



Between the Sheets (The Boys of Bishop)

By Molly O'Keefe

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NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *RT BOOK REVIEWS*

Sure to thrill readers of Susan Mallery and Rachel Gibson, Molly O'Keefe's sizzling series cranks up the tension as a bad boy rides into town on his motorcycle—and teaches the girl next door to lose control when it comes to desire.

After years of running, Wyatt Svenson has now parked himself in Bishop, Arkansas, trying to do the right thing and parent a son he didn't even know he had until recently. Over six feet tall and packed with muscles and power, Ty likes to get his hands dirty, fixing his motorcycle at night and keeping his mind away from the mistakes he's made. Then his pretty neighbor shows up on his driveway, doesn't bother to introduce herself, and complains about the noise. First impression? She should loosen up. Funny that she turns out to be his son's elementary school art teacher—and the only one willing to help his troubled boy. Ty needs her. In more ways than one.

Though Shelby Monroe is safe in her structured life, she is drawn to Ty's bad-boy edge and rugged sexuality. What if she just lets it all go: her worries about her mother, her fear of heartbreak, and her tight self control? What if she grabs Ty and takes a ride on the wild side? "What if" becomes reality—intense, exhilarating . . . and addictive. But Ty wants more than a secret affair. He wants it all with Shelby. But will she take a chance and open her heart? Ty is determined to convince Shelby to take the biggest risk of her life: on him.

Praise for *Between the Sheets*

“Phenomenal . . . The story is deep, complex, and rich, with emotional tones of hope, loss, regret, pain, and so many flavors of love.”—***Publishers Weekly*** (starred review)

“The characters are genuine, their stories are authentic and there is a rawness of emotion that is completely unexpected. The chemistry Ty and Shelby share is electric and their sex scenes are sizzling on a whole new level. This is a fantastic read that surprises and thoroughly delights.”—***RT Book Reviews*** (4-1/2 stars,

Top Pick)

“Dark, edgy, and emotionally turbulent, *Between the Sheets* is a . . . modern-day romance that speaks of second chances, love, heartbreak, redemption, and hope.”—**Smexy Books**

“Once again, Molly O’Keefe explodes the traditional trope and creates characters that breathe. . . . *Between the Sheets* did what great books should do and let me live beside these people of Bishop and come to care about them. A lot.”—**The Best Reviews**

“An intense, heartbreaking and poignant novel that is also insanely hot and incredibly passionate . . . another powerful novel of love and healing by Molly O’Keefe that old and new fans of the Boys of Bishop series do not want to miss.”—**Book Reviews & More by Kathy**

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Editorial Review

Review

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“An intense, heartbreakingly poignant novel that is also insanely hot and incredibly passionate . . . *Between the Sheets* is an emotional, complicated and messy romance that is unique and engrossing. Ty and Shelby are complex, vibrantly developed characters whose smoldering attraction leads to fiery, explicitly detailed sex scenes. It is another powerful novel of love and healing by Molly O’Keefe that old and new fans of the Boys of Bishop series do not want to miss.”—**Book Reviews & More by Kathy**

“I really could go on and on about this book because it is a special story and while it might not be a pretty romance all tied up nice and neat with a bow, there is a realism about it that makes it truly wonderful. *Between the Sheets* will no doubt put your emotions through the wringer, but all the good that comes out of it makes it all worthwhile.”—**Guilty Pleasures Book Reviews**

“What a great love story, not just the kind between a man and a woman, but also the love that lies between family members, and the devastating effects of being deprived of such love. If you’re looking for a book that is a testament to the healing power of truly being noticed for who you are and loved anyway, then look no further: *Between the Sheets* should be your next read!”—**The Romance Reviews**

About the Author

Molly O’Keefe published her first Harlequin romance at age twenty-five and hasn’t looked back. She loves exploring each character’s road toward happily ever after. She’s won two *Romantic Times* Reviewers’ Choice awards and the RITA for Best Novella in 2010. Originally from a small town outside of Chicago, she now lives in Toronto, Canada, with her husband, two kids, and the largest heap of dirty laundry in North America.

