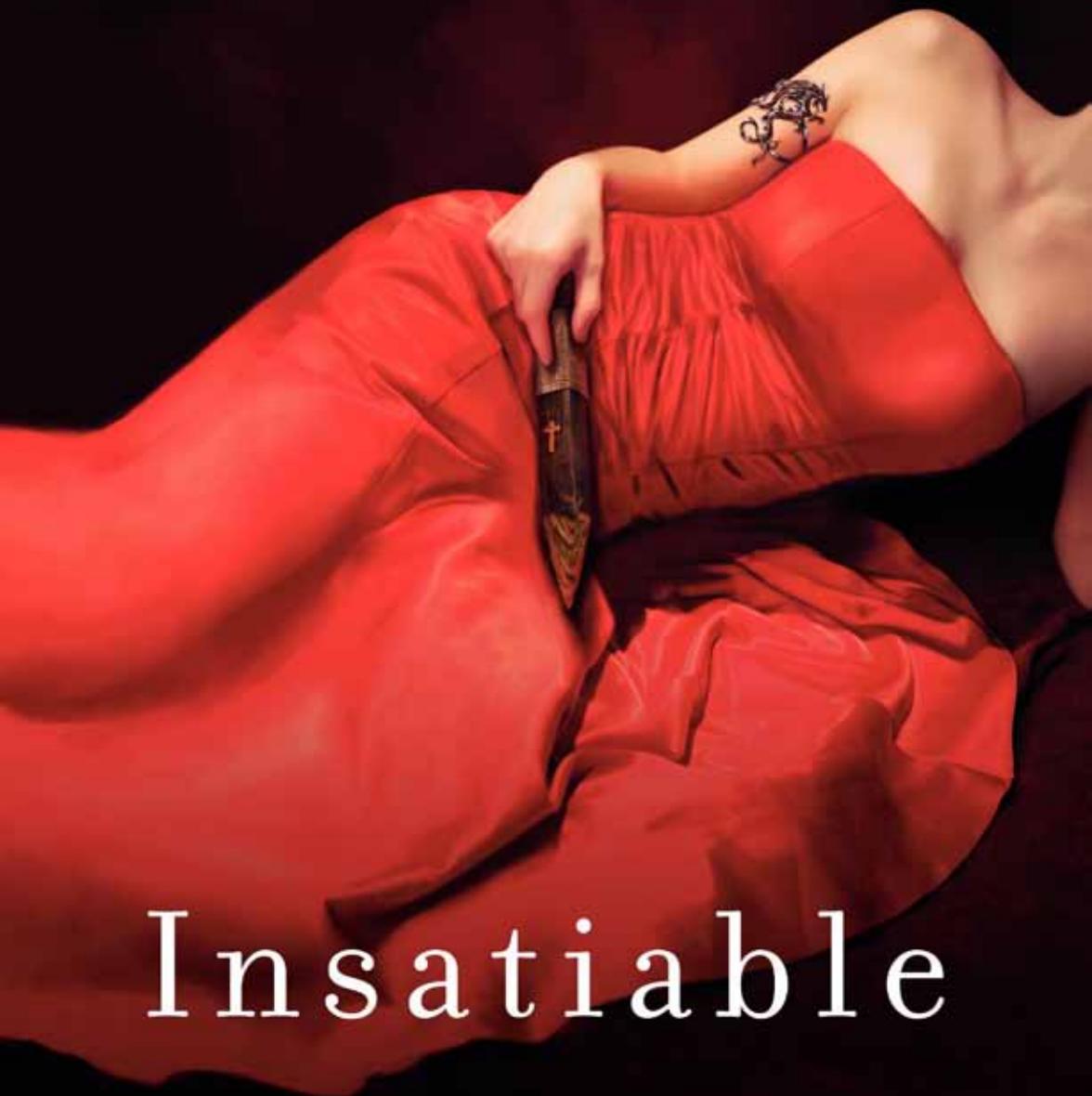


MEG CABOT

#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING AUTHOR



Insatiable

DELETED SCENE: MEENA



ONE

In its early drafts, *Insatiable* was told in first person from Meena's POV. And it was one giant flashback starting with the scene where Alaric first appears at Meena's door. The flashback, about Meena's terror-filled prom night with a doomed ex named Peter Delmonico, was over 100 pages long. I realized first person wasn't working, nor was the flashback, so I trashed it. Peter is now relegated to a mere mention late in the book when Lucien discovers Meena's ability. Maybe someday I'll post Meena's prom night with Peter, but for now, there's this:

"Cassandra, daughter of the Trojan king Priam, was given the gift of prophecy. And because she did not return a god's love, this gift was turned by that god into a curse, so that Cassandra's prophecies, though true, would never be believed.

"I have never rebuffed the love of a god (that I know of).

"And yet no one ever believes me when I tell them my prophecies, either....

"And so they die."

—Meena Harper

I know things.

I can't tell you how I know them.

I just do.

Like I knew that the tall, impossibly good-looking man standing in my living room was there to kill me.

Just my luck, right? I finally get a hot guy in my apartment, and what is he there to do?

Off me, not boff me.

You wouldn't think he was a killer to look at him. He was dressed nicely enough, in dark, form-fitting blue jeans, a cashmere sweater, and a long, black trench...Hugo Boss, I was pretty sure. The scarf around his neck looked as if it were made from cashmere, too—at least from where I was standing—and brought out the blue in his eyes....

...the kind of bright blue eyes that wouldn't have been out of place on some hunky heartthrob making his way down a red carpet, or paddling a surf board off a sandy white Australian beach.

