



Rewrite the Carbs, Meraki

You know you want me.

I spin away, biting back a sharp breath and clenching my eyes shut. But the familiar fingers of longing enfold me tenderly, invitingly, and I relax enough to inhale a lungful of the exquisite fragrance. My lips tremble against my will, and a shiver tickles my spine. No...I must resist.

Don't turn away from me.

Must. Resist. Temptation claws at me, dragging me into an abyss of longing. The chills that have taken over my arms slither their way into my veins, penetrating to my very soul. I can't go back.

Not now.

I'd wrestled for months before I made my solemn oath. I can't break it now. I can't betray the me I want to be. Why now? Why now, when I'm but two days into my diet, did my sister, Clara, decide to buy a chocolate cake?

Monsieur Ménard spread extra raspberry sauce between my layers for y—

“Don't give in, Jenna,” I turn my back to the dessert.

The frosting is made with a special blend of—

“Don't give in, Jenna,” I growl, forcing myself to take a step toward the kitchen door.

You don't love me anymore? I stop, one hand on the doorknob. So close. *That's what it is, isn't it? A part of me always suspected it would come to this, but I never really believed...I mean, I guess I just never thought that YOU...* The voice trails off.



Defenses wavering, my head pivots toward the counter—almost against my will—and my eyes are drawn toward the decadent chocolate cake. Raspberry filling oozes from between the layers. My mouth waters, and my gaze trails over mounds of chocolate frosting, chocolate chips...chocolate roses of temptation.

Come on. Clara must have had you in mind when she asked Monsieur Menard to add the roses. Think of how disappointed she'll be if you refuse to eat me.

“Don’t give in.” I whisper, closing my eyes. “I am strong. I can do this.”

But I need you. Think about all of that hard work you’ve been doing. You took out the trash. And cleaned the bathroom. You deserve me. Just one slice.

I crack open an eyelid, squinting at the cake. All that work must have burned a few calories, after all...

Please? Don’t make me cry. A teardrop of raspberry filling trickles down the side of the cake.

“Do you think this is easy for me?” I clench my fists. “Do you have any idea how long it took me to prepare myself for this? Or about how many other desserts I’ve given up?”

You eat other desserts, but not me?

“My point is,” I turn back around, huffing, “that this hurts me just as much as it hurts you.”

I doubt that. Do you know what a chocolate cake’s purpose in life is? Hmm?

I bite my lip, trying to push the answer from my mind.

That’s right. We were made to be eaten. How do you think it makes me feel being passed over for sticks of carrot? They laugh at me, you know. Me! A rich, stately, dark chocolate—the greatest cake around, made with love by the most renowned baker—and no one will have me. Love, that’s all I ask for!



“What—” I raise an eyebrow, then shake my head. “How do you think it makes me feel when I gain two pounds because of you?”

Two pounds! Pfft. We both know you're prone to exaggeration. One slice of me may be a day's worth of calories. Far cry from two extra pounds. I looked it up in your nutrition book.

“I know,” I sigh, pinching the bridge of my nose. “I just think we need to go our own separate ways for awhile, all right?” I turn to leave again. I only make it halfway to the kitchen door this time before being foiled.

Do you remember when we first met?

Another exasperated sigh huffs from my lips. “No.”

What? Jenna! It was just this afternoon.

I massage my temples. “It’s been a long day.”

Not for me. I remember it like it was just a minute ago. Clara was bringing me home after running some errands; I didn't really care where we went as long as I got out of that stuffy car. Anyways, she opened the rear door and carefully brought me out of the back seat. 'I have to be careful with you,' she said, 'because you're going to be a present for someone very special.' I didn't know what she meant at the moment, but I do now. She couldn't open the front door herself, so she rang the doorbell with her elbow. We waited for a moment, then the door opened...and I saw an angel.

“An angel?” I screw my face up slightly and lean my arms against the counter bench. Is the cake...*flirting with me?*

Oh yes, and what a happy moment it was! I can still see you standing there with your hair tied up in a messy bun, a rag thrown over your shoulder, and a plunger in your left hand.

“It was a toilet brush.”



And your eyes...never before have I seen such eyes! They reminded me of an angel food cake I knew once in the bakery. And when your heavenly gaze met with mine, I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that you were the one I was destined for!

“Well, you were wrong,” I growl, spinning on my heel and making my way toward the door again. No need to spend another minute arguing with a cake. About eating it, at that. Shouldn’t a cake want to be more self preservative?

Jennnnna.

“What?”

I’m thinking of a song.

“Yeah—no.”

But it’s such a wonderful song! And with the little additions I made to it, I know you’ll love it even more than you did before!

I face the counter again, trying to keep the curiosity off my face. “What are you talking about? What song?”

Jenna! I’m surprised at you! It is our song after all. Don’t you remember? You were listening to it when Clara brought me in.

I cross my arms in response.

Well, if you’re going to be like that, then, I guess I’ll just have to give you a little reminder. The distinctive sound of someone clearing their throat comes and a frown creases my forehead. Can a cake clear its throat?



I would like to dedicate this song to a very special someone who, no matter what happens in life, I know I can depend on to be there for...

“Are you going to sing the song or not?” I rub my neck, glancing toward the door again. May as well humour the poor cake. I can almost feel it roll its eyes at me. Not that I can see any eyes. I avert my own gaze from its careless wandering over the silky sauce, the rich color, the mouth watering embellishments...

Of course I'm going to sing it. Just making the dedication. That's the proper way to do things. You of all people should know that. It hesitates before continuing. Now, as I was saying before the starving angel interrupted me, I can always trust that this person will be there for me. Even if she sometimes feels that her self image is more important than our friendship. The cake's voice cracks slightly, and I take a half step closer. This song is dedicated to my beloved Jenna. The one who can't resist me.

