

STITCHES

By Sarah E. Daniels
sarah@soyoused.com

WRITING SAMPLE

Genre: Romance
Format: Interactive Fiction
Demographic: Adult Women

SET-UP

All she ever wanted was to be a fashion designer, but she's not sure she can handle the pressures of the big city or the most elite design school in the world.

Taking place in NYC, our lead character must navigate an aggressive curriculum and shaky allegiances with her fellow students all while trying to hold onto her internship at a leading fashion site. Her personal tribulations are set against the hustle and bustle of city life and an almost endless cornucopia of possible conquests.

EXCERPT

INT. DARK AND GRIMY PUB

PLAYER sits at the bar, squinting at a binder full of magazine clippings. She's sketching in a notebook and eating the free peanuts.

NARRATOR

After the day you've just had it's only natural to seek comfort at your favorite watering hole.

NARRATOR

Especially, since they have free peanuts and you haven't eaten all day.

JAKE

I'll hafta start charging you for those if you don't order a drink.

NARRATOR

Jake. He's another good reason to come here after a hard day.

PLAYER

Hey, Jake.

NARRATOR

After a brief upward glance, you mutter into your notebook.

NARRATOR

You're worried if you look at him too long, you'll pass out. He makes you dizzy.

JAKE

So, what'll it be? Clock's ticking.

PLAYER

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Come on, Jake. You know I'm broke.	If you're buying, I'll take a bourbon.	I..umm...guess I'll be going.

JAKE

Cocky. It sounds like you've had a day.

PLAYER

That's one way to put it.

JAKE

What's another way?

PLAYER

In an alternative universe, you're watching me get arrested on the Nightly News.

NARRATIVE

Jake throws back his head and laughs. A deep sound of uninhibited delight.

NARRATIVE

You flush. His easy confidence ratchets his appeal into the stratosphere.

JAKE

That bad, huh?

NARRATIVE

He's grinning at you. A bottle has materialized in one hand, a glass in the other.

NARRATIVE

As he upends the bottle in a practiced pour, your eyes lock.

NARRATIVE

You're mesmerized for a heartbeat, then you realize you're holding your breath.

NARRATIVE

You look away. There's a solid thunk of a glass on the bar in front of you.

JAKE

On the house...to celebrate your freedom.

NARRATIVE

Jake winks at you before walking down the bar. You finally exhale and take a sip.

NARRATIVE

A warm heat slithers down your throat and expands in your near-empty belly. You sigh, happily.

PLAYER

That's the good stuff, right there.

TALYA

Spending my bonus, I see.

NARRATIVE

Talya! Dammit. You thought this place was your secret.

NARRATIVE

You refuse to look up. You've had enough of her smug face for one day.

PLAYER

Let it go, already. I did the work. I got the award.

NARRATOR

You feign confidence, staring straight ahead, lightly cupping the drink between your hands.

NARRATIVE

Like a feral cat, she sidles closer and slinks into the space between the barstools on your left.

TALYA

Why stick to your lie? It's just us pigeons...

NARRATIVE

A guttural growl rumbles below each word.

TALYA

Two weeks.

TALYA

Two weeks I was trapped in the basement looking for the right bolt of fabric for Genoa's design.

TALYA

Fabric which somehow teleported from my locker to your desk at just the right moment.

PLAYER

I already told you, it was in the fabric station with a dozen other bolts.

PLAYER

I liked it, so I took it.

NARRATOR

She's standing over you, all six feet of intimidating, elegant beauty.

TALYA

Innocent as that...who knew we had such similar taste?

NARRATOR

She coils around you so you can't avoid her cheshire grin and takes your drink from your hands.

PLAYER

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Take one sip, and you'll be wearing it home.	Hey! Give that back!	Enjoy. I didn't buy it anyway.

TALYA

Wouldn't that be a neat trick?

NARRATOR

She raises the glass to her lips daring you to make a move.

NARRATOR

Instead of drinking, her hand keeps tilting, tilting, tilting until...

PLAYER

My sketchbook!

NARRATOR

Talya has upended the bourbon onto your open sketchbook. The ink is already starting to blur.

NARRATOR

You act without thinking.

PLAYER

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Throw the notebook at Talya. It's ruined anyway.	Pull off Talya's wig and toss it behind the bar.	Clench your fists and glare into Talya's eyes with barely controlled rage.

NARRATOR

You're on your feet in the shadow of the colossus.

NARRATOR

Your head barely comes to the top of her cleavage. Through your rage, you have a moment's clarity.