They hardly looked like the eyes of a killer.

Except that I'd known that's what he was from the moment I'd opened the door and he'd brought the big bouquet of red roses down from in front of his face (why had I fallen for that old trick? That bouquet-in-front-of-the-peephole trick? I deserve to get killed, just for being stupid enough to fall for that trick).

I hadn't thought, "Oh, look at the good-looking guy who's stopped by my place to bring me flowers."

No. I'd known the second I'd seen him: He was a killer.

And he'd come to kill *me*.

Unfortunately, that had only been after he'd dropped the bouquet.

And then stepped into my apartment, where he'd thrown back the trench coat, revealing the sword hilt at his side.

I like to think of myself as a twenty-first century sort of girl. I've got a Blackberry (which I barely know how to work) and a MacAir in addition to the desktop I've got in my office. I've got iPods in two sizes—one for the rare occasions when I exercise (which I swear I'm going to start doing more now. Of course, now that I'm about to die), and one for home use. I stay in touch through Facebook with friends from high school and college that I don't care enough to call because, let's face it, they're kind of boring. I know how to record the reality TV shows I like using my DVR, and I can text like a champ...even while driving, though since I don't own a car and live in New York City, the latter happens rarely.

But I could do it if I needed to!

And yet, somehow, I missed the whole sword craze.

And now I was about to be run through with one.

It's funny how these things happen, isn't it?

And I had nothing with which to defend myself. I wasn't wearing anything

but my bra and the black silk slip I'd stripped down to a few minutes earlier in my eagerness to get out of my work clothes. You would have thought, upon realizing I was about to meet my un-maker, I'd have grabbed a robe for decency's sake (no girl wants to be found by the coroner in her underwear), or at least something I could use as a weapon...a can of hairspray and a lighter, to use as an impromptu flamethrower, or even a shoe, to throw at the guy.

As usual, however, I'd instinctively grabbed my BlackBerry, which in any scenario was pretty much useless in my hands. But in this one was just pitiful, unless I wanted to call some cops to come over and be killed along with me.

But what else was I going to do? Just stand there and be decapitated? In my apartment in the middle of the Upper East Side, so I can end up being next month's "ripped-from-the-headline's" murder on *Law and Order SVU*?

Um, no, thank you.

He was looking around with mild curiosity at my Ikea-brand furniture. Hey, I work for television. You think I get paid the big bucks? Think again, buddy.

Meanwhile, the fingers of his right hand rested on the you-know-what. Yeah. It seemed unbelievable, but given everything else that had gone on this past week, I shouldn't have been surprised. It was an honest-to-God sword hilt. A freaking *sword* hilt.

I held my breath as that blue-eyed gaze drifted toward me.

"I am not here for you, Meena," he startled me by saying in a voice so deep, it seemed to reverberate through my chest. "Just tell me where he is, and I'll let you live."

I jumped.

Okay. So he knew my name. Of course. It had been on the flowers, which is why Kevin, my doorman, had let him come up.

A guy with a sword hidden in the folds of his trench. And Kevin let him up. Thanks a lot, Kevin. No Christmas tip for you.

He had some kind of accent. European, though I couldn't place which country, exactly.

But how could he know my name? I had no idea who he was. I'd never seen him before in my life. I think I'd recognize a murderer if I saw him.

And yet...I felt as if somehow I'd known him forever.

Maybe that's how everyone feels when they meet their killer.

Or maybe that's just me. I've always been...well, quirky that way.

He was casually flicking back the trench coat. Now he unsheathed the sword. The blade made a ringing sound in the stillness of the apartment, clear as a bell, as it came clear of its scabbard.

Scabbard. I was actually about to be killed by someone who owned a *scabbard*.

It's amazing what you think right before you die. All I could think, for instance, was, *Wow. No foreplay for this guy.*

And, *This is so unfair.*

Because the thing was, I had never done anything to deserve this fate. I'd led a decent enough life. I'd never cheated on my taxes. I'd given tons of money that I

really could have used on clothes—and better furniture—to charity. I'd never stolen anyone's boyfriend. Right now, I didn't even have a boyfriend! Well, unless Lucien counted. And I really wasn't sure right now whether or not he did.

It wasn't fair that I had to go like this. It really wasn't.

And I knew just by looking at that chiseled profile that there wasn't the slightest flicker of hope.

But it's incredible what we'll do to try to survive.

I pried my lips apart. Forced my tongue to moisten them.

"I know you're lying," I said. "You're here to kill me."

My voice was shaking. I sounded weak even to my own ears, like when I tried to convince the Indian food delivery guy that he hadn't given me extra tamarind sauce with my order (even when he hadn't).

I could tell by his expression that's how it must have sounded to him also.

Only it turned out I was wrong. He wasn't disgusted by my weakness, simply offended at the accusation.

"I never lie," he said. "Just tell me where he is, and you will not be harmed."

As close as I was to death, I couldn't help laughing at that one. Maybe knowing you're about to die makes you reckless or something.

"Oh, right," I said. "So you can kill us both? I don't think so."

He looked annoyed. Way to go, Meen. Antagonize your killer. That's smart.

He glanced up for a moment from his examination of his shining blade and said, his dark eyebrows raised a little sarcastically, "I already told you, Meena. I have no interest in killing you. But if you are going to be difficult—"

Difficult. He had no idea how *difficult* I could be. Especially since I already knew I was as good as dead. I had nothing to lose.

Which was why I chose that moment to hurl my Blackberry at him with all my might.

Hey. It was all I had. That, and my life.

Then I turned around, and made a run for it.