O'Keefe / BETWEEN THE SHEETS

Chapter 1

January 8

Shelby Monroe was not having a very good morning.

Last night, her new neighbor—a motorcycle enthusiast apparently with insomnia and a hearing problem—didn't stop revving his engine until nearly dawn. Then Mom put the coffeepot on the stove thinking it was the kettle and it shattered when it got too hot.

So here she was for her first day of classes after the Christmas break at Bishop Elementary, frazzled and without coffee.

Which was no way to deal with Colleen.

“Welcome back!” Colleen, the school secretary, stood up from behind her desk and for a moment seemed as if, in the three-week break, she'd forgotten that Shelby wasn't a hugger.

Thank God it came back to her at the last moment and instead of throwing her arms around Shelby like they were old friends, she turned to the bottom drawer of her filing cabinet and yanked it open. Shelby dropped her phone and purse in it. There was no office for the part-time staff, so she made do with Colleen's bottom drawer. She shrugged out of her winter jacket and hung it on the coat hook with her scarf, then tucked her gloves in her coat sleeves.

“How are you doing?” Colleen asked.

“First day back. It's always a good day.”

“You must be the only teacher in the world who thinks that.”

Shelby laughed. That was probably true. Her first days back in the schools after winter break were her favorite of the whole year. All the hard work of getting to know the kids, understanding them, and getting their attention and respect was done. And now they were recharged. The next two months would undoubtedly be her most productive with the kids, before spring fever hit.

She just needed to shake off this bad morning she'd had.

“Coffee's fresh.”

“You're a saint.” She grabbed a mug from the cupboard above the coffee area and waited for the machine to belch and steam before she poured herself a cup. Colleen went nuts if you robbed the pot, and no one wanted to get on Colleen's bad side.

In her years as a part-time employee for the school district, Shelby had come to know one thing for certain: principals did not run schools; the secretaries did. And Colleen's desk was like the bridge of a giant spaceship. A phone system with a gazillion lights and buttons. Color-coded Post-its. The sign-in book, which she guarded like the Holy Grail. The first-aid kit, the small fridge with ice packs. Printer, computer, jars with

pens. One drawer had hard candy, the other a box of Triscuits. There was a heat lamp at her feet. A fan at her back. Two different sweaters over her chair and a small hot plate for her coffee cup.

Colleen could survive the zombie apocalypse at her desk.

“How is your mom doing?” Colleen asked.

“Fine,” Shelby said, because she had to say something and that was the sort of answer people expected. Colleen didn’t want to hear how her mom had spent the night pacing the hallway looking for her mother’s old cookbooks.

“It’s nice to see her at church again.”

Why was everyone so scared of silence? Shelby wondered, contemplating the drip of the coffee machine.

Shelby loved silence. And everyone from the woman behind the cash register at the grocery store to Colleen wanted to force her into conversation because her silence made them uncomfortable.

“Shelby?”

“I’m sorry, what did you say?” She poured coffee into one of the spare mugs; this one had a sleeping cat on it. There were a thousand cat mugs on that shelf.

“I said it’s real nice to see you both in church again. It’s been a long time.”

“Well, it’s a comfort,” she lied, glancing at the big clock over the door. She had five minutes before the bell. “I’m starting in Mrs. Jordal’s class?”

Colleen swiveled in her chair to face Shelby. “There’s a new student in there,” she said. “He’s a handful.”

Shelby smiled. Perhaps she was in the minority, or maybe it was only because she was part time and in the classes she taught out in the Art Barn in the summer and after school the kids wanted to be there, but she would take a kid who was a handful every day of the week.

The quiet, studious boys and the girls who were so eager to please all too clearly reminded her of herself and she wanted to scream at them to get a backbone, to stand up for themselves. To take a lesson from the kids who caused problems, whom no one could overlook. Because waiting to be seen, to be noticed, only led to midlife crises and psychotic breaks that tore apart your world.

