



On A Night Like This (Callaways #1)

By Barbara Freethy

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From #1 NY Times Bestselling Author, Barbara Freethy, comes a romantic new contemporary series about the Callaways, a big, blended Irish family born to serve and protect. ?

The second oldest of the Callaway clan, Aiden Callaway veered from the family tradition of urban firefighting and became a smokejumper, never questioning his choice until the job took the life of his friend, Kyle, and left Aiden with injuries and fractured memories. Everyone blames Aiden for what happened, but he doesn't remember, nor is he sure he wants to remember. The truth may clear Aiden of blame but destroy Kyle's reputation and hurt the people he left behind. ?

Aiden seeks help from an unlikely ally ... ??

Sara had always been untouchable, sweet, innocent, his sister's best friend, and the girl next door. But one reckless night in their youth took their relationship to a new level. Sara has never forgiven or forgotten the way Aiden brought it crashing down, but she's no longer that girl with the crazy crush. She's a woman in search of her own truth.

The sparks between Aiden and Sara have been smoldering for a very long time. Sara is afraid to take another chance on a man who broke her heart, and Aiden knows better than anyone how dangerous an intense fire can be.

As teenagers they weren't ready for each other. Are they ready now?

Don't Miss Any of the Callaway Novels:

ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS (#1)

SO THIS IS LOVE (#2)

FALLING FOR A STRANGER (#3)

BETWEEN NOW AND FOREVER (#4)

NOBODY BUT YOU (A Callaway Wedding Novella)

ALL A HEART NEEDS (#5)

THAT SUMMER NIGHT (#6)

WHEN SHADOWS FALL (#7)

SOMEWHERE ONLY WE KNOW (#8)

IF I DIDN'T KNOW BETTER (#9)
TENDER IS THE NIGHT (#10)
TAKE ME HOME (Callaway Novella)
CLOSER TO YOU (#11)

PRAISE FOR THE CALLAWAYS!

"I love the Callaways! Heartwarming romance, intriguing suspense and sexy alpha heroes. What more could you want?"

-- NYT Bestselling Author Bella Andre

"I adore the Callaways, a family we'd all love to have. Each new book is a deft combination of emotion, suspense and family dynamics. A remarkable, compelling series!"

-- Barbara O'Neal, author of How to Bake a Perfect Life.

"Once I start reading a Callaway novel, I can't put it down. Fast-paced action, a poignant love story and a tantalizing mystery in every book!"

-- USA Today Bestselling Author Christie Ridgway

"I loved Aiden and Sara's story! Barbara manages to give us a good glimpse of the rest of the family too, without taking away from Aiden and Sara's story, leaving us with a little bit of mystery to be followed up on."

Harlequin Junkie for ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS

Barbara manages to weave a perfect romance filled with laughter, love, a lot of heat, and just the right amount of suspense. I highly recommend So This is Love to anyone looking for a sexy romance with characters you will love!

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"BETWEEN NOW AND FOREVER is a beautifully written story. Fans of Barbara's Angel's Bay series will be happy to know the search leads them to Angel's Bay where we get to check in with some old friends."

The Book Momster Blog

"A very touching story that shows the power of love and how much it can heal."

All Night Books for BETWEEN NOW AND FOREVER

"I love the Callaways and FALLING FOR A STRANGER makes me love their family even more."

All Night Books

"I really love the Callaways and am looking forward to reading about the rest of the family and unraveling the grandparents' secret which we're learning a little more about in each new book. If you're looking for a great feel good read with a bit of action and mystery, this book is for you!"