Then the singing begins. Such a voice. So perfect. The tune is simple and familiar, and my eyes widen. The Greatest Showman?

*I know you want me,
It's not a secret that you can hide.
You know you want me,
To say you don't would mean you lied.*

*You say that I'm not healthy,
And the fats are pulling you far away
And out of reach of me.
But I'm here in your mind
So who can stop you if you decide
That I'm your destiny?*

*What if you rewrite the carbs?
Say I was made to be yours.
One bite won't clog up your heart;
I am the snack you were meant to find.
It's up to you, and it's up to me*



*No one can say what you get to eat.
So why don't you rewrite the carbs?
Even the roses could be yours,
Tonight.*

The cake pauses, waiting, and I feel the bubbles of a song welling up inside me. I screw my eyes shut. No Jenna. You are not in a musical. I turn away from the table, an ache building in my chest. I can't keep doing this. Something breaks within me during the silence and I spin back, words tumbling out of my mouth as I pull a fork out of the utensils drawer to use as a microphone.

You think it's easy?
You think I don't want to run to you?
But there are doctors,
And there are heart attacks I can't live through.
I know you're wondering why,
Because we're able to be
Just you and me
Within these dreams.
But when I step on the scales
There'll be five more pounds, heart disease and my liver will fail.

There we go. Disney princess has replied. The cake already fulfilled the whole, 'love at first sight' thing, so now we're moving onto the unnatural harmonies that make us fully fall in lo—No Jenna. Can't give in to the cake. I move onto the chorus, looking away from it.

No one can rewrite the carbs.
How can you say you'll be mine?
Every bite clogs up my heart,
You're not the snack I was meant to find.
It's not up to you, it's not up to me
When everyone tells me what I can eat
How can we rewrite the carbs?



No sugar roses can be mine,
Tonight.

Our voices meld together in the duet section and I find myself holding the cake up on a plate. No, Jenna. You said you wouldn't give in. But our voices soar across the room in unison as I stand up on a kitchen chair, the conquering hero of the cake. The long lost lover. The heroine in the background of an ongoing saga.

All I want is to eat with you.
All I want is to not be killed,
By the sugar within.
It feels impossible.
It's not impossible.
Is it impossible?
Say that it's possible!

How do we rewrite the carbs?
Say you were made to be mine?
You cannot clog up my heart,
'Cause you are the snack I was meant to find.
It's up to you, and it's up to me
No one can say what I get to eat.
And why don't we rewrite the carbs,
Making the roses be mine—

I sink down into a seated position, raising the delicate cake fork to take the first mouthful, then lower it. Tears prick at my eyes and I swallow. I can't do this. The cake sits there still, waiting, *trembling* in anticipation. Or maybe it is just my hand trembling from not eating sugar for so long. Low blood sugar does that. I lift the fork again. That would mean I *need* to eat the cake to survive. A salty tear falls from my face onto the glossy frosting.

The fork drops from my hand, clattering against the plate.



I sing the final verse with a hoarse voice, setting the cake down beside me. Another tear traces its way down my cheek.

You know I want you,
It's not a secret I try to hide.
But I can't have you,
I'll get fat and
My heart will die.

We sit there in silence. I put my head in my hands. Why is it so difficult to give up sweets? I thought I was stronger than this. I thought I had enough willpower in me to be able to say “no” to my cravings. I never expected to have this much of a struggle with it. If only I had never seen the cake to begin with! I would be fine then. But I did see it. And I had almost eaten it. I give a guilty glance over at the cake. I can't blame it for being who it is. All *it* wants is to be eaten. That's what it was made for after all. How can I blame it for trying to fulfill its purpose in life?

I rub a trembling hand over my face, as though trying to wipe the memories of what nearly happened away. But I...I know it would never have worked out. Just look at it! It looks so confused now. Or, maybe I'm confused. I don't know. I stare down at the glossy surface and wipe away another tear. All I want now is—

“Um...Jenna? What are you doing?” I look up. Clara is staring at me with a smirk on her face. “Are you crying?”

“No,” I reply, hastily wiping off my cheeks with the back of my hand. How could I explain to her that I was crying over a cake? She never understands those kinds of things. She raises an eyebrow.

“Are you doing one of those “act-like-your-character-for-a-day” exercises again?” I manage to return her smirk. If only I was. “Well, could you break out of your character long enough to hand me Mrs. Wilson's cake please?” I stare.



“Whose cake?” I ask. No way in the world could she have just said—

“Mrs. Wilson’s. She turned 90 just this past week, so the women at my Bible study thought it would be great if we gave her a little birthday celebration tonight. I was in charge of getting the cake. Chocolate raspberry is her favorite you know, and she absolutely loves roses.”

“She does?”

“Of course. Haven’t you ever seen all the rose bushes she has out in her front garden?”

“Well, yes, but…”

“But what?” Clara asks.

I turn a little pink. “I..I guess I kind of thought that you bought the cake for me.”

Clara narrows her gaze. “What kind of sister would I be if I bought you a cake two days after you started your diet?” I chew my lip. Clara holds out her hands. “Now, will you please hand me the cake? I don’t want to be late.” I grasp the cake plate and hold it out to Clara. She reaches out to take it from me, then stops. “Wait. I should probably open up the front door and the car first before I try to bring it out. I don’t want to risk spoiling Mrs. Wilson’s surprise! You wait right here.” And with that, Clara vanishes, leaving me alone again with the cake.

I turn a glare on it, and the frosting seems to wither a bit.

Well this is awkward.