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# Five Alarm Flirting

by Moira Rogers

It was seven-thirty and things were slow, but Valerie was already in a snit. "Of all the damn nights for the barback to quit and pursue his dream of Off-Off-Off Broadway, he has to pick tonight. I have five-thirty makeup in the morning."

Belinda eyed the willowy redhead and smirked. "So, start charging ten thousand bucks just to get out of bed like Naomi Campbell, and you won't have to work here anymore." She patted her hand against the bar and raised her eyebrows at the man at the end of it. "You still good?"

He nodded, leering a little. "Hey, could be better, baby."

Belinda grinned until she turned around, then made a face at Val. "I should make you stay until Casanova down there heads out, but it just so happens you caught me on a good night. Go."

Valerie gasped. "You serious?"

"Yes." She waved a hand at her. "Get the hell out of here before I change my mind."

The taller woman struck a quick pose and then was off like a shot. Belinda pulled a textbook from under the bar and started reading.

A few minutes later, a shadow fell across the bar as a man slid onto the stool on the other side. He didn't interrupt her reading, just waited for her to look up before giving her a polite nod. "Don't suppose I could trouble you for a beer." His voice had a bit of an accent, a slow drawl.

The first thing Belinda noticed was that he was attractive, though in a rugged rather than pretty way. He had one of those faces that seemed lived-in, and was a bit too asymmetrical to be considered conventionally handsome. *Undoubtedly hot, though*, she thought, admiring the thick blond hair and dark blue

eyes that seemed to take in everything.

She smiled, a slow, lazy parting of lips that usually got even the most taciturn customer smiling right along with her. "Sure thing," she said, throwing a cardboard beer mat into her book and slamming it shut. "Got a preference, Tex?"

"Whatever's handy," he replied with a slow smile of his own. "Been a long day."

Belinda nodded, grabbing a frosted glass and pulling a draft. "So," she said, eyeing the FDNY emblem on his t-shirt. "Which house are you out of? My kid brother's a rookie down at the oh-six."

"Oh really?" He accepted the beer with a nod. "I just finished my second day down there. Who's your brother?"

"Enzo Giampara," she told him, dragging the textbook off the bar and sliding a bowl of pretzels down in front of him. "You couldn't have missed him. He has a mouth the size of the Hudson, and a brain the size of his ass."

The man snorted. "Might have bumped into him." Setting the beer down, he held out a hand. "I'm John Murphy."

"Belinda." She reached out and gave his hand a firm shake. "Nice to meet you, John."

"Same here." John grabbed a handful of pretzels and smiled. "You didn't have to put your book away, you know. You can keep reading if you want."

"See, it's your use of the word 'want' that's throwing me off." Belinda shuddered. "I don't *want* to read about the proteins that function in synaptic vesicle exocytosis, I *have* to." She grinned as she leaned her elbows on the bar, dark hair tumbling over her shoulder. "You could be a doll and distract me, you know."

If he noticed the fact that her posture displayed an impressive amount of cleavage, he managed to hide it. "Are you trying to get me in trouble?" he asked with a hint of humor in his eyes, one eyebrow going up. "Second day in town

and I'm about to start flirting with one of my coworker's sisters."

"See, now you're making me think I shouldn't have told you," she said teasingly, stepping back from the bar. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw Casanova waving and groaned softly. "Be right back."

The slightly tipsy man was ready to close his tab, and more than ready to close the deal with Belinda. She played him like a violin, batting large green eyes at him and managing not to get pawed as she turned him down without him quite realizing she'd done it. He handed her a business card and a huge tip before staggering towards the door. "Oh, that's precious," she laughed as she walked back to John's end of the bar, eyeing the card.

"New friend?" John drawled, his voice amused.

"Oh yeah. Vinnie Vanderhause wants to help me get started on a career in adult films." Belinda held up the card. "*This* is going on the Loser Board." She scribbled her name on the card, then walked to the back wall and pinned it to a crowded bulletin board. "Best bad come-on gets an extra fifty bucks out of the tip jar."

John laughed before taking a sip of his beer. "Maybe I should start coming in here every week with the worst pick-up lines I can think up. We could split the winnings down the middle."

She arched a brow at him. "You'd have to try pretty damn hard to beat Vinnie," she informed him, then grinned. "Besides, you'd never win."

"I wouldn't?" He leaned forward a little. "Now that just sounds like a challenge."

Her smile turned a little wicked. "You could try, but the point of the Loser Board is that there must be a distinct and marked correlation between the hideousness of the proposition *and* the propositioner." She leaned in as well. "In other words, I'm fairly certain even your crappy lines work a good bit of the time."

