



Secrets and Seductions

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For Jessica and Elizabeth, the sweet life begins at 30...

Three years after the events of Sweet Valley Confidential, Elizabeth and Jessica Wakefield are back in Sweet Valley and inseparable once more. But Jessica, now a mother, is trying to reconcile a colossal mistake that may have cost her Todd forever. Meanwhile, reality TV star extraordinaire Lila Fowler's in desperate straits after her fame-seeking scheme has unexpected repercussions. And Elizabeth and Bruce struggle to cope with the fallout of the scandal that's torn them apart, made worse after Bruce makes a shocking decision. The Sweet Life #4: Secrets and Seductions turns up the heat as the serial speeds towards its explosive conclusion.

Secrets and Seductions Details

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From Reader Review Secrets and Seductions for online ebook

kylajaclyn says

Welcome to "Fifty Shades of Sweet Valley" or The Sweet Life #4: "Secrets and Seductions."

I just have to say that, back in the old days of Sweet Valley, hormones weren't an excuse for relationships falling apart. Since nobody had sex (except Annie Whitman, apparently), the gang had to find ways to fuck up relationships all on their own. Oh, sure, Jess and Liz always cheated. But they never cheated by having sex. We could say that all this discovering of new body parts in Sweet Valley has led to more options for the ghostwriters. In reality, it has just led Francine to be more uncreative, as the characters dig themselves in deeper by doing nothing but having sex and lying to each other constantly. Seriously. What a fucked up posse.

Good old Lila Fowler is no longer good old Lila Fowler. She is now, quite simply, a trending Twitter topic, and that says it all. She's still faking a pregnancy and has everyone on her side. She is about to fake her miscarriage. It works out perfectly when Ashley feeds her raw fish at her dinner party and Lila immediately spits it out. Pregnant women can't have raw fish. She performs all the way home in the taxi, and when she arrives home she barricades herself in the bathroom and screams like she lost the baby. She is Lila Fowler, the beloved, and that's just the way she likes it. Now she's Lila Fowler the poor victim of miscarriage as well. Once again, we have to hear how unloved she feels. She had to win Ken back by lying to him because she didn't feel like he could love her any other way. Well... that's pretty fucked up. Across town Caroline Pearce is heading into Dr. Rollins's (not Enid, fuck you very much) ob-gyn office for her routine check-up. Caroline muses that her blog is drying up, but she knows going to see Enid will fill up her cup and black heart with glee. See, Caroline's cancer convinced her more than ever that carrying on with her blog like a pathetic 12-year-old is exactly what she should be doing with her life. It's the exact opposite of an inspirational Lifetime movie. Have cancer! Continue to gossip! Caroline's usual source is gone, but Enid proves to be the catalyst in the coming messy turn of events. That's the only thing she's been useful for so far. Caroline mentions Lila and Enid breaks all doctor/patient confidentiality laws when she mentions that Lila's been there but only to get routine check-ups. She's not pregnant at all! Enid immediately realizes what a tool she is and swears Caroline to confidence, which is obviously completely useless. But Caroline isn't taking this news to her blog. She's going to dance all the way over to TMZ. The story breaks later that day, and Lila barricades herself in the bathroom to figure a way out of the mess Jessica told her would blow up in her face. Ken yells for Lila and she runs down the stairs with real tears this time. Ken dresses her down and promises that this time the divorce is final. Lila cannot stop crying. She runs back up to her room and vomits into the toilet twice in a row. Then she realizes that since she isn't REALLY in love with Ken, this is a bit much to be feeling emotionally. She's hormonal, she just vomited... and she hasn't had her period in a month. She didn't realize until this moment because she's been so busy faking a pregnancy and acting like a bitch. Perhaps she was just a bitch because she really IS pregnant? She pulls out a pregnancy test she had lying around from a year ago. One line comes up. Okay. Not pregnant. But then... the second line materializes. Lila Fowler, faker extraordinaire, has spent so much time faking her pregnancy (8 weeks, to be exact), that she never thought she actually could be pregnant. Looks like she's going to be a single mom...

