

With summer sun, a girls' trip, and enough romance to leave a smile on your face, *Destination: Romance* is the perfect vacation. And you don't even have to pack for the trip!

— HEATHER GREER, TWO-TIME SELAH  
AWARD FINALIST

A chance encounter on a road trip kicks off the perfect summer read. *Destination: Romance* combines flirty fun with deeper spiritual themes to create a compelling and satisfying book you won't want to put down.

— ELIZABETH MADDREY, USA TODAY  
BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE  
BILLIONAIRE'S NANNY

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*For Hannah Raines and Shyla Martin, my college friends who took an “epic” roadtrip with me. Though we haven’t seen each other in years, you and those memories made, stick with me forever!*

Destination:  
**FUN**

**ROMANCE**

Roadtrip Romance • Book One

AMY R. ANGUISH

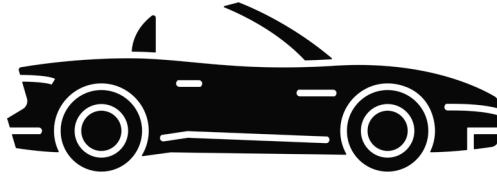


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# 1



**F**ive to one, their team, Camden Malone readied to serve. He reared back, aimed ... but his eyes strayed toward a brunette just entering the pool area.

*Wham!*

“Watch out!”

Too late.

The ball careened out of the pool and smacked the very source of his distraction in the side of the head. A small *oof* escaped the perfectly shaped lips as the impact rocked her whole body. Her flipflop clad foot slipped on the edge of the pool, and what had been totally embarrassing turned catastrophic. One of those moments where time slowed to make each instant feel eternal.

He dove two seconds too late. Her body smacked the water and sank. Pushing himself beneath the surface, Camden fumbled to grasp her as she fought against him, walloping his cheek and elbowing him in the ribs. He finally got a solid enough grip to stand and lift both their heads into the blessed oxygen.

“Let go of me!” She coughed and wiggled.

“I was just trying to help.” He shifted his hands as she continued squirming so much, he was afraid he might drop her.

“I wasn’t drowning. I just lost my balance because some goon in the pool hit me with his ball.” She brushed several waterlogged strands of brown curls out of her hazel eyes and blinked at him. “You.” Her short legs kicked harder.

“I’m sorry. I wasn’t aiming at you.” He wasn’t ready to relinquish her from his arms.

“Well, you need to work on your aim.” She pushed against his chest, her hands unintentionally sending pleasure through his skin.

“You caught a feisty one there, Cam!” His cousin Ryan guffawed from the other side of the pool. “She might be *too* much fish. Throw her back.”

“Can you stop wiggling for a minute so I can make sure you’re okay?”

“Why? Are you a doctor or something?” She caught him with her elbow.

“I have a degree in physical therapy and am a trained life-guard, actually.”

She stilled. “Oh.”

“Thank you. Now, I’m sorry my ball hit you and you fell in the pool. Are you sure you’re all right?”

“Fine, no thanks to you.” She crossed her arms over her chest. “It’s not like this pool is that deep. And I know how to swim. You didn’t even have to come over here.”

“I guess I felt guilty.” He shrugged. “Call it a hero complex or something.” He shot her a grin many girls had swooned over.

She simply raised one eyebrow and pursed her lips.

“Katie, are you okay?” Another brunette girl leaned over the side of the pool.

“Who’s the hot stud, Katie Belle?” A blonde waved at him from behind the brunette. “Way to start a trip out right!”

When his gaze returned to Katie, her cheeks were much pinker than they’d been before.

“Are you going to put me down or not?” She wiggled again, kicking her legs so high that his hands slipped. “Oof!” She spluttered back to her feet in front of him, shooting him a glare that made him glad looks couldn’t kill. “Not what I meant.”

“If you hadn’t kicked, I could have put you down gracefully.” He poked her shoulder. “That one was all on you.”

“If you’d left me alone in the first place, I wouldn’t even be wet right now.” She jabbed him back.

“I already apologized for that. Obviously, you’re not gracious enough to forgive and move on.” He crossed his arms.

“I’d love to move on, but you’re standing in front of the steps.”

He glanced over his shoulder and fought back a grimace. So much for being helpful or needed. All he’d succeeded in was making things worse. He moved aside and gestured to the stairs as though presenting her with a new car like a gameshow host.

“Katie.” Her brunette friend met her on the top step with a towel. “Girl, that bump looks nasty.”

“Well, what do you expect when a stupid volleyball whacked me upside the head?”

“Camden, are you still playing?” Ryan called.

Camden waved his hand and followed Katie and her friend instead. The least he could do was get her some ice and check her for a concussion.

Katie wrapped the towel around her shoulders, hiding the

freckles he was itching to count. “Why on earth did I let you guys talk me into this trip?”

“Because you’re my maid of honor and this is what I chose instead of a bachelorette party.” The friend steered her to an empty seat.