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Editorial Review

Review

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"Once I start reading a Callaway novel, I can't put it down. Fast-paced action, a poignant love story and a tantalizing mystery in every book!" --USA Today Bestselling Author Christie Ridgway

"Freethy has a gift for creating complex characters." --Library Journal

"Barbara Freethy is a master storyteller with a gift for spinning tales about ordinary people in extraordinary situations and drawing readers into their lives." --Romance Reviews Today

"Freethy's skillful plotting and gift for creating sympathetic characters will ensure that few dry eyes will be left at the end of the story." --Publishers Weekly on *The Way Back Home*

"Freethy skillfully keeps the reader on the hook, and her tantalizing and believable tale has it all— romance, adventure, and mystery." --Booklist on *Summer Secrets*

"Barbara Freethy brings a tender poignancy to mainstream romantic fiction." --Romantic Times on *Daniel's Gift*

"Freethy's story-telling ability is top-notch." --Romantic Times on *Don't Say A Word*

About the Author

Barbara Freethy is a #1 New York Times Bestselling Author of 41 novels ranging from contemporary romance to romantic suspense and women's fiction. Traditionally published for many years, Barbara opened her own publishing company in 2011 and has since sold over 4.8 million copies of her books. Nineteen of her titles have appeared on the New York Times and USA Today Bestseller Lists. In July of 2014, Barbara was named the Amazon KDP (Kindle Direct Publishing) Bestselling Author of ALL TIME! She was also the first Indie Author to sell over 1 million copies at both Barnes and Noble and Amazon.

An author known for writing emotional stories about ordinary people caught up in extraordinary situations, Barbara has received starred reviews from Publishers' Weekly and Library Journal and has also received six nominations for the RITA for Best Single Title Contemporary Romance from Romance Writers of America. She has won the honor twice for her novels *Daniel's Gift* and *The Way Back Home*. Barbara recently launched a new contemporary series, *The Callaways*, featuring a family born to "serve and protect". For more information, visit Barbara's website at www.barbarafreethy.com

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As a teenager, seeing her father's car in the driveway when she came home from school had always made Sara Davidson uneasy. She would steel herself for the evening to come, never quite sure why she felt afraid. Stephen Davidson had never physically abused her, but he had been demanding, and his words cut like a knife.

It wasn't always what he said that was the worst part; it was the rejection in his gaze, and the cold quiet that usually followed his disappointment in her.

It would be different now, Sara told herself as she got out of her rental car. She was twenty-nine years old, a successful lawyer, and she hadn't lived at home in ten years. So why did she feel trepidation?

Because her relationship with her father had never been quite right.

They were biologically connected, but emotionally they were as distant as two people could be. Her mother, Valerie, had been the buffer between them, but her mom had died when Sara was nineteen years old. For the past decade it had been just her and her dad. Actually, it had mostly been just her.

While her father had paid for her education and living expenses, he hadn't come to her graduations—not from college or from law school. The last time she'd seen him in person had been five years ago when they'd both attended the funeral of her grandmother, her father's mother.

She walked up the path, pausing at the bottom of the stairs, her hand tightening around the bottle of wine she'd brought for her dad's sixty-fifth birthday on Sunday. She'd tried her best to get him something a wine connoisseur would appreciate – a bottle of 1989 Chateau Mouton Rothschild Bordeaux. The wine had cost as much as her monthly car payment; she hoped it would be worth it. Her father was her only living relative, and she still, probably foolishly, wanted to believe they could find a way to connect with each other.

Her nerves tightened, and she had to fight back the urge to flee. She'd flown all the way across the country to see him; she couldn't back down. Trying to calm her racing heart, she looked around, reminding herself that this had once been home.

Her father's two-story house with the white paint and dark brown trim was located in the middle of the block in a San Francisco neighborhood known as St. Francis Wood. Not far from the ocean, the houses in this part of the city were detached and had yards, unlike much of the city where the homes shared common walls.

Her family had moved into this house when she was nine years old, and one of her favorite places to be was sitting in the swing on the front porch. She'd spent many hours reading or watching the kids who lived next door. The Callaways were a big, Irish-Catholic blended family. Jack Callaway, a widower with four boys, had married Lynda Kane, a divorcee with two girls. Together, they'd had fraternal twins, a boy and a girl, rounding out the family at eight kids.

As an only child, Sara had been fascinated by the Callaways and a little envious. Jack Callaway was a gregarious Irishman who told great stories and had never met a stranger. Jack was a San Francisco firefighter, following in his father's and grandfather's footsteps. The Callaways had been born to serve and protect, and all of the kids had been encouraged to follow the family tradition. At least two of the boys had become firefighters, and last she'd heard her friend Emma had done the same, but she hadn't spoken to Emma in a long time.

