



Sweet Spot (Bakery Sisters Book 2)

By Susan Mallery

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Enter Hawk. The deliciously sexy former NFL player offers Nicole a taste of the freedom she craves. Hawk may know the way, blindfolded, to her sweet spot, but Nicole's not about to let him get close enough to break her heart. Of course, she might not have a choice in the matter if Hawk's past keeps getting in the way of their present....

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Sweet Spot (Bakery Sisters Book 2) By Susan Mallery Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #24332 in eBooks
- Published on: 2012-06-15
- Released on: 2012-06-15
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

In the second book of the Bakery Sisters trilogy (*Sweet Talk*, 2008), Nicole Keyes, tired of being the “Responsible One,” wants a life of her own. She has weathered some low points, most notably finding her younger sister in a compromising position with her husband, having major surgery, and dealing with the reappearance of her estranged twin. But now life has a new twist for Nicole. When Raoul, a teenager in the foster-child program, steals some donuts from her bakery, she wants to call the cops. Instead of answering her complaint, the police call Raoul’s coach, Eric “Hawk” Hawkins, who convinces a reluctant Nicole to let the youth work off his theft. Mallery explores the many facets of family relationships, and Nicole’s complex nonfamily involvements, in this heartwarming novel about how a woman at odds with the world learns to live with it, and sometimes even love in it. --Shelley Mosley

About the Author

New York Times bestselling author Susan Mallery has entertained millions of readers with her witty and emotional stories about women. Publishers Weekly calls Susan’s prose “luscious and provocative,” and Booklist says “Novels don’t get much better than Mallery’s expert blend of emotional nuance, humor and superb storytelling.” Susan lives in Seattle with her husband and her tiny but intrepid toy poodle. Visit her at www.SusanMallery.com.

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Nicole Keyes had always believed that when life gives you lemons, stick them in a bowl on the counter, then go get a Danish and a coffee to get you through to better times. Which explained why the time cards were sticky and she had a very effective caffeine buzz going on.

She eyed the display case, where a cherry-cheese Danish softly whispered her name over and over again, then glanced down at the brace on her knee and cane by her side. She was still healing from her recent surgery, which meant not a whole lot of physical activity. If she didn't want to risk making her jeans even tighter, she was going to have pass on that second Danish.

"Better to be tempted by a pastry than a man," she reminded herself. Baked goods could make a woman fat, but a man could rip out her heart and leave her broken and bleeding. While the cure for the former—diet and exercise—wasn't pleasant, it was something she could handle. But a cure for the latter was iffy at best. Distance, distractions, great sex. At present, she didn't have any of those in her life.

The front door to the bakery opened, causing the bell above it to tinkle. Nicole barely glanced up as a high school kid walked to the case and asked for five dozen doughnuts. She licked her fingers, wiped them on a paper napkin, then began initialing the time cards so they could be dropped off at her accountant's that afternoon.

Maggie, working behind the display case, put three big boxes on the counter, then started to ring up the order. Just then, the phone rang. Maggie turned to get it.

Nicole couldn't say what it was that made her look up at that moment. A sixth sense? Luck? The way the teenager's fidgeting caught her attention?

She saw the kid stick a cell phone back into his shorts' front pocket, grab the boxes of doughnuts and head for the door. Without paying.

Nicole accepted that she was, by nature, a crabby person. She rarely saw the bright side of any situation and she was known to overreact from time to time. But nothing, absolutely nothing, pissed her off more than someone playing her for a fool. She'd had a lot of that in her life lately, and there was no way this kid was going to add himself to the list.

Without really planning her actions, she stuck out her cane, tripped him, then shoved the cane in the center of his back.

"I don't think so," she told him. "Maggie, call the cops."

She half expected the kid to jump up and run away. She couldn't have stopped him, but he didn't move. Ten minutes later the door opened again, but instead of one of Seattle's finest walking in, she looked up and saw someone who could easily pass for an underwear model/action hero.

The guy was tall, tanned and serious about working out. She could tell about the working-out bit because he wore red shorts and a gray T-shirt from Pacific High School ripped off just above his waistband. Muscles she hadn't even known existed on the human body twisted and bunched as he moved.

