

ELLORA'S CAVE PRESENTS

The GLASS
Stripper



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THE GLASS STRIPPER

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Chapter 1

"Good afternoon. The Glass Stripper. May we bring you pleasure?"

The dusky voice was perfect for the phone, low and smooth and promising all kinds of things to the lucky caller.

"Hello, Syn my sweet. I want to confirm my appointment tonight with Mistress Iris?"

"Of course, Mr. Atkinson, one moment and I'll double check for you." Syndea Ellerby clicked her mouse on her appointment book program. "You're all set, Mr. Atkinson, Mistress Iris will be waiting for you in the Saracen suite this evening at nine."

"Sure you don't want to come play with us, Syn?"

A deep chuckle greeted his words. "Sorry, Mr. Atkinson. Not this evening," she answered tactfully. *No way in hell* was what she was thinking.

Mr. Sweetie-Pie Atkinson was two hundred and seventy-odd pounds of man stuffed into a five foot four frame and aged nicely. He held onto a firm belief that he had been a Crusader in an earlier life, and really got off by reliving his capture and torture by the Saracens. Why the Saracens would want to capture and torture a middle-aged hardware store manager was anyone's guess.

However, Mr. Atkinson—slogan "You Can Get It All at Atkinson's"—kept The Glass Stripper supplied with a variety of products useful to its business, so Syndea was not about to complain.

Not about him, anyway.

She pinched the bridge of her nose in an attempt to stave off the headache that had been hanging around her all day. Knowing that the little gesture would fail, she grabbed her aspirin bottle and went into the small kitchen of her apartment for a glass of water. Leaning on the counter, she sighed.

Being a partner in, and manager of, a private club specializing in “out-of-the-ordinary” entertainment, was a headache in itself.

Being the stepdaughter of a woman who could make Stephen King’s hair stand on end, was another. For the forty-thousandth time she wondered what the hell her father had been thinking when he married Violet Trumbull and brought her and her two daughters, Iris and Pansy – yeah, yeah, cute, flowers, *that* should have warned him off right there – into the family.

And then he had the nerve to go die on her and as a last request urge her to take care of them. Hah! The gods must be having a really good yuck at her expense.

The phone rang again, disturbing her thoughts. “The Glass Stripper. May I help you?”

“Damn you, Syndea, what have I told you about answering the phone like that?”

The strident tones of her stepmother did absolutely nothing to help her headache.

“You say ‘*Syn here. How may the Glass Stripper fulfill your desires?*’ Haven’t I told you that time and time again?”

The nasal screech made the fillings in Syndea’s back teeth hurt.

“Yes, step-mama,” she answered unwisely.

“It’s Mistress Violet,” hissed the woman angrily. “Keep this up and you’ll be counting condoms and doing inventory for the rest of the week.”

Syndea sighed, knowing that it wasn’t an empty threat. Although she functioned as manager/receptionist/bookkeeper, she had also done plenty of service as janitor/inventory control/supply manager and had, on very rare occasions, presented her bottom for spanking. She had decided she’d rather clean the toilets.

“Mr. Jonas called,” she said. It was an attempt to divert the woman’s attention.

"He did? Did he ask for me?" It worked, as it always did.

"Yes. He requested the 'Punished by Catwoman' scene with you for tomorrow night?"

"Excellent." She almost purred over the phone. "Such a nice man. I want you to make sure there's a good whip ready for me – last time, one of the thongs was frayed."

Syndea sighed again.

"Did you hear me? You may be the manager here, but don't forget that the girls and I own equal shares. We could toss you out on your ear real quick if we wanted to. It's in your best interests to keep things running smoothly, so get on it."

Syndea bit her tongue. Hard. "Yes, Mistress Violet."

An approving grunt was followed by a dial tone, and Syndea gently placed the phone back on the table. Throwing it against the wall would have been infinitely more satisfying, but then she'd have had to cover the cost of a new phone. And that would have been an additional expense she couldn't afford. Not with her current financial situation.

If only she had the money.

It was a familiar refrain. No ready cash to hire good staff, a reliable janitorial service, or more girls. Her only asset was the building itself and that was mortgaged to the hilt.

Syndea moved to the curved window of her living room. Some people couldn't understand why she lived here – her stepfamily certainly couldn't. They lived in the old mansion that her father had generously left them, and Syndea was extraordinarily grateful for that particular bequest.

She preferred this unusual Victorian, with its fading gingerbread trim, and her private little apartment with turreted rooms and a bathroom possessed by the plumbing demon.

Her gaze wandered around, glancing over her shelves filled with her favorite romances, and on to the large desk where she worked many long hours. Her computer hummed contentedly at her, as if saying “come Syndea, take an hour – finish that new erotic romance you just downloaded”.

Ignoring the cyber-siren’s song, she turned again to the window and pondered her fate. She was single, heading for thirty, running a private bondage club and damn near allergic to latex. She hated to be chained, tied, whipped, or spanked. She flat-out refused to have *anything* clamped, pegged, or covered with wax.

Her only orgasms were self-induced, stimulated by some of the best writers around – she had a real soft spot for hot medievals.

Her love life sucked. Mostly because she didn’t have one.

College had given her a degree in business administration, a minor in Eng. Lit., and a distaste of fumbled fucking with beer-crazed guys who immediately passed out or got up and left without a thank-you.

Her one hope had been Craig, who had actually stayed the night and pleased her in the morning as well. Then he’d produced his webcam and suggested they set it up – money could well be involved. Craig had beat a hasty retreat after Syndea had made her point quite effectively with her portable curling iron. She sincerely hoped that his next conquest would wonder about the pseudo-brand on his ass.

Her stepmother kept urging her to join them in one scene or another – she was shrewd enough to know that the more rooms they filled, the more money they could generate.

But there were some sacrifices she couldn’t bring herself to make. So what if it pissed off Mistress Violet? Syndea contented herself with being an all-purpose power behind the club. With chores from bookkeeping to payroll, not to mention monitoring the rooms at night, she continually found herself with scarcely a moment to spare.

The phone rang again, thus proving her point.

"Trixie and Dixie are on their way up..." growled a voice on the other end of the line.

Syndea smothered her chuckle. "Thanks Jake, you're a darling," she answered. Her security guard, for all that he was nearing seventy, had a dry wit and a sharp mind. His opinion of her stepsisters was clear and succinct. Two bimbos sharing half a brain.

He was damned close.

Syndea heard the giggling before the tap sounded on the door. Sighing, she knew she had to open it, but there was one teeny tiny second when she wished that lightning would blast these two idiots off her doorstep.

"Hey Syn, whatcher doin'?" bubbled Iris, ungrammatically.

"Syn, you gotta see this new stuff Bryony brought in..." mumbled Pansy around her chewing gum.

The two erupted into the room, without a second thought as to whether they would be welcome.

"God this place is sooooo gloomy." Iris flicked a sharp purple nail over Syndea's well-worn couch. "Can't figure out why you live here all alone. Not like you get any action, is it?" She smiled slyly at Syndea.

"Hey, get a load of this," said Pansy. She threw her coat wide and flashed the other two a glimpse of her outfit.

"It's for the Leather and Lingerie scene—Mama said I could do it next time, and I wanna do it with Mr. Overton. Oh *God*, do I wanna do it with Mr. Overton!"

Syndea gulped.

Framed by the dark lining of her coat, Pansy proudly displayed a leather bikini. Clearly this bikini had barely survived an attack by the scissor savages. There was no leather over the nipples, and precious little anywhere else, either.

"And look at this," Pansy added.

She reached down to the studs that ornamented the very low front of the thong panties. Widening her legs and gripping tightly, she pulled. The sound of velcro being rent asunder filled the air, and Pansy proudly displayed her pussy as the leather ripped away and dangled over her butt like the tail of a rather depressed duckbilled platypus. Pansy shifted her ample bulk and grinned.

Syndeia coughed. "Oh my."

"Huh. You think *that's* something? Look at *this*..."

Once again, Syndeia got flashed. She closed her eyes and prayed for death. Her prayers went unanswered.

Iris was flaunting a bustier. A vivid purple bustier. It was designed to encourage the bosoms of the wearer to flow bountifully over the tops, which were edged with delicate lace. Unfortunately, Pansy had no bosoms to speak of, so there was no bountiful overflow. Not even a small trickle.

"Don't you think it gives me cleavage?" she purred. Her hands were busily stroking the silk that ended just above a matching purple lace thong.

"Hah," snorted her sister. "What cleavage? You ain't got cleavage. That's hair making that shadow!"

"Well, speaking of hair, why don't you get that damn beaver off your twat," snarled Iris.

"Better a hairy beaver than a skinny stick like you," snapped back Pansy.

"Stop. This. Now." Syndeia hissed, surprising both them and herself. "Both costumes are very nice, and I'm sure you thanked Bryony for them... right?"

Two pairs of eyes dropped to the floor.

"You did thank Bryony for working so hard and sewing these costumes for you, *didn't you?*"

The emphasis made the girls hang their heads.

"Well, yeah, I guess,"

"Kinda, sorta, I suppose."

Syndea sighed. How the hell these two girls managed to satisfy their customers every night was completely beyond her comprehension.

"Well, I see that your mother's teachings have been forgotten today," she said sternly.

"Oh God, don't tell Ma," sputtered Iris.

"Please, Syn, she wouldn't like it," nervously added Pansy.

"Okay, here's what we're going to do. You two are going back to Bryony's workshop, change out of those costumes until you're ready to do the scenes, and then you're going to say thank you to Bryony, very nicely. Do you understand?"

They nodded dumbly.

"Very good. You may go now."

"Yes, Syndea..." They chorused.

"Oh—wait—I was supposed to ask who we've got tonight?" Iris frowned, as if remembering was akin to a bad attack of constipation of the brain.

Syndea rounded her desk and sat in front of her computer. A few quick clicks brought up the schedule and she scrolled down.

"Iris...let me see, you have Mr. Atkinson. He's requested the Crusades again. You might be able to get away with that bustier there, I suppose. Grab some of the chain mail and wear it over the top."

She scrolled on down while Iris smiled happily.

"And Pansy? Here we are—yes, it's your lucky day. Mr. Overton is indeed coming in tonight and has requested you, but for the Hansel and Gretel scene. No leather and lingerie tonight."

Pansy pouted, making a very large moue with her chubby lips. "Still, it is Mr. Overton," she sighed. "He's got such a delicious cock, you know, Syn. All hard and veiny, and he goes so red just before he comes...I so want to pop him in my cunt five seconds before it happens. Last time, I got so excited I soaked right through my thong and down my leg."

“Enough, Pansy” said Syndea sharply. “You know the policy on full intercourse. It must not happen in our paying rooms. You want to seduce Overton, fine. But you’ll have to take him elsewhere to do it. Remember that or we’ll all be out of business.”

Her lecture soared over the head of a smiling Pansy. “Yeah, sure, whatever.”

“C’mon Pans, let’s go—I wanna get my nails redone before tonight. Maybe I can dig them into old Atkinson while he’s my prisoner in the desert,” giggled Iris.

The door closed behind them and left Syndea in blessed silence.

She leaned forward on her desk and rapped her aching head on the shining wood surface. Hard.

Chapter 2

Over the next week, Syndea's life proceeded to whirl its way quietly down the toilet.

She wished she could follow it, and seek a few moments respite in the oblivion of the town sewage system. The gurgling stink would be a welcome change from the ominous silence of the entertainment rooms as more and more of them remained empty and the supply of potential income dwindled to dangerously low levels.

Sure, it was vacation time. Sure, their best paying customers were probably enjoying a week at the beach, getting sand in their shorts and buying T-shirts. They would also be roasting their shoulders, and taking rolls of boring photos with which they'd send their neighbors into catalepsy upon their return.

But whichever way she manipulated her bookkeeping software, the bottom line was always the same.

They were in trouble.

She'd made the strategic error of mentioning this fact to her stepmother, that very morning.

Mistress Violet had, surprisingly, grinned. Or attempted to do so, if the slight tightening of her collagen-enhanced lips was anything to go by.

"Don't sweat *that*, Syndea. I've got it all under control."

Syndea's body chilled. "What do you mean *under control*? Right now, we'll barely make the payroll at the end of the month, not to mention the bill from the costume company."

Mistress Violet had just shaken her head. "Keep an eye on your monitors, tonight, girl. Better still, take a look in person. There's a special customer coming

in this evening. I've scheduled *both* Iris and Pansy for him. Should take care of all our little problems."

Syndea snorted now, as she scrolled through the appointment calendar. Sure enough, somehow both girls had ended up in the Grand Suite—a delightfully misleading name for what had once been the cellar—and next to their names was one that Syndea didn't recognize as a regular customer.

Mr. Luciano Charmanti.

Oh God. Her stepmother had gone to the Mob for financing.

Visions of large, swarthy men in expensive black overcoats rippled through her mind. Jackets cut large enough to hide a shoulder holster, muscles large enough to hold someone still while they nailed hands to the bar or lopped off fingers...

She dismissed the thoughts of Don Corleone offering her a deal "she couldn't refuse." Thankfully, she didn't own a horse.

Clearly, she needed to do some research, and within moments of her stepmother's departure, Syndea was at her keyboard clicking away in an attempt to find out just who this Mr. Charmanti was, and what he represented.

Her agitation wasn't soothed when she could find out next to nothing about their new customer.

He had graduated from Harvard with a degree in business. Good. He could read. He might also be able to say "forget about it" without running the three words into a threatening grunt.

He was listed as the Chief Executive Officer of something called Gala Investments.

Hmm. Didn't sound like something that might have originated with some families in the 1920's.

The website for Gala Investments looked very professional, yet non-committal. Describing themselves as venture capitalists, there was a respectable

list of companies with whom they had ventured their capital, apparently successfully.

But Syndea still chewed her bottom lip. Why would a venture capital company be interested in investing in *The Glass Stripper*? Sure, sex sells, but a quick look at the books would tell anyone worth his business smarts that it didn't sell *that* well. Not at the moment, anyway.

And giving him over to Iris *and* Pansy? Good God, if the man survived the experience, he'd probably be grabbing his mattresses *and* his cannoli and going underground for the next year or two.

Syndea shook her head. Time to stop reading those darned Godfather novels.

She sighed, and made a note on her computerized sticky paper program. Thousands of dollars of state-of-the art technology, and she littered her screens with high-tech versions of little yellow sticky notes.

Some things never changed.

* * * * *

"You did *what*?"

Luke Charmanti was outraged, if the bellow he just let loose was anything to go by.

Isaac Gala grinned.

Luke was more than his right hand man, his CEO, and his good friend. He was close to being like a son to him, and there were times he wished Luke was. He'd have been a damn sight better than that worthless piece of crap that sponged off him at quarterly intervals and probably snorted the proceeds up his rather bulbous nose.

"I've made an appointment for you tonight at *The Glass Stripper*. It's a place that bears looking into, I think." Isaac raised a piece of strongly-perfumed paper from his desk and waved it in the air, trying to rid it of the cloying fragrance of gardenia.

"God knows their stationery could use a good dose of fumigation, but that's neither here nor there. It was owned by an old buddy of mine, Syd Ellerby, and I promised him years ago that I'd keep an eye on it for him. He passed on a while back, and his daughter is joint owner now, with her stepmother."

"And so you *volunteered* me?"

"Oh, c'mon, Luke. Where's your sense of adventure? You've been working like a bastard these last two years, barely taking time for a quick fuck after the Christmas party with that busty temp...what was her name?"

Luke blushed. "Sarah."

Isaac dismissed it with a gesture. "Whatever. I need information on The Glass Stripper. Sources tell me it's close to going under. I need to know whether I should let that happen, and also if it's worth putting any money into to prevent it."

Luke snorted. "The Glass Stripper. What is it, some kind of third-rate strip joint? The seven dwarves get naked?"

"You've got your fairy tales mixed up, boy. That's Sleeping Beauty. I think." Isaac frowned. "Well, it's one of those. Whatever. No, it's not a strip club. It's a house of bondage, I believe."

He tried very hard to suppress a grin, as Luke rounded on him, mouth agape. "You're kidding, right? *Bondage*?"

The chuckle erupted. "Yep. Bondage. And whatever else strikes your fancy, I hear. Got a good reputation, surprisingly. No actual intercourse on the premises, although the customers are free to — er — come and go as they please."

Luke obviously missed the pun. He snorted again. "So you expect me to go over there tonight, and get spanked by some aging dominatrix or whatever, who has probably shoved herself into a vinyl thing two sizes too small and fancies herself as some kind of reincarnated figure from the 'Story of O'?"

"You've read that?"

"No."

"Then how..." Isaac bit back another laugh. "Oh never mind. Look at it as just another subtle investigation of a potential client. You do it all the time. And you can do the spanking if you want."

Luke sighed. "I suppose pointing out that I usually keep my pants *on* during such investigations would be pointless?"

Isaac laughed, clutching his gut as he rocked in his chair. "Wish you could see your face," he wheezed.

Luke's lip curled up. "I live to bring a little sunshine into your day," he quipped.

Isaac's hysteria sputtered down to a broad grin. "Look, Luke. You don't have to do anything you don't want to. Only this woman—" he reached for the paper again, "—Mistress Violet or whatever she calls herself, only she knows who you really are. She's Ellerby's second wife, I understand. Brought a couple of girls with her into the marriage. Rose and...no wait...Peony? Hang on, got it here..." He rummaged through his papers.

"Here we are. Pansy and Iris. Knew it was something to do with horticulture. Pansy and Iris will be offering you entertainment in the Grand Suite, such 'entertainment' to commence at nine tonight. All sessions must conclude by midnight."

Luke raised an eyebrow. "Three hours?"

"Something about city charters and limitations on private clubs, I believe. They're anxious to keep their noses clean. Most people seem to know what goes on there, but apparently the woman who runs the place, Ellerby's daughter by his first marriage, has made sure that the community is never disrupted, and she also brings in some revenue—parking, ordering supplies, that sort of thing. All done from local vendors. It appears to be a good symbiotic relationship. *I* think it's worth investigation."

