

all I want is everything  
a gossip girl  
novel

by

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*I wanna, I wanna, I gotta be adored.*

—The Stone Roses



*Disclaimer: All the real names of places, people, and events have been altered or abbreviated to protect the innocent. Namely, me.*

## hey people!

Christmastime in New York City really is magical, especially uptown. The air smells like falling snow and burning logs and Christmas cookies baking. From up in our penthouses, Central Park looks like a silvery wonderland, Park Avenue is a parade of Christmas lights, and the size of the tree in Rockefeller Center seems to promise that this is going to be the most amazing Christmas ever—although most of us will be drinking too much champagne to notice. Along Fifth Avenue, the department store windows are all dressed up for the holidays, and the girls out shopping are wearing those gorgeous sky blue cashmere Marc Jacobs coats they bought in October and couldn't wait to wear. And at night, everyone is out having fun, fun, *fun*. Forget studying for midterms; forget those last-minute college applications; forget helping your mom buy presents for the maids, the cooks, the drivers, and the laundry ladies. Grab your black satin Prada wrap dress, your Christian Louboutin four-inch stilettos with the clear Perspex heels, your orange Hermès Birkin bag, and the cutest boy you know and come out with me!

### Sightings

**D** and **V** with their lips locked down by the Seventy-ninth Street boat basin. It's kind of tragic how long it took them to realize they liked each other. **N** buying red roses for **J**—and you didn't think he had a sweet bone in his gorgeous stoner body. **B** and **S** heading into **Bendel's** to pick up their dresses for the **Black-and-White Ball** tonight. I hear **Flow**—former model and gorgeous lead singer and guitar player, whose band, **45**, just won the **MTV Music Award** for best album for their debut album, **Komunik8**—is going to do the honor of announcing how much money was raised. The ball is a

benefit for **Be Kind**, an animal rights group for which Flow is a spokesperson. But who cares about that? We all know we're only going so we can catch a glimpse of his perfect face. See you there!

### **Are they really friends again?**

It's true: **S** and **B** have decided to kiss and make up, and it's about time. I mean, how long can you actually stay mad at someone you took baths with in grade school? **B** may not be as blond or as tall or as "experienced" as **S**, but that doesn't mean she has to hate her. And **S** will never be as devious or as self-absorbed as **B**, but that doesn't mean she has to fear her. Instead, the two girls have decided to put aside their differences and be pleasant to each other, at least for the time being. The question is, now that they're back together, what kind of crazy shenanigans are they going to get up to?

Believe me, I'll be the first to find out, and you'll be the second. It's not like I'm good at keeping secrets.

You know you love me,  
gossip girl

## *the belles of the ball*

“If she was, like, six inches taller, he could rest his chin in her cleavage,” Blair Waldorf observed as she watched her ex-boyfriend, Nate Archibald, dancing with Jennifer Humphrey, the short and extremely buxom ninth grader for whom Nate had unexplainably ditched Blair only a few weeks ago. “But then again, he might have trouble breathing.”

Luckily, Blair had skipped dinner that night; otherwise she would have headed straight for the ladies’ room to vomit in disgust.

Serena van der Woodsen, Blair’s oldest and newest best friend, shook her pale blond head in response. “I don’t get it,” she said. “I have nothing against Jenny, but I always thought you and Nate were, like, the *perfect* couple. You were totally *destined* to spend the rest of your lives together.”

It was a strange thing for Serena to say. After all, she and Nate had lost their virginity together behind Blair’s back the summer after tenth grade. If any two people were destined for each other, you’d have thought it would have been them. But as with every relationship Serena had ever had, her little fling with Nate had been just a spur-of-the-moment affair. Blair and Nate were the *real thing*. And they had always been such

a reliable fixture—like the doorman in the lobby of Serena’s Fifth Avenue apartment building—that it was impossible to fathom what the future might be like without them as a couple. Through them Serena sampled what it would be like to be a part of a committed relationship, and it was a little scary to see how badly things had turned out.

Blair gulped her glass of Cristal champagne thirstily. The two girls were sitting alone at a big, round table draped in white muslin and black taffeta in the opulent ballroom at the St. Claire Hotel, where the annual December Black-and-White Ball was in full swing. Girls in long, strappy black dresses by Versace and Dolce & Gabbana with white feathers in their hair were dancing with boys in crisp black-and-white Tom Ford for Gucci tuxedos, and a gigantic ball made of black and white roses hung from the ceiling. Blair was having major déjà vu.

Her mother had been married only a month ago to a loud, sweaty, overweight loser named Cyrus Rose, and the wedding reception had taken place in that very same room. The wedding had also taken place on Blair’s seventeenth birthday, the day she’d planned to go all the way with Nate. She’d spent hours grooming herself and had played out every moment of how it was going to be over and over in her head. But then she’d stumbled upon Nate making out with that little girl in the hotel lobby and realized that in the end, it didn’t matter how hot she looked in her espresso-colored Chloé maid of honor dress, or how dramatic her hair was, or how high her pewter Manolo Blahnik stilettos were. Nate was too busy groping that fuzzy-headed fourteen-year-old’s balloon breasts to even notice.

