

Carina Press Blog Tour Program: *Forgiven by Garrett Leigh*
Excerpt

Mia Amour. Her name had haunted me so much my bunkmate had once found me sleep-scrawling it on our cabin wall. He thought it had meant something—that I was writing a message from another dimension in a language he didn't understand—but the reality had been far more simple: even on the other side of the world, I couldn't get her out of my head.

Somehow, though, over time, I'd forgotten what her eyes did to me. How they could root me to the spot with a single glance and empty my mind of anything but her. *Mia*. I counted my heartbeats as they thundered in my ears. One, two, three, four. And then she tore her stormy blue gaze away from mine and walked out of the chip shop.

I reached for the empty space she left behind, and my faculties slowly returned to me as her footsteps echoed in my shell-shocked brain. As drawn to her as I'd always been, I drifted after her, but when I got outside, she was gone.

A thousand emotions warred in my gut, but the age-old frustration was so familiar I felt sick. Fucking Mia Amour. Deep down, I'd always hated her as much as I'd loved her, because there was no one else on earth who could make my heart pound like she did, my palms sweat, and my fingers tremble.

Cursing, I hauled myself back into the van. Gus followed a moment later, an open bag of chips in each hand. "Where'd you get to? It was your turn to buy tea."

I tossed him a crumpled-up fiver. "Why didn't you tell me your sister was in town?"

"Oh fuck." Gus held out a bag of chips, then set it on the dashboard when I made no move to claim it. "Are we really doing this?"

I gave him a flat look.

He sighed. "Fuck's sake. Why would I tell you? You two aren't exactly friends, and you haven't been a couple since I was fourteen and nicking Mayfair Lights from her school bag."

Shit, had it been that long? Why was it that just a glimpse of her face could set me back a decade? The weight in my chest increased and I started the van, gunning the rickety diesel engine with a roar. "Either way, a fucking heads-up would've been nice."

"But *why*, though?" Gus pointed a chip at me. "You want her number so you can catch up on old times?"

I wondered if he'd actually give it to me. Then pictured myself calling Mia and her reaction to hearing my voice for the first time in ten long years.

A legit shudder passed through me. I was done torturing myself for putting my family first, for giving up my entire life to keep a roof over my mum's head, but that didn't make the obvious anger in Mia's eyes easier to bear. Her temper had fascinated seventeen-year-old me—sometimes I'd wound her up on purpose, just to revel in her flushed skin and sharp tongue—but I didn't have the stones to take it now. My Mia angst tolerance was at an all-time complacent low.

"Luke?"

I spared Gus another glare. "What?"

"Can I eat your chips?"

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