At least that was her experience.

But that was probably a little heavy for an elementary school art class.

“We’ve been back for a week and he’s been in the office almost every day,” Colleen said, lifting her own mug—no cats to be seen—from the hot plate. “Fighting, mouthy, stealing from classmates.” She turned her giant chair back around to face the door and the computer, her kingdom. “And his father is a piece of work, clearly the apple doesn’t fall far from that particular tree. Mark my words: that boy is nothing but trouble.”

Mrs. Jordal taught fifth grade and had for about a hundred years. There wasn’t a problem or a type of kid she

hadn't seen a dozen times before. And Shelby really liked the fact that her class, no matter how many handful kids she had, was always calm. The kids were respectful.

It was tough at the beginning of every new year because something happened to kids between fourth and fifth grade. Some hormonal surge that made them all short-circuit. But by Thanksgiving, Mrs. Jordal had those kids in line.

Christmas break, however, caused some regression.

Shelby took a deep breath, girding her loins, before she walked in.

"Hello, class," she said as she entered the room. All the kids looked up from the free reading they'd been doing and some of them answered her. Some waved. Scott and John whispered behind their hands. One boy in the back with shaggy red hair blinked, owly and worried-seeming.

Oh no, his expression said, before he schooled it into a predictable but ill-fitting sneer, not another new thing.

His whole vibe screamed "new kid."

Mrs. Jordal stood from behind her desk and walked over, limped actually. She needed hip replacement surgery but was being stubborn about it. "Hello, Ms. Monroe," she said. "Welcome back."

"Thank you, Mrs. Jordal. Anything exciting in the fifth grade in the new year?"

"We have a new student."

"That's what I heard."

"Casey?"

The redhead waved with one flip of his hand. Funny, that hormonal surge inspired all of the kids to walk that line between being respectful and being sent to the principal's office to varying degrees. Even the good kids started fifth grade with a little attitude.

This kid was really trying hard to seem like a badass.

"Nice to meet you, Casey." Shelby set down her coffee and bag beside Mrs. Jordal's desk, in front of the Regions of America bulletin board. "I thought, in honor of our new student . . ." Every eye in the classroom went to Casey and he shrank down in his seat, glowering.

"We're going to start on a new project today and it's going to last for the next three weeks. It's called *Things About Me*." From her bag she took the stapled packets of paper and began to hand them out. "You get three images, but no words, to convey what you know to be true about yourself."

"About anything?" Jessica Adams asked. She honestly looked terrified at the idea. Jessica was a girl who needed to be told what to draw. Most of the kids did, but that was the fun part of fifth grade—they were just beginning to realize they had ideas of their own. Largely inappropriate, but the ideas were tied more to identity than ever before.

“Anything.”

“Like I know this is lame?” Scott Maxwell said, and John James high-fived him.

“If you think that’s true, sure.” She gave Scott the packet of papers and then stood next to him for a moment, her hand on his shoulder. Scott had been in her summer art camp for three years in a row and was doing an after-school class on Thursdays, working in clay. He was a good kid and she liked him as much as she imagined he liked her. The poor kid was just short-circuiting. “But you have to figure out how to draw it. How to convey it without using any words.”

A couple of the kids started to groan, realizing how hard this was going to be.

She took out two examples and taped them to the blackboard with masking tape.

“What do you think these mean?” she asked.

One was a picture she’d drawn in the manner of Van Gogh’s Starry Night. She stood in a field surrounded by beautiful swirls and explosions of color and texture. The other was a picture of her art barn, filled with kids who were part human, part foxes, all mischief.

“Is that me?” Scott asked, pointing to one of the kids in her picture.

She squinted at the picture. “You know, I do see a resemblance.”

“Are you saying we’re all animals?”

“Not exactly.”

“She’s saying you’re all foxes,” Casey said.

She smiled at Casey, who beamed at her attention before he remembered he had a sneer he was trying to make stick.