"So, of course, *I* get to do the investigating," muttered Luke.

"Well, let's face it, son. My ass isn't a thing of beauty any more."

Luke grinned at that. "I *really* don't want to know, Boss," he said.

"So cut the kvetching. Go dig up those leather pants you used to wear, and get yourself to The Glass Stripper at nine tonight. The flowers will await you."

Luke sighed. "You win, old man. But if I can't sit down tomorrow, you can hold yourself entirely to blame."

With a snort he left the room.

Isaac continued to grin. His hand ruffled the papers on his desk until he found a photo of a lovely blonde woman, hair askew, smiling into the camera with a look of delight on her face.

"Oh Luke," he said, staring at the picture. "You're in for a real surprise."

* * * * *

Syndeia settled herself into her desk chair and fine-tuned the security monitors that ringed her seat.

Normally blank, they were turned on when clients arrived so that she could keep an eye on what was happening within each room.

Sometimes she felt a bit voyeuristic about the whole thing, but the one occasion when a customer had gotten lost in his fantasy and damn near whacked the hide off one of the girls had proven how necessary such surveillance was.

Overall, it was just a matter of a quick glance now and again, and these days she found herself monitoring Pansy and Iris more than the men, just to make sure they didn't take matters into their own *bodies*, so to speak.

She was definitely thinking that the word "nymphomaniac" had probably been coined just for them.

They were only too happy to get naked and spanked at the twitch of a flogger, and welcomed fingers, whips, anything at all thrust up their cunts.

Syndeia's lip curled. What some women would do for thrills.

Thankfully, she had no such urges. Well, to amend that thought, she did briefly acknowledge the existence of the small pink vibrator in her bedside drawer. But the batteries had probably turned green and fuzzy by now.

Somehow, watching all this frenzied sexual activity every night had found her “off” switch when it came to *that* sort of thing.

She assumed she was now frigid, and would spend the rest of her life raising cats.

A movement in the “Grand Suite” caught her attention.

Pansy and Iris oozed in, and they had certainly gone overboard for this mysterious Mr. Charmanti.

Both were wearing black latex.

Pansy’s was in the form of a brief thong bikini affair, which sliced her buttocks like wire through a lump of mozzarella. Her boots were plastered up to her ample thighs, and she carried a whip in her hands.

Iris had gone for the one-piece teddy, the one with the cutouts that showed a great deal more than it covered. Her ribs stood out like the keys of a xylophone, and her skinny legs teetered on spiked heels. A praying mantis that had gotten out of control in the Ferragamo markdown sale.

Syndea sighed. Why the hell hadn’t her stepmother scheduled Rayna? It would have been costly, but at least Rayna was lovely, with raven black hair down to her ass and a decided skill with a flogger than put her at the top of the requested list.

Then Syndea remembered. Rayna was on vacation. Shit. Other than Pansy and Iris, there were only the two part-timers. Doreen Grogan, who preferred elderly gentlemen, and little Jo Martin, who cried if anyone laid a hand on her. She was good with the manual techniques and tied a hellishly fine knot, but that was about it.

Mentally, she kissed any hope of venture capital goodbye.

The girls fussed around the room, pulling the large throne-like chair into a prominent position.

Syndeia knew that one or the other was hoping to be bent over that chair before long, getting her ass whipped but good.

Where was the appeal in that? Syndea couldn't, for the life of her, see it. Never had.

[DING].

What the hell? Her instant messenger chimed.

Syndeia glanced at her monitor. Sure enough, the screen was up and she was getting a ding from someone. A quick check of her "friends online" list showed no one she knew currently available.

[YFG: *evening, Syn*]

Okay. This was scary. No one, but *no one*, knew her real name. She wasn't an idiot. Her screen name was Ladyslipper.

She hesitated, not knowing quite what to do.

[YFG: *its ok. im not a freak. just answer me*]

Oh yeah, right. Probably some guy doing twenty-five to life, who'd just swung access to their in-the-big-house Internet center. For good behavior. Like *not* killing that inmate he was caught raping.

[YFG: *and im not in jail either*]

Syndeia jumped, as a little chill of fear shuddered down her spine. The identification name was listed as "YFG".

She didn't know any YFG.

[YFG: *yes you do. you just dont know it yet. im a friend*]

Keerrriiist. Her hand hovered over the shut-down button.

[YFG: *syn please. give me a chance. im here to help you. honestly.*]

The plea stopped her movement. Help her? Oh hell, she could sure use some help. And she could always switch her ISP if it proved to be some kind of terrible stalker.

With shaking fingers, she reached for the keyboard. "Who are you?"

[YFG: *a friend. i told you that already. someone who wants to help you*]

"I don't know any YFG."

[YFG: *think about it, toots. the glass stripper? syndea? YFG? someone who wants to help?*]

"Don't get it." Syndea's mind rattled around as she tried to put the clues in some kind of order.

[YFG: *(SIGH) YFG? mice? pumpkins? magic? YOUR FAIRY GODPERSON? NOW do you get it?*]

Syndea snorted in disbelief. Like she was going to buy *that*. "Right. Okay. So what are you selling?" Her fingers flew over the keyboard. She had no time this evening for a nut with a fairy tale fetish. That was Pansy's department.

[YFG: *dreams, sweetheart, dreams. your dreams, syn*]

"Don't have any, don't want any, so piss off." It was unlike her to resort to crudity, but she was about out of patience.

[YFG: *tsk tsk, sweetie. we fairy godpersons know it all, you know. just because your vibrator needs new batteries doesnt mean your dreams are green and fuzzy too...*]

Syndea's breath froze in her lungs, and she blinked. Then she pinched herself, just to make absolutely sure she hadn't dozed off over her computer and fallen down some rabbit hole into a dream world where a motherboard with a 100 gig hard drive and a P4 chip could read her mind.

Ouch. Nope. She was definitely awake.

Which meant that someone, somewhere, might just be her fairy godperson.

Yeah, right.

Chapter 3

Luke Charmanti was miserable.

His leather pants were biting into his skin and digging into various parts of his body that were objecting to such treatment. Apparently, his shape had changed in the four years since he'd actually worn the damn things.

His raw silk shirt was chafing his nipples, and he didn't feel at all like an evening of sexual exploration. He was more inclined along the lines of a warm bath full of anti-itch medication.

He sighed. He was doing this for Isaac. Although what bee had gotten into his boss's bonnet, he couldn't begin to imagine.

He took a deep breath, ignored his itchy chest, and stepped over the threshold of The Glass Stripper.

His first impression was one of agreeable surprise.

Although the furnishings were minimal, what there was reflected genuine good taste, and the soft carpet beneath his feet was an elegant oriental. Aged, yes, but clearly of first quality.

Luke had made it his business to notice such things. He could tell a lot from their potential client's surroundings.

This place was clean, scented with just the right blend of furniture polish and air freshener, and looked like what it was—a slightly down-at-heel Victorian mansion, converted into a private club.

"Good evening, Mr. Charmanti..." A voice boomed at him.

Luke jumped.

An older woman was bearing down on him like a damn battleship. Her portholes were open, and her guns were coming to bear. No wait, those were her teeth.

"A pleasure to have you with us. May I take your coat?"

He allowed her to remove his jacket, while he tried to jump-start his mind into the polite phrases that would be appropriate.

I hope YOU'RE not going to smack me tonight probably wouldn't do.

"Thank you." There, that was nice and bland.

"No, thank *you*, Mr. Charmanti," gushed the woman. "I'm Violet Ellerby. Although..." She actually produced a blush, although it was quite hard to see it under the mountainous layers of makeup she'd spackled on her face. "Most folks just call me Mistress Violet."

"Ah. Well. Good evening, Mistress Violet. Um...this is my first time here...what...who...?"

Nice going, chump. Now you look like a naive, itchy-titted idiot. He shrugged, restraining the urge to turn tail and run.

More teeth appeared. She seemed to have them in abundance. There had to be a helluva lot more than thirty-two in that enormous mouth of hers.

"Not to worry. I've selected our finest girls for your pleasure this evening. I can guarantee you'll enjoy every moment. Pansy and Iris are the very best at what they do."

"Pansy and Iris?" Swell. They really did have flower names. And him without an anti-allergy pill to his name. He wondered if they came with pollen or without.

"Yes indeed. My lovely daughters. I assure you they're very excited at the thought of catering to your every whim."

Right. He'd have to think up a whim. And fast, by the looks of it, since Mistress Violet was leading him down a staircase to the lower floor.

Old pine paneling covered the walls, polished to a dull gleam, and reflecting the age and beauty of the original craftsmanship. For a wild moment, he wondered if she'd mind him taking a quick prowling around. Old houses had always fascinated him, and this one was a doozy.

But all too soon, she stopped in front of a large door.

"Here we are. Inside, you will find your pleasures await you. Every fantasy, every dream you've ever had is about to come true and your body will be aroused to new heights."

Luke kept his snort to himself. His fantasies were a thing of the past, his dreams mostly involved getting caught up with the mountain of paperwork lying threateningly on his desk at this very moment, and he strongly doubted that *anything* could arouse him at this point. His pants were waaaay too tight for that.

But he managed a polite smile and entered the room as Mistress Violet swung open the door.

It froze on his face as he saw what awaited him inside.

Two latex-wearing women stood on either side of a huge chair. A chair which, he noted in passing, possessed some kind of restraints attached to the arms.

The women were definitely *not* from any fantasy he'd ever had. Even when he'd overdone the tequila thing in college.

One was so well endowed that her breasts threatened to snap the little bit of latex that was struggling to keep them in check, and the other looked like a stick insect he'd seen once in a biology lecture. Only this one had high heels. He couldn't remember the biology one having spiked shoes on.

He blinked.

Isaac was going to owe him *big-time* for this.

* * * * *

[YFG: you got your security monitors on?]

The question chimed out from Syndea's monitor, and she frowned again. "What's it to you?" She typed the retort back immediately.

[YFG: now, now. attitude adjustment, sweets. im here to help, remember?]

She bit her lip. She was one part scared to death, one part amazed at the uncanny ability of this YFG to tune in on her thoughts, and twelve parts convinced that it was all a hoax of some mammoth technical proportion.

"I thought fairy godmothers were just that. Godmothers."

[YFG: oh please. get with the new millennium, doll. pc all the way now, and i aint talking macsystems here. we are godPERSONS. got it?]

"Got it," typed Syndea. Snippy things, fairy godpersons.

[YFG: good. now check out the grand suite. that little family flower patch is about to get into some interesting action.]

Oh lord. YFG was right.

A man had entered, and even though his back was to the surveillance camera, Syndea could see that he was tall. His hair looked very dark, and his shoulders bulged as he was persuaded to remove his shirt.

Although the picture was in black and white, and rather grainy at that, Syndea hissed in a breath as she saw a very nice set of muscles appear on the screen.

This was not their run-of-the-mill customer.

He looked more like a damn cover model than a banker or an insurance salesman.

[YFG: see him?]

"Um, yeah. Who am I looking at? Oh—wait. That guy. I remember now..."

Syndea's colorful imagery returned to haunt her, and she looked carefully for any sign of a shoulder holster or a missing finger.

Nope. He seemed to have all his parts. And rather nice parts they were, too.

[YFG: guys a real peach aint he?]

"Can't see his face," typed Syndea irritably.

[YFG: patience, girlie. just watch. you like to watch, dont you?]

"Don't be sleazy. It's my job. Security and all that." She whipped the response back, refusing to give an inch.

[YFG: (SNICKER) sure babe]

Syndeia found an obscene emoticon and hit the “send” button with satisfaction, then returned her attention to the small picture off to one side.

Pansy and Iris were apparently trying to remove his pants, with little success.

For once, Syndea turned on the sound. She never allowed herself to listen in, unless she was concerned about the safety or level of play taking place. But this time, she broke her own rules.

“...not right now, girls...”

A deep voice issued tinnily from the speakers, sending a surprising shiver up Syndea’s spine. He was well spoken and about as polite as a man could be with Pansy and Iris tugging vainly at his fly.

“Well, all right,” said Pansy, pouting. “But promise us that if you want to, you’ll let us help you?”

“Oh, absolutely.”

Syndeia grinned. Maybe the girls couldn’t read that voice, but she sure could. It said fuggedaboutit, loud and clear.

Iris had moved to the small table upon which were a variety of sex toys. She pulled out the whip and gave it a couple of good cracks. “Are you sure you don’t want us to play with you, Mr. Charmanti?”

Her stepsister’s whine set Syndea’s teeth on edge.

“It would be so much fun, Mr. Charmanti,” added Pansy.

“No really. I much prefer to watch. That’s...it’s...my thing. You know? Watching?”

Syndeia saw his throat move as he swallowed. The man was thinking fast and side stepping so neatly that Fred Astaire would have been green with envy. She would also bet her favorite ebook that he was lying through his teeth.

This was no watcher. This was a doer.

She leaned closer.

[YFG: (GRIN) told ya]

* * * * *

Luke seated himself in the large chair, squirmed a little to ease the rather snug fit of his leather pants and surrendered to the moment. He was stuck here, and might as well play along.

It felt increasingly surreal as the women—girls—whatever they called themselves these days—began their entertainment in front of him.

More surreal, in fact, than the time he'd smoked something hallucinogenic with his college roommates and then watched a porno movie.

He vaguely remembered getting a hard-on from that experience. It didn't look like he was going to get one from *this*.

The big one, and damned if he could remember which was Pansy and which was Iris, began running her hands up and down the skinny one. She, in her turn, began moaning.

Within moments, snaps were unsnapped, velcro ripped apart, and Ms Skinny was revealed in all her bony glory.

Her pussy was shaved, what there was of it, and Luke caught himself seriously wondering if she'd have been better off not shaving, but covering her rather minimal mound with a size-enhancing tuft of pubic hair.

The two women continued to fondle each other, with a rising degree of enthusiasm for their performance. Hands roved, mouths followed, and legs parted in eager anticipation of what was to come. He could see the moisture beginning to glisten between their thighs now, as Skinny reversed their positions and revealed the rest of the ample body that was barely hidden beneath the bigger one's thong.

He held his breath as she released the catch on the top of the latex bikini, wondering if the resultant force released would be enough to send the rubber garment zinging across the room. He prepared himself to duck.

But it didn't happen. The latex bra tumbled to the floor as a pair of very large breasts tumbled into willing hands.

Iris, it had to be Iris – since irises were tall and skinny plants, weren't they? – continued to unveil the bountiful body of her partner, and followed her task with a liberal application of some body oil stuff, scattered with twinkly things.

Great. The latex bikini had left some rather prominent red markings on Pansy's skin and with the addition of the body oil, she now looked like a naked bumble bee who'd fallen into fairy dust.

But the scene was just getting started.

The pantomime was clearly meant to indicate that Bumble Bee had been a naughty girl – probably cross-pollinated the wrong plant – and now she was going to be punished.

Iris bent the larger woman over, and shook her finger at her in reprimand.

Bumble Bee attempted a chastened look, and leaned over onto a small stool, presenting a target big enough to have brought tears of joy to the entire US 3rd Infantry division.

Iris reached for her whip.

Now here, thought Luke, was a woman who enjoyed her work.

Iris's eyes sparkled as she flicked six feet of braided leather with an expert movement of her wrist. A crack made Luke jump.

Iris drew back, narrowed her eyes, and took aim. Snipers couldn't have looked more intense when they drew a bead on their victims.

With a smooth flex of her shoulder and a neat swing of her bony arms, Iris laid down a couple of light blows on the waiting buttocks.

Pansy moaned and wriggled.

Luke waited for blood to appear, surprised when nothing more than a light pink mark followed the passage of the whip.

Damn. Iris was talented, after all.

With new respect, Luke watched the performance as it dragged on, openly marveling at the accuracy of Iris's strokes, none of which were apparently doing more than arousing Pansy, who was now flushed and panting.

"Shit, Iris, I'm gonna come soon, you idiot," hissed Pansy under her breath.

He bit his lip and tried not to laugh.

Iris slowed her strokes and wiped some pretend sweat off her forehead, letting the whip dangle loosely but comfortably from her hand.

Luke mentally wrote himself a note to never piss off Iris if there was a whip in the vicinity.

Now Pansy was rising, breasts heaving, buttocks lightly red. Iris moved to her and began running her hands over the afflicted backside, gentling her and turning her to face Luke.

For the first time in he couldn't remember how long, Luke blushed. In spite of his brave words, he really wasn't a watcher. So having to sit quietly and not fidget as one woman's hands found another woman's breasts was turning into a difficult task.

Slowly and deliberately, Iris let her tongue rove over the ample mounds, suckling one and playing with the other. She did this for quite some time, bringing Pansy's nipples to an amazingly rigid state of protrusion.

Pansy moaned again, and dropped her hands to Iris's naked pussy.

More fondling commenced.

Luke could smell their scent on the air now, that pungent fragrance of aroused woman. Their bodies were indeed getting slick, and their excitement was mounting.

Iris reversed her whip and started stroking the profuse bush of curly hair that covered Pansy's mound.

It was almost as if two women had been rolled into one, then separated again, but not equally, mused Luke, as he absently watched the performance.

One had gotten hair and hips and the other had gotten enough skill in her wrists to make a rodeo star weep with envy.

Chiding himself for his roaming thoughts, he returned his attention to the couple, and did his best to look entertained and titillated.

In fact, he was neither.

The handle of the whip started to disappear, as Pansy's moans increased in volume. Iris herself was doing plenty of moaning as a large hand was stroking and spreading her flesh, revealing hot and swollen tissues gleaming with moisture.

Luke knew he should have been as hard as a rock by now, but instead found himself plagued by the question of how long it would take to get glittery dust out of someone's cunt.

He sighed.

For some reason, he just wasn't turned on. Two women were nakedly enjoying each other in front of him and it wasn't doing a thing for him. In fact, it was making him a little uncomfortable and not in a sexual way. They were sisters for chrissake. His libido snoozed on peacefully, his cock lay dormant beneath its leather covering, and his hands rested calmly on the arms of the chair.