Reflective sunglasses covered his eyes. He looked down at the kid still held in place with her cane, the doughnuts scattered across the floor, then whipped off the glasses and smiled at her.

She'd seen that smile before.

Oh, not from him specifically. It was the one Pierce Brosnan, playing James Bond, used to get information from slightly-out-of-breath secretaries. It was the one her ex-husband had used, more than once, to get out of trouble. Nicole couldn't be more immune if she'd invented the vaccine herself.

"Hi," the guy said. "I'm Eric Hawkins. You can call me Hawk."

"How delightful for me. I'm Nicole Keyes. You can call me Ms. Keyes. Are you with the police?" She looked him over, trying not to be impressed by so much male perfection in such a tiny space. "Is your uniform at the dry cleaner's?"

His smile widened. "I'm the football coach at Pacific High School. One of my buddies at the station took the call and phoned me."

People thought of Seattle as a big city, but it was made up of a lot of small neighborhoods. Mostly Nicole liked that about her hometown. Just not today.

Disgusted, Nicole looked at the woman behind the counter. "Maggie, would you call the police again?"

"Maggie, hold that thought," Hawk said. He nudged Nicole's cane aside so the kid could scramble to his feet. "Raoul, are you okay?"

Nicole rolled her eyes. "Oh, please. What could possibly have happened to him?"

"He's my star quarterback. I'm not taking any chances. Raoul?"

The kid shuffled and ducked his head. "I'm good, Coach."

Hawk took the kid aside and had a whispered conversation with him. Nicole watched warily.

Washington State might not be Texas, but high school football was still a big deal here. Being the winning quarterback of a high school team was nearly as good as being Paris Hilton. Hawk probably expected her to succumb to his questionable charm and let the kid off with nothing more than a shrug over the misunderstanding. Which was *so* not happening.

"Look," she said, her voice as stern as she could make it. "He stole five dozen doughnuts. In your world, that might be perfectly fine, but it's not okay to me. I'm calling the police."

"It's not his fault," Hawk told her. "It's mine."

She was sorry she'd rolled her eyes before—it meant she couldn't do it now. "Because you told him to steal?"

"Raoul, wait for me in my truck," Hawk said.

"Raoul, don't even think about moving," Nicole snapped.

She watched as Hawk's good humor faded. He pulled up a chair next to hers, sat down and leaned toward her.

He was one of those guys who took up too much space, she thought, fighting the need to scoot back. Still, she held her ground, even though he was so close, she could see the various shades of brown, green and gold that made up his irises.

"You don't understand," he said, his voice low. His breath smelled minty. "Raoul is cocaptain. Every Friday the captain brings in doughnuts for the guys."

His hands were massive, she thought, distracted by their size. Big and strong looking.

She forced her attention back on the conversation. "Then he should have paid for them."

"He can't," Hawk told her, still speaking softly. "Raoul's a good kid. He lives in foster care. Normally he holds down a job, but during training, he can't. Our deal is I give him a few bucks for the doughnuts, but I forgot yesterday and he was too proud to ask. It's Friday. He had to provide doughnuts. He made a bad choice. Haven't you ever made a mistake, Nicole?"

He'd almost had her. The sad story of poor Raoul had actually touched her cynical heart. Then Hawk had dropped his voice to an intimate tone and drawn out her name in a way that really annoyed her.

"Don't play me," she snapped.

"I'm not—"

"And don't treat me like I'm stupid."

Hawk held up both hands. "I'm not—"

She cut him off with a glare.

She could just bet he was used to getting his way, especially with women. One flick of that killer smile and anyone with an X set of chromosomes melted like butter in the sun. Well, not her.

She stood, then grabbed her cane to support herself. "That kid is going down."

Hawk sprang to his feet. "Dammit, that's not fair."

She pointed to the doughnuts still scattered all over the floor. "Tell it to the judge."

Hawk moved toward her, but Raoul stepped between them. "Coach, it's okay. I was wrong. I knew it was wrong to steal and I did it anyway. You're always saying we have to learn to accept the consequences of our actions. This is one of them."

