



SALACIOUS
LEGACY

the Good Girl Effect

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

SARA CATE

The Good Girl Effect

Salacious Legacy

Sara Cate

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This book is dedicated to your praise kink.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Salacious Legacy is a second-generation series that takes place twenty-five years after the events of Salacious Players' Club. This series will feature some familiar faces and will reference events in the original series, but this is an entirely new series and can be read on its own.

For those who would like to make connections between this series and the original, a family tree has been provided.

Welcome to Legacy.

CONTENT WARNING

Please be advised this book has topics that could be triggering to some readers, including: death, cancer, and grief.

As always in my books, the kink and elements of BDSM are entirely fictional and meant to be read as fantasy, not reality. Should anything in my novels serve as inspiration to you, you and your partner(s) are responsible for your own research and safety.

Be safe and have fun!

SALACIOUS FAMILY TREE

Eden, Jade, & Clay

Jack St. Claire
Elizabeth Bradley
Scarlett Bradley

Ronan & Daisy

Julian Kade
Amelia Kade

Hunter, Isabel, and Drake

Phoenix Scott
Austin Scott
Weston Scott

Garrett & Mia

Liam Porter

Emerson Grant

Beau Grant

PROLOGUE

Jack

"E veryone's here," I say as I find a seat in the back of the dimly lit bar. "Did you all get the email too?"

"Yep," my best friend Phoenix replies next to me.

"Sure did," Weston adds while scrolling on his phone.

At the corner of the booth, Julian and his sister, Amelia, sit in silence. Julian is doing so as a form of defiance, while Amelia is silent most of the time anyway. She's chewing on her lip, looking more uneasy by the second.

Neither of them wants to say anything about this mysterious email their father sent everyone yesterday asking us to meet at Geo's bar promptly at eight. Ronan Kade co-owns the sex club where I've been working for the past seven years. He's also my godfather, and his son, Julian, has never been my biggest fan.

The feeling is mutual.

It grates on my nerves to see the pretentious, haughty expression on his face. Julian and I might have grown up together, but it doesn't change the fact that I find him to be infuriatingly snobbish and full of himself.

"So do you think he's coming?" I ask, scanning the group around me.

"Yeah, right," Julian snaps. "He's not coming. He's probably on a yacht halfway across the world right now. He sent this email to trick us all into meeting here."

To trick us all into talking to each other, I think without saying it out loud.

“And what about your sister? She’s on the email too,” Julian says as if it’s a weapon to use against me. He’s cruelly pointing out that my own sister isn’t speaking to me. She won’t return my calls, let alone step foot in the same room I’m in.

My younger sister, Elizabeth, took my wife’s death last year as hard as I did. She looked up to Em like a true sister and even lived with us during Em’s brutal passing. But when she needed me the most, I went to a dark place for a long time. I should have been there for my sister and my daughter, but I just couldn’t. I could hardly be there for myself.

And now, my only goal is to get my four-year-old daughter out of Paris and go back home where we belong. If this email from Ronan means what I think it means, I might have my opportunity.

“We don’t need to wait for Elizabeth,” I mutter under my breath, assuming she won’t show.

“We should wait for everyone,” Phoenix says, softly placing a hand on my arm. I can’t make eye contact with her because I know she’s right.

Just then, the heavy door swings open, and I turn to find my sister slipping into the room. She doesn’t make eye contact with anyone as she approaches our table, sliding into the empty seat silently. Her black hair is pulled tight into a bun at the back of her head, and her expression is harsh like it’s filled with pain. The sight guts me.

No one speaks—the six of us stationed around the table in the back of a dark speakeasy as if we’re awaiting our grim fate.

“Now what?” Phoenix asks first. I look at her, our expressions mirrored. She’s been my best friend for years. She followed me to Paris after college and is currently the only person at this table who I think actually likes me.

As for the others, Julian and Amelia were raised here, although their parents are American. My sister came for a ballet program. And Phoenix and Weston came out here to work for the club a few years ago.

I’m starting to feel restless as the awkward silence engulfs the table. My hope is that Ronan is about to announce his official retirement, naming his son his successor, which would mean I’ll be free to leave. There’s not a chance in hell I’ll work for Julian Kade.

Just when I’m about to suggest we call Ronan, my phone buzzes.

As does everyone else’s.

We all look down in unison.

“It’s an email from Dad,” Amelia says softly with a smile.

Julian rolls his eyes without picking up his phone.

"I'll read it," I say, clicking the notification.

"Dear Kids," it starts, as if we're a bunch of teenagers and not a group of fully grown adults in our twenties and thirties.