“And so I get to spend a week being surrounded by clumsy oafs who think they’re some sort of Prince Charming?” Katie rubbed her temple.

“The way he looks, he sort of is,” the blonde friend chimed in.

“Skye, seriously!”

Camden cleared his throat. All three girls jerked their heads in his direction, each wearing guilty shades of red. “I’ll go see if I can find some ice for you. It’s the least I can do. And I’d like to take a look at that bump when I get back, if you’re okay with that.”

He could almost see the protest forming on Katie’s lips, but her brunette friend interrupted. “That’s a great idea. Thank you so much.”

Even three steps away, he could still hear Katie’s hiss of a reprimand to her friend. “Bree, it is *not* a good idea! I’m fine.”

His lips twitched. Coming on this trip with Ryan had seemed like a reasonable idea when their uncle suggested it. But he hadn’t expected to run into anyone so interesting. Especially not on their second day here. Would the girls be staying the whole week too? That could lead to all sorts of fun possibilities.

Now, what would be the best way to come up with an ice pack? Ice machines sat on every floor of the hotel, but he didn’t have anything to put ice in. Maybe the little restaurant on the other side of the breezeway would have a baggie or something. He headed toward the smell of fried fish.



“Bree, you know I love you like a sister.” Katie shaded her eyes with her hand. “Shoot. Sometimes, I love you more than my sister. But this is a bad way to start a trip I wasn’t sure was a good idea in the first place.”

“Don’t be ridiculous.” Skye leaned over the back of the lounge chair, her long blonde hair tickling Katie’s bare back. “If you’d just lighten up and have some fun, you’d see that what happened was serendipitous. Not many girls can say they got rescued by a super-hot guy on their first day of vacation.”

“Believe it or not, there’s more to life than ‘super-hot guys.’” Katie’s air quotes emphasized her frustration over her friend’s flippant attitude.

Skye opened her mouth, but Bree shot her a look that turned her protest into a mere squeak.

Bree patted her hands in front of her, as if calming toddlers. “Okay, I admit this wasn’t the best way to start our vacation, but we’re here now, and you’re okay. Let’s just make the best of things and do what we originally planned when we came down here.”

“Swim!” Skye dropped her bag by the chair. “And have fun.”

“Is that all you think about?” Katie pressed her fingers against the tender spot on the side of her head. “You might as well be hanging out with those idiots in the pool.”

“If you insist.” Skye flipped her hair over her shoulder and sauntered away.

“You promised to at least try to have fun on this trip.” Bree peeled Katie’s hand out of the way and studied the bruise.

“I’m sorry. I’ve never been as good at having fun as Skye.” Katie winced as Bree pressed too hard. “I just have a lot on my mind. I mean, as soon as we get back, I’m moving into my new

place and starting a new job, all within a week. And then a few weeks after that, you're marrying Nathan, and well ... It's just a lot of change all at once. You know I don't handle change well."

"And that's why we're on this trip. To have one more week to just relax and have fun before we face the real world." Bree bumped shoulders with her. "It may be off to a rough start, but we're in New Orleans. Focus on the good stuff. We get to eat beignets for breakfast."

"I've been dreaming of beignets and café au lait for weeks." Katie let herself give half a smile.

"See? Things are looking better already." Bree squeezed her in a side hug. "Soon your hero will be back with ice and we can get Skye over here to plan everything we want to do over the next few days before we're on to the next stop."

"Hero." Katie sniffed. "More like culprit." Of their own volition her eyes searched the direction he'd walked. Had he really gone to find ice for her, or was that just an excuse to politely escape? Where had he even gone?

Movement inside the restaurant caught her attention. A large, garage-door-style opening at the back was pushed up, allowing diners to spread onto the patio. A bar stood just inside, and Katie could see his spiky, blond hair from here. He leaned up against the bar, chatting with whoever was behind it. The bartender handed over a drink, and her 'hero' accepted it. Katie tore her gaze away. So much for ice.

"Katie?" Bree waved her hand in front of Katie's face.

"Pretty sure I'm not getting that ice pack." Katie pushed against the plastic and stood. The world spun slightly, and she closed her eyes.

"What? Why not?" Bree jumped to her feet and grabbed her elbow.

"I just saw him at the bar of the restaurant over there." Katie took a deep breath to try and stop the dizziness. "He's

obviously one of those party boys just here to have a good time.”

“Um, Katie.” Bree tugged on her arm.

“No, Bree. Just help me to the room, and I’ll rig something up myself.”

“But Katie.”

“What?” Katie huffed and forced her eyes open again. His blue eyes stared back, a look of anger on his face.

“Party boy?” Steel laced his voice.

“Let’s just say I don’t date guys like you.” Katie narrowed her eyes. “I would never date a guy like you.”

She started around him, but the world tilted once more.

“You feeling okay?” He thrust a bag of ice into her hands.

“Fine.” She gently pressed the cold pack to her temple.