The kid turned to her, then dropped his gaze to the floor. "Not having the money isn't an excuse. I shouldn't have done it. I was afraid of being embarrassed in front of the team." He shrugged. "I'm sorry, Ms. Keyes."

Nicole hated that she wanted to believe him. There was something so defeated about Raoul's posture. She told herself he could be playing her, too, that the two of them made a real great team, but somehow she sensed the kid was telling the truth. He *had* been embarrassed and he *was* sorry.

She debated what to do. While stealing was wrong, she didn't want to punish Raoul just to get back at Mr. High and Mighty. The fact that his coach was a womanizer/possible former underwear model/jock wasn't Raoul's fault.

Knowing she was going to be hating herself come morning when the kid didn't show up, she said, "I'll make you a deal. You can work off what you stole. Be here at six tomorrow morning."

For the first time since she'd tripped him, Raoul looked at her. Something very much like hope brightened his dark eyes. "For real?"

"Yes. But if you don't show up, I'll hunt you down like a dog and make you regret the day you were born. Do we have a deal?"

Raoul grinned. She sighed. Give it a couple more years and he would be just as deadly as his coach. How fair was that?

"I'll be here," he promised. "I'll be early."

"I won't."

Hawk turned to her. "*Now* can he wait for me in the truck?"

"Sure." Although if it were up to her, Coach Hawkins could go, too. They had nothing to say to each other.

She looked at him then wanted to rub her eyes. Maybe it was just a trick of the light, but she would swear he'd just gotten better looking. Talk about annoying.

Hawk glanced over at the woman glaring at him. She reminded him of a stray cat his daughter had brought home years ago. All spit and attitude.

Nicole was sensible. He could tell from her exactly-to-the-knee skirt in dark denim, her plain T-shirt, the lack of makeup and the way she hadn't bothered to do more with her long blond hair than pull it back in a ponytail. She wasn't the kind of woman who impressed easily. Not that he was worried.

"Thanks," he said. "You didn't have to do that."

"You're right. I didn't. I also know I'm going to regret letting him off like that."

There was temper in her blue eyes. She looked like she wanted to hit someone. He thought about offering—it wasn't as if she could hurt him—but sensed she would think he was mocking her. Which he was...a little.

"You won't. He's a good kid. He has a lot of talent—he can go all the way."

"You see yourself in him, don't you?"

Hawk grinned. "Yeah."

"That is just so typical." She glanced at her watch. "Don't you have to be somewhere?"

"Practice. The guys are waiting." He pulled out his wallet. "How much do I owe you for the doughnuts?"

She frowned. "Weren't you listening? Raoul is going to pay them off with hard labor. At least that's my fantasy."

"Then I still need five dozen for the team."

Nicole looked at the women behind the counter. "Maggie, would you get the coach his doughnuts so he can get out of here."

Hawk bent down and picked up the doughnuts on the floor. "You're trying to get rid of me."

"You think?"

"But I'm the best part of your day."

"Maybe I'll get a splinter later and that can be my highlight."

He laughed. "You're not easy."

"That's the first smart thing you've said."

He put the crumpled boxes and doughnuts on one of the tables. "I'm plenty smart, Nicole."

"Keep telling yourself that and one day it might be true."

He stared at her, his gaze steady, until she began to squirm. "Why are you trying so hard not to like me?" he asked. "Do I intimidate you?"

"I... You... Just go away."

With that, she braced herself on her cane and moved toward the back of the bakery.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marvin Gamez:

This book untitled Sweet Spot (Bakery Sisters Book 2) to be one of several books this best seller in this year, here is because when you read this guide you can get a lot of benefit on it. You will easily to buy that book in the book shop or you can order it via online. The publisher of this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quickly to read this book, because you can read this book in your Smart phone. So there is no reason to you to past this publication from your list.

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Are you kind of active person, only have 10 or perhaps 15 minute in your moment to upgrading your mind skill or thinking skill perhaps analytical thinking? Then you are having problem with the book in comparison with can satisfy your short space of time to read it because all of this time you only find reserve that need more time to be study. Sweet Spot (Bakery Sisters Book 2) can be your answer since it can be read by you actually who have those short time problems.

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