He hadn't even broken out in a sweat.

There must be something wrong with him.

He was probably impotent, and would have to spend the rest of his life raising cats.

That would be the remaining life he was permitted once he'd been convicted of first-degree assault and battery on Isaac Gala, which he intended to commit first thing in the morning.

The girls were heaving now, bodies rubbing against each other, yet managing to display all there was to see to their client.

It *was* a hell of a show, he had to admit.

When Iris's whip handle began to disappear, Pansy's eyes closed and the moans became louder, accompanied by a definite thrust of those ample hips.

Luke could damn near feel the breeze she was generating as the speed of the movements increased.

Iris was grunting, as Pansy's fingers caressed the taller woman's body.

They had all but forgotten him now, Luke realized. He was somewhat relieved. It might be just a job to them, but he found himself thinking that these two would have been right at home in Ancient Greece.

He pondered the legends surrounding the Isle of Lesbos. And Sapphire. No, wait, that was Sappho. He should have paid more attention in his Classics lectures, instead of napping or trying to date that cute redhead two seats over.

God, that was a long time ago.

A moan recalled his wandering attention to where he was and what he was watching.

He looked at the tableau in front of him again, and sighed. There was nothing decadently Olympic going on, if one discounted the truly incredible size of Pansy's breasts.

Although there, the word "Alps" came to mind.

With clinical interest, he noted their tightened lips, stiffening muscles, and heaving chests.

A flush was spreading over Iris's bony chest, and moisture was leaking profusely over her hand where it plunged the whip handle repeatedly back into Pansy.

They were about to come.

Sadly, Luke wasn't.

He suppressed a sigh. If he'd learned anything tonight, it was that the performers at the Glass Stripper certainly threw themselves into their work and as such, he supposed, made for a good show.

He'd also learned that he wasn't as young as he thought he was.

Apparently nothing turned him on anymore.

Chapter 4

[YFG: so whaddya think?]

Syndeia swallowed. What did she think? She'd seen Pansy and Iris strut their stuff often enough to disregard it completely.

It was the man in the chair who had held her entire attention the whole time her stepsisters were performing.

"I don't know what to think," she admitted to the keyboard.

[YFG: hes cute though, huh?]

She snorted. "Cute" didn't come even close. The man was gorgeous. Once he'd seated himself in the chair she'd gotten her first good look at his face, and nearly swallowed her tongue.

His eyes were dark, glittering from beneath a strong brow line, and his lips seemed firm, but with a definite fullness to the lower one that made her wonder what it would be like to nibble on it.

She straightened in her chair with a frown. "Cute is as cute does, YFG." She paused. "Or should that be MFG?"

[YFG: nah. sounds like a chinese food thing. YFG is fine]

"Okay. So he's cute. In a typical male sort of way."

[YFG: pshaw. what other way is there? hes a damned fine lookin man right? right?]

"Don't push it. I said he was cute. Leave it at that, will you?" Syndeia was growing irritated. "So what the hell's the point of all this?"

[YFG: touchy arent we? wrong time of the month?]

Huh. As if she'd share the intimate details of her monthly cycle with some on-line perv. Even if it was her Fairy God-whatever.

She ignored the question. "Why am I here playing voyeur and talking to someone I don't know?"

[YFG: well syn, thats the thing. this guy? hes real important to you and your business]

"Right. He's gonna sink millions of dollars in venture capital into the Glass Stripper. I sooooo don't think so."

[YFG: why? because he didnt even throw a boner?]

Syndeia couldn't help herself. She twiddled the zoom feature on the monitor and took a closer look at his lap.

Sure enough, while a neat package rested between his muscular thighs, there was no sign of the burgeoning growth of sexual arousal. She sighed.

"Okay. He's gay, right?"

[YFG: (ROTFLMAO!) boy have you got that wrong]

"Oh yeah?" She leaned back from the monitor, trying not to feel guilty that she'd just zoomed in on an unsuspecting man's crotch.

[YFG: yep. he aint gay, syn. trust me on this one]

"So, WTF is all this about?" Syndeia hated resorting to Internet shorthand, but refused to allow this...this...person to lure her into vulgarity. Although a good "what the fuck" would have felt perfect right about now.

[YFG: well ok. you paying attention doll? this is important]

Syndeia heard her teeth as they crashed together. Her patience was all but running out.

"I AM PAYING ATTENTION." Her typing was vicious, slamming the keys down with unnecessary force.

[YFG: DONT SCREAM. I CAN READ YA KNOW]

She held her hands paralyzed above the keyboard, indulging in a rare fit of temper.

[YFG: ok ok dont get your knickers in a twist. heres the thing...]

Well, damn. At last. Syndea whooshed out a breath of air and tried to unclench her back teeth.

[YFG: hes coming back at the end of the week]

“What?” She frowned.

[YFG: hes gonna come back at the end of the week]

“Why? He didn’t get much out of tonight, why the hell would he want to do it again?”

[YFG: (SIGH) thats why, miss dense brain. hes gonna have one more shot at this place. and thats when hes gonna learn what a real boner is]

Syndeas curled her lip in derision. “Oh right. Pansy and Iris are going to ram the whip up his ass this time.” Her fingers flew over her quick response.

[YFG: not at all, honey]

“Well, then, forgive me for being so stupid as to not understand these cryptic phrases typed by someone I don’t know on a messaging system to which I don’t belong.”

[YFG: dont get saucy with me...bearnaise]

In spite of herself, Syndea giggled. “Okay. So you like Mel Brooks movies. Don’t change the subject.”

[YFG: (GRIN) lookie here honey, hes gotta check this place out thoroughly before deciding about investing in it right?]

“Yep.”

[YFG: and so far nothing and nobody has got his juices running, right?]

“Yep.” This was getting repetitive.

[YFG: so friday night hes gonna get a show like hes never imagined]

Syndeas mind focused on the words. Friday night. Would Rayna be back by then? No—she was off till the following Tuesday. What the hell was this idiot chattering about? “Don’t understand?”

[YFG: honey its simple. his show on friday night is going to be put on by a very special performer]

"Can't be. Rayna isn't due back until next week."

The screen remained silent for a few moments, and Syndea found she was chewing her lip. Dammit, why didn't YFG respond?

Finally the words appeared.

[YFG: it aint gonna be rayna, sweetie. its gonna be you]

* * * * *

"So what happened next?"

The rather gleeful chortle came from Isaac Gala, as he vainly tried to suppress his laughter while he shared coffee with his right-hand-man. Who was, at this particular moment, attempting to walk the thin line between respect, embarrassment, and what Isaac guessed was an overwhelming urge to clobber him.

"You don't want to know."

"Oh but I do," answered Isaac. "Did they come? Moan, scream? What?"

"You're a pervert, you know that? I never realized." Luke's mouth snapped shut.

Isaac chuckled and sipped his coffee. "Well, all right. You don't have to go into any more details." He paused. "You killjoy."

Luke grunted. "You ever think what it would be like watching a ferret make out with a wombat?"

Isaac's eyebrows flew up. "Good God, no. And if that's the sort of thing you're thinking about on a regular basis, I suggest you get help."

An exasperated sigh greeted the words. "Look, Isaac. One was skinny, the other—wasn't, they both had barely enough latex between them to make a decent pair of surgical gloves, and they put on quite a sex show. And one of them could whack the tail off a southbound flea with her whip, too."

"So where's the problem?"

Luke stood, stretching, and walked to the window, gazing out of it absently as he considered his words. "Problem? I don't know. The house is lovely, elegant, well-decorated although a bit empty." A thought occurred to him. "Have they been selling off furniture by any chance?"

Isaac ran his fingers around his cup. "I wouldn't be surprised. Their debts are accumulating faster than their clients are paying."

"Hmm. Well, it's not our usual kind of interest, that's for sure, but from what I saw last night, the land could certainly be turned into something profitable. I don't know how much of a market exists for *this* sort of thing..."

He paused, collecting his thoughts and objectively channeling them away from the sexy part of the show – or non sexy part, as the case may be – and back into channels where it felt a lot more comfortable. Business. "Although this place has already carved a niche for itself, existing quietly within the community, and not incurring much in the way of public comment. Which in itself is quite an achievement."

Isaac nodded. "That would probably be due to Syd's daughter. I understand she's the brains behind the operation."

Luke turned. "Good Lord, don't tell me Mutt or Jeff runs that place, because I won't believe it."

A smothered laugh greeted these words. "No, no. Those are Syd's *step*daughters. He married Violet some years after Annabelle's death. Ah, Annabelle. Now *there* was a beauty, Luke..."

Luke listened, caught by something in the older man's voice.

"Eyes like the sky in summer, skin creamy and soft – my God. We were all crazy about her. I still don't know why she picked Syd. Took me years to forgive him."

The words were spoken with humor and affection. Obviously Isaac had come to terms with this Annabelle's lack of taste in settling for someone else.

"Well, regardless of her parentage, she obviously inherited quite a bit of business sense," said Luke.

"Oh she did indeed. Went to college, got her Masters in business administration, then came back here and found her father dying. The old goat had married Violet, and he left the Glass Stripper jointly in their names. But with the proviso that his oldest daughter run the place. Violet got the house."

"Ouch. Lousy break for the kid."

"Yep. She's stuck it out though, I understand. Done her best to keep it running, as respectably as she can given the nature of the place, and it looks like she's done a pretty good job. Which is *why*..."

Isaac paused for another sip of coffee.

Luke felt the fingers of fate brushing up his spine, grabbing his Adam's apple and threatening to choke him. He just *knew* he wasn't going to like what was coming.

"Why...?" He encouraged Isaac, straightening his shoulders and waiting for the shoe to drop. Right on him.

"Which is why you're going back."

"Fuck that. I most certainly am *not*." The response was out before he could censor it, but it only gained him a wicked grin from his boss.

"Oh yes you are. Friday night."

"Friday night?" Damn, he'd all but screeched. "Why Friday night? How can you do this to me? You want me to sacrifice my Friday night for one more crack at those...those...*torture* chambers of theirs? Spend what little free time I might have watching another couple of...of...whatever they were, groping each other?"

Isaac waited calmly for the outburst to conclude. "Did you have a date?"

"Well, no, but...but I *might* have."

"But you didn't. Luke, you and I both know that your Friday night would have been spent here, in your office, battling paperwork until your eyes crossed.

Well, I'm giving you a chance to have a go at something else that might make your eyes cross."

"Yeah right," pouted Luke. "Ferrets and wombats will do that to a guy."

Isaac permitted himself a small snicker. "Well, this time, you're not scheduled for any rodent entertainment."

"Oh goody. I shall sleep better tonight knowing that."

"Don't be sarcastic. It doesn't suit you. Now hear me out." Isaac shuffled paperwork on his desk, pulling out a small note. "Here we are. On Friday night, you will present yourself at ten sharp. You will be taken to 'The Ball'."

Luke snorted. "Grabbed by the balls, more like."

Isaac frowned at him. "Get over it. You're going. The note simply says that your presence is requested, and that you'll have to leave at midnight, as per the house rules. No mention of who or what will be there. Nor, it appears, will you be required to wear your leather pants again."

"Well, I guess I should be thankful for small mercies, then, shouldn't I?" Luke couldn't keep the distaste out of his voice.

"Luke, give them a chance." Isaac spoke calmly as Luke glowered at him under threatening eyebrows. "If we are really going to consider investing or buying them out, and I have to say I'd like to help them simply as a favor to a once-dear friend, then I need your input. Your calm and rational assessment of the facilities, the property – you know the drill."

Luke simmered down, listening now to good business sense. God bless business. Worked better than a cold shower on his temper any day.

"If, after Friday night, you consider them a worthwhile client, then I'll set the wheels on track. If you decide that what they have to offer is insufficient to keep customers coming back then buying them out completely and looking at other uses for the land might be an option. Just give me your feedback...and I'll abide by that. Just let's be sure we give them the benefit of the doubt, okay?"

Luke thought. One more night. And Friday too. Not that he had anything planned except, as Isaac so intuitively guessed, a few extra hours at his desk. But still...

He glanced up at the man watching him with a mixture of concern and affection. Damn.

He'd do anything for Isaac, and Isaac knew it. The crafty old goat.

He sighed. "You win."

Chapter 5

Syndeia Ellerby didn't recognize herself.

It was Friday night, and the previous days had produced a steady stream of large and small packages addressed to her and delivered by a highly-amused and cautiously secretive Jake.

"Here's another one, Syndea," he had grinned that morning. He showed her an interesting-looking box from an online costume supplier.

"Good God, Jake. I didn't order any of this...what the hell's going on?"

Jake simply raised his eyebrows and shook his head. "Haven't a clue. Haven't had one in years, come to think of it."

With that sage observation, Jake had turned and ambled out the door, leaving the slim package on her desk.

Since the previous deliveries had revealed an amazing collection of highly unusual clothing and...and...accessories, Syndea was cautious as she unwrapped the tissue and revealed the contents.

She gasped. It was the most incredible mask.

Made of the softest white leather, the eyeholes were ringed with tiny sequins and there were carefully sketched eyebrows, outlined with beads. It would cover her from lips to forehead, she realized, and tied at the back of the head.

The cheeks had been faintly rouged, the whole thing trimmed with sequins and when she held it to her face and breathed in that wonderful leathery scent, she couldn't suppress a smile.

Mardi Gras mates with Phantom of the Opera and gives birth to a girl.

For "girl" it was. It possessed a sensuality all its own, she realized, as she turned to a small mirror and took a quick glance. The glitter was no brighter than

the blue of her eyes, and the blush on the cheeks added a touch of femininity easily matched by her own lips swelling softly beneath the edge of the leather.

But she was pretty much unrecognizable.

Which was a damn good thing judging by all the other stuff she'd received.

She carefully laid the mask back in its box and carried it through to her bedroom, which now held an assortment of other boxes with their contents showing in the light from the slowly setting sun.

As always she checked the packing slip. No mention of any return address or purchaser. Just the usual "paid in full".

Her days had been busy, and her nights spent trying not to respond too sharply to YFG. And there had been a lot to talk about too. YFG had been very clear and concise with instructions for her.

She left the mask in her room and idly wandered back to her computer, drawn by the need to double check her saved messages from YFG. God bless the software that allowed her to revisit their conversations without having to spend ages clicking through a bunch of assorted TEMP files to find the archive she wanted. She *hated* that.

Here it was. The last messages she'd received from YFG.

{YFG: *so you got it straight? you wear the clothes ive had sent, and show up in room seven at ten tonight. not a minute earlier nor a minute later. got it?*}

Syndeia snorted. Room seven was simply for storage. It was a nice size, but she'd never had the cash to convert it into another pleasure room. It was on her list of things to do *if* she ever got enough money.

Her cell phone chirped.

"Hey, Syndeia, just to let you know. Room Seven's all ready, like you asked."

"Jake?" Syndeia's mouth dried and she had to swallow twice to get more than a squawk past her lips. "What are you talking about?"

"Your notes, Syndeia. Did what you asked. It's all set."

"I didn't ask anything. What the hell's going on?"

There was a pause.

"Look, honey. I know you're busy and worried about money. But how can you forget shit like that? I've been gettin' notes from you every day, very precise notes, I might add, tellin' me just what to do with Room Seven. All I'm sayin' is that it's done. Just like you asked."

A little chuckled followed these words. "Looks damn good too, if you'll forgive an old geezer like me sayin' so."

"I don't understand, Jake..."

"Don't ask me. I'm the guy with no clue, remember?" Jake hung up, leaving Syndea with her mouth open.

Syndea's brows furrowed, and she slid her chair to the far side of her security monitors. Reaching out, she brushed a cobweb away from one that had never been used. A quick huff blew the dust off the top of it and she hit the power switch.

Nothing happened.

"Shit, shit and double shit," she cursed.

[DING]

"Oh *now* what do you want?" she snapped irritably, as her computer demanded her attention.

She slid back to her keyboard.

[YFG: *aint nobody gonna be spying on you in that room tonight, sweets. i took care of that little matter*]

Syndea sighed. This was all getting way too outrageous.

[YFG: *you just do like i told you. put on the gear, pack the toys and head for room seven*]

"Oh sure. I'm going to just rush off and slip into this...this crazy costume of yours and dash down to the storage room and sort condoms." She snorted as she typed her response.

[YFG: Syndea. I'm not joking about this. It's a matter of great importance to you and your business.]

"Aha. You can punctuate." Syndea caught the change in text immediately.

[YFG: only if its real important...this is REAL important, babe]

She grimaced. If she had to go down and act like an idiot in a weird costume for a couple of hours to bring in some new business, then hell. It was probably worth it. She had promised her father, after all.

[YFG: *he'd be proud of you, girl*]

Her eyes filled with unaccustomed tears. God, she missed him so much.

"Thank you," she typed, meaning it. Those few words had straightened her spine, sent a shaft of courage through her heart, and cemented her resolution.

[YFG: *so go get ready. times a-wasting*]

So be it. Syndea pushed back her chair, turned off the desk lamp and headed for her bathroom.

At a quarter to ten that night, she wondered if she hadn't made the most godawful mistake of her life.

* * * * *

Luke Charmanti approached the door of The Glass Stripper with several thoughts racing through his mind.

Prime amongst them was relief that his chinos fit comfortably, and his soft t-shirt wasn't scratching anything sensitive.

The rest of his mind wondered about the upcoming "session" and what it would involve. He mentally shrugged and lifted his hand, only to find the door already opening.

This time, however, he was spared the extraordinary expanse of dental work that passed for Mistress Violet's smile.

"Good evening, Sir. I'm Jake. Would you follow me, please?" An elderly man was smiling paternally at him.

Luke crossed his fingers that the place drew the line at senior sex. Visions of ferrets, wombats and almost-bald guinea pigs danced horribly through his brain.

He shuddered.

"This way, Sir." Jake led Luke down the same staircase he'd used before. But this time, the man passed the doors that had opened for him last time and walked on to a room at the very end of the corridor.

"In here, please." He swung the door wide, and for a moment Luke was blinded by the glare of what seemed like a thousand candles.

