

Love Handles (A Romantic Comedy) (Oakland Hills Book 1)

By Gretchen Galway

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OAKLAND HILLS ROMANCE, BOOK #1

When a couch potato inherits a fitnesswear company in San Francisco, sparks fly with her arrogant, Olympic medalist vice president.

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The world of fitness apparel isn't ready for Beverly Lewis. She hates the gym, is nice to everybody, and shops at Ross Dress for Less. When she's not teaching preschool, she's wearing yoga pants . . . to nap in. So when she inherits her estranged grandfather's fitnesswear company in San Francisco, nobody expects her to keep it. Fite Fitness needs a heartless suit to save it from bankruptcy, not a thirty-year-old woman who cries when her students leave for kindergarten.


Someone like Liam Johnson. A former Olympic swimmer, Liam is Fite's executive vice president. Unlike Bev, he's devoted his life to Fite's success. Managing one little preschool teacher--and his attraction to her--shouldn't be an issue. Right?

But Bev's tired of being underpaid and underrated, and refuses to step aside as an obedient figurehead. To everyone's shock and horror, she moves up to San Francisco, sets up an office, and dives into the business. Nothing--not mockery, not exercise, not sabotage, not a disastrously hot night with her aggravating VP--is going to scare her away.

As Liam realizes she's tougher than she looks, he discovers that losing Fite might not be nearly as bad as losing her . . .

A story about the pursuit of love, happiness, and the perfect yoga pants, Love Handles will speak to anyone who's ever had to face what scares her most.

Warning: contains at least two loves scenes and a happy ending.

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Excerpt

Liam pulled out several pair of dark pants bearing the Fite logo and a pair of t-shirts, and thrust the pile at her.

Reluctantly Bev clutched them to her chest and made eye contact with the sales clerk. "I guess I'd like a room." She walked over to a wall rack of sports bras, knowing he was right but annoyed he'd ambushed her. Since day one she had intended on dropping into Macy's--wonderfully impersonal Macy's--to see if she could wear any of the Fite line--but not in a Rockridge boutique with the help of a starved Amazon with buttocks like halved cantaloupes, and certainly not with him looking on.

"This one is totally the best for D cups. And up." The clerk held up a white bra that looked more like a very small, thick, short, sleeveless t-shirt.

"That's quite a lot of coverage." Bev took it from her. "How do you get into it?"

"You just have to kind of pull like really, really hard. Over your head," she said. "I can help if you get stuck."

"That won't be necessary." Liam put his hand on Bev's shoulder and guided her towards the back of the store. "The changing rooms are over there."

Alarmed he was following so close, Bev said, "You can wait up at the front. Or better yet, go catch your train. No reason for you to be here."

"Oh, I think there is." The corner of his mouth twitched.

Bev slammed the changing room door in his face and locked it. She kicked off her shoes and turned away from the mirror to pull off her jeans. The walls that weren't mirrored were covered with artistic, enlarged photographs of naked athletes in motion, just to drive home the message that you really, really weren't one of them.

Well, Bev wasn't falling for it; they wouldn't insult her into feeling bad about herself. She got her feet into the leg holes of a pair of pants and tugged them upward, then unhitched her bra and began the struggle to fit the compression top over her chest. At one point both breasts were shoved nearly down to her belly button like stretched water balloons, but she reached down and pulled them up into the high-tech embrace of the sixty-four dollar bra and felt fairly confident she would be able to remove it herself.

"You all right in there?" Liam's voice was too close to the door for comfort. "I heard noises."

Just the sound of my breasts deflating. "I'm fine." She jerked a shirt off the hanger and pulled it over her head. With her breasts in captivity, the slippery shirt slid down over her chest without a fight, and, bracing for the worst, she turned to squint at herself in the mirror.

She groaned. Why did they put elastic bands all over the place? With waistbands so low on her hips they

would give a Rodin sculpture fatrolls?

"I don't think so," she muttered, turning to look at her rear end. "Yikes." Butt cleavage was not a trend she was going to embrace, nomatter how many apparel companies she inherited.

Liam rattled the door. "Let me in."

"No! I already took it off."

The doorknob turned. "Then put it back on, because I'm coming in."

The damn door came unlocked. She threw her body against it. "Stay out there. What the hell do you think you're doing?"

"If you don't want me to see skin, then put something on. I'm coming in."

"Damn it." With one foot pushing the door closed, she craned across the dressing room to grab the next top and pull it on. It was as tight as the first, but only half as long. Her freakishly narrow waist--the one he had been fondling earlier--was exposed no matter how hard she pulled it down. "You gave me a kid's size!"

"They don't have kids' sizes here." And then he was standing in the open doorway. Big and looming and looking her over. "Interesting."

She stretched up to her full height and glared at him. "They need to fix the locks in this place."

He continued to stare. "Turn around."

"Liam--"

"If you want to be in apparel you'll have to get over this prissy self-consciousness."

"Prissy? Tell you what. You put this getup on. Then we'll see prissy." She pulled him all the way inside and shoved the door closed. At least the rest of the store didn't have to see her.

"The rise is all wrong. Did you put them on backwards?"

"The only problem is that I'm wearing them at all. Get out of here and I'll take them off."

To her horror he stepped right up behind her, stuck his finger under the waistband right at the flesh above her hip, and pulled the fabric away and over to read the tag. "And these are a large, too. They don't come in an XL."

"Yet another miscalculation. Not that extra width would do anything for me. They seem to have put all the fabric for the waist down at my ankles." Her feet were buried under the flared legs. "Am I supposed to wear heels with them while I'm doing my marathons? They seem a bit long."

Engrossed in the clothing on her body, he didn't lift his eyes to her face once as he continued his perusal.

"And the top is a bit short on you too, isn't it?"

"Maybe it's a hat."

Again ignoring her personal space, he stuck his fingers under the bottom hem of the shirt and pulled. The rough tips of his fingertips brushed her ribcage and she shivered--not that he noticed. He stuck his hands up higher, to the bottom band of the compression bra underneath, and wiggled his finger under that elastic. "This bra is a best-seller. If we change it, even a little, we get complaints," he said, then abruptly pulled his fingers out and stepped back. "Jump."

Unnerved by the shock of his hands on her body, she blinked. "What?"

"Jump. Something high-impact. Don't worry, there's a hospital just down the street if you pass out or break something."

"I am not going to jump."

He narrowed his eyes. "Jump, or I tell the design team you've got the muscle tone of a Cabbage Patch Doll."

"I'd fire you."

"It would be worth it," he said. "Jump."

To hell with him. Just because she hated exercise didn't mean she was incapable. She bent her knees and sprung upwards, did it again just to show him she could, then stood with her hands on her surprised hips, glaring at him.

But he was smiling. And from the way he was pinching his lips, she saw he was on the verge of laughing. "Thank you. That was great."

She jabbed him in the shoulder. Hard as a rock, of course. "Now get out of here."

"Could you do it again? You moved so quickly--really, quite a blur--I didn't get to see if the bra worked on you."

"Out."

Shaking his head, he leaned over and took another pair of pants off the hook. "Now try these on."

"Face it, Liam, the company just doesn't make clothes for average women. They're not even close."

"That's what I'm afraid of. Though, let's be honest, Bev--you're hardly average." He thrust the pants into her arms. "We've been getting returns on these for being too big. Act like the businesswoman you're pretending to be and try them on please." Then he turned around and faced the door, crossing his arms over his chest.

"You aren't staying in here--"

He unhooked a hand and looked at his wrist. "I've only got another ten minutes."

She stared at his back. He thought he could intimidate her. Never dropping her gaze, she bent over and wriggled out of the pants.

Users Review

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