Jess & Todd are still on the outs. Sarah, plagiarizer and Todd's new live-in, never told Todd that Jess came by in the last installment. Jessica is still with Liam just so she can feel relevant (because Jessica Wakefield wouldn't be relevant at all unless she made herself that way), but she isn't responding to any of his desperate texts. She's back at work in a lower position, but all the fight has gone out of her to even try to be a sociopath anymore. Personally, I just want her and Todd to get back together so we can quit pretending that Jessica

Wakefield is a good person. Jessica may not be actually TRYING, but she still believes herself superior in every way. This is proven tenfold when she makes remarks about her new assistant, Emily, who has an up-turned nose and freckles, therefore meaning, in Jessica's eyes, that she will age badly. Yikes. I guess it's true that every woman in this world who has not had blonde hair and a size-six figure has had a miserable existence. We just needed Sweet Valley to remind us of that. While Jessica is working she and Emily see a message from TMZ pop up on the screen. It says that Jessica and Todd are heading for divorce. However, Jessica hasn't filed... so that must mean that Todd has. Well, clearly Jessica must regain her mojo instead of actually, you know, TALKING to Todd. (To be fair, Elizabeth never talked to him either.) She knows that beyond Liam she's also had her VERTPLUS.NET boss Michael after her for a while. She slips into his office and invites him to dinner. You know, to discuss work. I'm sure in the next installment we will see that not only has Jessica slept with Liam, but she has now slept with Michael too. Sounds like same old Jess Wakefield to me. Meanwhile, Todd is the picture of innocence at Casa Wilkins. Except that he has scheming liar Sarah traipsing around his house in cut-off shorts and no bra. He comes home to this ensemble and the smell of dinner wafting through the house. He notes that he can't help that he's an old-fashioned man who wants to be cooked for. Yes, so you married Jessica Wakefield why?! That relationship will never make sense. I don't believe they love each other, especially with how they both are acting. Todd notes that Sarah has been such a GREAT friend, listening to him babble on about how much he misses Jessica. Newsflash, Toddie: you're telling the WRONG PERSON!! TELL JESSICA!! Dear God!! He turns on the news to see that he and Jessica are filing for divorce. Again, he has the same thought she did. He didn't file, which must mean that SHE did. And now he has to reclaim HIS mojo. He thinks that he IS a man, after all, and there's only so long he can be without sex... wait. Hold the phone. You went ALL THROUGH A NEVERENDING JUNIOR YEAR OF HIGH SCHOOL WITH NO SEX. He COULD make it if he tried, but obviously he doesn't care enough anymore. Sarah pushes out her tits and bends over, and Todd's like "oh, fuck it." While they are having their wild orgasm party, he notes (of course!) that Sarah's body isn't QUITE as lean as Jessica's, but he still relishes the differences. He's followed his dick to greener pastures. I'm sure there could be a size-0 floating around Sweet Valley, and she STILL wouldn't be as skinny as perfect size-six Jess & Liz, somehow. After having about fifty orgasms Sarah leaves the room and picks up her phone, which has a long line of communication with Caroline Pearce. Sarah's been supplying her with all that gossip. She now tells Caroline that she and Todd are a couple. He wanted to be a freer man with her. Maybe. Sweet Valley sounds like a prison to me. Kind of pathetic these characters all refuse to ever leave it.

Bruce and Liz are also both still on the outs. However, Liz has suddenly decided that she wants to help him. Suddenly she's not so convinced of his guilt. Liz would make a horrible president. She's such a flip-flopper. She sends Annie Whitman, Bruce's defense lawyer, to the South of France where she knows Bruce is hiding out. Meanwhile, she quits her job. She refuses to do the story on Robin Platt (the accuser) that her boss wants her to do. She knows it'll happen anyway, but she doesn't want her name to be on it when it is published. She decides she needs to get to the bottom of who Robin Platt really is. She still suspects Rick Warner is somehow behind it. She needs to send someone undercover to the Warner building. Why not Aaron Dallas? I don't know, it didn't make much sense to me either. Aaron is back from New York where he just legally married Steve. How sweet. Except Francine just threw them together in SVC to make herself politically correct. She proves this when Aaron arrives at the building and tells the receptionist that he likes her Missoni scarf. Please! My best friend is gay, and he's never guessed what brand I'm wearing or any of that "typically gay" stuff. It's just sickening. But on to the undercover business... Aaron doesn't find much the first day, but when he comes back the next day the receptionist is on her way out, and he asks to use her computer. While browsing he finds one Rose Palley (same initials as Robin Platt) with the same information as Robin but no picture. He tells Liz that this just might be it if they can find a picture. He comes back the next day and strikes up a conversation with the receptionist about Rose, who is apparently upstairs at that very moment. Aaron meets her and knows that it can't be Robin. So much for that idea. Meanwhile, Liz is heading over to Robin's house to try and dig up more dirt. But Robin quickly pulls her Puss in Boots sad eyes and Liz is

instantly back to doubting Bruce and trusting Robin. Ye gads.