"Enjoy yourself, Sir." The door closed behind him, and Luke found himself alone.

The silence was broken as music began to play. Something soft and haunting with a slightly Latin beat to it.

Curiously, it was echoing the beat of Luke's heart.

The room was filled with dancing light. Candles had been lit in great profusion, from the huge old chandelier overhead to the niches in the walls and down to one or two large ones in standing sconces around the perimeter of the floor.

A large chair sat on an ancient oriental rug, and faced a slightly raised dais over which soft, flowing draperies were presently drawn.

The room was almost entirely white. Walls, drapes, everything.

Except for the glass. There was glass everywhere. Statues, figurines, small creatures and large chunks. Interspersed with the glass were several huge lumps of glittering geodes, their vibrant innards exposed to the candlelight.

It was dazzling, spellbinding and unique, and Luke had to make a physical effort to drag his jaw off the ground.

This was *not* what he'd expected at all.

With a shrug, he pulled off his jacket, tossed it aside and sat down in the large chair. Perhaps there was more merit to *The Glass Stripper* than he'd thought the other night.

Time would tell.

The music continued quietly, relaxing Luke, stealing into his ears like liquid honey.

It had to be after ten. Where was the entertainment?

A slight shift in the draperies hiding the dais let him know that it was about to begin.

All thoughts of music, candles and furry rodents faded from his mind as the curtains drew back.

A woman stood there.

A mask over her face twinkled and glittered as she moved slightly, and nearly blinded him for a few moments. He blinked to clear his vision.

She seemed tall, but the rest of her was concealed beneath a long white cloak of something soft that fell to the floor in graceful folds. It had a high collar standing up behind her like a fan, which neatly framed the massive amounts of shining golden hair that tumbled down over it to where her waist would probably be.

The effect was completely dazzling, and Luke held his breath, fearing to disturb the gleaming image before him.

Slowly, very slowly, a hand emerged from where the two halves of the cloak met and slid upwards to the fastening at the throat.

Luke's heart ignored the slow tempo of the music and started its own rapid rhumba within his chest as her hand flipped the catch.

She spread the cloak wide and dropped it to the floor.

His heart gave up the battle, leapt into his throat and stopped completely, as awed as his brain was by the vision she revealed.

Her body was almost as white as the cloak she'd let fall. Perfect curves, long legs, and breasts...well, for one brief moment, Luke blessed his chinos. His cock was responding very enthusiastically to the sight of those breasts. If he'd worn those leather pants, he'd be dead by now.

She wore a soft white satin corset thing, which laced up the front, leaving long ends of ribbon dangling downwards, pointing the way to...to...heaven.

Her lower half was mostly revealed by a tiny white g-string affair, riding low beneath her navel, and disappearing into the shadows between her thighs.

Her long, white, smooth thighs. Thighs he had no trouble imagining clasped tight around him.

Holy shit. She was gorgeous.

And to judge from the tiny tremor that made her mask flash wildly, she was nervous too.

Somehow the thought calmed Luke.

She was here for his pleasure, right? This whole place was designed for his pleasure. And after his last visit he figured he had some making up to do on that particular front.

Making up wouldn't be hard to do at all. Not with her. Neither would making *out*.

His cock shuddered once more, achieving quite respectable proportions as it struggled to find room to grow within his trousers.

The air turned hot around Luke, and without even thinking about it, he tore off his shirt, as if by baring himself to her, she would reciprocate. *Please* let her reciprocate.

She moved and Luke's breath caught.

Slowly, she stepped from the dais, her long legs gleaming in the candlelight as she neared his chair.

"Good evening," she breathed.

Luke's hair stood up on the back of his neck. Her voice was low, and sultry, and made him think of impossibly sexy things. Her fragrance swirled around him, light and feminine and mixed with something indefinable. A light touch of woman.

"Hello." Shit. That wasn't what he wanted to say. Of course, "*let me get those clothes off you and fuck you til you can't stand up straight*" probably wasn't the best way to begin a conversation either.

"I am here to give you pleasure this evening."

Ohhhh honey. If you only knew. Luke was trying very hard to keep his thoughts rational and his heart within a couple of feet of where it belonged. His pulse pounded in his ears as she rounded his chair and let her fingers just graze his bare shoulders.

"If you'd care to assist me, there is a catch that needs undoing..."

She turned away from him and presented him with the loveliest ass he could remember seeing in years. Okay. The loveliest ass he'd ever seen in his entire life.

Firm and full, the cheeks of her bottom were creamy and smooth, and divided by the little strip of white silk from her g-string thong.

He dragged his gaze from the expanse of flesh and looked to where her finger was pointing.

A small patch of Velcro fastened the silk. It was nestled into the soft valley at the base of her spine.

"Would you mind?" She glanced over her shoulder at him, blonde curls tumbling every which way.

Would he mind what? Biting her buttocks? Fucking her up the ass? Stripping her naked and doing any one of the seventy-two improbable things that were tripping merrily through his befuddled brain?

Oh. Damn. She wanted him to undo the Velcro. Well *shit*.

Luke was appalled to see his hands trembling as they reached out for the fabric. He couldn't ignore the ass in front of his face, and daringly brushed his hands over its soft cheeks as he undid the fastener with a quick tug.

He registered the little shiver that passed over the woman as he touched her.

Well, hell. She was human too. He was beginning to wonder if she was just a fantasy his mind had conjured up. Although in all fairness, his mind could never

have imagined *her*. Not in his wildest dreams. Or – maybe in one or two of them. The ones that left him with a pounding hard-on and a deep need to take himself in hand, so to speak.

To his amazement, she stepped away, and left him holding the tiny bits of her underwear.

They snagged slightly between her thighs as she moved, and Luke grasped them firmly, letting them drag slowly across her hidden folds.

Obedying some erotic need, Luke raised his hand to his face and inhaled the fragrance that lingered on the little scrap of silk.

It sent his senses spinning and his cock into ecstasy.

Delicate, sweet, yet tangy with the moisture from her body, it slid effortlessly up his nose and into his brain.

Luke was lost. He couldn't wait to see what she was going to do next.

And if she needed some more help.

He was *more* than ready to oblige.

Chapter 6

Syndea tried her very best to forget that her naked ass was now wobbling its way to the dais under the gaze of the most gorgeous man she'd ever seen.

For a second she regretted all those "Buns of Iron" videos she'd ordered but never used.

Then the magnitude of what she was about to do swept over her and she forgot all about cellulite, flabby buttocks, and everything else in a flush of sheer and simple terror.

Could she do it?

Having looked into his dark brown eyes, could she go through with it?

Close up and in person, he was even more devastating than she could have imagined. His black hair curled softly at the base of his neck, full and thick and with one lock dropping sensually over his forehead.

His eyes were pools of heat, melted chocolate that encouraged her mouth to water along with other parts of her body.

His chest was solid, tanned and very nicely shaped, not the bulging muscular strength of a body builder, but the carved planes and valleys that screamed *all-male* and sent her hormones into overload. She had a very hard time resisting the urge to run her hands through the light scattering of black hair that dappled his skin, or seeking out his flat copper nipples and teasing them into buds. With her tongue.

Keeerrriisst. This man seemed to have the key to her inner slut. And he'd just unlocked the door.

She reached the dais and stepped slowly onto it. Now came the hard part. She had to turn around and expose herself to him.

Keep it cool, Syn, she told herself. *He's seen pussies before. Why should yours be any different?* She tried to slip into the mindset she used during her regular physical exam. It didn't work.

For starters, there was no nurse in the room, her feet weren't resting on potholders in stirrups, and the man behind her wasn't a gentle fatherly MD. Her doctor certainly *had* seen it all before, but this man, this Charmanti, hadn't. Not hers, anyway.

And it was also unlikely that he'd begin a conversation about the latest movie while shoving a speculum into her body.

Shoving things into her body was *her* assigned task for the night.

Swallowing, she reached for a low shelf by the dais. It was filled with an assortment of glass objects, most of which strongly resembled the distinctive shape of the male penis. Not surprising, actually, since that was exactly what they were supposed to represent.

They were glass dildoes.

She picked her favorite, long, smooth, and with rippling ribbons of red and yellow intertwined within the glass of the shaft. The head was flanged, and the feel of the satiny surface beneath her fingers made her wonder...about Mr. Charmanti and *his* cock.

Taking a deep breath, she slowly turned, taking comfort in the mask that she hoped hid the color she could feel rising to her cheeks.

It seemed to be matched by the color in his.

As the fog of embarrassment cleared from her vision, she saw him grip the arms of the chair with force, his arms muscling as he clenched the wood. He was looking her right between the...legs.

She sighed. Oh well. The worst was over now.

Slowly she began her carefully rehearsed moves, sliding the glass cock over her cheeks and allowing it to cross her lips with a little hum of pleasure.

This time, there was no mistaking the level of arousal in Charmanti. His cock was damn near jumping out of his pants.

Something inside Syndea grinned. Ah, the power of woman. Well, woman stroking glass cock over various portions of her body and flaunting her bare pussy at him. It was nearly the same thing.

She slid the glass between her breasts, brushing it over her nipples and the corset that covered them.

She gasped as the pressure brought a shudder of arousal through her. Somewhat stunned, she realized she was responding to her own touch. And being watched so intently by those burning brown eyes was helping the process move right along.

Very well indeed.

Growing braver, she slid the cock downwards, lingering around her navel and unconsciously licking the dryness away from her lips.

His eyes were everywhere.

She gradually widened her stance, letting the cock just brush the top of her mound, and fighting to suppress the slight hiss of pleasure that forced its way out between her teeth. Thank God for the mask. It hid the heat of her face, protected her behind its anonymity, and let her release some of the wild woman that had lain dormant inside her.

Daringly, she slipped the cock between her legs, and then back up again, bringing it to her lips and running her tongue over the glass. The heat from her body warmed it a little now, and it felt wonderful as she slipped it into her mouth and then pulled it back out again.

He moaned. He definitely moaned.

She hadn't restrained him to the chair, but he never moved, never took his eyes off her. His lips were parted, his chest rising and falling in rapid breaths, and the bulge in his pants approached mammoth proportions. His knuckles were turning white on the arms of his chair.

Well all right. She was getting to him.

Her conscience forced her to admit that he was getting to her too. But who listened to their conscience? Certainly not mostly-naked women putting on an erotic sex show with glass penises.

She dropped her hand again, sliding the cock more rhythmically over her mound and between her legs. She couldn't suppress the little thrust her hips gave as the cool glass brushed her clit. It felt—good. Amazingly good. As if she'd waited a lifetime for her body to show her what it could do. And the right man to watch her while she did it.

His gaze seared into her flesh as she moved the cock, letting the head touch her now, and pushing slightly so that he could clearly see it disappear into her cunt a little way, and then emerge.

She knew she was wet—she could feel the moisture on her thighs, and she wondered what, if anything, he was thinking.

His pants made it clear what he was *feeling*. But was he watching her show with mental detachment? Evaluating her moves as if she were a ledger sheet or something? Making a rough guess as to the value of the props?

The mere thought of such a calculated assessment firmed Syndea's resolve, and she leaned forward a little, thrusting the glass cock deep inside her.

He growled and his mouth opened, startling her with the intensity of his sound.

She withdrew it again, then plunged deep once more.

To add a little drama to the scene, she raised her other hand and cupped her breast through the satin of her corset, raising it slightly as if in offering.

Her thumb stroked her nipple, which was hard enough already and didn't need much more attention, thank you very much. Not this kind of attention, anyway.

It needed a hot mouth suckling it, a strong hand kneading it...

She gulped, feeling strange sensations flowering inside her.

God no. She couldn't come. Not right this minute. She hadn't finished her show. If only he would stop looking at her like that.

Like she was Sunday dinner and he hadn't eaten for a month.

With a sigh she withdrew the glass cock, and let it slip from her hand back onto the table.

Her knees shook as she spread her feet wide apart and found the ankle restraints that had been discreetly secured to the floor.

Bending over she fastened her ankle chains to the clasps.

She stood, thankful her mask was still in place. She reached high, touching the bar that was suspended from the ceiling above her.

It took but a moment to snap her wrists into the padded cuffs.

She was spread-eagled before him, hanging there in a satin corset, with her arms out to both sides and her legs open to his gaze.

Her eyes met his. She swallowed past the dryness in her throat and let her lips curl into a sensual smile. "Your turn."

* * * * *

His turn?

For a moment, Luke wasn't quite sure he'd heard what he thought he'd heard. His turn.

For what?

He stood slowly, trying to grab a breath and subtly fix his pants around a cock that was now the size of a small intercontinental missile. And damn close to acquiring its target and firing, too.

He neared the dais, watching the candlelight flicker off blue eyes, wide open beneath the mask. She was a true blonde, all right. He didn't need pussy hair to tell him that.

Tentatively, he reached out a hand and smoothed it up the outside of her thigh, as if to reassure himself that she was real.

She was.

The heat of her burned his palm, and her flesh was silky soft as he stroked it. He stepped up and circled her. From behind her he gazed down at her buttocks, the firm roundness of her crying out for his hands.

He answered the call, cupping her, kneading her, and learning the play of muscles and skin as she leaned back slightly into his hands.

"My name's Luke. What's yours?" He whispered low, bending to her golden hair and nuzzling it with his nose.

"I have no name. You may call me what you wish," she answered. Her voice was breathless, a sound that made his cock throb.

"Very well...Princess. You said it was my turn. What can I do?" Luke waited for her response, hands still caressing her cheeks, longing to delve between them.

"Anything you wish, Sir. I am here to please you."

Right answer. Luke's libido punched a happy fist into the sky.

"Anything but..." She paused.

Shit. Heaven's doors were closing on him. "But?" He drew out the word in time with his fondling of her, running his fingertips in a scrape up her hot flesh.

She shivered. "Anything but penetrate me with your...your..."

He tugged on her cheeks a little, spreading her apart. He moved closer and pressed his cock into the valley he'd created, wishing his damn pants weren't in the way.

"With this, Princess?" he said. His hips flexed and he heard a stifled groan as his cock rubbed her.

"Yes, with that," she sighed. "You may...remove your clothing, should you so desire."

"Oh I desire, honey. Can't you feel how I desire?" Luke gritted his teeth and quickly shed the rest of his clothing. Then he moved back to her and resumed nestling his now very happy missile between those perfect ass cheeks.

Their sighs of pleasure were simultaneous.

But it was surely not enough. Not for Luke, anyway. He slid one hand around her and found her juices between her legs. Her silky mound was soon covered with them, and he smiled as she moaned at his touch.

He could feel himself leaking droplets of pre-come into her dark cleft. "So I can't fuck you, right? Is that what you're saying? I can't spread you wide here and take you like I so want to? Find your secrets?" He rubbed the tip of his cock against her tight anus, and bit his lip against the urge to thrust himself past it, deep into her heat.

"No." The word sounded almost...scared.

"Okay, relax, Princess. I won't. I'll just play a little."

And he did. They were both slippery and hot and her breaths were coming in little pants as his fingers and his cock sought and found her most sensitive places.

"You may...you may use the toys if you wish," she gasped. His fingers paused from their investigation of her soft folds. Perhaps he was getting to her. Well, hell, her hot honey was covering his hand, so that was a pretty obvious deduction.

Luke smacked himself mentally. Of course he was getting to her. Perhaps he could even make her come. Like this. Chained for his pleasure. It would be his pleasure to make this cool, beautiful body shudder. To watch those hidden blue eyes go misty and hot as she came.

His lips curled in a sensual smile that was almost a snarl. He had it bad.

He glanced around at the table and its assortment of sparkling glass sex toys. There were many different shapes and sizes, but the one that caught his eye was the cock featuring a spiraling ring of sapphire blue glass around the outside, swirling from base to head.

He grinned.

Moving away from her, he picked up the glass dildo. It was cold and smooth to the touch except for the rippling bumps of the decoration.

He circled her again, standing close in front of her this time. Her breath was sweet and minty, and he wanted to kiss those full lips.

He did. Lightly, and with just a brush of his own, he touched her mouth and pulled back, seeing her eyes close for a second and then flicker open.

"Like that? I like kissing. Do you?"

She seemed lost for an answer. Of course, the fact that he was running the cool glass over her belly might be a bit distracting. It sure was to him.

He found her mound with the toy and pressed against it. Her lips parted with a slight sound, and he seized the opportunity, grasping the back of her head with his free hand and plunging his tongue into her mouth.

Luke's mind roiled as his tongue found the sweetness of hers and tangled fiercely with it. She was kissing him back and matching his moves with hers. He angled their heads, deepening his attack, and tasting her.

It was seductive, hypnotizing, this mix of mint and Princess that sent a shiver down his spine directly to his balls. He pulled away slowly, letting their lips tug apart as if unwilling to be separated.

"Nice," he breathed.

"Oh yes," she whispered. "Oh yes."

His eyes dropped to the toy, pressed hard now against her mound. "Time for play, I think."

He heard her swallow. "As you please."

"Oh, I please, all right. So do you." Luke dropped to his knees in front of her.

Her mound was shining, flushed with her arousal, and he could smell her special scent as he raised his hand and spread her folds apart. He touched the cool glass to the little bud of weeping flesh.

She jumped. "I'm sorry...I..."

"Don't. Don't apologize. I want to make you feel things. Wonderful things...new things..."

"I...you are. Oh God." It was little more than a whisper, but Luke heard it. His whole body lit up. There was something about this woman and her state of helpless need that was turning him on like nothing he'd ever experienced.

She was willing to let him do whatever he wanted, yet everything seemed to be new to her. She was as brazen as any woman he'd ever seen, but had a touch of innocence about her reactions that she couldn't possibly fake.

She was a mystery, and he'd love to puzzle it out. Right after he'd done a few other things to her first.

Slowly, he touched her pussy lips with the glass dildo, and smoothed it around, covering it with her moisture and caressing her swollen folds at the same time.

She moaned, and her hips slid towards him in mute appeal.

He found exactly the right spot, and gently pressed upwards, sinking the glass into her cunt.