It had been by far the worst birthday Blair had ever had. But she wasn’t about to dwell on it. She wasn’t like that.

Yeah, right.

“I don’t believe in destiny anymore,” she told Serena, plonking her crystal champagne flute down on the table and nearly breaking its stem. She ran her fingers through her long, dark brown hair, which had been trimmed earlier that day by Antoine, her new favorite hairdresser at the Elizabeth Arden Red Door Salon.

Serena laughed and rolled her dark blue eyes. “Then how come you’re always saying Yale is your destiny?”

“That’s different,” Blair insisted.

Blair’s father had gone to Yale, and Blair had always dreamed of going there, too. She was at the top of her class at Constance Billard and had extracurriculars coming out of her ass, so applying early admission had seemed like an obvious choice. But during her interview, she’d cracked under pressure and become Blair, Drama Queen of the Silver Screen. She’d told her interviewer a heart-wrenching sob story about how her mother had divorced her gay father and was about to marry a man she barely knew, and how she couldn’t wait to go to college so she could start a whole new life. And then she’d kissed her interviewer—actually stood on her tippytoes and kissed him on his hollow, stubbly cheek!

Blair was always imagining herself as the heroine of some black-and-white fifties movie, in the style of Audrey Hepburn, her idol. This time it had been her downfall. Now she’d been forced to apply to Yale regular admission along with everyone else, and she’d even had to ask her father to donate a Yale study abroad program in France to help give her a leg up. But her chances of getting in were still slim at best.

Blair reached for the bottle of Cristal sitting in its silver cooler in the middle of the large, round table and filled her glass. “Destiny is for losers,” she said. “It’s just a lame excuse for letting things happen to you instead of *making* them happen.”

If only she knew exactly how to make the things she wanted to happen *happen* without fucking them up completely.

Serena's attention span was shorter than that of a newborn puppy, and she had already drunk way too much wine to have such a serious conversation. "Let's not talk about the future for once, okay?" she said. She lit a cigarette and blew smoke into the air above Blair's head. "You know, that blond kid Aaron's talking to has been totally staring at you for the last ten minutes." She covered her mouth with her long, slender fingers and giggled. "Oops. Here they come."

Blair turned around to find her dreadlocked vegan stepbrother, Aaron Rose, and an extremely tall boy with spiky blond hair and light brown eyes, wearing a fabulously tailored Armani tux, walking over to their table. The boy drummed his long fingers nervously against his superlong legs and looked down at his shiny black Christian Dior dress shoes, as if he was worried about tripping over them or something. Behind the two boys, the dance floor was heaving with gorgeous, gorgeously dressed girls and adorably handsome boys, their arms wound around each other's necks, swaying to a Beck song.

"Say something nice to Blair," Serena told Aaron. "She's stressing about the future."

Blair rolled her eyes. "Who isn't?"

Aaron's thin red lips curled down in an apologetic frown. He, Blair, and Serena had come to the ball together, and as soon as they'd arrived, Aaron had left the two girls to drink and smoke cigarettes while he went and found his friends. But Blair had been kind of wound-up and emotional lately, what with their parents' wedding and her lousy Yale interview and everything. She needed all the moral support she could get. "Sorry. I haven't been a very good date. Wanna dance or something?"

Blair ignored him. Did she look like she felt like dancing? She glanced at Aaron's tall, blond friend. "Who are you?"

The blond boy grinned. His teeth were even whiter than his shirt. "I'm Miles. Miles Ingram."

Son of Danny Ingram, the famous restaurant and nightclub owner, proprietor of such hot spots as Gorgon in New York and Trixie in LA, to name just a few.

"He's in my class at Bronxdale," Aaron added. "We're starting a band. Miles plays the drums."

Blair sipped her champagne, waiting for them to say something that wasn't completely boring.

Miles grinned at Blair and drummed his fingers on the back of an empty chair. "You're much prettier than I thought," he said.

He was cute, but the drumming fingers thing could get seriously annoying.

Blair didn't smile back. She picked up her drink. Aaron had probably told Miles she was a total witch, and he'd expected her to have warts on her nose and a broom up her ass.

Not exactly. Aaron just didn't like to talk about his new stepsister because he wanted to keep her all to himself. But don't get your fishnets in a twist—we'll get to that later.

Aaron pushed his dreadlocks behind his ears. "And this is Serena," he told Miles.

Miles gave Serena's perfectly chiseled face, deep blue eyes, long, lithe body, and fantastic black Gucci dress the once-over. He let his eyes linger on her a moment—it was hard not to—before turning back to Aaron. "It's weird. You didn't say anything about Blair being so beautiful."

Aaron shrugged and looked uncomfortable. "Sorry."

Blair and Serena lit new cigarettes, still waiting for something crazy to happen. Considering the point Blair had just

made about destiny, it was up to them to *make* it happen.

Aaron cleared his throat. “Sure you don’t want to dance?” he asked Blair again.