"This message is for all six of you: Julian, Amelia, Jack, Phoenix, Elizabeth, and Weston—

"This letter is a long time coming, and I'm sure you've guessed by now what it's about. With the help of my business partner, Matis Moreau, I've managed L'Amour for the past two and a half decades. It is time for me to officially retire.

"I've spoken to Matis about this, and we both agree that you should make the club yours now."

"Wait," Julian interjects with a scowl. "Who? Who the fuck is going to own the club?"

I scan the beginning of the email again, searching for the answer.

"I think he means...all of us," Phoenix replies.

"All of us?" Amelia asks. "Own the club together?"

"Fuck this," Julian mutters, tossing his phone back on the table and picking up his drink.

With a disgruntled sigh, I continue reading.

"I've known you all since you were born. Your parents created a legacy, and you were raised together like a family. You came to Paris with a dream, and you've all worked so hard at L'Amour. But what I see now are six adults who have lost their way. You've grown apart, and each of you has lost something you can never replace. I know how that feels.

"I see your potential. Each of you brings something special to the table. If you really worked together, you could make a club even better than what your parents created.

"There is nothing more powerful than family. The six of you are a family, whether you see it or not. There are three of you missing from this letter—Liam, Austin, and Scarlett. They are choosing another path for their lives, but this offer extends to them, should they choose it. And I hope they do."

Across the table, my sister huffs, and I look up to find her clenching her teeth angrily. Trying not to let it affect me, I continue reading.

"That is why I am passing the club down to all six of you. You can do what you want with it. Change the name. Make it yours. The only catch is

that you have to run it together for at least a year. If one of you pulls out, the ownership reverts to Matis, and he'll sell the property.

"This isn't a punishment. It's an experiment. I watched your parents' club save lives, and I'm hoping this one will save yours.

"One year. That's all I ask. After the year is up, you can do what you want.

"I'm begging you to give it a shot.

"Find your family, and make this your home.

"Sincerely, Ronan Kade"

My jaw hangs open as I stare at the email. The rest of the table is silent as we let this news settle in.

Suddenly, I see my plans of leaving Paris slipping through my fingers. If I leave, the rest of them lose out on this opportunity. Do I really want that on my head?

I scroll through the message again. "There has to be some catch."

"Well, that settles it." Elizabeth stands angrily from the table. "Looks like none of us are getting the club after all."

"Now, wait a minute," Amelia pleads with a hand toward Elizabeth. "Are we not going to consider it at least?"

"Consider what?" Julian barks. "The six of us are more likely to sprout wings and fly to Neverland than work together and create something that could actually succeed."

"Not with that attitude," Weston replies sarcastically. He's hardly looked up from his phone this entire time, and I doubt he's even interested in what has been presented to us. Everything is a joke to Weston. He's here to party, and everyone knows it. If he doesn't get a crack at owning the club, he'll just tend the bar here at Geo's or at one of many other bars in Paris. He doesn't have nearly as much riding on this as the rest of us do, and his cutting tone grates on my nerves.

"Maybe Dad is right," Amelia says sweetly as she wrings her hands and glances around the table. "Maybe we could own it together. It could work."

She barely gets through the sentence before her brother rises from the table. Weston is right behind him.

"What a waste of time," Julian complains.

There is disappointment on Amelia's face, but all I see is my sister sitting next to her. My sister, who I haven't even been in the same room with for over a year. Who knows if I'll get this chance again? If I want to

repair my relationship with Elizabeth, working side by side with her on this club might be the only way to do it. This could be different than just seeing each other in passing like we do now. We'd be in meetings together. She'd have no choice but to speak to me.

But how the hell am I going to rally the rest of this group to join me? If I let them leave and Ronan's offer goes up in smoke, then Elizabeth will go back to ignoring me, and it could be another year before I get her in the same room as me again. I can't let that happen.

"One year," I say, and everyone freezes with their eyes on me. "One year," I repeat, standing from my seat. "I mean...what do we have to lose, right?"

"What's the point?" Phoenix asks with a tilt of her head.

"The point is...Ronan is right. We could make something great. We all bring something different to the table. Amelia has the design and marketing skills, and West can run the bar. Nix has the business brains. Elizabeth..."

My sister doesn't turn my way, even after I utter her name. Swallowing my grief, I continue.

"Elizabeth has danced in shows all over Paris. She can head the entertainment."

"And what about me?" Julian asks from behind me.