She gasped and he glanced up, seeing her teeth come down on her lower lip.

"Does that hurt you, Princess?"

"Oh no, no. It's just so...so..." Her eyes were closed and her nipples beaded taut beneath the corset.

Luke pulled the toy out and slipped it back in again, knowing the ripples on the smooth sides would be rubbing her inner silk and finding all those super-sensitive places deep within her.

The laces on her corset were dangling over her navel, and Luke obeyed an inner urge. He raised his head and caught one between his teeth. He tugged.

Her eyes opened wide and she looked down, surprise showing in the blue gaze.

He tugged some more and the knot fell free. The corset loosened and her breasts were revealed as the satin slipped slowly down her body.

With frantic urgency, Luke ripped the laces from the fabric and tore it away from her, leaving her as naked as he. He kept the glass dildo high inside her with

one hand as he stood and freed her body with the other. Her breasts were perfect.

Round, firm and just the right size.

He couldn't resist. His mouth lowered, and to the accompaniment of her gusty sigh, Luke suckled her, tugging hard on the rigid peaks and keeping the toy moving in her cunt.

She was groaning now, under the dual assault of his hand and his mouth. Her skin flickered like a live thing, ripples of sensation crossing its white surface and a flush of arousal staining her breasts and neck.

He continued to suckle her, pulling mercilessly on first one nipple and then the other. Her body tightened beneath his touch, and he felt the first trembles of her orgasm begin.

He dropped her breast from his mouth and fell to his knees once again. This one he was going to share with her, one way or the other.

He shoved his face hard against her mound and found her clit with his tongue. He circled it fiercely, pushing and demanding her response.

He got it.

As his mouth worked her, he pushed the glass dildo all the way in. She fell apart around him.

She cried out, her flesh shuddering and pulsing around his tongue and his fingers. The spasms went on and on, and he encouraged her, prodding her hard clit and running his tongue around the folds that were dancing to his tune.

Again and again he forced her to take more from him, letting one set of tremors die down before touching her again, differently, sometimes gently, sometimes hard.

After the third time, she sagged, muscles limp, eyes closed, shaking a little as the aftershocks racked her body. She was dewed with sweat, her thighs soaked with her own juices, and he was on fire.

He promised himself that soon, very soon, it would be his cock that made her come.

Chapter 7

Syndea's mind and body were beyond her control.

She hung from the arm restraints, letting her weight rest on the cuffs, exhausted, stunned, and sated.

Slowly she raised her eyelids and looked down. His face smiled at her, glistening from her own moisture, and with a grin that would have out-Cheshired the Cheshire Cat.

His brown eyes were hot, seeking her face, her body, and almost cataloging each and every twitch and flutter. And God knew there'd been enough to fill a clipboard.

She drew in a deep breath, and tried to muster her thoughts back into some kind of rational order. *Shit*. The time. She still had another task assigned, and it must be after eleven already.

A quick glance at the clock high in the shadows on the wall confirmed her fears. Past eleven thirty. She'd lost track of time under the spell of his hands, his lips, his tongue and that dratted glass cock he was slipping out of her.

Ooooh. She damn near came again as the rippling glass pulled free.

Steeling herself, she twitched her wrists and freed them from the cuffs.

He stepped back, a question in his eyes. "What now, Princess?"

Damn. His voice was liquid sex and she was still turned on by it, let alone the sight of his body. His cock was nearly purple, the veins standing out along its length as it pointed towards her. She wanted to ponder the symbolism, but time was running out.

"Now, perhaps...you should sit down." She kicked free of the ankle clasps and stretched slightly, letting her body recover from its erotic roller-coaster ride.

Luke tilted his head slightly at her, but obeyed, walking back to his chair.

Syndeia sighed. What a really nice butt. A really *really* nice butt. The kind a girl could sink her teeth into.

But it wasn't his butt that was going to get her teeth. It was something else. Something hard and long, and that was making her mouth water.

She was surprised at herself. Oral sex had never particularly interested her or turned her on, but right now, it was all she could do to stop herself from flying over to the chair and grabbing that fine cock of his.

Well, she *was* going to do that, of course. But sensually. Not like a bitch in heat. She snorted to herself, wondering if there was a difference. And even if there was, whether Luke would care.

From the look in his eyes as she walked towards him, the answer was clear. *Not at all.*

As if he sensed her intention, he widened his thighs, letting his cock stand free, inviting her touch. It was so big, so...so...male.

She stood in front of him, watching him, seeing the pulse beating fast at the base of his throat and the way he licked the remnants of her honey from his lips.

Keeerrriiisst. Three eye-rolling orgasms, and he was *still* ringing her bells.

She dropped to her knees and pushed his legs even further apart, thanking her guardian angel that her usually annoying knees didn't crack as she did so.

She must be more relaxed than she thought.

Syndeia's hands reached out for their goal, and as she enveloped him in her grasp, the breath hissed out between his teeth.

"That feels so good, Princess...so good."

She risked a glance at his face. "Does it? I'm glad."

His eyes were heavy lidded and fixed on her as she ran her fingers up and down his length. He was smooth and hard, and very hot, and she could feel the echo of his pulse beneath her hands.

Slowly, deliberately, she licked her lips. As she moved forward, her hair fell on his thighs and her breasts brushed against him.

Yep. Hard nipples all over again. She groaned and took him into her mouth.

His body tightened around her, his thighs clasp her, and his hands reaching for her head.

She pulled back quickly. "Do not touch the mask."

"I wasn't going to, Princess. I just want to feel your hair. So soft..." He trailed long strands through his fingers.

Relieved, she returned to his cock, letting her tongue trace the veins and ridges and paying minute attention to every little ripple and valley she could find.

Almost of their own volition, her hands sought his balls, finding them hard and tight, and hot to the touch.

She moved her head slowly, taking as much of him as she could. It was the most amazing experience. He tasted salty, yet sweet, with a flavor she couldn't begin to describe.

His sounds, his sighs and groans were making her even more determined to bring him pleasure.

She pulled back, letting her saliva soak him, and slick the surface of his cock, and then went down on him again, taking him almost to the back of her throat.

"I'm gonna...I can't..." His hands fisted in her hair.

Instead of letting him pull her head away, Syndea simply increased her suction. She clamped her mouth around him, drawing all the way out to the head, flicking beneath it with her tongue, and then sliding back down again, glancing up at him every now and again to make sure she still had his attention.

Oh yeah. He was paying attention.

His face was flushed, his breathing irregular, and his hands were scrabbling in her curls, trying to hold her head right where it was, and then slacking, as if it was something he should not demand.

She didn't care. She had a goal, a purpose. She was going to make him come like he'd never come before. And take it all, every drop, right down her throat.

He moaned, a deep, passion-filled sound, and his balls moved higher in her gentle grasp. "Princess..." he hissed.

Syndeia ignored him. She'd always been accused of being goal-oriented. Why change now?

Within moments he was heaving beneath her, and she added some extra tongue flickers to encourage him to lose control. Damn, he was a fighter. She could almost hear his thoughts as he struggled against his natural inclinations.

Finally, with a guttural cry, he surrendered.

His legs locked against her, his balls twitched and suddenly he was erupting into her throat, pouring spurt after spurt of his come into her heat.

She sucked him and tongued him and swallowed, milking him dry.

It was the most extraordinary moment, and Syndeia knew an instant's regret that it would be over so quickly.

She had never done this to a man in her life. Never known the feeling of taking his come and making it part of her this way. Never felt a man shudder and tremble in the throes of his orgasm as she sucked his cock frantically, trying to pull his very soul from the tiny slit that poured his essence into her.

Finally, he eased.

With a last loving lick, Syndeia let his softening cock fall from between her lips, and knelt back on her heels.

His thighs were relaxing, his chest was heaving, and his eyes were closed as the last shivers of his orgasm faded from his body.

Quietly, very quietly, a clock began to slowly strike midnight somewhere else in the house.

Syndeia knew that it was time for her to leave.

He opened his eyes as she stood. "Midnight strikes. Our evening is over, Sir."

"Who are you?" The question came out on a breathy sigh.

"Your Princess, of course."

Syndeia rose and gathered her cloak, swirling it quickly around her. She had to follow her instructions and time was of the essence now.

"But...but..." Luke was trying to stand, and Syndeia noted with a certain amount of pride that he had to hold on to the arm of the chair to do it. "I want to see you again."

Syndeia bit her lip. Her instructions had been quite precise. She'd followed them to the letter. But nothing had been said about meeting him again. In fact, she'd been told that it would not be a good idea.

Then her heart took over.

She wanted this man. They'd had an erotic experience together that had gone past the bounds of anything she could have imagined. Supposing she could...could actually *be* with him.

What an experience that would be. Where would be the harm in it? He'd have fun, she'd get the orgasms of a lifetime, and it would be just them, two consenting adults. The club wouldn't suffer, or even have to know about it.

Oh yeah. Her body grinned at her. *Now you're talking.*

Syndeia took a deep breath and reached over to the small table of glass dildoes. "If you truly wish to see me again, then keep this. I shall be here on Sunday night." She passed him a small, smooth cock, lovingly shaped by an artist's hands. It was her favorite piece, created by Italian craftsmen who had no peer when it came to glass sculptures.

He looked at it, then back at her. "I thought the club was closed on Sundays."

Syndeia paused at the doorway and glanced back at him. Naked, unashamed, he stood there, perfection personified, with the glass cock in his hand.

"It is."

She whirled her cloak again and slipped through the door closing it behind her as the last stroke of midnight sounded.

There was *nothing* like making a dramatic exit.

* * * * *

Syndea woke to the bright sunlight streaming across her pillow and a very sharp fingernail poking her in the shoulder.

"You still sleeping? What the fuck's the matter with you? Get out of that bed right now. It's Saturday, you stupid bitch."

The strident tones of her stepmother penetrated the hazy clouds of a rather wonderful dream Syndea had been enjoying and made her groan.

She grabbed the sheets and pulled them up to her neck. "Go away."

"I will *not*. You lazy shit. Get that ass of yours out of bed right now. How the hell are you going to manage this club when you sleep the goddamned day away?"

Syndea opened one eye. Her clock informed her it was barely half past eight. Hardly sleeping the day away. Then another thought took hold. "How'd you get in here?"

Mistress Violet snorted. "Anyone could have gotten in here. You didn't lock the door. Another stupid idiot mistake. And what the hell's all this?" She kicked at the tissues and boxes that littered Syndea's bedroom floor.

"Damn. You've been messing with the costumes, haven't you?" She pulled out the white cloak and held it between her finger and thumb like it was a dead fish.

"White? *White*?"

Syndea felt the screech all the way to her bladder, which was reminding her that she really had to pee.

"What have I told you about using white? Men don't like white. White pisses them off. White is for virgins and brides, and we're not in that business. Gawd. How fucking stupid can you get?" She tossed the offending garment away. "Get this stuff back to Bryony. Maybe she can dye it or something."

Syndeia clenched her teeth. "I'll be up in a minute. You want coffee or anything?" *A gag? Cyanide? Arsenic?*

Mistress Violet snorted. "All I want is for you to get that fat ass of yours out of that bed. Lazing around like you've got nothing better to do. Move it, bitch, or you and your...*toys*...will be out on the street before you can blink."

She stalked from the room and Syndeia heard things clattering in her tiny kitchen. Grabbing her robe, she hit the bathroom, then hurriedly pulled all the boxes out of sight. She wasn't about to let Bryony dye anything. Not anything she'd worn last night, anyway.

Last night.

She shuddered. Dear God. Luke Charmanti. The things he'd done to her and she'd done to him. *Keeerrrrriiisssst*. Her cunt twitched just thinking about it.

"Syndeaaaaa..."

Shit. The foghorn voice summoned her from the kitchen.

Syndeia sighed. "Coming, stepmother."

She walked into the kitchen to be met with a firm slap around one ear. "Didn't I tell you not to call me that?"

Syndeia's ears rang as tears started into her eyes from the sudden blow. Red fury swept through her. "Don't ever...*ever*...lay a hand on me like that again," she hissed.

In spite of her bravado, Mistress Violet took a cautious step back.

"You may be co-owner of this place, but I'd willingly turn the whole thing over to the bankruptcy boys before I let you hit me."

Something in Syndeia's voice must have penetrated Violet's brain, because she subsided, muttering, into a small chair that groaned under the strain.

"Now what the hell do you want?"

Violet narrowed her eyes. "What do I want? What I've always wanted. For this place to show a decent profit. For plenty of money to start coming in. And you're falling down on the job."

Syndea gritted her teeth. "Look, I've told you before —"

"Don't bother with all that bottom line business crap. I'm fucking fed up with it. You're not managing this place the way it should be managed. You've got some damn degree, for chrissake. Use it."

Syndea sighed. What was the point of arguing? She could bang her head against a brick wall for only so long.

"Seeing as you can't get the lead out of your ass, I decided to take matters into my own hands."

Oh God. It wasn't even nine o'clock in the morning, and already Syndea's day was shot to hell.

"I've booked a party tonight. There's six of them, so it'll be me and the girls...and seeing as Rayna's out of town, missy, that means you too."

Syndea jerked up. "Me?"

"Yes, you. It's about time you earned your keep. I don't care what you do, but I expect you to be in the Grand Suite tonight. Ready for action. And I don't care what the action is. You understand?"

"No."

"Don't give me no. You'll be there, or there will be..." Violet paused, looking for the right words. "Dire consequences."

Syndea snorted. "Yeah? Like what? Counting condoms? Cleaning whips? Sewing up that latex that Pansy always rips to shreds?"

Violet's eyes narrowed. "Oh no. Not this time." A vicious grin bared her teeth. "You fuck this up for me, and you're out."

Syndea's heart stopped. "What do you mean, *out*?"

"I mean out. As in out on the street. Gonzo. Bye bye." Violet's eyes weren't laughing.

"You can't do that."

"Watch me."

"Look, you know how this ownership is set up. We're partners." Syndea fought to keep her temper. "You can't throw me out. I'm half-owner."

"Only by that stupid will of your father's. Which I will contest on the grounds that he wasn't in his right mind when he died."

Syndea gaped. "What the hell...?"

"I've been talking to a couple of lawyers." Violet smirked. "It was an even exchange. Information for stimulation."

Syndea's stomach heaved, and she swallowed rapidly. Barfing over her kitchen table wouldn't help matters.

Violet tapped her long fingernails on the table in an irritating off-tempo rattle. "I have the legal grounds to contest that will. The signature is fuzzy. It was signed while that old lawyer of his, Thompson, was alive. He's dead now. I can certainly take it to court and say that it was a fake. That *you* signed it, or forced him to sign it."

Syndea's jaw dropped. "*You wouldn't!* You *know* my father signed that. He left plenty for you and the girls."

Violet snorted. "Plenty. That's a joke. A house and half interest in a club that's losing money hand over fist. I'm not gonna let the chance to get my hands on more money slip away. I'll contest the will, and I'll win. Make no mistake about it. And when I do, I'll sell the lot as quick as I can find a buyer. And that won't be hard."

She stared at Syndea. "So when I say 'out on the street', I mean it. Show up at that party tonight, or start packing. As soon as this matter hits the courts, I'll get a restraining order barring you from the house. *This* house." She shut her mouth with a snap.

Syndea's world was rocking on its axis as she realized that Violet meant each and every threat. She wouldn't care that legal cases like this could get tied up in the courts for years. She wouldn't have thought of anything like costs, or how she would live in the meantime if the club was closed.

No, she was out for only one thing. Her own satisfaction.

And it looked like grinding Syndea into the ground beneath those stupid high heels she tottered about on was one of the side pleasures she was going to permit herself.

"But Pansy and Iris..." stuttered Syndea.

"They'll be fine. All we have to do is set up shop in our own house. This place can rot, for all I care. They've got clients. As well they should. They know their job and do it well. Not like *you*..."

Violet stood, scraping the feet of the chair across the wooden floor and bringing a wince of pain to Syndea's face.

"The only reason I'm asking you to show your ass downstairs tonight, is because I'm one girl short. Don't ever think otherwise. You're a failure as a business manager and not much better as an *entertainer*. Tonight's party is gonna bring in more money than you've brought in over the last month. I've even extended the hours."

Syndeas eyes widened. "You can't do that. It's in violation of city ordinances."

Violet snickered. "Oh yeah? Just watch me." She walked to the door. "And it's no holds barred, tonight, too."

"You don't mean..."

"Sure I do. Those guys wanna fuck? Let 'em. It'll cost them plenty, but the money goes right where it should have been all along. Be downstairs at eight sharp. I don't care what you wear, just be there. And make sure that the costumes are clean and ready, the tools set out just like I want 'em, and the whole shebang tidy."

Her eyes pierced into Syndea. "And that ain't gonna happen while you laze around here. Get to it, dimwit."

The door closed behind her, leaving one very distraught woman hunched over her kitchen table.

This was a disaster. Syndea either had to face a legal nightmare and see her father's name dragged through the courts, which might end up with her losing everything she'd worked so hard for, or go downstairs tonight and...and whore!

Chapter 8

[DING]

Syndeas computer chimed just as she dragged her tired ass back into her apartment. Slamming the door behind her, she locked it this time, making sure that the bolt was thrown home, too.

She was tired, worried, furious and seriously pissed that she hadn't been able to spend at least some of the day dreaming about her own private paradise. Named Luke Charmanti.

[DING DING]

Oh shit. As if she had time for this right now. She eased her aching back down into her chair and pulled her keyboard close.

"What?"

[YFG: hey girlie. howd it go last night?]

"Fine."

[YFG: ouch. whadd i do?]

Syndeas sighed. "Nothing. Sorry. Last night was a dream. This day has been a nightmare."

[YFG: so tell me about last night]

Her fingers paused over the keyboard. What the hell could she say? That her experiences had left her trembling and invaded her dreams? That Luke had touched her in ways and places that no one else had ever come close to?

"It was...wonderful. Let's leave it at that."

[YFG: oooh. that good huh?]

"Yep."

[YFG: followed my instructions, did ya?]