I’m on to you, she thought, and felt that surge of affection she always felt when she saw past the too big veneer of the “problem kids.”

“Why do you think I picked foxes?”

“Why do you think you picked foxes?”

Shelby blinked, not at his tone, but the way he’d rephrased the question. She wondered if Casey with the shaggy red hair and freckles, slouching in his chair as if at the advanced age of eleven he’d seen it all, had spent some time with a psychiatrist.

“Because you’re all sly and mischievous and looking for trouble,” she answered. “But you’re still cute.”

“What about the other one?” Jessica asked.

The room was silent and Shelby turned to look at the picture again. The figure in the middle was clearly her,

even though she'd drawn herself from the back. The blue tee shirt she wore said Art Barn across the shoulders, and any kid who took a class out at the barn got the exact same shirt.

"Art is everywhere?" Jessica asked, giving it her best shot.

"You need to get your eyes checked?" Scott said.

She bent forward, to look him in the eye. "Do we need to have a conversation in the hallway?" she whispered, and he blanched, shaking his head.

"Beauty is everywhere," she said. Though she'd drawn that picture perhaps more in hope than as proof of anything.

"So, you've got three pages there. Take your time and think of three images that convey something to me about who you are. Or what you feel. Or know. Or believe."

A dozen desktops were lifted and pencil boxes were pulled out. "Don't just draw the very first thing that comes to mind. Think about how you're going to surprise me. Or make me work to figure it out. For instance," she turned and found Jeremy in the corner. Sweet Jeremy who grinned up at her, blinking through his thick glasses. "Jeremy, perhaps you could consider not drawing dinosaurs."

"But . . . I love dinosaurs."

"I know that. We've all known that. Since you were in kindergarten there has not been a child on the planet who has loved dinosaurs more than you. Try to think of something else."

"What if I can't?"

"Then at least draw me a very good dinosaur."

He beamed at her. Just beamed, and all the black soot that lingered on her heart from her late night and frazzled morning was gone.

Children and art were simply the best medicine. The very best.

Heads were bent over work and the room was silent but for the scratch of pencil and crayon over paper. She walked up and down the aisles until she got to the far corner where Casey, who was bent so far over his desk she couldn't see his paper, sketched furiously. His pencil was a short, bitten-off thing, probably salvaged from the broken pencil bin Mrs. Jordal had for kids who kept forgetting pencils.

"Do you want some colored pencils?" she asked. "Or crayons? I have some."

"I'm fine," he said without looking up, without taking a break. Without giving her a chance to see what he was working on.

A couple more kids raised their hands to ask questions, and she had to finally move Scott to the far side of the room because he wouldn't stop talking to his friend John. Casey didn't look up. She set a sharp pencil down on the edge of his desk but he ignored it.

“You have five minutes left,” she said at almost the exact moment Mrs. Jordal came back in. Shelby took her own pictures down and tucked them back in the bag. In the kindergarten class after this they were going to start a finding-shapes-in-nature exercise, which was basically just an excuse to get them outside and moving around.

“Time’s up,” she said. “Hand in your pages. I’ll see you next Wednesday and we’ll keep working on this.”

Students flooded up from their desks, a giant wave of kids who smelled like graphite and wax crayon. Casey didn’t meet her eyes and handed her his page facedown. “It’s nice to meet you, Casey,” she said and he shook his hair out of his eyes in that weird, totally practiced and ineffective Justin Bieber way.

“Yeah,” he said and shuffled back to his desk. He was tall, really tall. The tallest kid in the class by at least a few inches. She hadn’t noticed that when he was slouching at his desk.

She gathered up the pages and grabbed her bag and empty cat coffee cup and went back to the office for another cup of coffee before heading to kindergarten.

The new kid forgotten for the moment.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Warren Ford:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their own spare time to take a walk, shopping, or went to the actual Mall. How about open or read a book called Between the Sheets (The Boys of Bishop)? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You realize beside you can spend your time along with your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with their opinion or you have different opinion?

Marie Brenneman:

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