He laughed again, this time a low, deep little chuckle. "You might be

right," he agreed in a voice just above a whisper.

Her smile faded a little as she peered up at him through her lashes. "So try one."

John bent his head, placing his lips so close to her ear that she could feel his breath. When he spoke, his voice was low and warm. "I don't care if I work with your brother. You're worth getting into trouble over."

"Mmm," she breathed into his ear. "Slight reduction in score for mentioning one of my relatives, but overall? A strong showing." She straightened and grabbed the phone, punching a single button. "Ted? Get off the PlayStation and get your ass out here. I'm taking a break."

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Her back slammed into the tile wall almost hard enough to hurt, but Belinda didn't particularly care. She was busy trying to get her hands under John's shirt, while he was just as busy making that difficult by trying to kiss her within an inch of her life.

Strong hands tangled in her hair as he kissed her, his tongue sweeping across her lips before twining with hers with a low groan. She moaned in response, giving up on the shirt for the time being and sending a scrambling hand out toward the door in search of the lock. Finally, her fingers caught the metal knob and flipped it, then grabbed at him again.

"Jesus," she whispered against his mouth, one leg climbing up around his. She renewed her efforts to get at the muscles she could feel under his shirt.

His hands suddenly slid down her back and under her ass, and then he picked her up and dropped her on the small counter next to the sink. As soon as he set her down, his hands went to his shirt, tugging it out of his jeans and over his head to reveal a leanly-muscled body. He grinned at her as his hands found her hair again, and then his lips reclaimed hers.

His tongue was a wet, lazy thing of beauty as it probed her mouth, and Belinda didn't know whether she wanted to focus more on the kiss that was making her joints weak or the gorgeous expanse of flesh he'd just bared. She decided to split the difference, one hand kneading at his chest while the other clutched the back of his head.

A rumbling noise of approval left his throat as he pulled back just enough to get his hands in between them without releasing her mouth. His fingers pushed up under her shirt, brushing against soft skin as he traced his hands across her stomach and around to her back as he coaxed the shirt slowly upwards.

She tore her mouth from his and pulled the clingy red fabric over her head, revealing her black lace bra. "There," she half-sighed as her gaze fell to his chest. "God, you're hot."

"Likewise." His teeth scraped over the fluttering pulse in her throat, and he trailed hot kisses down her chest, ending at the lacy edge of her bra. His fingers found the clasp, undoing it with ease before he glanced up at her with that crooked grin again.

"Let me guess," she murmured, shrugging the scrap of lace aside. "They declared that grin illegal in Texas, so you had to come here and try it out on unsuspecting bartenders."

His hands came up to cup her breasts, teasing at her nipples as he kissed his way back up to her ear. "Why, is it working?"

She hissed in a breath as her head fell back. "That depends," she told him on a throaty moan. "Is it supposed to make my panties come off?"

"That's the general idea." His teeth closed on her earlobe as his hands skated down her body again, finding her legs and starting to inch her skirt up over her thighs. "If you're okay with that, of course."

Her own breath feathered against his cheek as she arched her hips toward his hand. "I wouldn't be in here with the door locked and my shirt off if I wasn't

dying to feel you inside me."

The words earned her a low groan and a redoubled effort to slip her underwear out from under her skirt. "That's a pick-up line that probably never fails," he muttered against her skin as he eased the panties down her legs.

She kicked them free. "So far, it's looking like a hundred percent success rate."

One of his hands fell away as he reached into his back pocket, pulling out a wallet. He tugged a foil package free, then tossed the wallet onto the counter behind her. "Lady's choice," he told her, raising an expectant eyebrow. "Counter? Wall?"

Belinda gave a whimpering little moan. "Wall," she decided, reaching for his belt. "Without a doubt, the wall."

"Mmm..." He braced his hands on the counter and leaned in again, nipping at her neck as she tugged at the button on his jeans. "I knew you were going to make excellent choices."

She pulled his pants open and scratched her nails down past his stomach. "At the moment, I am quite pleased with my decision-making skills," she panted, then wrapped a stroking hand around him and bit his shoulder.

This time the noise that escaped him sounded like a growl. His teeth dug into the side of her neck a little harder as he shoved the condom into her hand. His hips arched, and she heard him make another low, almost desperate noise.

The sounds sent shivers through Belinda, intensifying the heat he'd already aroused in her body. Her hands shook as she opened the condom and quickly rolled it on him, pausing to squeeze her hand over his erection to see if she could elicit another of those deep, delicious noises.

It was even louder this time, maybe because he groaned right into her ear as his hands dragged her off the counter. Her back hit the wall again, but she barely felt the sting as she focused on what came next, the feeling of him pushing slowly into her.