“Really? Because I’m pretty sure you’re paler than when I first saw you.” He gently cupped her shoulder and pushed her back down in the chair. “Were you dizzy when you stood up?”

“I just got up too fast.” She shook her head, unwilling to give in to anything he was saying.

“Mm-hmm.” He pulled his cell phone out. “Can you keep your eyes open while I shine a light in them? I want to see if your pupils dilate.”

“Oh, really.” She tried to push him away and stand again, but Bree joined in his efforts to keep her down.

“Just let him check, Katie.”

“How do I know you really are all you claim to be?” Katie winced as the flashlight beam connected with her left eye. “You could have been making that up just to impress me.”

“If I were, it obviously didn’t work.” His lips twitched with noticeable effort to hold back amusement.

It was the first time she’d paid any real attention to his looks, and his five o’clock shadow fascinated her as it shimmered in the afternoon sunshine.

“Oh, here. I got you some water too.” He picked up a glass he’d set by her feet and pressed it into her hand.

Water. That was the drink she’d seen him get at the bar. Something innocent. Something for her. Guilt crept up the back of her throat and threatened to choke her.

“Your pupils look good, but you should still probably keep an eye on this bump.” He pulled the melting ice away and pressed gently on her tender head. “It doesn’t look to be swelling much, but if it does, find an urgent care right away. I’m assuming you’re not from around here?”

Katie set her mouth in a line. There was no way he was getting any personal information out of her.

“We’re just here for a couple of days.” Bree leaned over Katie’s shoulder. “I’m Bree.”

“Camden.” He shook her best friend’s hand and shot her a smile. “Sorry I ruined your first night in New Orleans.”

“You haven’t ruined it. The night is young. We were just relaxing a bit before we head out to find some dinner.”

“And music.” Skye appeared beside them, dripping on Katie’s toes. “I want to dance.”

“Maybe we can find somewhere off the main drag that plays jazz.” Bree handed Skye a towel. “I heard somewhere that the best stuff isn’t on Bourbon Street anymore.”

“Oh, come on.” Skye flopped beside Katie on the back of the lounge, the vibrations sending a wave of nausea through Katie. “This is New Orleans. We have to at least walk down Bourbon Street.”

“I have no desire to get anywhere near that place.” Katie shook some condensation off her hand from the melting ice pack. “No way.”

“It’s basically the same area you said you wanted to go see tomorrow.” Bree nudged her shoulder. “Right on the French Quarter.”

“But I wanted to see Jackson Square and eat at Café Du Monde. Not walk down the street surrounded by drunks.”

“We won’t even go into any of the bars, Katie. Just come with us. Bree and I can protect you. I want to soak up the soul of this place.” Skye leaned forward.

“Are you sure you’re up for something like that?” Camden’s voice interrupted their discussion. Katie had honestly forgotten he was there.

“She said she’s fine.” Skye put a hand on her slender hip. “What are you, a doctor or something?”

“No. But I know enough about medicine to know that was a hard blow.” His eyes searched her face, but Katie couldn’t tell what he was looking for.

“You should know how hard it was. You’re the one who sent it.” She tilted the corner of her lips up to ease the words.

“True.” That twitch skittered across his mouth again and made her heart skip right along with it.

“I have a great idea!” Skye bounced on the seat, and Katie barely swallowed the groan at the jostle it caused.

“What?”

“Camden and Ryan could come with us. That would make it even safer, and Camden would be there if Katie needs anything for her head.”

Katie’s eyes flew to Camden’s and saw him blink. Was he intrigued or terrified that he’d be cornered into spending the evening with them? Oh, to go back in time and stop Skye from making such a suggestion!

“Who’s Ryan?” Bree asked.

“Cam, what’s the deal?” Another guy came up behind Camden and put his hand on Camden’s shoulder, drawing Katie’s attention to Camden’s muscled chest. She swallowed and quickly raised her eyes again.

“Ryan, this is Katie and Bree and Skye.”

“Oh, yeah. Skye and I met a little while ago in the pool.” Ryan’s voice sounded on the brink of laughter. “She’s invited us to tag along to Bourbon Street tonight. What do you think? Up for it?”

Camden’s eyes met Katie’s again, but she was frozen, unable to form a coherent thought.

After a moment that seemed eternal, he nodded. “Sure. I could listen to some jazz.”

“Aww, man. I just remembered our gas tank is almost empty.” Ryan grimaced. “We may have to meet you down there.”

“My car’s not huge, but I bet we can all squeeze in.” Skye shrugged. “It’s not like it’s that far of a drive.”

If Katie didn’t kill Skye on this trip, it would be a miracle. How did she get them into such a mess? An evening loomed ahead of her with a man she’d yelled at and possibly hit or kicked during the earlier struggle. Her head throbbed harder than it had a moment before.

“I need some painkillers.” For the first time in her life, she was even slightly tempted to look for something even stronger.