A wave of nostalgia hit her as her gaze drifted down the block. She'd let her childhood friends go—not that there had been that many, but she could still hear the sounds of the past, kids laughing and playing. The Callaway boys had run the neighborhood, taking over the street on summer nights to play baseball, football,

or any other game they'd invent. She'd occasionally been part of those games, but not often.

She might have grown up next door to the Callaways, but she'd lived in an entirely different world—a world of quiet structure and discipline, a world where expectations for grades and achievement were high, and having fun didn't factor into any equation.

Sighing, she pushed the past back where it belonged and walked up the stairs. Time to stop procrastinating.

She rang the bell, and a moment later the front door swung open. She drew in a quick breath as she met her father's dark gaze. At six foot four, Stephen Davidson was a foot taller than she was, and had always scared the hell out of her. He had dark brown hair, brown eyes, and wiry frame. Today, he wore black slacks and a white button-down shirt that had always been his uniform during the week. He seemed thinner than she remembered, although he'd always been fit. His sense of discipline extended to every part of his life.

"Surprise!" she said, forcing a smile on her face.

"What are you doing here, Sara?"

"It's your birthday on Sunday."

"You should have called."

"You would have told me not to come."

"Yes, I would have done that," he agreed. "It's not a good time."

It hadn't been a good time in over a decade. "Can I come in?" she asked.

He hesitated for a long moment, then gave a resigned nod.

She crossed the threshold, feeling as if she'd just gotten over the first hurdle. There would be more coming, but at least she'd made it through the door. Pausing in the entry, she glanced toward the living room on her right. It was a formal room, with white couches, glass tables, and expensive artwork. They'd never spent any time in that room as a family, and it didn't appear that that had changed. Turning her head to the left, she could see the long mahogany table in the dining room and the same dried flower arrangement that had always been the centerpiece.

The fact that the house hadn't changed in ten years was probably a sign that her father hadn't changed either.

"You shouldn't have come without calling, Sara," her father repeated, drawing her attention back to him.

"Well, I'm here, and I brought you a present." She handed him the wine.

He reluctantly took the bottle, barely glancing at the label. "Thank you."

"It's very rare," she said, wishing for a bigger reaction.

"I'm sure it is." He set the bottle down on a side table.

She squared her shoulders, irritated by his lack of enthusiasm. But she knew it would take more than a bottle of wine to crack the iceberg between them. "I'd like to stay for the weekend."

"You want to stay here?" he asked, dismay in his eyes.

"Why not? You have the room." She headed up the stairs, figuring it would be best not to give her father time to argue. He was an excellent attorney who knew how to win an argument. But she was pretty good, too.

When she reached the upstairs landing, her gaze caught on the only two family pictures that had ever hung in the house. On the left was a family shot of the three of them, taken when she was about eleven years old. She remembered quite clearly how desperately her mother had wanted a professional family picture and how hard her father had fought against it, but it was one of the few battles that Valerie had won.

The other photo was of her and her mother taken at her high school graduation. Her mother had a proud smile on her face. They looked a lot alike, sharing many of the same features: an oval-shaped face, long, thick light brown hair that fell past their shoulders, and wide-set dark brown eyes. A wave of sadness ran through her as she realized this was the last photo of her and her mother. Valerie had died two years later.

Turning away from the memories, she moved down the hall. Her room was at the far end of the corridor. It had been stripped down to the basics: a mattress and box spring, her old desk on one wall, her dresser on the other. The bookshelves were empty and so were the drawers. Only a few nails revealed that there had once been pictures on the wall. There was absolutely no trace of her childhood.

She shouldn't be surprised. Her father had shipped her several boxes a couple of years ago, but it still felt a little sad to see how her early life had been completely erased.

Moving to the window, she looked out at a familiar view – the Callaways' backyard. The large wooden play structure that was built like a fort with slides and tunnels was empty now. Like herself, the Callaways had grown up. She wondered if any of them still lived at home.

"As you can see, I'm not set up for guests," her dad said, interrupting her thoughts.

She turned to see him standing in the doorway. "I'm sure there are some extra sheets in the linen closet. I don't need much."