She cried out and wrapped her legs around his thighs, her fingers clutching at his shoulders and back. "God, that's good..."

His laugh was half rumbling amusement, half groan. "Took the words right out of my mouth." His hands tightened as he lifted her a little higher, testing, searching for the perfect angle. When he found it, she arched away from the wall and her hips jerked against his, her head snapping back with a rough exhalation.

He started moving with a satisfied moan, angling his hips to hit her just right, again and again. He murmured encouragement, his lips pressed against the side of her head, as he maintained a strong, steady rhythm. Belinda wrapped her arms around his neck, her breath pushing out of her with little grunting gasps every time he plunged into her.

The muscles of his shoulders bunched under her arms as he moved faster, his mouth dropping to her shoulder. He pressed hot, open-mouthed kisses against her skin as his hands flexed on her hips. Her gasps turned into groans, and her hands slid up into his hair as her back arched. "Please, please, harder..."

He obeyed without a word, one hand slipping behind her head to keep it from smacking back into the tile as the other gripped her hip hard enough to bruise. His movements were frantic, hard and unyielding, and his teeth dug into her shoulder.

"Fuck, John." Belinda could feel the pleasure inside her starting to tighten, to build, and she smiled a little. Then, without warning, the tension buckled, sending a powerful orgasm lurching through her. "Oh, *Christ*..." She sank her teeth into her lower lip, but a tiny wail escaped as she started to shake.

His lips crushed against hers as his hips lost their rhythm, pressing her back into the wall hard before he froze against her with a rumbling groan lost to her mouth. He stilled, one hand wound in her hair and his body pinning hers against the cool tile.

She opened her eyes slowly, trying to focus. "Jesus."

"Mmm." His head fell to the wall next to hers. "Jesus, indeed."

Belinda stretched just a little and laughed huskily. "Welcome to New York, John."

He lowered her carefully to the ground, his hands smoothing her skirt over her hips. "Best welcome I've ever had."

She smiled as she walked over and began pulling on her bra. "I wish I could say everyone in town is going to be so friendly, but the unfortunate truth is that this was somewhat of an anomaly."

"For you or for New York?" he asked lazily as he started to straighten his own clothing up.

"I don't know. Both?" She grinned and pulled her shirt over her head. "You could ask around the firehouse, you know. I'm pretty sure the pool is past three hundred now."

"The...pool?" One eyebrow went up. "Do I even want to know?"

"Sure," she said, tilting her head to one side and shaking out her hair. "The pool to see who can bag Giampara's untouchable sister. I figured you wouldn't know about it yet. I'm not supposed to, either."

"There's a pool." His voice sounded somewhat amused. "You're kidding me."

"I don't kid about the sheer absurdity of a bunch of grown men, sitting around, discussing what it would take to get in my pants," she told him dryly, leaning over to pull her underwear off the sink fixture. "Especially when they only want to because it would piss my brother off."

"Well, then." He got his shirt back on and grinned. "I'd say the pool would have to be a lot bigger than three hundred before I'd be tempted to boast to a guy that I did his sister in the bathroom. That sort of thing just isn't very nice."

She stepped closer and leaned up to kiss his cheek. "You *do* seem to be a very nice sort, John Murphy."

"Sometimes," he agreed with a smile, then caught her lips in a slightly longer kiss. He pulled back and whispered in her ear. "And sometimes I pin a woman to the wall. Different sort of nice, there."

"Mmm. I'll bear that in mind," she said. "Just in case you decide to try out any more of your crappy pick-up lines on me."

"Maybe just one or two." He laughed and unlocked the door. "Want to be subtle?"

She pondered the question. "How much noise did we make?"

"How thick are the walls?" he countered.

Belinda made a small face, then laughed. "I think the cat's probably out of the bag already, then." She reached past him and pulled open the door, then walked out.

He froze when he stepped out behind her and saw that the bar had filled up in the last few minutes. "Whoops."

It seemed like the entirety of Station Number Six had congregated around the bar. They hooted and raised beers in salute as the bathroom door opened, then fell silent when they noticed that it was Belinda and John who had emerged.

She cleared her throat, then looked up at John. "I suppose you are now officially their god." Then she walked behind the bar.

He followed behind her, leaning against the edge of the bar. "Well, that sure wasn't my intention."

She gave him a smile. "Hey, I know that. What happened was just you and me. It didn't have anything to do with the rest of these yahoos."

"Fair enough." He eyed the men and then sighed. "I'd better see if I can head off my death at your brother's hands, though... So I guess the next round's on me."

She winked at him. "You got it, Tex."