

- Backstory -

Belle French grew up surrounded by yachts, champagne, and secrets. Her father, Maurice French, was one of Figure Eight's most powerful men, running French Yacht & Co., a luxury boat rental empire. Her mother? Gone before she even had the chance to remember her. Raised by nannies and expectations, Belle was groomed to be the perfect society girl—polite, educated, and obedient.

But Belle was never that girl.

By the time she hit her teens, she started seeing Figure Eight for what it really was—a world built on money, corruption, and empty smiles. The rich didn't just have power, they bought it. And her father? He was right in the middle of it all.

At 16, Belle started sneaking out. First, it was just harmless—bonfires on the Cut, secret beach parties, flirting with boys who didn't care about her last name. But then, it turned into more. Breaking into abandoned lighthouses with JJ, stealing her dad's speedboat for midnight races, sneaking into bars where she definitely wasn't welcome. She wasn't just rebelling—she was escaping.

On her 18th birthday, Belle made her biggest move yet. She walked away from Figure Eight. Cut up her credit cards, left her father's mansion, and moved into a tiny rental on the Cut. She got a job at Tommy's Bookstore and swore she'd never look back.

But running isn't the same as being free.

A year later, Belle's past caught up with her in the worst way possible. The FBI knocked on her door with questions about her father's business, questions she didn't have answers to—but her name was on his financial records. Turns out, Maurice French had been laundering money for people far worse than she ever imagined. And now? He was missing.

The only person who could help her? Rafe Cameron.

Now, Belle is caught between two worlds—her Pogue friends, who would never forgive her for working with Rafe, and the dark, dangerous secrets of Figure Eight, which are pulling her back in faster than she can fight it.

She swore she'd never be one of them again.

But the truth is, Belle doesn't know if she ever really left.