He stared back at her, his eyes dark and unreadable. "Why are you here, Sara?"

"I wanted to be here for your birthday. It's been a long time since we've shared more than an email. We should talk, catch up with each other."

"Why on earth would you want to talk to me?"

The confusion in his eyes made her realize just how far apart they'd drifted. "Because you're my father. You're my family. We're the only ones left."

"Do you need money?"

"This isn't about money. Mom would not have wanted us to end up like strangers. We need to try to improve our relationship."

He stared back at her for a long moment, then said, "There's nothing left for you here, Sara. I wish you well, but we both need to move on. If you stay, it won't go well. We'll only disappoint each other."

Her chest tightened, the finality of his words bringing pain as well as anger. Her father was like a brick wall.

She kept throwing herself at him, trying to break through his resistance, but all she ever achieved was a new batch of emotional bruises.

"You're a grown woman now," he added. "You don't need a father."

"Not that I ever really had one," she countered, surprising herself a little with the words. She was used to holding her tongue when it came to her dad, because talking usually made things worse.

"I did my best," he said.

"Did you?" she challenged.

A tickle caught at her throat and her eyes blurred with unwanted tears. She had not come here to cry. She sniffed, wondering why the air felt so thick. It took a minute to register that it was not her emotions that were making her eyes water, but smoke.

The same awareness flashed in her father's eyes. "Damn," he swore. "The kitchen? I was cooking?"

He ran out of the room, and she followed him down the stairs, shocked by how thick the smoke was in the entry.

She was on her dad's heels when he entered the kitchen. The scene was unbelievable. Flames shot two feet in the air off a sizzling pot on the stove. The fire had found more fuel in a stack of newspapers on the counter that had been left too close to the burner, those sparks leaping to the nearby curtains.

Her father grabbed a towel and tried to beat out some of the flames, but his efforts only seemed to make things worse. Embers flew everywhere, finding new places to burn, the heat growing more and more intense. Moving to the sink, she turned on the faucet and filled up a pitcher, but it was taking too long to get enough water. She threw some of it at the fire, but it made no difference.

"Move aside," her dad shouted, grabbing two hot pads.

"What are you doing?" she asked in confusion.

He tried to grab the pot and move it to the sink, but she was in the way, and he stumbled, dropping the pot in the garbage. She jumped back from an explosion of new fire.

"We have to call 911," she said frantically. But there was no phone in the kitchen, and her cell phone was in her bag by the entry. "Let's get out of here."

Her father was still trying to put out the fire, but he was getting nowhere.

"Dad, please."

"Get out, Sara," he said forcefully, then ran into the adjacent laundry room.

"Wait! Where are you going?"

"I have to get something important," he yelled back at her.

"Dad. We need to get out of the house." She coughed out the words, but she might as well have remained silent because her dad had vanished through the laundry room and down the back stairs to the basement. She

couldn't imagine what he had to get. There was nothing but gardening tools and cleaning supplies down there.

She started to follow him, then jumped back as the fire caught the wallpaper next to her head, sizzling and leaping towards her clothing.

"Dad," she screamed. "We need to get out of the house." A crash echoed through the house. Then all she could hear was the crackling of the fire.

End of Excerpt

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Pamela Guarino:

What do you regarding book? It is not important along? Or just adding material when you need something to explain what the ones you have problem? How about your spare time? Or are you busy particular person? If you don't have spare time to try and do others business, it is gives you the sense of being bored faster. And you have free time? What did you do? Every individual has many questions above. They have to answer that question due to the fact just their can do that will. It said that about reserve. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is appropriate. Because start from on guardería until university need this specific On A Night Like This (Callaways #1) to read.

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Mattie Peters:

What is your hobby? Have you heard this question when you got pupils? We believe that that query was given by teacher to the students. Many kinds of hobby, Every individual has different hobby. And you know that little person similar to reading or as examining become their hobby. You must know that reading is very important as well as book as to be the point. Book is important thing to incorporate you knowledge, except your personal teacher or lecturer. You will find good news or update regarding something by book. Amount types of books that can you choose to adopt be your object. One of them is actually On A Night Like This (Callaways #1).

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