Blair noticed that he wasn’t wearing a bow tie and that his tuxedo shirt was untucked and unbuttoned at the throat. Apparently he was making a statement. She took a long drag on her cigarette and blew smoke in his face. “No, thanks.”

The Beck song ended, and people crowded back to their tables to fill up on booze.

“My feet are dying!” Kati Farkas whined, flinging herself down on a chair opposite Blair and whipping off her heels.

“Mine are already dead,” Isabel Coates chimed in, sinking into the chair next to her.

For the past two years, while Serena had been away at Hanover Academy in New Hampshire, Isabel and Kati had been glued to Blair’s side. They bought makeup at Sephora together, they drank cappuccinos at Le Canard together, and yes, they even went to the bathroom together. Blair ruled the social scene, so when they were with her they felt almost famous, getting red-carpet treatment everywhere. But just before Columbus Day, Serena had gotten kicked out of boarding school and reappeared in the city to steal Blair away from them, and Kati and Isabel had gone back to being plain old Kati and Isabel again.

“How come you guys aren’t dancing?” asked Kati.

Blair shrugged. “I’m not in the mood.”

Isabel sighed. “All we have to do is make it through midterms next week,” she said, mistaking the note of boredom in Blair’s voice for fatigue. “And then we get to go away for Christmas.”

“You guys are so lucky you’re going someplace hot,” Kati added. “I have to go stupid skiing in stupid Aspen, *again*.”

“Well, that’s not as bad my boring country house in Connecticut,” replied Isabel.

“It’s going to be awesome,” Serena gushed with an excited smile.

Kati and Isabel glared at her.

Blair and Serena were going to St. Bart’s together for Christmas break. Blair’s mom and Aaron’s dad had spent their honeymoon cruising in the Caribbean and had arranged to meet Blair, Aaron, and Blair’s little brother, Tyler, for the holidays at the exclusive Isle de la Paix resort in St. Barts. They were each allowed to bring a friend if they wanted, so after making up in the bathroom during her mother’s wedding reception, Blair had asked Serena.

Of course they’d be back in the city for New Year’s. No self-respecting party girl spends New Year’s away with her parents after the age of twelve.

“It’s going to kick ass,” Blair agreed with a smug smile. She could picture herself perfectly, slick with tanning oil, in her new Missoni bikini on a pristine white-sand beach, her face masked by enormous Chanel sunglasses, while hot guys in surf shorts brought her exotic drinks in coconut shells. She was going to forget about Yale and Nate and her mother and Cyrus and just bake herself brown as café au lait under the hot island sun. Of course she knew Kati and Isabel were totally jealous that she hadn’t asked either one of them to come to St. Barts with her, but to be honest, she didn’t give a rat’s squiggly ass.

Only one more week to go.

Chuck Bass came up behind Blair and put his big, warm hands on her bare, tennis-toned shoulders. “I just saw Nate and that little girl from Constance feeling each other up in the corner,” he announced, as if everyone wanted to know.

Chuck was handsome in a dark, after-shave commercial sort of way. He was also the horniest boy in all of New York City. He had tried to molest Serena when she was passed out drunk in his family's Tribeca Star Hotel suite in October, and he had almost gotten little Jenny Humphrey to take her dress off for him in the ladies' room at the *Kiss on the Lips* party that same week. Chuck was the worst sort of slimeball, but they all still put up with him, because he was one of them: He went to a small, private all-boys' school; in grade school he'd gone to dancing school at Arthur Murray and tennis lessons at Asphalt Green and sung in the church of the beachfront hotel in the South of France. He got invited to the best parties and the most exclusive private sales, just like they all did, and he was born to live the high life, just like they all were. Even when he got rejected, Chuck still came back for more. He was ruthlessly unflappable.

Blair tried to shrug his hands away. "So?"

Chuck kept his hands where they were. "Nate never got you to give it up, did he?" He began massaging her shoulders. "I was thinking maybe I should be the one to do the honors."

Blair's whole body stiffened. Until that moment, she'd never had much of a problem with Chuck, but now she understood why Serena hated his guts. She pushed her chair back, wrenching her shoulders away from his hands, and stood up. "I have to pee," she announced to the table, ignoring Chuck entirely. "Then let's get out of here. We can have a party back at my house or something."

Aaron stood up and took a step toward her, tucking his dreadlocks behind his ears self-consciously. "Are you okay?" he asked, sounding concerned.

At that moment, his whole Mr. Sensitive act annoyed Blair almost as much as Chuck's sliminess.

“I’m fine.”

She turned and marched across the room as best as she could wearing four-inch Christian Louboutin Perspex stilettos and a supertight black Gucci dress, keeping her eyes straight ahead of her to avoid the sight of Nate with that little Ginny girl, or whatever the hell her name was.

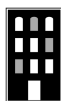
People were gathering on the dance floor, murmuring excitedly. It looked like Flow—the hottest lead singer in music—was about to make his appearance. But Blair didn’t care. She didn’t go crazy over famous people, like most girls. She didn’t need to: She was the constant star of the feature film playing in her head, the most famous person she knew.

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