

BRATVA BABYGIRL

DARK & RUTHLESS
BOOK THREE

KILEY BECKETT



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This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only.
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advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

TRAFFIC WAS BACKED up on Ka'ahumanu all the way to the 76 gas station. There was an accident, two cop cars with the bee-bop lights flickering in the bright sunlight about twenty car lengths ahead. Her van's rear end blocked a lane at the Wakea intersection, and someone honked their horn, a long, loud bellow that got her teeth grinding.

Forty minutes ago, she'd disembarked a whale-watching vessel at the Mahala boat ramp in Lahaina, all the way on the west end of Maui. She'd hauled ass from Lahaina to Wailuku, but had to stop for gas in Waikapu—the van was on fumes, and she should have got gas in the morning or on Friday night, but she was almost late this morning and was too tired coming home on Friday.

Saturdays and Sundays, Sawyer worked as a tour diver for the Aloha Maui Adventure Company; a boat charter service operating with some of the big hotels in Lahaina, taking tourists out whale-watching, snorkeling, and diving. Today the tour went out to Shark Pit, by the Kaua'ula Valley. Not near the beach, but straight out from it in the deep water where they ran the dive tour. But the tour had gone by Shark

Pit on their way out, close to the beach so the tourists could see it. Shark Pit was crowded—benny surfers all up and down, and the waves were barreling. Ten years ago, when she was a teen, that's where she would have been. There or maybe over at Jaws on the north shore. Surf all day, hang out on the beach all night by a fire.

But times had changed. She worked full time at the Wild Sea Park and did weekends for Aloha Maui. Seven days a week, go-go-go. Now she was off work, four o'clock on a Saturday, and racing across to the other side of the island to pick up her brother from physical therapy. She should have been there ten minutes ago. Covey had been taunting her by text, writing how he was going to get sunburned, wheeled out in his chair to the curbside and abandoned by the nurses. The nurses would not have abandoned him, not Covey—everyone loved her brother.

She nosed her big old van right up to the bumper of the Prius in front of her—who had more room to pull ahead, but was probably a dumb tourist who noticed nothing but the big blue sky, the green spine of Haleakalā in the hazy distance, happy to be in Maui and not desk jockeying somewhere in Middle America. Meanwhile, Sawyer lived in Wailuku and had important things to do and places to be. Not everyone had the luxury of a vacation.

She laid on her horn in return, shouting: “Pull up, you dumb piece of—”

The car behind her van, blocked in the intersection, horn-howled at her again and she passed the message on to the Prius, leaning on her horn as well. At last, the Prius figured their shit out—*oh yeah, there are other cars on the road*—and nudged up so Sawyer's back end would free up traffic.

Riled by the Prius, she swung the van's octagonal wooden wheel hard to port, determined to get around this haole, even if it was just one car length. Shoot, if those cops weren't up

ahead, she'd just scramble the van across the grassy median and drive on the wrong side of the road. There was no traffic oncoming from the other direction and the Med Center was just up ahead—right where the accident was.

Another blaring horn. Someone else had snuck through the yellow light with her and crowded her out of the lane she tried to pull into. Some shiny new Oldsmobile. She looked down on this tanned and white-haired retiree—probably headed to play golf at the Maui Country Club—seeing the guy in his white polo through his front windshield. The guy threw his hands up in the air and scowled at her, mouthing some profanity.

She shouted out the open window, “Look at my rotten old van, you asshole! You think I won’t ram you right off this road, huh, you dumb fuck?”



FIRST THING COVEY said to her: “You look stressed.”

Sawyer paused, one hand on the van’s side door lever, and gave him a look that would terrify him into silence. Covey said no more, sitting there in his wheelchair in the bright sun, outside the medical center. His unruly hair stuck up in chestnut clumps, shaved at the sides, growing out a mullet. Covey could pull it off. His boyish smirk, dazzling brown eyes and rakish charm won him a lot of friends on the island.

With the van door open, she lowered the hydraulic ramp. Covey rolled on, and they got him in the cargo area, the back of his wheelchair bumped up against her scuba tanks. He made to give her some sly remark, so she slammed the van door shut before he could.

