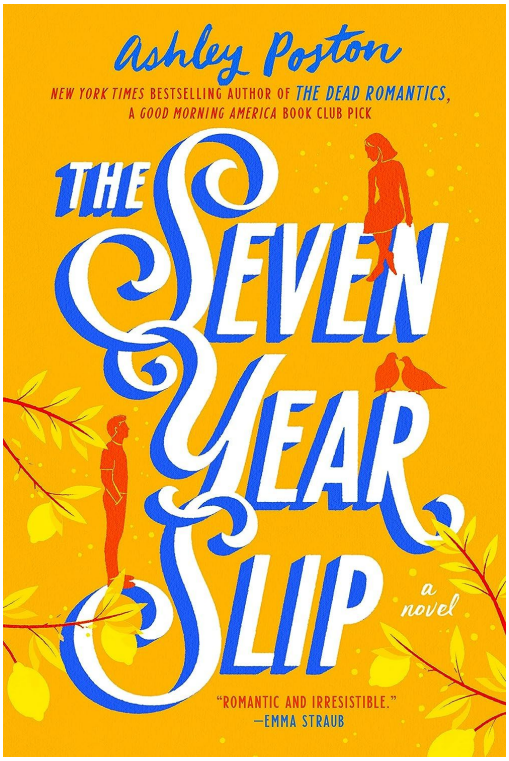
Pending Final Report

The Seven Year Slip



Book Summary

A book publicist falls for her temporary roommate, only to discover he's from seven years in the past.

Summary of Concerns

This book contains; alcohol, death/grief, profanity, sexual activities and suicide

Adult

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211	His hands were gentle as they cupped my face, slowly drifting downward toward my blouse, undoing the buttons one at a time with those nimble, long fingers of his. As he did, his kisses trailed from my mouth to my neck. I made a noise that sounded more feral animal than sexy as he scraped his teeth across the line of my throat toward my shoulder. He spun us, so I pressed against the table instead, and he lifted me up on it, scooting
212	the bottle of bourbon out of the way. His tongue flicked against the skin at my collarbone, sucking, and then his teeth sank into it. I felt myself prickle with gooseflesh, and I gasped. “Too much?” he asked, looking up at me from under his lovely and long eyelashes, his gaze drunk on me. No, the opposite. “More,” I begged, feeling heat rise up on my cheeks. “I love the way you blush,” he murmured, kissing the hills of my breasts as he undid the top buttons of my blouse. “It drives me mad.” I never considered how I looked when I blushed. “Tell me.” “It’s a lovely color,” he started, his breath hot against the skin between my breasts, as he laid me back on the table, his knee anchored on the edge, his hands planted on either side of me. “It starts right here”—he planted a kiss just below the center of my collarbones—“and it creeps up”—a kiss at the base of my throat— “and up”—another against the side of my neck —“and up.” Another on the edge of my jaw. On my right cheek. “And it drives me crazy when I know I’m the cause.”
214	Those lovely pearl eyes darkened to storms, to tempests, as he seized me by the middle and shifted me off him and onto the duvet. He pressed against me with his weight, dragging his hands up my thighs, under my skirt. “I’m going to take off your blouse,” he said, his fingers finding their way to the buttons on my shirt, undoing the rest of them one by one with those long, nimble fingers of his. I wanted them elsewhere. “I’m going to kiss every part of you. I’m going to commit every piece of you to memory.” “Every piece?” I asked as he reached back and unclasped my bra. “Every”—he muttered as his mouth explored my breasts, his fingers following my curves downward, tugging at my skirt, slipping beneath my underwear—“lovely”— I tensed in a gasp as his fingers toyed with me, my hands finding purchase in his messy hair.
215	“—piece,” he growled, and slipped his fingers into me, stroking me, as his tongue danced across the bare skin of my breasts. I squirmed beneath his weight, but he held me firmly and murmured sweetly, like chocolate, his words tart and coy like lemons, affirmation after affirmation into my hair. I was never the kind of woman to fall in love with a voice, but when I came, he pressed his mouth against my ear and rumbled, “Good girl,” in the exact way that made me lose all sense of self-preservation. My aunt had two rules in the apartment—one, take your shoes off by the door, and I’m certain I’d forgotten to do that at least once. So at least once I could break rule number two as well. Just once. But, unlike with shoes, all you need to do is fall in love once, though, to be ruined by it forever. “Birth control?” he asked between kisses. I had to think for a second. “Um, yeah, but—” “Hold, please.” He peppered a trail of kisses down my body, and planted one on my inner thigh, before he left to get something from his wallet, then came back into the bedroom, slipping out of his trousers. He tore the condom wrapper open with his teeth—which was so much sexier than I thought it could be—and put it on before he slowly, savoring me, slipped