Turning away from the table, I stare at him. Standing at my height, I am toe-to-toe with the one guy I can't stand. The idea of working with him repulses me, but this isn't about me. It's about making this harebrained scheme work in hopes of getting my sister back.

For her, I can endure a year with the most pretentious, arrogant, self-absorbed asshole in Paris.

"You, Julian," I say, clapping a hand on his shoulder. "You'll be my partner."

"Your partner?" he asks with a scoff.

"Yeah. You and I will manage it together. And after the year's up, those of us who want to leave can leave. Then you'll have it to yourself."

He scrutinizes me. The room is bathed in awkward tension as we wait for his response. It's all up to Julian now. The one person who needs this the least. He lives a comfortable existence thanks to his rich inheritance.

We're at Julian's mercy now.

His brow furrows as he considers it with a scheming expression.

“Fine,” he says eventually. “I’ll do it.” Quickly, he averts his attention from my face, and I know I should react, but I’m too confounded. I never expected him to actually agree to this.

“Wait, so we’re really doing this?” Phoenix asks.

“I guess we’re really doing this,” I respond.

I look over to my sister, who still won’t look at me. Instead, she smiles softly at Amelia, who is trying to stifle her excitement.

“I’ll get us a round of shots,” Weston announces as he goes to the bar, slipping behind it like he owns the place. And considering most of us grew up here and have known the owner since we were kids, he sort of does.

Meanwhile, the rest of us are still standing around the table. Low chatter and nervous mumbles fill the space while I let this all sink in. There’s a twinge of guilt in my gut because I didn’t do this for the club or the others. I don’t care whether the club thrives or fails, and I don’t genuinely believe Ronan’s message about finding some deeply hidden worth in working together. These people aren’t my family. My family fell apart the day my wife died.

Now, there’s only one family member I’m concerned about in this room, and I’m doing it for her. Running this club with Elizabeth means getting to see her and talk to her and hopefully repairing our broken relationship. Once I do that, I’m taking my daughter back home to California where we belong. The rest of them can do what they want with the place.

One year. I can get through one year.

Weston returns a moment later with a tray full of shots. Knowing Weston, they’re cheap crowd-pleasers, as if we’re a gang of kids fresh out of college and not a meeting of mature business owners. Judging by the white appearance and sugar-coated rims, I assume they’re Lemon Drops, and I was right.

“To the new club,” Phoenix cheers as she holds one up.

“Wait,” Amelia cries, and we all lower our shot glasses. “Dad said we could rename it. So what should it be?”

The answer comes to me immediately.

“Well, he said our parents created a legacy. So I say we do the same.”

“Legacy,” Phoenix replies with a proud smirk.

“I like it,” Amelia chirps.

“To Legacy,” Weston cheers.

“To Legacy,” the rest of us echo. Then we all throw the shots back, even my sister, who has replaced her angry scowl with an expression that looks vaguely like warmth and hope.

This whole venture will surely be a disaster. We’ve worked under Ronan and Matis for years, but have we really learned enough to do it on our own? We don’t have what it takes to recreate what Emerson Grant did nearly thirty years ago. Maybe if our hearts were in it, we could. But like Ronan said, we’ve lost our way. We’re all fighting for something other than this club. Our motivations go far beyond this business venture. But with any luck, my plan might work.

And just like that, the Legacy is born.

RULE #1: YOU'LL ALMOST ALWAYS FIND SOMETHING EXCITING INSIDE A BOOK.

Camille

Ten months later

"**B**onjour, Marguerite," I call pressing open the door of the bookstore. After dropping my bag under the counter, I stretch my arms over my head and move toward the aisles.

The early autumn temperatures have dropped, so the room is still cool with the shutters closed. Pulling them open, I let the heat of the morning sun shine through the dusty windows. Popping my earphones in, I flip through the music app on my phone, landing on an '80s pop playlist and hitting Play. Pat Benatar guitar chords blast into my ears as I grab the cart full of books and push it toward the Littérature section.

Working at the used bookstore doesn't pay much, but it's enough to cover my half of the rent at the flat that I split with an obnoxious and annoying woman who works at the boulangerie. And I like working with books. At least with them, I can escape this mundane life for a moment. The measly pay is enough to get me by until I can get out of this village for real and go somewhere better. Maybe London. Maybe Paris. Maybe Rome. But it's not like a lonely girl with no parents, no money, no education, and no skill can just pick up and leave the village where she grew up. My stubborn curiosity and poor drawing skills wouldn't get me far.

So until then, I'm stuck at this boring job in this boring village, living this boring life.

