awesome person; he was not at all the rich spoiled brat I always made him out to be.

He began to talk to me outside of class, and even sat with me at lunch, which in Cypress Oak High School society is a huge deal when you're not in each other's social circles. We were

actually becoming friends--until that kiss. That damn kiss! I didn't even want to go to that stupid party, but Britney insisted I'd go with her.

She dragged me to Laura Burn's house, which happens to be on the wealthy side of Cypress Oak, uninvited. The last time I had gone to a party was with Jason by my side. It was awkward walking into that enormous house by myself, especially since it was surrounded by the people I once wanted to be like, but now could hardly tolerate.

Britney left my side two minutes after we arrived to find Derek Peterson, her new conquest, and the only reason we had gone to that stupid party. She hated these people as much as I did.

I was hoping to become invisible and blend in with the unadorned eggshell walls, as hip-hop music blared out of the speakers. The beautiful people were all packed in drinking, dancing, hooking up, and making me sick. I didn't belong, and the truth was I didn't want to.

I stood against the wall missing Jason, and trying not to make eye contact with anyone, but I soon learned that was unavoidable. Christy LeVandal was glaring at me from across the room, with pure hatred in her cold sapphire eyes. She sent me violent messages as she twirled around her fake blond hair.

She hated me, but because of what happened with Jason, she had stopped making her nasty comments towards me. I knew she wanted to attack me for being at that stupid party, but I also knew she wouldn't, so I smiled and waved hello. Before she could respond someone blocked my view, and tried to share my personal space. Court was standing right in front of me, offering me a drink. He looked so good in his green Hollister T-shirt and blue jeans,

"Thanks," I said, taking a small sip of beer. I held the cup in my hand and wished it was water, I hate alcohol.

“No problem. I’m glad you’re here.” He formed his perfect smile.

“I wish I wasn’t.”

“What, you’re not having a good time?”

I lowered my voice and with a sly grin I said, “Well, this is not my scene. I can’t stand these people, and you’re the worst of them all.” He started laughing, as he stood next to me.

Court and I started talking about the books we are reading, the latest episode of *Shameless*, and about the obsession people have with collecting friends on social networks, and letting them know what they are thinking or doing every minute of the day. Court admitted he was guilty of this obsession. He, himself has over two hundred and fifty friends, and minutes earlier had updated his status by writing “*Ready to drink 1 too many at Laura’s party.*”

I couldn’t stop laughing when he told me. At first he looked upset I was laughing at him, but seconds later he began laughing too. He stepped in front of me with his perfect smile and said, “I love that about you.”

“What?” I asked, trying to breathe.

“That you make me laugh, but most of all that you make me think.” Court’s electrifying baby blue eyes were swallowing me up. Before I knew it his light pink lips began to come closer, making my heart pound even harder.

My body began to shake from the fear and excitement his touch might produce. Slowly his face began to get closer and closer, I could smell the beer on his breath, and at that moment I forgot how much I hated that scent. He was about to kiss me. Court Dobberson was going to kiss me! I wanted to run, afraid his kiss would erase Jason’s last, but I couldn’t move. He gave me a little smile right before his soft lips touched mine. We slowly began to kiss.

His lips gently absorbed my upper lip as mine absorbed his lower lip. Court's kiss was beautiful; he never tried to put his tongue in my mouth. I wrapped my arms around his neck and pulled him closer to my body. In that moment, I was no longer at that stupid party, but instead on a magical voyage I never wanted to end.

But it did, I was brought back to reality when I heard Britney yell, "Emma, let's go!" She didn't realize I was enjoying some mouth to mouth with Court. I pulled away from him, just as Britney stormed by, taking me away from a kiss I hadn't realized I had wanted so badly.

I didn't blame her though, she was having a horrible time. Minutes earlier she had witnessed Derek making out with Lila Diller. Britney cried about the betrayal she had just lived, while I thought about the amazing kiss I had just experienced.

That was the last time Court and I shared any personal space together, and the last time I got a smile from him. Now there he is smiling, as the warm mountain air blows his chestnut brown hair in different directions.

I can't handle this, I don't want to be hurt by him, not after what I've been through with Jason, losing him was the worst thing in my life, I suffered more than I needed to. I don't need this insignificant person crushing what is left of my heart.

I'll run home, he can't hurt me if he can't talk to me. All I have to do is avoid him for another month, and then I'll use this whole summer to get over that stupid kiss that's been holding my mind hostage.

Oh no, it's too late to run. Court is focusing his eyes on me. He puts his white Yankee baseball cap on his head, says goodbye to Adam, and begins his journey towards me. I want to run, but I can't, Court's baby blue eyes hold me in place. My heart begins to beat louder and louder, Thump, THump, THUmp, THUMP!

“Hi,” he says, making all my insides shake.

“Hi.”

“How are you?”

“Okay.” His eyes are too powerful for me. I quickly bring my focus down to the ground while I tuck my hair behind my ear.

“So, I’m glad we got an A on our project. I couldn’t have done it without you.”

“We both worked equally hard on it.” Oh come on already, break my heart, so I can run off and find comfort in a bowl of double fudge chocolate ice cream.

“Umm, so you’re working at Fairland Park this summer?” Is this why he wants to talk to me? Oh man, I forgot his father owns the park. He probably wants to brag on how I’ll be working there while he hangs out with all his friends, and wants me to cater to all of them. What a jerk! I just nod my head. “Then I guess I’ll be seeing you there this summer.”