"Pretty much."

[YFG: hmmm. youre gonna see him again arent you?]

"I...umm..." Syndea found a little emoticon that blushed. She added it to her message.

[YFG: (SNICKER)]

"You told me not to...don't you mind?"

[YFG: hell no. you wanna see him again then hes the right guy. if you broke a rule it was because you wanted to. had to make sure]

"You sneaky, underhanded, devious little..."

[YFG: hey hey cut it out with the insults. you had a good time didnt ya?]

"Well, yeah. Hell, yeah."

[YFG: thats more like it. so whats the beef today? no lemme guess. that stepbitch is on your case again]

"Got it in one," typed Syndea. Her fingers flew over the keys as she poured out the story of her stepmother's vicious plans. It was a relief to share it all, to let it all flow into the anonymous world of cyberspace.

There was a pause after her missive, and she waited, wondering what YFG would have to say about it.

[YFG: you gonna go?]

"What other choice do I have? I can't lose this place. I promised Dad..." Her fingers slowed and she stopped, feeling tears gather at the back of her eyes.

[YFG: dont sweat it babe. trust in YFG. i got us a plan]

For the first time that day, Syndea felt her spirits lift a little. "You do?"

[YFG: yup]

Shit. Was that all she was going to get? A simple "Yup"? What the hell kind of an answer was that? She decided to find out.

"What the hell kind of an answer is that?"

[YFG: LOL. the only one youre gonna get for a while. heres what I want you to do]

Syndea stared at the screen as a slew of instructions scrolled across it, specific, precise, and yet leaving a gaping hole in the logic of the situation.

"What do you mean, I don't have to worry about them? You want me in some kind of French maid hooker outfit and you don't think I have to worry? With God knows how many liquored-up men ready to play? And in a wig?"

[YFG: yup]

"You can get quite repetitive you know. It's aggravating."

[YFG: yup]

Syndea resorted to her favorite emoticon. The little red face that looked like it was about to explode, which probably bore a close resemblance to Syndea herself right about now.

Her phone rang. "Hello?" She snapped. She definitely snapped. She couldn't help herself.

"Hey, don't bark at me, honey. I'm just the messenger here," answered Jake.

"Sorry, Jake. Tough day."

"Yeah, tell me about it. I've got about four tons of food here. Want me to shove it in the downstairs fridge? It's not working real well, but it should keep it cold enough for a couple hours..."

Food? Violet had ordered food? Syndea hoped she'd fucking well paid for it out of her own pocket. The club was short enough on funds as it was.

"Uh, sure, Jake. Didn't know food was on the menu tonight?"

There was a loud snort into the phone. "Me neither. I guess this one's a big party, huh?"

Syndea sighed. "Yeah. Mistress Violet has set it all up."

"Oh swell. That means I'd better keep this shit away from Pansy, or she'll be busting that thong of hers long before the clients arrive." He hung up.

Syndea couldn't help but smile. Pansy was certainly going to make inroads on whatever edible items were around.

[YFG: so. you still there?]

She snickered. "Yup."

[YFG: smartass]

"Better than a dumb shit." Syndea's eyes filled as she typed her father's favorite response. They'd laughed like crazy whenever anyone had used the term "smartass", and the ache to hear his voice again was always deep within her.

[YFG: (LOLOL) thats the spirit. trust me, hon, itll be OK tonight]

"You sure?"

[YFG: yup. promise. you just think about tomorrow night and ill get going on one or two things you need. you like red?]

Before she could question YFG further, the sign came up on the screen..."YFG logged off at 6:27pm".

Well, shit.

* * * * *

By nine-thirty that night, Syndea was sure of two things. First, she'd never make it through the entire night in the uncomfortable shoes she was wearing, and second, if anyone else grabbed her ass she was going to turn around and deck him.

The French maid's costume had not included footwear, so she'd been forced to rummage through the club's supplies and the only pair that had come near her size had also featured platforms and high heels.

She felt like an idiot.

Fortunately, she was still a *dressed* idiot, which was more than could be said for Pansy and Iris.

They'd giggled and snickered as eager hands had tugged their clothing free, although the men were already on their way to what could only be called a state of stinking, shit-faced drunkenness.

One guy had managed to make a knot in the laces of Iris's purple bustier, and nearly earned himself a sharp elbow in the eye as he'd torn it free. Iris loved her purple bustier.

Mistress Violet was encouraging them to paw her, reaching beneath the ruffled neck of her blouse to feel her up. They had to reach a long way, too, thought Syndea bitchily. Mistress Violet's breasts were not immune to gravity.

For her own part, she was managing to look busy, serving platters of hors d'oeuvres, cleaning plates, and keeping a wary eye out for hands nearing her knickers.

Her outfit did nothing for her figure, being quite thick and higher at the neck than she'd expected. When she'd added the rather ratty wig that had been tucked into the box, the transformation was complete.

Instead of being creamy, her complexion sallowed. Instead of curves and sleek limbs, there were straight lines, and very tight thigh highs that made even *her* slender legs bulge over the top. They could have doubled as support hose. Or sausage casings.

She deliberately left off any makeup, and giggled at the awful picture she presented.

It wasn't awful enough to stop the groping, but compared to the willing nudity of Pansy and Iris, it kept her out of the limelight. And that was the whole purpose of the thing.

Mistress Violet had glared at her as she made her entrance, bearing trays of food. "Well, better than nothing. You'll take that off of course, if you're asked. And do whatever they want. Understand?"

She pinched Syndea's flesh hard, under cover of the general noise, ringing her arm with skinny fingers and sharp nails and gripping hard enough to leave bruises.

Syndea winced and nodded. *Keeerrrrriissst*. If anyone did any actual fucking on the premises, which seemed to be what Mistress Violet was implying, they could lose their license for sure. Maybe even get brought up on charges.

Syndeas body chilled at the thought, and she found herself praying that her unknown YFG was as powerful as promised.

“Hey honeeee...” A slurred voice summoned her attention, and she pasted a weak smile on her face.

“Lemme see what you got there.”

Syndea hoped he meant what was on her serving tray and attempted a smile. She had no idea of what the food tasted like since she’d been far too nervous to eat any, but it looked pretty. There was an assortment of finger sandwiches, canapés, and some green stuff that might have been parsley. In a previous life. Certainly not a banquet by any means, but Syndea knew that the minds of the party frolicking throughout the room were probably not on food.

The man wove unsteadily towards her with what she assumed was his best lecherous grin. He’d decided to let the others play with Pansy and Iris, and her stepmother was getting up close and real personal with the older guy. She shuddered as that loose blouse began to fall off the woman’s shoulders.

The sight would probably have thrilled the Romans, since they perfected the art of the orgy. It didn’t thrill Syndea.

Neither did the look in the eyes of the man approaching her. She gritted her teeth. “Would you care for another hors d’oeuvre, Sir?” She strategically held the tray in front of her, hoping it would halt his progress.

It didn’t. Apparently, it wasn’t the nibbles on her serving platter he was after, it was the nibbles inside her costume.

She fought down the urge to see what he’d look like wearing tuna salad instead of that appalling T-shirt which loudly announced that he was a “Babe Magnet”.

Syndea snorted. He'd have to be magnetized, and the babe made out of iron filings for *that* particular sentiment to come true.

He dodged the tray and licked his lips, cupping his hands in an expectant movement. "Lemme *see*, honey. Bet you've got some sweet tits hidden away, huh?"

Syndea swore she felt her nipples trying vainly to disappear backwards into her lung cavity. She stood stock-still, trying not to throw up, as the man plunged his hands down her tight costume, scratching her a little with his rough handling.

"Hmm. Not bad in the boob department, are we?"

Takes one to know one, I guess.

"Lessee what else you got going on here."

"Sir, I believe your friends might be able to use your assistance?"

Well, hell, that was an out-and-out lie. His friends were working hard on a very naked Iris and a very naked Pansy, who were squirming and slithering and giggling over an assortment of nearly-naked and drunken revelers.

Shirts had been tossed aside, and pants unzipped, and Iris was now getting on her knees in front of one guy who seemed to think her mouth was a great target for his rather floppy cock. He was having a bit of trouble finding it, however, and Iris kept moving her head making the task harder.

Syndea heard a muttered curse as the guy stuck his cock in Iris's ear for the third time.

Mistress Violet's escort seemed to have finally located Mistress Violet's breasts, since he was sitting with her on his lap and a blissful smile on his rather ruddy face. Thankfully, his hand was elbow deep down her shirt, and Syndea was spared the sight of her stepmother being fondled.

The Babe Magnet was not to be deterred, however. With the blind determination of one who is going to seriously regret everything he drank when he awoke the following morning, he started to grope her body.

His breath stank as he pulled her close, threatening to topple the tuna salad snacks onto the floor. His hands were rough, his nails ragged and she felt the bile rising in her throat.

Keeerrriisst. How far could she let this go?

His hand found her frilly French knickers and all but ripped them in his haste to feel her up.

Syndea saw red. That was it. She'd had enough. She raised the tray, oblivious of the canapés that tumbled to the floor. Her temper was fiery, her teeth clenched and she fully intended to flatten him. The Babe Magnet was about to become the Pancake Magnet.

But before she could strike the first blow, he paused.

Then he looked at her with a funny expression on his face. A face that was turning an odd shade of green.

"You got a bathroom? *Quick...*"

Syndea pointed to a door. The Babe Magnet turned, and surprised her by doing a very respectable five yard sprint in about zero point two seconds. He disappeared into the mens room.

She sighed with relief and bent to retrieve the scattered bread squares.

To her surprise, the noise and the giggles and the horrible background noises made by the rest of the party had gone quiet, and other faces were starting to show a tinge of the similar green.

Pansy was first. She dashed headlong from the room. Iris was barely two paces behind.

The men were disappearing like wisps of smoke. One moment they were there, then the next—poof.

Finally, Mistress Violet herself succumbed. With a vicious glance at Syndea, she stalked from the room, only betraying herself as she neared the door. She too could have qualified for the Olympics with her final sprint.

Syndeia shook her head and looked at the canapés. Well, well. Who'd have thought it?

Jake had been right. That old fridge probably wasn't working too well. Not well enough to keep mayonnaise fresh. She snickered.

Saved from a fate worse than death by Charlie the Tuna.

Chapter 9

For Luke Charmanti, thankfully ignorant of the assortment of digestive health issues being faced by the little party at The Glass Stripper, the days dragged.

He'd been spared the morning-after inquisition from Isaac, which surprised him until he found the elegant invitation on his desk commanding his presence at yet another interminably boring formal dinner.

Another chance to glad-hand the money boys. His lip curled in distaste. He hated these things with a passion. The women were dripping in jewels, their eyes hungry, and their husbands paunchy. His appearance acted like some kind of cattle call, and many was the time he'd fended off a too-well manicured hand that was straying to the seat of his tuxedo and the butt beneath.

He usually checked out the crowd to see if anyone caught his attention—he was, after all, single and male. But this particular night, there wasn't one woman he felt like approaching, let alone talking to.

This one's eyes were the wrong shade of blue, that one's hair was too artificially blonde, and *that* one—well, damn. Limpets could take a lesson or two from her.

Luke detached himself graciously from the limpet, and managed to join an all-male conversation prior to the actual consumption of dinner. He knew little about football, and cared less, but smiled and nodded at the right times, thus protecting himself from the circling predators.

He simply *had* to stop watching those National Geographic specials. He was thinking of everything in animal terms.

Everything but *her*. His Princess.

Well, correct that thought—he was very definitely thinking in animal terms about her. But it was more to do with the male animal claiming his mate and all the fun things that went along with it that was occupying a greater part of his mind.

He checked his watch once again. Five minutes later than the last time he'd checked it.

Luke sighed, and then braced himself as Isaac cut him out of the herd and shepherded him to a quiet corner.

Dammit. He was doing it again.

"You're mighty quiet this evening, Luke," grinned Isaac. "Might you be considering our investment strategy concerning The Glass Stripper?"

Luke couldn't help himself. He blushed.

Isaac's grin got wider. "I see you are. Any...developments in that area?"

"Um...er...well..." *Shit. Let's just give the whole thing away.*

"I meant business developments, Luke?" added Isaac. Those annoying eyes were twinkling at him, and Luke didn't know whether to ignore him or tell him everything. It would have been comforting to share his experience with someone, and get some perspective on it. The only perspective he had right now was coming from a place that didn't belong in business.

He was breaking all the rules and thinking with his dick instead of his brains. And he didn't feel in the least bit sorry about it.

"I think it might be a viable investment opportunity, Isaac," he ground out. "My visit on Friday was...was...educational."

Isaac seemed to choke slightly into his wine glass. "Sorry. Went down the wrong way." He recovered himself rapidly and turned his gaze to the diners as they moved to their assigned seating.

"Well, good. I've set up a meeting next week with the principals. Perhaps by then I can work up a proposal? Can you forward me some preliminary facts and

figures that we can use to begin our negotiations?" Isaac raised an eyebrow as the two of them strolled through the herd. *Crowd, dammit, crowd.*

By then, thought Luke, he'd have claimed his Princess for himself. He had no clue what lay after that and he frankly didn't care. "Maybe," he said noncommittally.

Isaac slapped him on the shoulder. "Good lad."

They separated and Luke found himself at a table that, thankfully, was populated with friends and acquaintances, none of whom were likely to be in heat.

That emotion was reserved for him. And his Princess.

And the thought made him shiver beneath his elegant suit. Maybe the animal in him was finally coming to the surface. Maybe the mating instinct was stronger in him than he'd thought.

Maybe...maybe...His thoughts flashed to golden hair and a pair of blue eyes as he remembered her kneeling between his legs.

Grrrrrrowwwllll....

* * * * *

Syndea spent Sunday cleaning up.

It was a small price to pay for her narrow escape from what she privately referred to as "Babe Magnet Hell", and she couldn't suppress the occasional giggle.

She'd begun the job last night after the room had emptied, ignoring the weak and staggering customers who had sheepishly retrieved their clothing and slunk off into the night, after a couple more trips to the bathroom.

She'd also ignored the moans and complaints from Violet, Iris and Pansy, simply calling them a cab and shoving them all in it. With remarkable speed, considering the circumstances, she'd emptied the club of everyone.

Her garbage disposal wasn't very happy with the large amounts of spoiled tuna salad canapés it had been forced to process, but it had finally finished its job and was now resting and recovering. Probably like the guests themselves.

Syndeia couldn't have cared less. The evening had been a disaster from start to finish, and she realized it was likely no profits would be forthcoming. She refused to let it bother her since her thoughts kept straying to the night ahead. All she had to do was clean up. Today, no financial worries were going to spoil her mood.

The chores were finally finished, and although she'd have loved to be able to pay the time-and-a-half rates demanded by a cleaning service, she still entered her small apartment with the sense of a job well done.

She'd been spared the recriminations of her stepfamily. Apparently they were still on the "pink" diet, and other than a moaning phone call requesting more stomach-soothing medication and a couple of growls about a lawsuit against the caterer, they were quiet.

Syndeia was thankful. Perhaps Pansy would lose those extra pounds she complained about now and again. Stifling the rather cruel thought, she headed for the kitchen.

Grabbing a couple of slices of bread, and deliberately passing on her own tuna salad—it seemed sacrilegious to eat something that had saved her ass—she threw a quick cheese sandwich together, grabbed a bottle of water and sat at her desk, sighing with relief.

The house smelled clean, assuming one found a blend of bleach and pine fragrance clean, and she'd opened several windows to vent the fumes.

[DING]

Syndeia put down her sandwich, and answered.

"Hello?"

[YFG: *fun time last night huh?*]

"Well, it wasn't as bad as I'd expected. Thanks to some tuna salad..."

[YFG: (SNICKER) *had 'em all 'running' did ya?*]

"How did you know?"

[YFG: *i have my sources. i am your YFG ya know*]

Syndea's hands paused then she quickly typed "Yes, maybe, but who are you *really?*"

[YFG: (SIGH) *dont you believe in anything anymore little girl?*]

"Working in a place like this makes it kinda hard to have any illusions," she shot back.

[YFG: *oh yeah? what about that guy? the one thats coming back tonight?*]

"Oh, um. Yeah. Him." The blush emoticon followed. She sure was using that one a lot these days.

[YFG: *you check your room yet?*]

"Huh?"

[YFG: *go look in your room. the stuff should be there by now*]

"What stuff?"

[YFG: *go look. ill wait*] A little face whistling and tapping its fingers followed.

Curious, Syndea did as she was told. And sure enough, there were several new boxes laid neatly on her bed. She opened them with care, pulling the white tissue away from the contents.

She gasped.

Everything was red. The brilliant red of a thousand sunsets. There was a teddy of sorts, shoes, fishnet thigh-highs, and a mask.

Syndea lifted the mask gently from its nest of tissue.

Of the finest and softest suede, this mask was meant to adhere to the features of the wearer. The eyeholes were cut at an angle, and black and silver sequins slanted above them, adding an air of almost oriental mystery to the thing. It was not as full as the white one, but would still cover a good portion of her features.

She sighed and put it back, turning her attention to the teddy. It too, was of leather. But this was a gleaming, shining thing, with lots of straps, revealing so much yet managing to hide the essentials. At least Syndea assumed it did.

She held it up and realized that may have been a hasty assumption. There wasn't much of it.

Rummaging through the packages, she found an exquisite pair of high heeled mules and a length of matching red chiffon. She slipped her feet into the shoes, loving the way they felt and the way they made her feel. *Sexy*.

She clicked her way across the polished floor and back to her desk.

"OHMIGOD" she typed. "It's all wonderful stuff. Can I really wear this?"

[YFG: *i dont see anyone else around, do you?*]

Huh. Sarcasm from her computer. She ignored it. "But why?" she asked. "Why are you doing all this?"

[YFG: *(SIGH) jeez girlie. get with the program. that's what YFGs do.*]

"LOL. Yeah, right. Just because I've got a stepmother and two stepsisters doesn't make me a candidate for Cinderella, you know."