Meanwhile, in the South of France, Bruce is feeling utterly defeated. Annie is trying to cheer him up with her sickening devotion to him and his cause, but it's not really working so much. They have dinner at one of Bruce's favorite restaurants while Annie goes over the case with him again. She tries to find anything he might have missed. They get back to the house and pour some wine. Annie blathers on and on about her attraction and how she really DID sleep with Bruce in high school. Hmmmm. Then why didn't Francine ever come out and SAY that?? She snaps back to reality though and steers the conversation back to work. Bruce tells her there is something - he's afraid he might have bipolar. He's afraid that day might just have been a psychotic break and that he really is guilty. Annie makes the mistake of telling him that he's wrong, that she's always admired his cockiness, and that she never thought he was a bad person in high school. Francine tries to get a bit philosophical on us with the whole conversation. Bruce is tired of feeling defeated. He realizes that Annie is right. He always won in high school because he believed he could. Maybe getting some cockiness back wouldn't be a bad thing. And, just like Todd and Jess, he thinks the ONLY way to prove he's a man is to sleep with Annie, right here, right now. He propositions her since he knows she's been feeling it too. She goes back to the room with him, and he makes her feel how hard his dick is for her. But suddenly Annie has grown a moral backbone, and even though she is about to be spread eagle with Bruce Patman, she tells him to wait, that she's not sure she can go all the way. We are left hanging as to what Annie's decision will be, and Bruce is left with blue balls until next week.

Honestly, Francine, there are other routes to take besides all sex all the time. But at least this one was more interesting than last week, though we are still missing Margo.

Amber says

"Hi! My name is Francine Pascal and I have one plot line and one plot line alone: break everyone up and have them screw everyone else around them because they're all idiots incapable of sensing deceit, having decency or communication!"

Seriously, I wrote better plots than this as an eight-year-old. This is literally the worst of the worst soap operas. I thought Sweet Valley Confidential was bad, but this series tops it! At this point, I'm reading on in hopes that a) everyone dies in a fiery explosion or b) the whole thing is a nightmare of Elizabeth's spawned by pregnancy hormones and indigestion or something.

Fran says

This part, and the proceeding part, kind of merged into one for me as I read them so close together. They're a bit filler/padding-ish, just drawing out to the (mostly) predictable endings.

A few daft 'twists' are thrown in that stretch the believability rather too thin; other things are dragged out. Standard soap stuff.

Everyone in Sweet Valley needs to be in counselling, because no one can communicate properly or express their feelings in a normal, healthy fashion. Sweet Valley also seems to suffer from an epidemic of gullibility.

Sara says

My one complaint about this series is that the installments keep getting shorter and shorter! What's up with that? It's not like there wasn't room to throw in more characters development or plot twists or even bring back other characters from *Sweet Valley High*. But at least this installment did not have the lagging, boring subplot that the previous novella did. This one barely featured Steven at all! I guess I could also complain about the stupid decisions all the characters continually make and all the soap opera-y drama throughout the entirety of it... but hey, it's Sweet Valley! You don't read these books expecting good, rational decisions from the characters.

So, let's recap. Bruce has had formal charges brought against him and instead of facing them, he decides to flee the country. Annie Whitman, his lawyer, tracks him down, all the while reminiscing about all the good times they'd had in his Porsche in high school (so awesome!).

Back in Sweet Valley, Liz has decided to believe Bruce and work toward helping prove his innocence (it's about time!), but she doesn't want him to know that she's helping because that would be... smart? I don't know. Of course, because it's Liz and she has to be *everyone's* friend, she can't help but also sorta believe Bruce's accuser. She gets Aaron Dallas to help her with undercover work, which involves going to the office of Bruce's rival and flirting with the receptionist. There, Aaron immediately names the designer of the receptionist's scarf, yet she assumes he is straight and has a girlfriend. I don't know if it was intentional or not, but it made me laugh.

Meanwhile, Lila's scheme to get Ken back has worked, but because lies always catch up to you, her lies catch up to her. I love the fact that she's a reality TV star and that all this drama is playing out on TV. It also helps Caroline Pearce, the resident gossip in SVH, since she can now sell stories about Lila to TMZ and the like. I feel like this plot was given more page time in this installment (finally!), but like everything else, it could have been stretched out a little more.

Jessica's almost back to her usual self, though she's being undermined at work and too sad about Todd to fight back. I assume that must be coming in a future book - or so I hope! Because Todd's a complete moron, he's let his former colleague (who was fired for plagiarizing Jessica) move in with him, knowing that she's interested in him. Like I said, Todd's a moron. I can't believe that he seemed dreamy when I was twelve. Anyway, this woman is causing more friction between Todd and Jessica because Jessica knows she's there but Todd doesn't know that Jessica knows. Ahh, Sweet Valley. Todd and Jessica have both made so many dumb relationship mistakes throughout this series alone, so perhaps they do belong together.