Now she was face to face with Kailani, Grampa’s airbrushed mermaid. The van Sawyer drove—a 1976 customized Dodge Street Van—belonged to her grandfather,

a bona fide old school Wailuku Old Town pakalolo outlaw. Grampa—‘Uncle Day’ to everyone in Wailuku—was a pot dealer in the Cheech and Chong days, selling all the foundational strains, the Maui Wowie and the Kona Gold. Uncle Day bequeathed to her and Covey his home and his beloved Street Van, amongst some other wonderful oddities. The van used to have an elevated bed in the back, with wood paneling, shag pillows, and balusters from bedside to the ceiling. “Something to give the girls to hold on to,” her father had said one time when Sawyer was little and asked what they were. She didn’t understand her father’s answer until she was grown. Uncle Day boned half the young surfer girls in Wailuku back in the day, and sometimes she wondered, driving down the Main Street, if any of the old sidewalk bitties got flashbacks seeing the wild-looking van pass by. Now the van’s back was gutted for space. Since Covey’s accident, they’d converted the old van into a transport for him. It was Covey who did the mechanic work, installing the hydraulic lift—he was wheelchair bound, but still one of the best hot rod wrenchers in all of Maui.

Sawyer scanned Kailani’s airbrushed face, looking for more cracks. Nothing new, but there was something horrible thinking of the old painting fading off the side of Uncle Day’s van. Kailani was a warrior woman and mermaid, armed with a deadly trident. She adorned the passenger side, from the chrome side exhaust up to the roofline. A full-figured and beautiful *Kānaka Maoli* woman, with long black hair and a serious—but also sultry—stare. Kailani had been painted topless back in the seventies, but in the mid-eighties the Wailuku town council ordered Grampa to remove the indecent image. He painted a bikini bra instead—making the mermaid’s nipples bulge through the fabric. No one chased him down about it. But now, almost fifty years of Hawaiian sun were erasing Kailani from existence.

Back in the driver's seat, Sawyer slammed the door and said, "I *am* stressed, Covey." She pulled off her trucker cap with the Aloha Maui Adventure logo and ran her fingers through her hair.

From the cargo, Covey said, "You've got veins popping out in your temple and in your neck. You need to chill, Sawyer."

She checked her reflection. Sure enough, the slim bulge of a vein throbbed in her hairline. Her head pounded and her back ached. "The fucking traffic," she said. "Can't someone stop the airplanes coming in? Like, the island is full, guys."

"I told you Eva would have picked me up today."

"In what? That little car she's got?"

"You could have swapped vehicles."

"Me swap with Eva? No way, Covey. She's not driving my Kailani, and I'm not driving her shit box out to Lahaina with all my scuba gear stuffed into it."

"Whatever. I'm just saying you don't need to rush out to get me if you're going to pop an aneurysm on the way. What would I do without my little sis?"

"Some dip shit hit a pedestrian," she said, flicking a hand out to the cop cars still holding up traffic on Ka'ahumanu. An ambulance was there now, too. "Fucking bright sunny day, wide open double-lane street and whammo. Like, what the fuck, what's the guy doing, texting? How can't you see someone on the road?"

"Maybe they darted out."

Sawyer looked in the back at Covey. "You buckled up and ready to go?"

"All set, Captain Blood Pressure," Covey said and nodded to get going.

"How was your workout today?"

"Good."

"You sore?"

“Nothing a few beers won’t help.”

She groaned. “Ugh, now I gotta stop at the store.”

“I’ll run in,” he said, grinning.

She rolled her eyes. “Fine. I can grab some groceries, too.”

Van in gear, she rolled out from the front of the medical center and through the parking lot to where the cops were doing little to manage the traffic problem. “All these cops here, and they just make it worse.”

“I hope that person’s okay,” Covey said, leaning forward to get a look at the hubbub as they eased onto Ka’ahumanu, headed the direction where there was no traffic.

“They’re right out front of the med center, good spot to get hit. Probably an insurance jump anyway, some deadbeat trying to make a claim, pretending they got hit.”

“You’re so cynical, Sawyer.”

Sawyer grumbled and rubbed her forehead, and Covey laughed.

Covey said, “Hey, did you bring me some of Kim’s banana bread?”

Mitch Turner—who owned Aloha Maui Adventure—always brought out fresh baked banana bread for the guests, made by his wife, a cute Korean woman named Kim. It was Covey’s favorite, and Kim always made extra for Sawyer’s shifts to bring home to Covey. Everybody loved Covey. “In my purse,” she said, and grabbed her bag off the passenger seat and backhanded it into Covey’s lap.