[YFG: *close enough for me. youll note that i havent asked you for a pumpkin yet, have i?*]

"Nothing you ask for would surprise me at this point. Just don't do the rats-into-horses thing, okay?"

[YFG: *(ROTFLMAO) you got it babe. promise. no rats.*]

"Thank you," typed Syndea with feeling.

[YFG: *so go dress. or undress. room seven will be ready for you two.*]

Syndea glanced at the clock and realized that she had barely enough time to shower and slip into all the red stuff, let alone figure out what strap went where.

She sighed. "Okay. Do I have to quit at midnight again?"

[YFG: *not unless you want to*]

She paused. For a brief moment she'd dreamed of never stopping, never letting Luke Charmanti out of her arms. What the hell was the matter with her thinking like that? Her life was set in its own path.

She was going to make a success out of The Glass Stripper, and that was that. It was a full time job and then some. There was no room for any kind of entanglement. This was going to be one night that was just for her, but after that...well, it was back to business as usual.

She hoped that she'd at least have a couple of sore muscles to show for it along with a mind full of memories. They'd have to last her a lifetime.

"Cool." She added a large, toothy-grinned, smiley face to her IM.

And *that*, she figured, just about summed it up.

* * * * *

Luke was surprised at himself as he climbed the stairs to The Glass Stripper. He couldn't remember the last time he'd been so nervous, so keyed up, so full of anticipation when meeting a woman.

Once again it seemed his presence was expected. His knock on the door opened it slightly, and he cautiously stepped inside. "Hello?"

There was no answer. He shrugged, and closed the door behind him, taking care to snap the lock into place. A door should never be left open like that.

He slipped his jacket off and hung it on one of the pegs conveniently placed in the hallway. He frowned as he noticed his hands tremble.

"Hello?" He tried again. But once more only silence met his call.

The house smelled—well—*clean*. Or like someone had dumped a swimming pool into a pine forest.

He wrinkled his nose, and walked down the stairs towards the room he'd visited on the last memorable occasion. The scent of cleaner faded as he neared the door, to be replaced with a soft fragrance that reminded him of incense, flowers, and...sex.

So, okay. *Everything* was making him think of sex. His cock had been half-hard all day, and just knowing she might be inside the room was stirring his loins and a great deal more.

He adjusted his pants and pushed the door open.

She was there. Waiting for him.

Or *was* she?

Someone was there, but until she moved and the light caught her golden hair, he couldn't be sure. He blinked.

Gone was the white room, the white clothes, the soft white draperies. It had been transformed.

Luke drew in a breath at the sight before him.

The glittering white bower had become more of a glowing dark dungeon. Red velvet was everywhere, cascading over the walls, puddling on the floors, and draping the huge four-poster bed that had been placed prominently in the middle of the room.

The only thing that wasn't red was the black velvet spread covering it. And the white skin of the woman reclining on it.

Once again, there were candles, but red ones this time, their flames like a million tiny flickering stars against a twilight sky. Glass objects still ringed the room, but against the dark red velvet, they looked less angelic and a lot more like torture devices, staring coldly at him.

And the woman waiting for him?

Luke swallowed.

Her hair fell in great golden piles over the black pillows. She was swathed in some see-through stuff, and he could see through it. *God*, could he see through it.

Red leather criss-crossed her white skin, from crotch to shoulder, just hiding her nipples and drawing his eyes to the valley between her thighs. She wore the most decadent pair of fishnet stockings he'd ever seen, and a pair of sharp red spiked things on her feet.

One white shoulder was bare, and she sprawled in wanton abandon, every limb, every curve an invitation to delve into his deepest fantasies.

She was sex incarnate. And his cock leaped in response.

"Good evening, Luke," she breathed.

Luke swallowed. For some reason his throat had swollen shut. "Good evening, Princess," he said. Okay. He moaned it more than said it, but it was the same thing.

"You look uncomfortable. Would you care to leave your clothes over there?" She gestured casually with one hand, while the other fondled one of the pieces of glassware.

"Um, yeah, sure." Luke's hands seemed to have stopped functioning as he fumbled with his clothing. A button popped, he forgot to remove his shoes, and he had to hop around a bit while tugging his pants free. *Shit*.

Well, now she'd be really impressed. Thirty-one years old and he couldn't undress himself.

Of course, he hadn't had the occasion to strip under the watchful gaze of a nearly naked siren. Not lately, anyway. He could swear he heard his cock sigh with relief as he finally struggled out of his boxers and neared the bed.

She handed him one end of the red filmy stuff. "Would you like to help?"

Oh yeah. He'd like to help. He'd like to help in any way he could. Would licking her from head to toe help?

"Just pull," she said.

"Just push," his cock answered. Luke followed her instructions, ignoring the jutting hard-on that was trying very hard to direct the action. Typical dick. Not content with acting its role. Always wanted to direct.

He eased the sheer thing away from her body, revealing it in all its glory. And it was *glorious*.

The red leather accentuated the white of her skin, and the fishnet stockings added a touch of decadence that was contradicted by the pulse beating rapidly at

the base of her throat and the expression in her blue eyes behind that devilish-looking mask.

She looked...nervous.

Somehow, seeing that endearing touch of trepidation in her eyes relaxed the screaming tension in Luke more than any words could have done.

He was going to take her in every way he could think of tonight, but he was going to make sure her pleasure matched his. He'd never wanted anything more in his entire life.

He was going to claim her, fuck her until her eyeballs rolled back in her head, and they were both limp with spent passion.

But he was also going to make her smile. A real smile, one that said, "*Luke, you're wonderful. Incredible. I want you. Again and again.*"

And in that second he came to a stunning realization. He knew, beyond a shadow of a doubt, it wouldn't be fucking.

He was going to *make love* to his Princess.

Chapter 10

Syndeia tried very hard not to catch her breath at the expression in his eyes. It had changed from fiery heat to something...more...intense.

She felt rather idiotic, lying across the black velvet like a leather-clad houri, but he'd seemed to relish the fantasy. Well, at least his cock had.

Hard and swollen, it was waving at her in a *very* friendly fashion. And why not? It was her friend, after all. And it was about to become a very *close* friend.

Her mouth watered, and she swallowed, risking a glance back up at his face.

"May I join you?" he asked. The red chiffon slid through his hands and pooled on the black velvet beside him.

"Of course." She reached out for the fabric, a little smile curving her lips. "Please make yourself comfortable."

He settled himself on the big bed, which suddenly seemed a lot smaller. Perhaps it was the lean strength of him, or the aroused cock, or the way his eyes watched her every move. She had no idea. Whatever it was, she just hoped he'd keep doing it.

It was turning her on with a vengeance.

He reached for her, but she stopped him. "Allow me," she murmured low.

His hand fell back, and he leaned his head on the other one, eyes cautious as she took the chiffon between her hands and rolled it into a soft rope.

She leaned forward and daringly looped it around his cock, letting the soft stuff slide over him, and loving his hiss as the softness tugged his aroused flesh.

"Am I your present?"

His words made her jump. "Sorry? I don't understand..."

He grinned. "You seem to be intent on tying a bow on me. I just wondered if I was your present. Perhaps today is your birthday?"

She looked at him, all solid male, lying beside her. *Keeeeeerrrisst!* He was birthday, Christmas and Fourth of July rolled into one.

She compromised. "It might be." She leaned forward and kissed him.

He pulled away a little after the first touch of their lips. "Happy birthday, Princess."

He returned to her mouth, taking control, demanding she meet his heat with her own. She knew no hesitation, and before she realized it, she was pulled against him, tight against him, and his hands were all over her.

Syndeia lost herself in his arms. She felt him fumbling with the catches of her leather gear, and he seemed to have a lot less difficulty getting her out of it than she'd had getting into it.

It fell apart beneath his hands, and he paused for a moment, just looking at the body he'd revealed.

She still had her fishnet stockings and shoes on, and he smiled. "I like you like this. It's...it's...erotic."

Well. Thanks for the newsflash, anchorman. I'm damned well supposed to be. Now how about getting on with it?

Her cunt ached inside her, and as his hands gently stroked her flesh, she felt herself melting like ice cubes in a dead fridge. She was certainly starting to overflow her defrost tray. God, the merest touch, a kiss, a look, and she was hot, wet and ready.

He paused. "What's this?" His tone was sharper, more focused, as he gently touched her arm.

She glanced down and saw the bruises her stepmother's hand had left the night before.

"And this?" He raised his fingers and brushed her breast. A slight red scratch bore witness to the Babe Magnet's gropings.

"It's nothing. Don't worry about it."

"Are you kidding? Someone hurt you, Princess..." His eyes were angry as he stared at her.

"Please. It's nothing. Truly. You're here now. That's all that matters." She realized she'd spoken the truth. Nothing mattered at this moment. He was next to her, touching her, making her feel all kinds of wonderful things. For this short time, the world had disappeared.

His gaze turned hot again, and his hands found her breasts as their lips met. She moaned as he tugged and teased and rubbed the hard points with the palm of his hand.

Her arms slid around him of their own accord, fingers pressing deep into his muscles, learning his feel, the texture of his back and his buttocks. Those lovely, firm buttocks.

His tongue dueled with hers, each giving and taking and pleasuring the other.

She drew back with a little sigh. "So good, Luke," she breathed.

"Tell me your name," he said. His head dipped and his tongue found her nipple. He played with it, just brushing the tip of it in lazy flickers.

"I...I...can't," she sighed.

He flashed her a quick glance. "Then let me take that mask off. Let me *see* you..."

"No...not the mask." She chuckled. "Besides, you can't see much more of me than you're seeing right now."

He snorted, but let his hands stroke her lovingly, over the curves and dips of her body. He lingered at her backside and then ran his fingers over her hip to the top of her mound.

She widened her legs, inviting more of his attentions.

But he continued on, finding the band around the top of her stockings and slipping beneath.

He moved away from her, lower down the bed, and replaced his fingers with his tongue.

The touch of his mouth to her inner thigh was an exquisite pleasure all its own, and when he licked her like a cat, up toward the center of her body, she trembled.

"Oh yeah," he breathed. "You taste so good, Princess."

He treated the other leg to the same attention, never rushing, taking his time, and driving Syndea out of her mind with wanting. Finally, he began rolling down the stockings, drawing out the process, tracing his progress with his tongue and fingers, until she felt a scream building in her throat.

"Now, Luke, please..." she begged.

He glanced up at her from her feet, where he was removing her shoes and finally ridding her of those damned thigh highs.

"Protection?"

She lifted a limp hand and pointed at a table next to the bed. A large brandy snifter sat there, stuffed full of red and black foil packets.

His lips curved into a smile. "Well, well. You have great faith in my powers," he said.

Syndea was beyond speaking. If he didn't damn well fuck her, and *right this minute*, she was going to do something she'd regret. Like come all on her own. Just from his touch on her feet.

She wriggled.

He leaned across the bed and grasped a packet, ripping it, sheathing himself and ending up between her legs before she had time to blink. God, the man was fast.

Then finally, *finally*, she felt him against her swollen flesh. His cock teased her clit and she moaned with the sensation.

"I'm going to come now," she announced. She had no control. It was all him. She was going to have to let go and damn the consequences.

"Not without me, Princess," he muttered.

She felt his weight lift as he poised himself at her cunt, and then with one thrust he took her, sinking deep inside her, filling her, and bringing a cry to her throat.

She came.

Twice.

* * * * *

Luke held on to his control by the very skin of his teeth. He was ready to blast himself into oblivion inside her, but something held him back. Some little voice that told him this was just the beginning, the start, the tip of the passions this woman was capable of experiencing.

She was panting now, her skin moist and damp and her muscles shuddering beneath him.

He slowly pulled out of her, smiling as she moaned and trembled all over again.

"Easy, Princess," he soothed.

She raised heavy eyelids and stared at him, her blue eyes hazy and unfocused. "You didn't...you haven't..."

"Oh I will. But not yet. Did you think that we were done?" He chuckled, ignoring his cock which was trying to get his attention and point out that it would very much like to *be* done. Right *now*.

She sighed. "There's more? I can't believe it."

He grinned.

Dropping light kisses on her damp skin, he gentled her down from the heights, letting her relax and get even more used to his touch. "Roll over, sweetheart," he urged.

Slowly she obeyed, groaning a little as she settled herself on her stomach. "What are you going to do?"

"Just play," he answered.

"Play?"

"Yes, play. It's what two people do in bed. They play with each other." His hands began a rhythmic sweep of her ivory back, running from her buttocks to her shoulders in firm strokes.

"They do?" She sighed and softened with each stroke.

"Oh they do indeed." He leaned down and kissed one round cheek.

"Oooh..." She squirmed a little. "I never knew that."

"Do you like this?" His hands never stopped their movements, digging slightly at her muscles and caressing the smooth flesh.

"Oh yeahhh," she sighed.

"Got any massage oil?"

There was silence for a moment, and Luke smiled to himself. He really had blown her thoughts away, because she was having difficulty answering a simple question.

"Um...there may be some on the table?"

Luke looked around him. A couple of small bottles stood next to the brandy snifter full of condoms and he picked one up, sniffing it experimentally. Yep. It was oil.

He dribbled a little on her back. Fire still burned his gut, and he wanted to come *real* bad, but he still kept moving, swirling his hands through the oil and back up to her shoulders.

This time he drew them down all the way to the cleft between her buttocks, spreading them slightly and making sure the oil trickled into the darkness between.

She gasped, the tension in her muscles changing. "Luke," she moaned.

"Relax, honey," he murmured. Her skin flickered as he brushed her tightly puckered anus.

She shuddered. "God, Luke, that's..."

"Yeah, isn't it? Like it?"

Another long moan greeted his touch. He was going to take that as a yes. Her honey was drenching her thighs and he slipped his hand beneath her, spreading her moisture around and blending it with the oil.

The scent of her was making him dizzy. A seductive blend of massage oil and aroused Princess. He spared a thought for the poor condom. Had one of these things ever exploded? Tonight might just be the time he found out.

Gently he cupped her mound with one hand, flexing his fingers against her sensitive clit. With the other he kept up his light touches on the tight ring of muscles, rubbing the oil around and over it, and aware of each and every response.

She began to squirm.

So did Luke. He couldn't keep this up for much longer without blowing his ears off. With the lightest of pressure, he let a finger penetrate her, passing the barrier of her clenched ring and entering her secrets.

She gasped.

"Relax, honey," he said again. "We're playing, remember?"

He increased the pressure of his fingers against her clit, and she squirmed even more, moaning now as he let his finger rest inside her.

"I can't...you don't know what you're doing to me...that feels...oh that feels..."

Yeah, thought Luke. It does.

Keeping his finger inside her, he eased his hand away from her clit and lifted her onto her knees. She went willingly, panting and shivering beneath him.

He spread her legs wide and for a moment looked at the vision beneath him, rounded buttocks spread, his finger sunk into her ass, and her cunt shiny and dripping tears of pleasure down her thighs.

He could wait no more. With a sigh of relief he slid into her heat once again, his cock eager to plunge deep within and find release exactly where it was supposed to.

Her previous orgasms had left her slippery and ready for him, and the slick kiss of her softness against his cock was like nothing he'd ever felt.

She boiled around him as he began slow, leisurely thrusts, pacing himself to her movements. This time, he knew he'd lose control.

And that was fine by him.

His cock was so deep he could swear he touched her womb as he thrust, and the thought flashed through his mind — *good*.

He'd like to plant his seed there. Grow his babies there. He knew next to nothing about her, except that he wanted her body. No, strike that. He wanted more than her body. He wanted her heart and her soul, and he wanted to see her face, bare, as he blended their bodies into one.

Her innocence and her natural sensuality were a perfect match for his. She was intelligent, could make him smile, and his protective urges had leaped to the forefront of his mind when he'd seen those damn bruises.

Something inside him screamed "*mate*" when it came to his Princess.

And he didn't even know her real name.

He didn't care.

Quickly withdrawing and making her sob as he left her, Luke flipped her onto her back. "Look at me, Princess. Watch me. Come with me."

He was back inside her, pumping harder this time. He felt her breath leave her body as her eyes met his. Blazing blue, they stared at him, full of wonder and desire and some deeper emotion he couldn't read.

His hips pistoned now, his cock singing for joy and his body aching for its release. But not without her.

He slipped a hand between them and found her clit, just flicking it lightly in time with his movements.

His thighs hardened as his spine began that electric tingle, signaling his orgasm was coming. And fast.

He pressed on her clit, not hard, but enough to feel the bud as it shook beneath him.

Her whole body tensed and Luke wanted to throw back his head and roar. "Now...*now*, Luke..." she cried.

Now it was.

His balls tightened into rocks and her cunt grabbed his cock in fierce waves of contractions.

He groaned and let it all go.

His come spurted, fiery hot bursts of relief, as his body went taut with his climax.

For long moments they shuddered around each other, losing track of where one ended and the other began. They were a single entity, a shaking, sobbing mass of spasms traveling to someplace new where the rules were changed and earthbound principles didn't apply.

It was magic. It was mind-blowing.

And all too soon, it was over.

Chapter 11

They slept.

Syndea had been barely aware of Luke leaving the bed and removing the condom, until he'd slipped back beside her and cuddled her close.

She vaguely remembered the steady thump of his heart beneath her head before exhaustion had claimed her.

It couldn't have been too long before she awoke from her nap to find him lightly kissing her hair as it lay tumbled over his shoulder.

"Hello," he said.

"Oh my God, I'm sorry. I fell asleep..."

He chuckled. "You earned it. I napped too. And a better nap I can't remember."

She wondered about the time, then decided to ignore it. No clocks would chime midnight and ruin *this* particular fantasy.

She stretched and winced a little.

"Sore, babe?" Luke hadn't missed the little groan.

"No, just a few odd aches here and there," she answered.

"Good. Don't move."

He reached over and pulled a facecloth off the table. "This'll make you feel more comfortable."

"Wha...wha..." *Oh great.* The wanton sex goddess becomes the stuttering idiot.

But Luke caught her by surprise. He was gently wiping away the residue of their loving, cleaning her swollen cunt and mound with a touch so gentle she wanted to cry.