PLAYER

"She could brain me with the glass and drag my unconscious body behind the bar without breaking a sweat."

JAKE

Ladies! Ladies. Please. We're a friendly neighborhood bar.

NARRATOR

Jake is holding Talya's wig out to her with charming nonchalance.

JAKE

Emphasis on friendly.

NARRATOR

Jake's toothy smile does nothing to diminish the tension. Talya snatches the wig from his hand with a grimace.

NARRATOR

It's dripping wet on one side and a fine crust of spent peanut shells are woven into the hairs.

NARRATOR

Talya glares at you, her cheeks two cherries of color in a plane of unblemished perfection.

TALYA

Unless you have a deathwish, I suggest calling in sick tomorrow.

NARRATOR

Talya storms from the pub, spectral tendrils of fury flowing in her wake.

(additional excerpt illustrating romantic scene)

CUT TO:

In response to your confrontation with Tayla, you've spent your bonus money on drinks. Way, way too many drinks.

The pub is closed. Jake is cleaning up.

NARRATOR

You're watching Jake place chairs on tables with practised ease.

NARRATOR

A simple twist of his wrist, the chair flips then lands seat down on the table top.

NARRATOR

The choreography is captivating, and for the first time in all these months you find yourself openly admiring Jake.

NARRATOR

He's not movie-star handsome, no, that's true. It's the way he moves.

NARRATOR

Like a dancer or an athlete. He's got hip-hop grace and all-star confidence.

PLAYER

"Not to mention that perky plum of an ass."

NARRATOR

You're talking outloud. Jake glances your way.

JAKE

Still with us, I see.

NARRATOR

He walks to where you're slumped against the bar instantly perking up your drunken misery to a state approaching human.

PLAYER

Oh, I'm not going anywhere without you, Jakey-my-boy.

JAKE

Now I'm your boy? It's an historical night.

NARRATOR

This is the closest you've ever been. He smells like oak and cloves and sweat.

NARRATOR

You close your eyes and lean toward that scent until it becomes a taste.

PLAYER

Ummm-hmmmm. You wanna make history with me?

NARRATOR

You open your eyes. Jake's hand glances across your hip. Steadying you as you waver in a tipsy, delicious cloud of possibility.

NARRATOR

His eyes glimmer with their persistent humor, but now there's something more.

NARRATOR

You stare up at him. This time you don't look away. Your eyes linger, until he breaks the spell.

JAKE

Awh, PLAYER. You're more than a little drunk, aren't you?

PLAYER

I'm not that drunk.

NARRATOR

You close your eyes. A magnetic thread pulls you forward, and you feel a soft exhale of breath across your lips.

NARRATOR

His lips are firm, warm, and a little salty, and you suck tentatively on the lusciousness of his bottom lip.

NARRATOR

His hand slips easily around your waist treading the terrain between your back and your ass with practiced ease.

NARRATOR

You lean in for more.

NARRATOR

His kiss becomes a command; you feel his hands circling your waist.

NARRATOR

He pulls you hard against him for a blissful insistent moment, then he's gone.

JAKE

It's late. You're drunk.

NARRATOR

He's fiddling with something at the bar. It's almost like he's talking to himself.

JAKE

Let's get you home before we do something you'll regret.

NARRATOR

You gaze at him with a lopsided smile.

PLAYER

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
My place or yours?	You asking to come home with me?	Home? We were doing just fine right here.

NARRATOR

A flicker of surprises passes over Jake's face, then it's broken with one of his easy laughs.

JAKE

I've never seen this side of you before. I like it.

PLAYER

If you like this side, just wait. There's a lot more you haven't seen.

NARRATOR

You lean in for another kiss to find nothing but air. His athletic grace is working against you.

NARRATOR

Instead, you feel your coat drape across your shoulders, and you look up into an earnest and determined face.

JAKE

I'm sure there is, but it'll have to wait.

NARRATOR

Jake winks at you. He stuffs your supplies into your bag, and throws it over his shoulder.

JAKE

Come on. I'll walk you home.

PLAYER

You're a good, good man, you know that Jake?

PLAYER

A good man.

NARRATOR

You pat his chest to sincerely emphasize each word. Jake rolls his eyes as he shuffles you out the door.

JAKE

Yeah. I'm a gem. Not that bright, probably dumb as a post, but a real gem.

NARRATOR

Jake kisses the end of your nose and closes the door behind you.

FADE OUT: