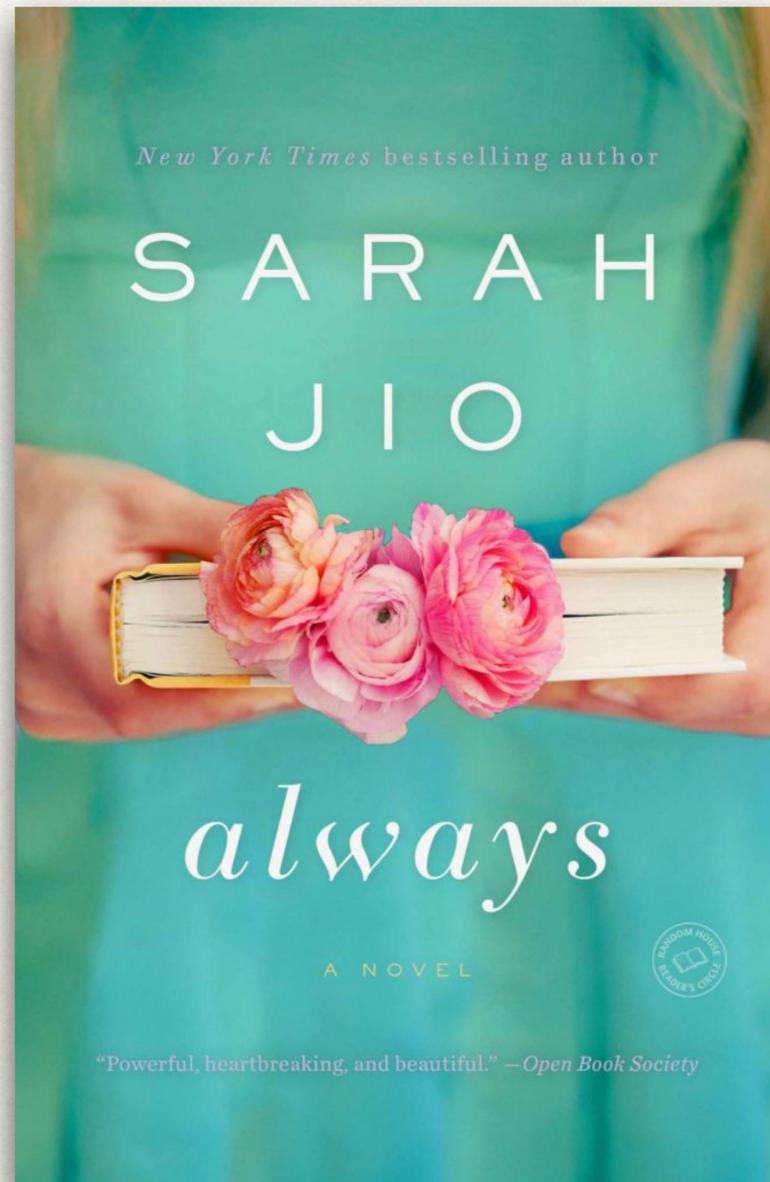


Закр́тый клуб

# Читаем вместе по-английски

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## 'Always' by Sarah Jio

Автор – Диана Семёнычева  
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# Lesson 31

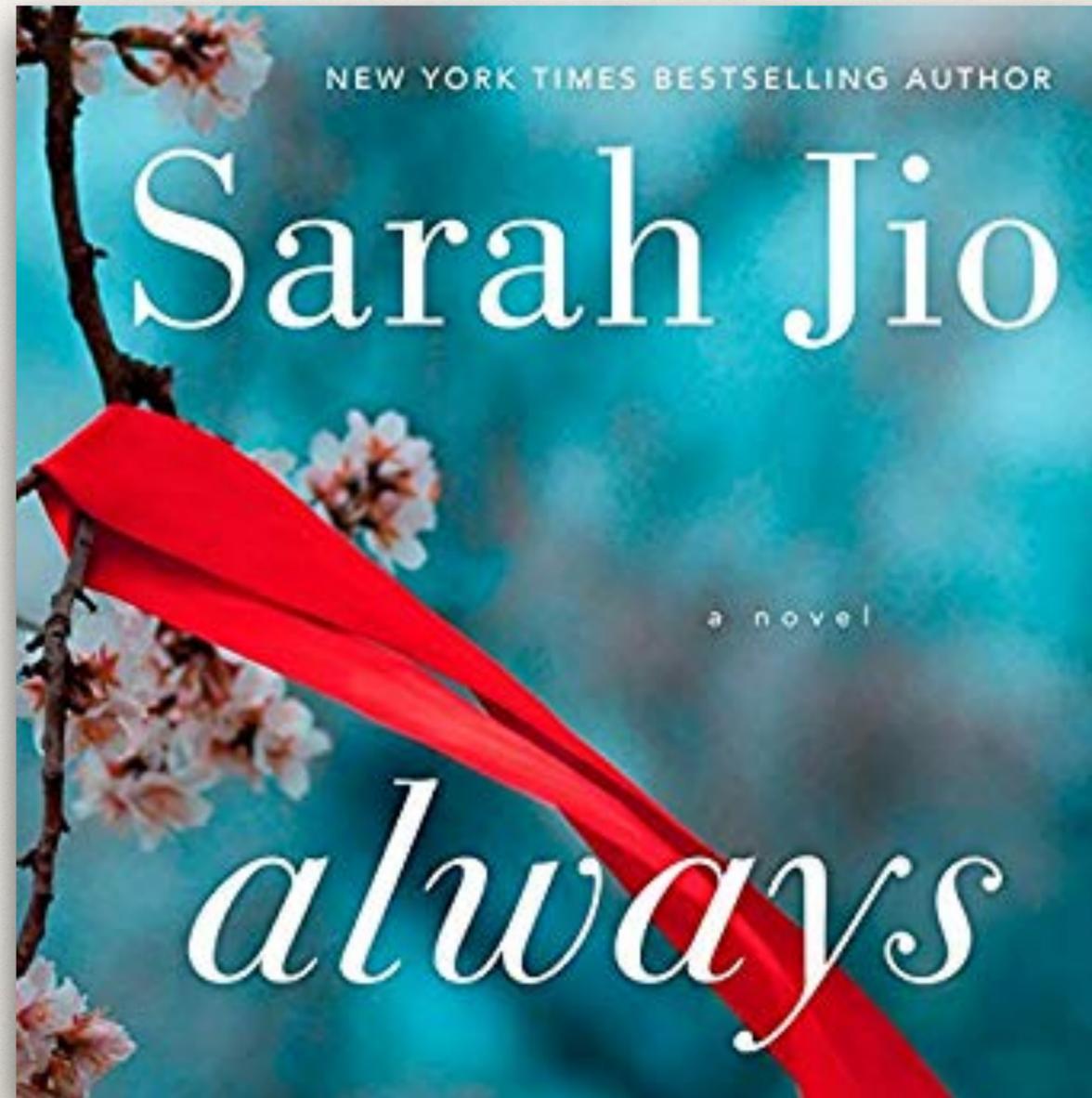
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Always

*Chapter 28, Part 2*

# Chapter 28

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# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Wow, I can’t believe he’s coming to the wedding,” Ryan says later that night at the kitchen table, **eyeing** his phone.
- “Who?” I ask, looking up from my plate of **overcooked** lasagna Ryan’s mother made and left in the freezer. I **neglected** to **preheat the oven**, and the top **got scorched**.
- “Josh Graham,” he says. “An old friend from Yale. He just emailed me.”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “You’ve never mentioned him before,” I reply, **scrunching my nose.**
- “Josh is a **fraternity friend,**” he says. “He’s living in New York now with a wife and two kids. He **runs** a **hedge fund** and **is doing really well** for himself.”
- I imagine the email from Josh Graham saying he’ll **be coming with a date,** and I **look away indifferently.**

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Is something wrong, honey?” Ryan asks.
- I sigh again. “I don’t know,” I say, tugging at my sweater, which suddenly feels **itchy** around the **neckline**. “I guess I’m **wondering if we should have kept the guest list to only close friends and family.**”
- “But when we discussed it, you **didn’t bring up** any **apprehensions** about the size of the wedding. And Josh is a close friend.”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "A close friend? I **have never heard of** him, and **it sounds like you haven't seen him since college.**"
- "Yes," he says a little **defensively**, "but we email and talk on the phone **now and then**. Besides, he's a great business contact." He **turns back to his laptop**, looking a bit **wounded**.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Business contact?” I say. The words **shoot out** with a little more **oomph** than I planned. “So our wedding **has become a networking event?**”
- “Kailey, you’re **overreacting.**”
- I sigh. “Didn’t you say that **a bunch of** your dad’s colleagues are coming, too?”
- “The Hartmans, yes,” Ryan says. “But I’ve known them **since I was a baby.**”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “All right, fine,” I continue. “But your father said he wanted to reserve a table for his **employees**. Ryan, really? His employees?” I feel **anxiety welling up** in the pit of my stomach and rising to my chest.
- He sighs. “What do you expect, Kailey? My parents **are paying for** the wedding.” He gets up and walks to the kitchen, opens the fridge, and **grabs** a beer.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "I know," I say. "I'm sorry. I **didn't mean to upset** you."
- My phone rings before Ryan can **venture a response**, and I'm **relieved to have an excuse to stop talking** about the wedding. Since the engagement party, every interaction **has felt strained**, every conversation stressful.
- I recognize the number on my phone: Harborview. Dr. Branson, perhaps? I **pick up**. "Hello?"

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "Hi, it's Cade."
- "Hi," I say, turning to Ryan, who's typing something on his laptop.
- "I'm sorry if I'm bothering you," he says.
- I walk to the living room. "It's okay. **What's going on?**"
- "I, I..."
- "Cade, **what is it?**"

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- Ryan looks up from his laptop, and his eyes meet mine for a brief second before he **turns away**.
- "I just...miss you, I guess," he says.
- The words **pierce** my heart. I remember the first time he told me he missed me. A month after we started **dating**, he called me one evening and those three words **slipped out of his mouth** and **slayed** me, right there on my couch on a Thursday night.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- And there is his voice on the phone again. The world **has shifted**, and yet his words hit me as hard as they did so many years ago. And maybe even harder.
- "Do you need me to **come over?**" I say, **aware** that Ryan is listening.
- "If you can," he says. "If it's not too much trouble."

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Of course it’s not,” I say, **glancing at** the clock: seven-thirty. “I can **be over** by eight.”
- “That was Cade,” I say to Ryan. “He’s...**struggling** tonight. I’m **going to go over and check on him.**”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- Ryan **grunts** a reply but doesn't look up from his laptop.
- **"I won't be long,"** I say. **"Just there and back."**
- I grab my keys and purse. Ryan doesn't say goodbye.
- —

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- Seattle is **glorious** tonight. The **skyline sparkles** over Lake Union as I drive down I-5, and I **am struck by** how much I love this city, all of its **angles**, all of its character. I've **been drawn to it** from the moment Tracy and I **rolled in** with all of our **earthly possessions** in the back of her car.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- I **fell for** its **rain-soaked** streets, the **briny** smell of the sea, the sound of **ferry horns** on Elliott Bay, the music **spilling out of** restaurants and bars, a new talent, a new **yet-to-be-discovered** sound around every corner.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- But so much of my love for Seattle **is wrapped up in** Cade. Every song. Every neighborhood. Every **hole-in-the-wall café**. We left our **mark** on the city together, and without those memories Seattle might as well be Chicago or Los Angeles or New York or any metropolis on the face of the planet. Cade is Seattle. And Seattle is Cade.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Hi,” I say to the security guard at the reception desk at Cade’s building when I arrive. I **strain to remember** his name. My head is **foggy** tonight. Chris, I think. Yes, that’s right.
- “He’ll be glad to see you,” Chris says. “He’s had a hard night.”
- “What happened?”
- He leans closer to me. “Someone **scared the living hell out of** him.”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “What do you mean, someone scared him?”
- “He **went out for a walk,**” Chris explains, “**about four** o’clock, and came back an hour later really **shaken up.**”
- “Is it okay for him to **be out on his own?**”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Dr. Branson said it was okay for him to **leave for walks,**” he says, pointing to the **clipboard sign-out sheet.** “See, she signed him out right here.”
- I nod. “What do you mean, he was ‘shaken up’?”
- “He said someone **was chasing** him, that someone wanted to hurt him.”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Do you think it was real or post-traumatic stress, as Dr. Branson described?”
- Chris shrugs. **“Beats me,** but the guy seemed really frightened. He **kept looking over his shoulders** thinking someone **was coming for** him.”
- “That’s terrible,” I say. **“No wonder he didn’t want to be alone.”**

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Nice of you to come,” Chris says as I head to the elevator. “Let me know if you need anything.”
- The elevator **deposits** me on the third floor, and when I knock on Cade’s door he opens it **immediately**.
- “Hi,” I say, **giving him a hug**.
- “Hi,” he says, **pulling me tight**. I’m aware of his hands around my waist.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "I'm sorry," he says.
- "Don't be," I reply. "I'm glad you called. Now tell me what happened. Someone was chasing you?"
- "How do you know?"
- "Chris told me."
- He **gives me a blank stare.**

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "The security guard."
- "Oh yeah," he says. "Kailey, it's not safe **out there** for me."
- "Sit down," I say. "What do you mean?"
- "Someone **was following me**. I started walking faster, and he started walking faster. Then I began to run, and he began to run."

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "Are you sure the person was following you?"
- "Yeah," he says.
- **"Did you get a good look at** who it was?"
- "No," he says. "It was **too dark.**"

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “We have to protect you. Please, don’t leave the building unless you’re with someone. I don’t know **what’s going on**, or why these people want to hurt you, but, Cade, promise me you’ll stay here and **keep yourself safe** until we can **get to the bottom of this.**”
- He nods. “I’m glad you’re here. The world feels better when you’re with me.”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- Before I can respond, Cade's phone rings. **"I'll get it,"** I say.
- "Hello?"
- "Kailey?"
- "Yes?"
- "This is Chris at the front desk. There's a man here who says he needs to see you."

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "A man? Who?"
- "Says his name is Ryan."
- Why is Ryan here?
- "Ok," I say, "um, **I'll come down.**"
- "Actually," Chris says, "he's just stepped into the elevator. I tried to stop him, but he said he was your **fiancé.**"

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "Yes," I say. "He is. It's fine."
- "I'll just be a moment," I say to Cade, **heading out to** the hallway. Ryan **is stepping off** the elevator. His face looks **ashen.**
- "What are you doing here?" I ask.
- "Nice to see you, too," he says.
- "Ryan, what's this about?"

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- He throws up his arms. "What's this about? I think you know what this is about."
- "Shhh," I say. "Please, he'll hear you."
- "Kailey," he says, "**at this point, I don't care if he hears me.**"
- I look down at my feet.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- **"I'm done,"** Ryan says. "Done pretending that this little **charade** doesn't bother me, because it does. You're the woman I love, and I **have had to sit back** and watch you spend **every spare minute, expend every ounce of your emotional energy,** on this man, while all I get from you is the **scraps.** Kailey, I would be fine with the scraps if I knew you really loved me, if I was assured that you wanted to be with me **in the way** that I want to be with you."

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- He shakes his head. "But I'm not assured. In fact, I think that as long as Cade is in the world, I'll never have your heart."
- My eyes widen. "Ryan, you wouldn't."
- His eyes search mine. "Wouldn't what?"

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- It **has never crossed my mind**, this **ugly thought** that **hovers** now, but then I've **never seen** Ryan's eyes **flash** with anger **in this way**. I've **never seen such a passionate response** from him. That, and he came home from work late tonight. My heart begins to **thump** loudly in my chest. "Tell me you wouldn't hurt Cade."
- He shakes his head. "What are you talking about?"

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Someone was following Cade tonight. Someone wanted to hurt him.”
- He shakes his head again. “I can’t believe this. **Even now.** Even when I’m standing here, **pouring out my fears to** you, all you can do is worry about him? Or worse, **accuse me of trying to hurt** him?”
- I take a step toward him. “But I—”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “It’s okay,” he says, **forcing a smile**. “I know this is hard for you. And **at the end of the day**, I’ve only wanted to make life easier for you. I’ve only wanted you to be happy. And if you’re happy with Cade, then you should be with him.”
- “Ryan, please. I—”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Goodbye, Kailey. I love you. I always will. I’m sorry I...I’m sorry I’m not **the one.**” He **ducks into** the elevator before I can **beg him not to go.**
- **I fall to my knees and weep.**
- —

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- A few minutes pass before I **pick myself up**. I wipe away the tears on my cheeks before I return to Cade's door and **peer in**. "Cade?" The apartment is **empty**.
- "Cade!" I cry. I **notice a note**, written in his **handwriting**, on the coffee table. **It reads:**

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- My dearest Kailey,
- You saved me, and **the only way I can repay you** is by not **ruining your life. It's time I said goodbye.**
- I will always love you, **no matter** how close or how far.
- Cade

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “No!” I cry. “Cade, no.”
- He **must have slipped out** and used the stairs to leave while I was talking to Ryan. Did he hear everything? Is he upset?
- I don’t wait for the elevator. Instead I **bolt** to the **stairwell**. My feet **pound down** the **cement stairs, footsteps echoing off the walls**. When I reach the first floor, I race to the reception desk. “Did Cade leave?”

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- Chris nods. **"About** five minutes ago."
- I shake my head. "Why didn't you stop him?"
- "We have a **sign-in, sign-out system** here, but we can only advise patients. **At the end of the day,** they have **free will.**"
- I nod, **solemnly.** "Did he say where he was going?"
- "He didn't, just left **heading that way.**" He points right, toward the city, and my **heart sinks.**

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- —
- It's after ten before I drive home. I looked everywhere I could possibly think of for Cade, but this time, it seems, he is gone. Ryan too. His car isn't parked in front of the house, and when I step inside, there's a **permanence** to the air of **loneliness** I feel, **as if an era** has ended, **just like that**, without my even knowing it or asking for it. Just gone.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- I walk to the kitchen and somehow know I won't find Ryan at the **breakfast table** in the morning. I can't even remember the last omelet I made him. Sunday? The Tuesday **before last**? Was it **spinach** and **leek** or mushroom? I think about all of our lasts. Our last kiss. The last time he danced with me in the living room, **made love to me** on a Saturday morning with birds chirping out the bedroom window.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- The last time we **held hands** or laughed together. I want to memorize the details, and **mourn** them.
- And **yet I still wonder if** he could have been part of the reason Cade left tonight. Did Ryan frighten him? Could he have hurt him? Impossible. Or not? The world feels cruel and sad and confusing, as if everything I love **has been reduced to** a small pile of sand and I must **try my best to hold it** in my hands, **wincing** at every **grain** that slips between my fingers.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- **I'm startled by** the sound of a knock at the door, and even more startled when I open it to find James standing on my doorstep. It's begun to rain, well, pour, and James's hair is wet. His **bangs are plastered to** his forehead. He looks **disheveled,** anxious.
- "I'm sorry to bother you at home," he says. "You mentioned you lived in Wallingford, and, **anyway,** it wasn't hard to find your address online."

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- **"I don't know what to say."**
- "Kailey, we need to talk," he says, his eyes sad and **pleading**.
- At first I want to **send him away**. I don't trust him, and I'm not sure if there's much more to say. But something in his eyes tells me to **invite him in**, so I do.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “Sit down,” I say, pointing to the couch. He does so in one **exhausted heap**, as if there are weights **strapped to** his shoulders. **Dark circles hover** under his eyes, and for the first time the **once ageless** James looks tired and **weathered**, like Old Man Time **has finally caught up to him**. He **buries his head in his hands**. “I don’t know where to begin,” he **mutters**.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- My heart beats faster. I'm not sure what he will tell me, but I know it is going to be a long and **painful** story. "Just tell me what you need to tell me, James. Please."
- He looks up and nods. "Cade and I always had a **complicated** relationship," he says. "You know that."
- "I do."

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- He takes a deep breath. "Element Records was our baby. We both were so proud of it, and we both **brought different strengths** to the company." He looks up at the **ceiling** nostalgically as I reach for a **tumbler** and pour him a glass of Scotch. He takes it. "Cade had a gift, you know. This special ability to recognize talent. I always told him it was like a **sixth sense**."

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- He could walk into a room and **smell** the next Nirvana. For a long time, **it seemed like anything he touched turned to gold**, and I **naïvely** thought that would continue forever. But that was **foolish thinking**. There's a cycle to everything. **Ups and downs**. And Cade **fell into a downturn**. At first it was just a band **here and there**. He'd **sign** a group and offer them an enormous **advance**, and they'd sell ten thousand albums **instead of** the one hundred thousand we **planned on**.

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- We'd **spend fifty grand** on marketing an artist only to have her **fizzle out with** a **mere** two thousand records." He nods. "This **kept happening**. But Cade **kept wanting to invest more and more**. There was **no end to his efforts**, no **stopgap**. He **kept promising** that we were so close to the next **big thing**, that I should trust him and **stop worrying so much**."

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "But you **stopped trusting** him."
- "I did, **in a lot of ways,**" James continues. "He **seemed to have lost his edge,** but not only that, he was drinking more. The **booze,** the pills. He **was spinning out,** Kailey."
- "I know," I say. "I was there. But was it as bad as you **make it out to be?**"

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "It was and it wasn't," he says. "I **have to tell you** something that I've **carried with me for far too long.**"
- "What is it?"
- He rubs his forehead. "I **could have helped** him. I was his best friend. But I **let my personal fears get in the way.**"
- "Fears?"

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- "Alexis," he says. "She **was in love with** him."
- "What?"
- He nods. "You didn't know. No one did. But I knew. I felt it every time she was with me. She only wanted Cade. Everyone always wanted Cade. **After a while, it took a toll on** me. I always **felt second-best.**" He sighs. "So when Cade started to **spiral**, I thought it was my moment to shine. I thought that **by his failure, I would rise.**"

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- That Alexis, everyone, would see that I was **worthy.**" He looks down at his lap. "I was a fool."
- "Wow," I say, **recalling the way Alexis had looked at** Cade. I'd mistaken love for **admiration. Had he returned her feelings? I shudder.** "I don't know what to say."

# Always

## Chapter 28

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- “You and I both know that Cade **was troubled** in those days,” James continues. “The drinking. The **erratic behavior**. Would he **have snapped out of it?** Maybe. I don’t know.” He sighs. “But I **had to do** something. So I started taking the company in a new direction, signing pop artists, changing our focus a bit.

# Always

## Chapter 28

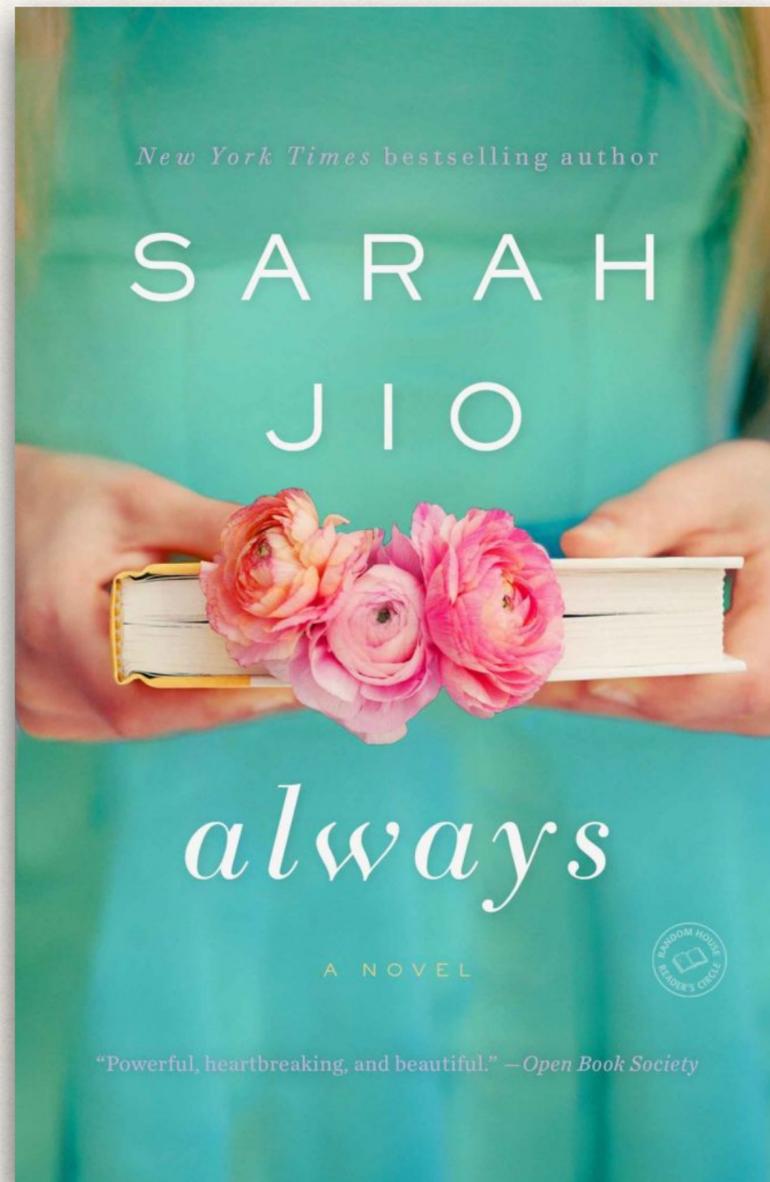
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- When we **forced him out**, I didn't think it would ruin him. I thought he'd **take some time to regroup**, maybe even start his own **offshoot label**. Instead it was **disastrous**. If you think for a moment that I haven't lived with guilt all these years, you are mistaken."

Закр́тый клуб

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