

Excerpt for *Recipe for Disaster*

After Marin learns Griffin has only been paying attention to her because he thought she was a suspect in the art thefts, she is taken to a safe house for her protection from the real thief. While she's there, she keeps busy by cooking for the agents on her detail. Things are going fine until Griffin arrives and the two of them are forced to address the elephant in the room:

Blinking back tears, she furiously chopped pecans. How could she have been so gullible? And why did she still care?

“Something smells good in here.”

Marin nearly chopped off her finger at the sound of Griffin’s voice.

“‘Good’ doesn’t even begin to describe Marin’s cooking,” Ben raved.

Marin kept her back to both men, mincing the pecans into sawdust.

“Just don’t tell my mom I said someone else makes shrimp better than she does,” Ben added.

“This cake is unbelievable, too.”

As far as she could tell, Griffin hadn’t moved from the threshold of the kitchen. She could feel his eyes on her, though. Her mouth went dry, but she refused to give him the satisfaction of seeing her so distressed.

“Did you and Adam leave anything for me?” Griffin asked.

Before Ben could answer, Marin reached into the cabinet and pulled out a can of Spam she’d found in the pantry earlier. She turned and slammed it on the counter in front of Griffin.

“Bon appetit.”

She couldn’t help it. Her gaze drank him in. Marin suddenly felt appalled at her behavior. Casually dressed in faded jeans and a Boston Bruins T-shirt, Griffin appeared as though he hadn’t slept in days. His eyes were bloodshot, his hair wild, and dark stubble shadowed his face. He looked weary, ruffled, and amazingly, still incredibly sexy. It wasn’t fair.

He shut his eyes and sighed. “I came here to give you the news about Diego, Marin. Not to fight with you.”

Marin grabbed at the counter in order to steady her suddenly wobbly knees. “Diego? Is he—is he. . .” She couldn’t finish the sentence.

Griffin opened his eyes. They were filled with wonder. “He’s alive,” he said.

She gasped in relief. “He’s. . . he’s alive?”

“Yeah.” Griffin grabbed at the back of his neck. “And married.”

“Wait. What?” Marin’s head was spinning. “What do you mean *married*?”

“The reason he was AWOL is because his partner, one of the waiters in the Navy Mess, was having a difficult time coming out to his family. Once he did, the two men got married.”

“That’s it?” Marin cried. “He skipped out on work on one of the busiest days of the year *to elope*? And he didn’t bother to tell anyone? I spent the last two days *worried sick* over that man! I could kill him myself just for that.” She picked up the knife again, poured more pecans on the cutting board and began viciously chopping. “Well, isn’t that just like a man for you? All he cares about is his end goal. He doesn’t care about who might get hurt in the process. As long as he gets what he wants!”

“Damn it, Marin, I was doing my job!” Griffin was suddenly beside her.

The knife stilled in Marin’s hand. “Your ‘job’? Your *job*.” She slowly turned and pointed the tip of the blade at Griffin’s chest. “Was it your ‘job’ to kiss me senseless? Or how about when you

had your hands and mouth all over my body, was that your 'job,' too, huh?" She jabbed the knife at him. "Or what about when you were making me—"

"For crying out loud, Ben, can you give us some privacy!" Griffin yelled, his eyes never leaving Marin's face.

"Just when it was getting good," Ben mumbled. "Come on, Otto, let's go check your pee mail. Maybe we'll catch up with Adam on his run while we're out."

"Put the knife down, Marin," Griffin commanded once Ben and the dog had left the kitchen.

Marin's hand holding the knife shook, but she couldn't seem to get the rest of her body to move.

"Please," he urged softly.

The knife landed on the counter with a clank. Her eyes stung and her face burned with humiliation. This man had too much power over her. And stupid woman that she was, Marin was about to give him more.

"You kissed me," she choked out. "Why did you do that? It wasn't fair."

He stepped in closer so their bodies were only separated by a distance the same width as the blade of the knife she'd just tossed on the counter. Marin breathed him in. Despite being exhausted and bedraggled, Griffin still smelled crisp and clean, like a freshly showered man. The guy was a menace to women everywhere.

"I kissed you, Marin, because I couldn't *not* kiss you." His soft voice was like a caress to her skin. "I'd be lying if I said I tried to avoid kissing you. Because I really didn't. Yeah, it was wrong, but I'm not going to apologize. From the moment I saw you standing in the pastry kitchen looking like an Amazon goddess, I knew I had to touch you. To kiss you. And when I finally did, it felt anything but wrong." He brushed a fingertip along her jawline making Marin's breath hitch in her lungs. "You enthralled me from the very beginning. Kissing you"—he leaned in closer so that his lips were hovering over hers—"kissing you, Marin Chevalier, was inevitable."

The rasp of his breath scorched the tender skin on her cheek. But Marin didn't care because seconds later he was opening her mouth with his. He kissed her slowly, reverently, as though he was reacquainting himself with her mouth. Marin wasn't as patient. Fisting her hands in his T-shirt, she tugged him closer. He made a rough sound in the back of his throat when their tongues collided. His lips on her mouth suddenly became more urgent.

Marin felt the cold hard door of the refrigerator at her back. Griffin cupped her face as he delved into her hungrily, now just as impatient as she was. She slid her fingers beneath his shirt, spreading them out over his warm skin. He shuddered when she traced the muscles on his stomach. Feeling empowered, Marin rubbed her pelvis against his. Griffin nipped at her lips before moving to her neck. He swore roughly against her skin. She arched her back to give him greater access, smacking her head against the steel door when she did so.

"I didn't want to stop the other night, Marin," he whispered near her ear. "You have to know that."

"But you did and now you owe me," she insisted.

She didn't want to think about that night. All she wanted was the here and now with this beautiful man before she woke up from what was certainly a dream. Marin wrapped her fingers around his skull pulling his mouth down to hers.

"And you can start by shutting up and kissing me."

Griffin's grin was merciless, his eyes wicked. Using his hard body to press hers more fully against the fridge, he gently pulled her hands from his face and placed her palms against the cool door. He unstrapped his holster and carefully lifted it over his head, placing the gun on top of the

refrigerator. Taking her hand, he maneuvered her onto the padded bench of the banquette in the corner of the room, his own body following her down.

“I think you need to be more specific, Chef.” One of his hands slid between their bodies as his lips nuzzled her jaw. “I need to know *where* you want me to kiss you.”

A low moan escaped from the back of her mouth when Griffin’s talented fingers slipped inside her shorts.

“Am I getting warmer?” He teased the corner of her mouth with the tip of his tongue.

Marin squirmed when his finger found her wet seam. His other hand left her chin to gently knead her breast. She tilted her face toward his and sank her teeth into his full bottom lip. Lifting her hands from the refrigerator door, she slipped them into the back pockets of his jeans where she dug her fingers into his ass.

“Kiss me, Griffin,” she pleaded. “Kiss me everywhere.”

He didn’t disappoint. Griffin took her mouth in a demanding kiss while his hands simultaneously pleased other parts of her body. Marin’s stomach quivered at the full sensual assault. Griffin’s tongue slid over hers while his finger mimicked the same motion down below. She gasped for air, her body on the verge of shattering.

The kitchen window shattered instead.