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215	himself inside of me, murmuring psalms of my body as he traveled it, and I knew I was falling. The kind of falling that would hurt when I hit the ground. The kind of falling that would shatter me into pieces.
288	His mouth lingered against mine, deeper this time, hungrier. He leaned in, his hands traveling to my hips. I ran my fingers down the line of buttons on his shirt before I slipped them between two of them near his stomach, brushing my fingertips along his skin. I could get lost here in this moment, no travel guides, no itineraries. Until I remembered—"We're still in the hallway." "Are we?" He kissed my cheek. "We are." Another kiss on my temple, on my nose, returning to hover against my mouth. "I guess we should get inside." "Probably." And I pulled him in to kiss him again, and then I unlocked my apartment door, and we fell in, a mess of arms and limbs. We kicked off our shoes at the door as it closed behind us, and pushed each other down the hall. He slid his arms behind my back, and lifted me up. I wrapped my legs around his middle, pulling him closer. My fingers curled into his ginger hair. He was like a brandy I wanted to drink on a clear summer day, a golden afternoon I wanted to get lost in, an evening over cardboard pizza and lemon pie that was never the same twice— He sat me up on the counter of the kitchen, trailing kisses down my neck. "The plant's new," he murmured, glancing at the pothos on the counter. "Her name's Helga. She won't mind."
289	He laughed against my skin. "Good." He nibbled my shoulder, his fingers slipping under my skirt, and unzipped it, tugging it off me, and then he undid the buttons of my blouse, and planted a kiss between my breasts. I undid his buttons one by one, tracing the crescent-shaped birthmark on his collar before I kept going—and then I paused. Felt over a new tattoo I'd never seen before. My eyebrows furrowed. "When did you get this?" He looked down at the tattoo, and then sheepishly back at me. "About seven years ago. It's a bit faded now—" "It's a lemon flower." "Yes," he replied, looking up into my eyes, searching them. He'd gotten a lemon flower tattooed over his heart. "What do you tell people, when they ask about it?" His shyness melted into a smile, warm and gooey like chocolate. "I tell them about a girl I fell in love with at the right place but the wrong time." A knot lodged in my throat. "And what are you going to tell them now?" "That we finally got the timing right." "A matter of time," I whispered. "A matter of timing," he proposed, and kissed me again, before his mouth trailed down my stomach to my underwear, until he pulled them down, and I curled my fingers around his auburn curls as he said soft devotions to me right there in my kitchen. He was so tender as he planted his hands against my thighs, and spread my legs wide, and, oh, I really loved this man. I loved this man as he kissed the rest of me, and carried me to my bedroom. As he took time to learn about the scars on my knees from when I fell as a kid, as he traced his fingers, calloused and warm, across the freckles on my back, and kissed the scar on my right eyebrow from a close call with a piece of glass. He pushed my hair back gently and kissed

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289	me so deeply I finally realized what my aunt meant when she said you always knew the exact moment you fell— I did, too. Sort of. I fell for every kiss he planted on me, but I'd fallen days, weeks, months, before. I fell a little in that taxi ride with a stranger, and I fell a
290	little more when I asked that stranger, seven years later, to stay. I kept falling, tumbling, not realizing I wasn't on solid ground anymore, as we had dinner and laughed over wine and danced to violin musicals, as we ate late-night fajitas in the park and walked on glittery sidewalks made of recycled plastic, tripping headlong into something so deep and terrifying and wonderful I didn't realize I had fallen at all until he came to sit beside me in front of a painting of a dead artist, and told me he loved me. He meant it as his fingers memorized my body, as he discovered how we fit together again, and he was so much better at it all than he was seven years ago. Like, impeccable game, sir. I suddenly had no qualms with all the women I remembered from his Instagram. They were a lot of practice and I was absolutely reaping the benefits. He wrapped his hands around mine, and as we moved together, he said my name as if it meant something all its own—a spell. Maybe the start of a recipe. For disaster? No, I won't even think it. He nibbled the side of my neck, just under my ear, and I pressed myself up against him, trying to be closer than we ever could go. I wanted to enter into his bloodstream, meld into his bones, become a part of him with everything that I was— "I have dreamed of this for years," he murmured, kissing the dip of my neck. "I dreamed so much of you." "How's reality?" I asked, myself around him, never wanting to let him go. "Fuck, so much better." I laughed and kissed him, and then he moved faster as our heartbeats rose, and there was no more talking as we fell, harder and harder, toward each other, coming together in the right place at the right time in the right moment, and I loved him.

Profanity & Sexual or Derogatory Terms	Count
Ass / Jackass / Asshole etc.	7
Bitch	1
Breast / Tit	6
Fuck, Fucked, Fucker etc.	30
Piss	1
Sacrilegious & other offensive language usage	**Count**
Damn	5
God / God damn etc.	21
Hell	10