

Chapter One:

Sophie Newton had seen enough newlyweds to overdose on sweetness without even getting a taste of sugar.

“Carne asada quesadillas,” she called out the window of her beachside taco stand, The Sandy Tortilla. She pasted on a fake smile when a woman stepped forward, her wedding ring blinding Sophie with its obvious brand-new sparkle.

Her stomach lurched like she’d swallowed a spoonful of sucrose laced with fructose, followed by a chaser of glucose. It was a miracle she wasn’t diabetic after nearly ten years of business here in the small-town, but big-tourist attraction, of Redwood Bay.

She returned to the orders hanging above her grill, focusing on tossing the chicken onto the flattop, slathering the cilantro spread on the tortilla, and crisping up the chips.

With her utmost concentration on her cooking, she didn’t have room to obsess over her ex-fiancée, Clint.

“Chicken verde,” she called, and a teenage girl stepped up. At least she wasn’t in her early twenties with a huge rock on her finger.

Sophie glanced down at her left hand, where, until recently, *she* had worn a gold band with a single diamond. Clint hadn’t wanted to set a date, something that frustrated Sophie. She liked deadlines, and lists, and meeting goals. Without a date for the wedding, she couldn’t plan the event.

Which is just fine now that there is no wedding, she told herself as she dropped an order of taquitos into the fryer.

“We’ll need more chips,” Jenna said over her shoulder as she put up yet another order.

“On it.”

SYTYCW Editor Critique:

Hi Liz,

Thanks so much for sending over the first page of “Until Summer Ends”. Liz, we really like what you’ve done here! You have a lovely contemporary, fun feel to your writing, and the narrative is smooth, pacy and compelling. Sophie seems like a young, sparky heroine and

we empathise with her right from the first line. You've even managed to set up part of her internal conflict without getting too bogged down in details and back story – great job!

There are just a few things you might like to think about as you keep developing your story. First of all, bear in mind that romance readers come to us for an escapist story full of aspiration. So, while it's great to incorporate the senses into your writing, be careful of focusing so much on the food here – it might not necessarily be the best way to set up the glamour and sense of escape from everyday reality that readers will be looking for. Additionally, make sure as you keep writing that the heroine always stays sympathetic and doesn't spend too much time brooding on her failed engagement – it's far more enjoyable to read about an ambitious, confident heroine than a heroine who spends too much time moping around. And finally, make sure readers are introduced to your hero quickly. He is such a big part of your story that readers will want to get to know him as soon as possible, so don't wait too long before giving him the spotlight!

Generally, Liz, we very much enjoyed reading your first page, and are excited to read more of your story. Keep writing, keep coming back to the tips and blogs that will appear on the So You Think You Can Write website, and we look forward to seeing more of Sophie's story in September!

Good luck!