“Yeah, when you come hang out...”

“No.”

“Huh?”

“I’m working there too!”

Did he just say he’ll be working at the park too? I’m confused. Is his dad making him work there? God knows he doesn’t need the money. Maybe he wants me to cover for him, and do his share of the work. What the hell does he want? “Just tell me already!” Oh no, did I just say that out loud?

“I’m sorry, umm...” Court mumbles, bringing his baby blue eyes down, now he’s having trouble making eye contact.

“I’ll make it easy for you, the kiss was a mistake. Well I got news...”

“What? No! In fact it’s the total opposite.” Court gazes into my eyes again.

“What?” My legs are struggling to keep me up.

“I wanted to know if maybe you would like to go out with me.”

“What?”

“Do you want to go out? I’m not sure if you’re ready to date yet, I mean it’s been six months. I don’t know. Would you like to go out with me?” Court asks.

My heart races and breaks at the same time. I like Court, and for six days I have really wanted him to ask me out, however, now that he’s asking, I’m not sure if I am ready to say yes. He’s right, it has been six months, but as I see it, it’s only been six months since Jason died.

“When?” I whisper.

“Tonight? I mean I know its short notice...”

“No.”

“Oh,” Court utters, as pain spreads across his eyes.

“No, I mean I don’t care about the short notice. I’m just not sure if I’m ready for this. I mean I want to go out with you, but...”

“We’ll go slow. We’ll only go out as friends tonight.”

“Okay,” I agree, watching Court’s beautiful smile appear on his face again, which makes me smile even harder.

“Then I’ll pick you up at seven.”

“Okay. Um, Court? Where are we going?”

“I thought we’d go to the opening of Fairland Park, as customers, before we become park employees.”

“Sounds good. I’ll see you tonight.” With each step I take to my car my smile becomes wider. I can’t believe Court asked me out! Britney is going to die when I tell her about this.

I close the door to my car and tears begin to run down my face, my heart is tight with pain. Why did I say yes to Court? Can I really do this to Jason? He’s only been gone for six months. Oh God, this might be a mistake. Am I really ready for this?

2

THE GOOD LIFE

My sophomore year is officially over! I have so much to look forward to this summer:

1. My job
2. Spending time with my new boyfriend
3. Spending time with my best friend Britney

Okay, I know number one should be my boyfriend, but I'm still having a hard time saying I have a boyfriend again, especially since it's Court Dobberson. He's not the type of guy who is supposed to choose a girl like me, we are not supposed to be together, but somehow we are. He even wrote it on his status update, "*In a relationship with Emma Paige*"

I battled with every emotion in my heart to say no to him. But every time we hung out, I couldn't wait to be with him again, and when he'd kiss me it just felt right. After two weeks of amazing dates and even better kisses, I finally accepted to be his girlfriend.

I'm not sure if enough time has passed since Jason's death for me to move on, all I do know is I don't want to be sad any more. Jason will always be in my heart, and I don't think I will ever love anyone the way I loved him, but Court makes it easier for me to smile again. He's helping me heal, and find the old me again.

Court and I becoming a couple has become a huge deal to everyone at Cypress Oak High School. The colorless hallways sang with the gossip of the newest couple alert. I still remember

the first time Court and I walked down the hallway holding hands, everyone's jaws hit the floor. I've never had so many confused looks come my way.

No one could understand why someone like Court would go out with someone like me. He belongs to the beautiful people, while I belong to the hallways. When people asked Court why he's with me, he would say, "Because she is not only beautiful, but also amazingly smart." No one asked me why I'm with him, but if they did, I would tell them, "Because he is not only hot, but also kind. Okay and smart."

Many of my female classmates were more than upset to hear about our new relationship. No one said anything mean to me, they all still treat me like the delicate flower I became when Jason was killed. But it hasn't stopped all the girls in Court's social circle from secretly hating me, they pretended to like me as they try to break us up.

Christy however, has been the only one who's been outspoken about her disapproval of Court's new relationship. She's tried everything she can do to break us up, including spreading rumors that Court is only with me because I'm easy. I wonder if Court thinks that's true, then again, all I've let him do is kiss me, he hasn't even touched a boob yet.

Anger runs through her veins for a good reason, she's had the hots for Court since the 4th grade. I know in the past they've hooked up a lot, but never had a real relationship. She must be hurting, and I respect her feelings, so every time she's around I make it a point to hang all over Court. What can I say, I'm a bitch! Happiness runs through my veins to see the pain in her evil eyes.

You can't blame me though. Christy LeVandal has been an evil witch to me my whole life. In kindergarten she would always take the toys I wanted to play with. In the second grade she forced everyone to stop playing with me, the only one who didn't listen to her was Britney,

which is why we are best friends. In the sixth grade she found out I liked Tom Walker, so after Christy told the whole school, she went after him and got him. She made sure to parade him in front of me every day, until she dumped him a month later. Christy's called me names, insulted my friends, and even said nasty things about Jason. She deserves to be messed with right now, and I'm happy to be the one to do it. I'm enjoying every minute.

Anyway, now here I am three weeks into the perfect relationship, getting ready to enjoy the summer, but not before one more major frightening event [End of Sample]