This series is so ridiculous, but I am totally loving seeing all these old SVH characters as adults and how crazy their lives are. Yes, I'm constantly amazed at the stupid decisions characters are making, but I'm hooked nonetheless!

Paula Phillips says

All Lila Fowler has ever wanted was to be the centre of attention and deep down she has realised that she actually loves Ken Matthews. After Ken left her for Ashley Morgan- one of the other contestants on the hit TV Show "True Housewives of Sweet Valley". Lila comes up with the perfect plan to

win Ken back , she will fake a pregnancy. All goes as accordingly to plan until Gossip queen Caroline Pearce gets ahold of the truth and it backfires. What will happen though when Lila realises that during the whole time she was faking her pregnancy , she is actually pregnant ? What will Ken's reaction be - Will he think it's a case of the Lila who cried Baby ? It seems that ex-reporter Sarah has her claws into Todd and what will happen when rumours of Jessica and Todd's divorce get out ? Is this the in that Sarah has been waiting for ? Book #4 reminds me of the original stories of lies, secrets, seductions. This one will definitely have readers gasping for air as they dig deeper into the lives of the Sweet Valley characters.

Rouselle says

In the eleven short chapters of this fourth book, two drama queens have managed to get their husbands divorce them, and two guys have managed to get off their pants and screw the nearest available woman faster than you could say 'rebound sex'. Oh, it just gets trashier and trashier. So hooked already.

Cheryl says

Jessica wants Todd back. Only now Sarah has her arms around Todd. Elizabeth believes that Bruce's competitor Rick Wagner, owner of Wagner Gas is behind Bruce's demise. She just needs to prove it. Then there is Lila. Her secret of her fake pregnancy is revealed. Now she has no chance of winning back her husband and she looks like the fool.

I don't like Sarah. I find her annoying and don't know what Todd sees in her. Elizabeth needs to wake up and realize that Robin is not who she says she is. Elizabeth is a big push over. I can not believe that she would have Robin's back over Bruce's. I wish she and Bruce would work things out. Jessica she needs to drop Liam. He is also annoying and needy. I am glad though to see Jessica trying to grow up and be a single mother. If Todd thinks that he is being nice helping Sarah out by letting her stay with him, he is dumber than I thought he was. Part of the realize that Todd is letting Sarah stay is because she is hot. That and Todd knows that Jessica hates Sarah. Him and Jessica need to work things out for their son's sake. Lila is finally learning what happens when you call wolf one too many times. I am addicted to this series.

Beth says

More like a 2 1/2 star rating. Don't know why I keep reading, but now I have to finish all 6. I also don't know why there had to be 6. Could have been all 1 book. Maybe it's to get people to keep reading. Too much like a soap opera and a little trashy, but I read these when I was younger so I had to get them!

Elizabeth says

I guess I can't make fun of all the Fifty Shades fans when I'm reading about Todd Wilkins and his "gutteral shouts."

Seriously, though, anyone who grew up reading SVK, SVT, SVH, and SVU needs to read these.

Melinda Elizabeth says

Secrets and Seductions is the '50 shades of Sweet Valley' instalment in the 6 part e-series. You can pretty much skip this book altogether as it's prime goal is to provide a bit of heat to the series. Easy Annie is up to no good and certainly lives up to her name, Todd is making some pretty poor life choices with a Jessica replacement, and Jessica herself is stringing along a couple of eligible men in order to boost her confidence. I'm still rooting for Liam to get all psycho but so far he's just brooding and smouldering.

For fans of Pascall's romantic descriptions you won't be disappointed. There's lots of 'wet mouths' through this book and I'd hate to count how many times someone's mouth was described as 'wet' as a term of passionate want.

Nicole says

Welcome to volume four of Francine Pascal's Sweet Life e-serial, *Secrets and Seductions, or: Revenge Sex is the Solution to Every Problem Ever*.

Angry Todd and Jessica have a big misunderstanding. Jessica decides to pursue someone else (presumably she has sex with him by the next installment) to really show herself--and Angry Todd--that she doesn't need AT in her life to be happy. Angry Todd is heartbroken by the big misunderstanding and mourns for all of two seconds before being all, "Well, I am a man, right? And I haven't had sex for, like, *months*, right? I'm pretty sure my junk will fall off if I wait too much longer." (Which makes absolutely zero sense when you think about how he went through decades of middle school, high school, and college without ever having sex. A few months of abstinence should be a bloody cakewalk compared to that.) So he makes the beast with two backs with (view spoiler) Is being 30 really this much like high school? Because if it is, I'm not sure I want to be 30.