It takes me a few hours to get the cart full of new donations put away, but to be honest, I'm going slow on purpose. If I hurry, then I won't have anything to do, and hardly anyone comes in now that summer is over, so if I finish too quickly, then I'll *really* be bored.

Marguerite is at the checkout desk now, handling customers while I peruse the books in the romance section because they have the best covers and titles. After peeking around to make sure no one is watching, I slide a book from the shelf. The spine is pink, and the text is bubbly, and on the cover are a pair of lips blowing bubble gum.

Blondie shouts "Call Me" in my ear as I pull a pen out of my back pocket. After another quick glance around, I flick open the front cover of the book and draw a tiny black cat with a spiky mullet blowing a bubble on the inside. It makes me chuckle as I finish the doodle before closing the book and sliding it back into place.

The drawings are just something I've always done. My father used to call them my little signature. He'd find them all over the house when I was young, shouting at me from the kitchen when I'd forget the rules: no furniture, no walls, no floor.

"Tu as encore fait des bêtises, Camille," he used to shout. *You've been causing trouble again, Camille.*

But he'd still find tiny black cats or snakes or turtles popping up on a dinner plate or the leaves of a plant. He wasn't *really* mad. He was never really mad.

I smile at the memory as I walk down the aisle.

My pen goes back into my pocket as I run my fingers along the shelf. I don't know what it is about the next book that catches my eye. It's an old one that hasn't been picked up in years; I know every untouched book on these shelves by heart now. But something about it grabs my attention today.

It has a dark blue leatherette spine with the title *Le Passeport*, which is a boring and strange title for a romance novel. But then I get the idea to draw a gorilla with a suitcase and bucket hat on the inside, so I slip the book from the top shelf.

As I thumb open the front cover to find the title page, something falls from between the pages and lands on the floor. I put the pen back in my

pocket as I lean down to retrieve the beige envelope. I stare at it curiously, turning it over to see the messy, scrawled handwriting on the front.

It's addressed to a woman—Emmaline Rochefort.

The top of the envelope is ripped open, so as the song in my ears changes to something slower and more romantic, I put the book back on a random shelf and peer into the envelope. Inside, there is a folded piece of paper and a small square photo.

It feels like an invasion of privacy, but I can't help myself as I pull them both out. Flipping the photo over, I stare down at the couple smiling back at me. It's a young, handsome man with his arm around the shoulder of a beautiful brunette woman. They're both grinning, cheeks pulled tight from ear to ear and bright, pearly white teeth showing.

They appear so happy it's almost hard to look at them. Two very real people in what looks like the throes of a blissful moment together. One small photograph has captured that, so now it's like they're inviting me to be a part of the moment too.

Tearing my eyes from the photo, I look at the letter next. It's folded beige paper with scribbles all over it, from the front to the back.

At the very top, it says, *Dear Emmaline*.

The letter is scrawled in messy English.

I can't stop thinking about you, it starts. But I stop reading there. It would be an invasion to keep reading.

Turning it over, I find the closing sentence sweetly signed: *Love, Jack*.

"Camille," Marguerite calls from the front of the store.

I quickly shove the letter, envelope, and photo into the pocket of my jacket before I answer, "J'arrive!" Then I dash up to the front of the store, and Marguerite hands me a list of tedious tasks.

For the rest of my shift, I think about the letter and the couple. How did the envelope end up in a book in our small used bookstore? Who still writes love letters anyway?

The temptation to read it is almost too much to resist. And every free moment I have, I pull it from my pocket and glimpse another line.

I miss you so much.

I never expected to fall in love with you.

Please come back.

On my lunch break, I walk down to the bakery to buy a quiche. My rude roommate, Ingrid, is working, and she barely acknowledges me as she

tosses me my lunch.

I don't reply as I take it and walk out the door. On the table outside, I pull out the letter. Instead of inspecting the message, I look at the address listed on the envelope.

The woman, Emmaline Rochefort, must have lived here in Giverny.

The man, Jack St. Claire, has an address in Paris.

How did an English-speaking man in Paris end up writing a love letter to a French woman in a small village? The answers might be in the letter itself, but for some reason, it feels forbidden to read it. It's so personal. So intimate. Whatever he wrote on that paper is meant for her eyes only, even if it did somehow end up in the bookstore where I work.

Maybe it never made it to Emmaline. Maybe someone else found it and opened it, using it as a bookmark and discarding it between the pages when they lost interest in reading it.

Maybe Emmaline did read it and has been looking for it all this time. If that book has been on our shelf for years, then what became of the couple in the photo?

Since I can't bring myself to read the letter in its entirety, I decide to pull out my phone and look up their names instead.

David Bowie croons "Starman" into my ears as I type *Emmaline Rochefort* into the Google search bar first.

Of course, she's not the only Emmaline Rochefort. So I scroll through the results page, finding old women and teenage girls in various locations around the globe. But eventually, a social media page pops up, so I click on it.

The image at the top of her page is of her and a little girl. Immediately, I can tell the woman on the screen—with the pearly white teeth and warm, congenial smile—is the same woman in the photo. It's eerie, really. Finding some stranger online from one small photo and a name.

From there, I scroll, and my heart sinks.

I miss you, Emma.

You're in our thoughts forever.

Gone too soon. Prayers for your family.

Comment after comment after comment of some random person online sending messages to an account as if they can speak to this person beyond the grave. I'm hit by a twinge of grief.

Not for this woman I don't even know, of course. But seeing this immediately brings back memories of my father's restaurant's social media page. One day, it was filled with photos of his famous pan-seared fish, and the next, it was flooded with messages like these.

Gone too soon.

Prayers for your family.

We'll miss you, Laurent.

Messages he'll never read but words of sorrow that just needed to be expressed.

I glance down at the photo on the table. The happy couple stares back up at me.

The woman in my photo is dead.

Judging by the comments on her page, it happened only two years ago.

For the rest of my lunch break—and then some—I delve into this woman's life. I manage to scroll far enough to see past the in memoriam comments and see tidbits of her real life. Pictures of her with her daughter, an adorable toddler with bright blue eyes and brown hair set in bows on either side of her head.

And then I find what I'm really looking for. It's a photo of the beautiful woman, adorable little girl, and a dashing man standing together on the steps of the Sacré-Cœur. They are bundled in wool jackets and hats, and like the small photo on the table in front of me, they look happy. They look like they're in love.

Even without reading the letter, I feel some sense of comfort in knowing this happy couple stayed together. Even if she passed away. Even if the ending wasn't exactly happy. Even if I still have no idea what that entire letter says, I'm glad to know they got married and had a child.

After my lunch, I try to put my little obsession away, but I still carry it with me for the rest of the day. When my shift ends at four, I leave work and stop by the market to pick up some food and a bottle of wine. My roommate doesn't cook or bother me much when I'm in the kitchen or dining room. She does, however, hog the TV in the living room and plays her nauseating reality TV shows far too loud.

So I pick another playlist and keep my earphones in as I cook, this time listening to '90s grunge. Nirvana shouts through "Heart-Shaped Box" as I doodle on the wine label and wait for my pasta to cook.

All the while, I think about the couple. How do people find love like that? What did that woman have to do to get a handsome, seemingly successful, and, from what I can tell, normal man to give her so much attention? The only men I can get to look my way are creepy old men or chauvinistic young guys who only see tits and ass and fail to notice I have a face and a personality.

My dating life has been abysmal, to the point now where I turn down every single advance, even if the other person seems halfway decent. Every date I go on lacks connection. I won't settle for a life of contentment with someone else just to have a partner. I want fireworks and magic. I want to stare into someone's eyes and feel seen. I want to find a soul that matches mine.

I'm glad my pretty woman in the photo found love. Good for her.

After my dinner is done, I take it to the dining room table and browse more photos of the woman's social media. It's out of boredom and curiosity. This isn't an obsessive stalker thing. I'm not a creep. I'm so entranced, though, that I don't even hear when Ingrid comes in from the living room.

"What is that?" Ingrid asks, nodding toward the letter under my phone.

"Nothing," I reply, tugging it closer.

She takes a step closer and tries to reach for it. In a panic, I abandon my phone and fork to rescue the letter and photograph, spilling my wine in the process.

Ingrid rolls her eyes and chuckles to herself as I check to make sure the letter is intact. It's at that moment that I realize I might be a little too obsessed with this random piece of mail I found in a book today.

But I feel like I know Emmaline and Jack.

Not to mention I am in possession of something that once belonged to her. Something special. What if he's been looking for this letter? It's silly of me to think this way, to think that some strangers in a photograph mean anything to me.

What if I could return this letter to him? It may seem insignificant to most, but he clearly loved her enough to write it. He must be sick with grief, and this letter could be one small token of remembrance.

It's a wild idea, but my life is so boring and mundane that wild ideas feel like a lifeline. Wild ideas feel like hope. Because why not? Why can't I take the train to Paris and give this man a letter I found?

Why wouldn't I?

If he were mine, I'd want someone to do the same for me.