Also? I'm really not convinced he and Jessica really love each other. The pairing hasn't made sense since SVC. And how much can you really love someone if you're willing to jump in bed with the first person who wants you? Plus, Angry Todd describes it as "making love" rather than having sex, because she's been *such* a good friend by listening to him whinge about Jessica for months that they have this powerful emotional connection. Gag.

Bruce and Elizabeth are still on the outs and his life is still falling apart, so he runs away to France (clearly a great move when you're in the throes of proving your innocence in a maybe-rape case). Annie follows him and convinces him to channel the Badass Bruce of Yore. And then he's like, "Hey, I *was* pretty awesome in high school! And I think the best way to get my mojo back and prove to myself that I'm still a Man with a

Capital M is to have sex, *right now!*" So he (view spoiler) We are left hanging with this particular plotline (which also happens to be possibly the sexiest sex scene in the history of Sweet Valley--not that that's saying much since there have only been about four of them, but whatever).

Lila predictably screwed herself over and now she's paying the price. There's really nothing good that can come of (view spoiler), and since this is the Sweet Valleyverse of course it turns out that after (view spoiler) Refreshingly, though, Lila does *not* have sex to solve the problem--at least not in this installment.

Elizabeth still thinks she's a hardcore investigative journalist, so she gets Aaron involved in her scheme to prove Bruce's innocence. (Speaking of Aaron, the Steven/Aaron pairing still makes no damn sense. I will never not be fixated on the fact that Aaron was described in SVC as never liking Jessica, when they *dated* in Sweet Valley Twins. And now, even though neither he nor Steven ever seemed stereotypically fluttery and fashion-conscious, they live in some house with all designer everything and Aaron can recognize a Missoni scarf at 100 paces. WHERE IS THE CONTINUITY???)

This installment was pretty lackluster. I actually facepalmed at all the revenge sex. I just don't understand why sex is the solution to everything in Sweet Valley these days. Maybe it's because none of them seemed to realize they had genitals for twenty years of high school and now they're excited about using them? Anyway, on to the next one!

Virginia Mae says

Seriously, WTF? This series is simultaneously the best and worst read of the summer, in the greatest possible way.

Now everyone's sleeping with the wrong person, although Todd and that skank Sarah kind of deserve each other. And I'm starting to really like Annie Whitman. Elizabeth was such an idiot, she deserves to lose Bruce.

I'm anticipating that Liam is going to turn into a crazed stalker to Jessica. And by "anticipating," I mean "really, really hoping."

Selina says

This was one of the better ones in this short series so far. I feel a bit squicked out by the Sweet Valley sex scenes, but they aren't too detailed, so I can manage. Also- Elizabeth is an idiot. I'm interested in the Lila storyline the most right now. Some things do seem too off the cuff- Aaron and Steven out in NY without any warning or fanfare?? Weird and out of character.

Victoria says

Following up the drama of last week's Too Many Doubts: A Sweet Valley Confidential E-Serial, this fourth installment deepens the drama-factor for nearly all of the main characters. This "Sweet Life" certainly isn't so sweet for those who have been affected by yet more of Caroline Pearce's vicious gossip - she really is the continued villain of Sweet Valley, and it would be nice to finally see her what ought to be coming to her!!

Her awfulness really has made her the Scourge of Sweet Valley as she continues to push couples farther and farther apart. Todd's white knight status diminishes more here, and "Easy Annie" may just be making a return!! And Lila's schemes take a rather predictable turn for the worse... all in all there is more than enough drama to go around and I can't wait for next week's installment!!

Samantha March says

I just finished the fourth installment in The Sweet Life eSeries from Francine Pascal, Secrets and Seductions. A new development is happening with Bruce's accuser, and Elizabeth is starting to doubt her creditability. She feels terrible that she was so quick to write Bruce off, and now she can't even talk to him because he has fled from the States. Jessica is crushed when she finds out from TV that Todd has filed for a divorce. She had high hopes they would somehow reconcile, but she is forced to see that just won't be happening. And Lila, who had been faking a pregnancy for the TV cameras and her Real Housewives show loses it all when someone goes to the press with her secret. But irony is about to get the best of her...

This installment was pretty short, and I liked that it just focused more on the major characters and what they were dealing with. I'm very curious to see how Bruce's situation ends up. I can tell something is not right with the accuser, but I just can't quite piece it all together yet. And Lila's story! Oh boy, that is intriguing to read about. Will love to find out how it ends and if she is able to come out on top. Two more to go!