She put her hand to her face and found, to her surprise, that her mask was still in place. Her heart shifted. Not even in sleep, when it would have been so easy for him to slip the knots free, had he taken advantage of her.

He'd honored her request. That was the kind of man he was.

The cool touch of the cloth against her hot flesh was doing wonderful things to her. As was Luke.

He didn't seem to be able to stop caressing her body, or dropping kisses here and there. On her thighs, her belly, and her soft breasts.

She sighed, reveling in the pleasure he was giving her. Hmm. Perhaps it was time to return the pleasure.

Her mind drifted a little, and a smile curved her lips. "Luke?"

"Mmm?"

"Lie down."

She felt him pause, toss the cloth aside and obey her instructions.

"Okay."

"No, on your stomach."

He rolled over obligingly, resting his head on his crossed arms and watching her through half-closed eyes.

She took a breath and reached for the oil. It was a slippery blend of herbs and lubricants, and was just right for what she had in mind. She wondered for a moment at herself. Where had all these decadent thoughts come from?

Then she stared at Luke's body. *Right. Stupid question.*

The oil flowed over the dips and planes of Luke's back, and she eagerly spread it around with her hands, relishing his warmth and the feel of him.

"Why are you doing this?"

The lazy question surprised her and she stilled for a moment, then went back to her massage. "Because it gives me pleasure."

He grinned. "No, not *that*. I mean why do you work here?"

Syndeia refused to let the words distract her. "Does it bother you?"

She dug her fingers into his buttocks, kneading them, squishing them, and generally doing all the things she'd ever wanted to do to a wonderfully fine male backside. She smiled.

"Nope. It's just that you don't seem the same as the others."

Thinking of Pansy and Iris, Syndea mentally offered up a small prayer of thanks. "I'm not," she answered briefly.

There was silence for a moment, broken only by the rustling of the linens as Syndea worked on Luke's back.

"So why do you do it?"

Damn the man. He wasn't going to give up.

She thought carefully. "I have my reasons." There, *that* was pretty uninformative, and should shut him up.

And if it didn't, then *this* probably would.

She slipped her hand between his legs and allowed her oily fingers to caress his balls.

He grunted. She hoped it was an "I like that" grunt. She experimented some more, remembering her careful research on male genitalia. An absolute and confirmed obsessive when it came to accuracy, Syndea had made it her job to know her business and pass along what she learned to the other girls. Rayna had been fascinated, but Pansy and Iris had dismissed her lectures with a sniff.

For them, it was cock all the way.

For Syndea, that was just the beginning.

She let her fingers rest on the skin between his legs, just behind his balls. Carefully, she pressed inwards.

Luke moaned. "*Shheeeiiiit.*"

"Am I hurting you?" She whispered quietly to him, watching him carefully.

"God, no. It's just...just..."

She grinned. Good. Her research was paying off.

He fidgeted, settling his growing cock more comfortably beneath him. Syndea took a breath and reached over for a very special glass toy. A short one, slightly bulbous, with a smooth surface and a mushroom-like protrusion on one end.

He flinched as the cool surface touched his oily buttocks. "Um, Princess? What are you doing?"

"Just playing, Luke. Relax. I'm just playing. Remember? It's what people do in bed together." With a wicked smile she turned his words back on him.

Cautiously she eased his buttocks apart and found his tight muscles, shiny now from the oil she'd so carefully used to lubricate his skin.

She rolled the head of the glass toy around in his cleft, watching him tense as she touched him.

"Relax, Luke. Let me try something."

He muttered something into the pillow, but she could feel his attempts to ease the tension in his muscles.

With one hand, she carefully pressed the head of the glass butt plug against him as she continued to press that sweet spot beneath his balls.

He sighed, moaned, and the toy began to penetrate him.

"Oh my God," he sputtered.

"Bad? Hurts? Tell me, Luke..." She kept up her pressure, wishing he'd say something.

"Mmmrrrp-phh..."

Well, that was something. He wasn't screaming rape, or squirming to get away from her. In fact, he was parting his thighs to make it easier for her.

She continued her actions, pressing into him with her fingers and the toy until it was completely inside him, the ring of glass covering the muscles and keeping it from going any further.

"Now turn over, Luke," she said.

He was still for a moment. "I don't know if I can," he muttered.

"Sure you can. Easy now." She helped him roll awkwardly onto his back, and bent his knees for him. He was clearly confused, much like a man who has a glass butt plug up his ass.

She giggled. "How does it feel, Luke? Any pain? Am I hurting you? Tell me to stop if you want..."

Her hand had returned to his balls, cupping them, rolling them carefully around, and occasionally adding a little pressure to that one spot that seemed to bring him pleasure.

"No, it's so...I'm feeling...almost like I have to pee. But not. God, I don't know...it's unreal..."

Syndea kept her chortle to herself. She, Syndea Ellerby, was now an official sex goddess. She'd reduced the eloquent and controlled Luke Charmanti to muttering idiocy.

Much like he had done to her. It was one *fine* feeling.

She slid between his legs and put her other hand around his cock.

It was time for the *coup de grace*.

For Luke, it was a time to re-think every thought he'd ever had about his own sexual responses.

Oh he'd read all about that prostate stimulation thing, but had, like most men, dismissed it. Well, shit. He'd missed out on something. A *lot* of something.

He felt strangely filled, his cock ached in new and odd ways, and he was amazingly hard. He swore he could have come just from the pressure she was exerting on him, *there*, in that odd spot he never knew he had.

And here he was, lying on his back, with a glass toy up his ass, and loving every minute of it.

He realized something at that moment. In the brief amount of time he'd shared with this woman, he'd come to trust her. Something in the way she touched him, kissed him, and melted beneath him, had told him more about who

and what she was than all the dinner conversations or background checks he could imagine.

She was his woman. Made for him. She fit him, against him, around him, and he fit her. Oh boy, did he fit her. He'd never fit anybody like he fit inside her.

She was lowering her mouth to him, and he held his breath, wondering if he might just explode the moment she touched him. Visions of glass shooting out from his ass danced behind his eyes.

The first flick of her tongue was exquisite agony, coupled as it was with the fullness he felt deep inside and the touch of her hand between his legs.

He was a volcano and the lava was boiling hot and ready to erupt.

"I can't..." he stammered. He didn't even know what he was saying.

Her head moved up and down, her tongue teased him and her mouth sucked at him.

His brain was fried, his heart rate must have been damn close to the danger level, and he wondered if people died from orgasming.

Hell, he'd go with a smile on his face, at least.

"Let go, Luke."

He heard her whisper over the thundering of his pulse, and tried to obey. But he was too far gone to make a conscious effort, since her tongue had now found that one little cranny beneath the head of his cock that always made his senses overload.

He wanted to be inside her, pounding into her, but couldn't move a muscle. All he could do was feel.

Feel her tongue caressing him, her hand pressing deep into his flesh, and the glass toy filling him and stimulating him in places he'd never even imagined in his wildest fantasies.

His knees dropped wide and let her hair tumble around him, adding to the sensual stimulation and taking Luke on the ride of his life.

He opened his eyes, desperate to watch her as she urged him to surrender.

"Now, Luke. Come for me. Give it all up. Give it to me..." She hissed the words at him, her mouth wet, her breath slithering over his gleaming cock.

She bent her head and sucked him as deeply as she could, taking him practically into her throat.

He lost control.

He opened his mouth and let the roar free, his lungs crushed by the weight of his need, and the rest of him throbbing as his balls tightened and his cock began to pulse.

He came. Great gushes, geysers of his seed, pumping into her mouth and down her throat. His ass clenched onto the toy, prolonging his climax, and her fingers rubbed beneath his balls, adding one more sensation to the extraordinary electricity that was coursing through him.

He seemed to come for hours, and she was with him, milking him with her tongue, encouraging him to go further and higher than he'd ever been before. He was blind and deaf, and his whole universe had narrowed down to his cock, his balls and his ass.

It was unlike anything he could have imagined.

Even after he'd finished coming, his cock lingered, hard still, and unwilling to admit that its job was done.

He was vaguely aware that she had withdrawn her mouth and was easing the toy from him, sending a few more shudders through him as she pulled it free.

There were no words. For once in his life, Luke Charmanti was speechless. He simply held out his arms and welcomed his Princess as she clambered up the bed and settled herself beside him.

A subtle warmth blossomed in his heart.

A warmth that was more than the heat he was clasping so close. A warmth that was more than the blanket of her hair on his arms. It was a new warmth, something he'd need to examine more closely at some point in time.

But not right now. Right at this particular moment, he just wanted to hold her, to tell her without words how much she meant to him. How incredible an experience she'd just given him, and how much he appreciated it.

There was probably something else he should tell her too, but his mind was drowsing, and she felt too good to disturb.

Yeah, this was the way it should be. Warm bodies, warmer hearts, and a whole lotta love.

Must remember that...

Chapter 12

Stealthily, Syndea eased from the bed, keeping a cautious eye on Luke as he snuffled and groaned a little. Even in sleep, his arms had held her tightly to him, and it was a horrid feeling to lose that warmth from her skin.

But she knew she had to leave. It must be nearing daybreak, it was Monday, and God forbid her stepmother should catch them here like this. Her life would be hell from that moment on.

She quietly gathered her clothing, what there was of it, and slunk from the room, denying herself even the chance to place one last kiss on those wonderful lips.

She heard some distant sound, and wondered if it was dawn breaking or her heart. Leaving Luke was the hardest thing she'd ever done.

Her apartment seemed empty now, and she closed the door behind her, realizing that her life was going to be empty as well, from this point on. She closed her eyes.

She had her memories. They would have to do.

But tears still stung the back of her eyelids as she prepared for her day. The shower washed away the slight stickiness that lingered between her thighs, but it couldn't wash away the feelings she'd experienced last night.

Nor could the hot water beating down on her erase the thrills she'd known beneath his hands.

Syndea trembled.

Of all the lousy timing. To finally meet the one man who could turn her world upside down, and make her...*feel* things, only to have to disappear from his life as quietly as she'd entered it.

Sighing, she toweled off, dried her hair and dressed. It was probably for the best.

Luke Charmanti was a CEO. A businessman. With a highly visible and responsible position. He would not want to be associated with the likes of her. A woman who managed a bondage club. He probably thought she was some kind of whore for doing what she did. Especially with him, last night.

She'd made the rules that were in effect in The Glass Stripper, and she'd broken every single one of them.

And as she settled at her desk with her coffee, she realized she'd broken one of her own rules, too. The biggest rule she had.

Never, but *never*, fall in love.

[DING]

Oh, fucking hell. *Now*? Didn't Fairy Godpeople ever catch a couple of extra hours of shuteye?

"Good morning. You're up early."

[YFG: *who says we sleep?*]

Syndea sighed. "Never mind."

[YFG: *you ok?*]

"Sure."

[YFG: *you dont sound it...*]

"How would you know what I sound like? I'm fine. Really. Thanks for asking." Syndea's eyes blurred as she realized just how *fine* she wasn't.

[YFG: *never fear, sweetie. keep your chin up*]

"Yeah right. So Violet can whack it."

[YFG: *she hit you?*]

The response was terse and rapid. Syndea paused before she answered. "Not really. Just the occasional jab here and there."

There was a long silence as YFG apparently mulled over her words.

[YFG: *well shell get hers*]

"I'm sure she will. Now if you'll excuse me, I've got work to do..."

[YFG: *one more thing*]

"What?" Syndea didn't mean to sound snappish, but she'd about used up her reserves of charm. She had too much going on in her mind, with Luke, the club, her stepmother, Luke...

[YFG: *theres gonna be a meeting tuesday. between your stepbitch and the reps from the venture capital place...*]

"Oh really?" This was news. Mistress Violet had not seen fit to share that little piece of information.

[YFG: *your guys gonna be there*]

Oh hell. In that case, she sure as shit couldn't be. Damn. "So?"

[YFG: *so dont spend the day cleaning toilets. youre gonna have to make an appearance*]

Syndeas snorted. "I SOOOO don't think so."

[YFG: *yup you will*]

"No, I won't. I refuse. Absolutely and completely. You think I want Luke to know who I am?"

[YFG: *think hes gonna care?*]

Syndeas paused. "Maybe not, but I sure as hell do. No. I don't want him knowing I run this place. It's enough that he thinks I work here like some kind of hooker. It's enough that I let him...that we..."

[YFG: *(SNICKER)*]

"Oh shut up. I tell you right now, I won't see him again. It would be too...too..." Painful was the word she was looking for, but she refused to type it. To put it up on the screen would put a name to what she was feeling, and she didn't want to deal with that right this minute. The timing was wrong.

Maybe later, buried in the comforting darkness of some storage closet, she'd face it. But not now.

"...embarrassing." She finished her IM and hit enter.

[YFG: (SNORT) *look honey. they're gonna talk money. the future of this place. dont you think you should be part of that?*]

Syndeia gazed absently out of her window as she pondered that question. For the first time in her life, she found she didn't care.

"I don't know, YFG. Somehow it doesn't seem very important any more. I've done all that I can. I've kept this place running, provided quite nicely for Violet and the girls in spite of what she says, and now...now I don't know. It just seems like I've kept my promise to Dad, but my energy's just about run out."

[YFG: *so go to this meeting. see what they have to say*]

"I know what they'll say. Want me to tell you? They'll say something like... 'well, Mistress Violet. You have a nice piece of land here. We can knock this place down and build a strip mall on it. See this check? Just sign here' ...and Violet will trip over herself to sign. Then she'll bring the papers to me and make me sign 'em. And you know something?"

[YFG: *what?*]

"I might just do it, too."

* * * * *

A hand nudged Luke's shoulder and a sleepy smile crossed his face. "Good morning, sweetheart..."

"Hello *darlin'*."

He jerked up. It wasn't the sultry tones of his Princess. It was Jake.

Luke grabbed for the sheets, blushing as the old man stood next to the bed and grinned.

"Don't bother, son. I've seen it all before. You'll find your clothes right here, and there's a small shower over there if you want to take one before you leave, or you can wait until you get home. Makes no difference to me."

"Where is she?" The words tumbled from Luke's lips as he struggled to tug his brain back into some kind of functioning order.

"She who?"

"Damn it, man. You know exactly who I mean. My Princess. Golden hair, eyes bluer than blue, skin like..." He broke off and blushed again as a wide grin revealed a few gaps in Jake's smile.

"Your Princess, huh?" Jake looked around. "Don't reckon I see anyone here by that name. Of course, *my* eyes are blue."

Luke gritted his teeth and bravely dropped the sheet, struggling into his clothing. "Shit. I can't believe she's gone again. What is this, some kind of trick? You give me the woman I've waited my whole life for, and I find out she's just an illusion? I don't think so." He stood up to his full height and towered over Jake. "That was no illusion last night, my friend."

Jake backed up as a strong finger poked him in the chest.

"You waited your whole life for her, huh?"

Luke paused, as the awareness of what he'd just said sank into his brain. "Uh...yeah."

"Well, looks like you're gonna have to wait a bit longer, lad. All I'm here to do is make sure you get clear of this place before you're seen. We're officially closed and you ain't *officially* supposed to be here."

Closing his mouth with a snap, Jake shoved Luke's shirt at him and pushed him towards the door, hurrying him up the stairs and handing him his jacket before Luke had finished fastening half his buttons.

"Good day, Sir," said Jake respectfully, eyes twinkling.

The door of The Glass Stripper shut firmly behind him, and Luke Charmanti found himself standing outside, wondering what the hell had hit him.

He was still wondering when he finally made it into his office several hours later. A change of clothes, a shower, coffee and a hastily grabbed muffin hadn't helped his confusion.

He was almost glad when a phone call summoned him to Isaac's office. Perhaps more coffee would untangle the mess in his mind. Perhaps he could arrange for an IV of the stuff. Drip it right into his veins.

He was torn between fury that she'd left him once again, and a deep sense of desolation somewhere around his heart.

He didn't know which bothered him more. Just that they both hurt like hell.

"Morning, Luke."

"Grrr."

A slight smile crossed Isaac's face as he watched his CEO prowl over to the coffee pot and pour a large black mugful. "Rough night last night?"

The inquiry was casual, but the look in Luke's eyes was anything but. He knew it, knew Isaac knew it, and was damned if he could do a thing about it.

He sat down with a grunt.

Isaac riffled a few papers. "Just thought we'd better go over the week's schedule now, make sure we're straight. Is that okay with you?"

Luke nodded, staring at his coffee. It stared back, refusing to give him the answers he needed.

"Er...Luke?" Isaac cleared his throat. "Are you here? Hello? Earth to Luke?"

He jumped. "Sorry, Boss." He put the mug down on the desk and jumped up again, restlessly prowling the room. "Shit, Isaac..."

"Already did. It's the bran cereal. But thanks for asking."

Isaac's humor was wasted. Luke didn't even hear him. "I'm in one hell of a mess this morning."

Isaac sighed. "You pregnant?"

The oddball question made Luke grin. Leave it to Isaac to jerk him out of his mood. "Nope. Wouldn't want to be either."

"Got a girl pregnant? Got caught by some husband? Killed anyone? What? Share with me here, for God's sake before I have a coronary or sprain my neck watching you pace."

Luke came to rest back at his chair, and subsided into it, rubbing his hands over his face. Goddamn. He'd forgotten to shave.

"I met this woman. At that damn bondage place."

"Jesus, Luke. One of those flowers?"

Luke stared at him. "God no. *Hell* no. Well, I mean...yeah, she's a flower all right. Like a perfect white rose...like..." His words trailed off.

"So who is she?"

"*I don't know.*" It was a wail from the heart, and Luke recognized it as such. He winced.

"My, my. Got to you, did she?"

"Shit, yeah. Eyes bluer than blue, masses of soft gold hair like spun silk, and her skin, God, Isaac. Her skin..."

Isaac grinned. "She's something special, huh?"

"Damn right."

"So what's her name?"

"I don't know." Luke bit the words out, aware of how ridiculous they sounded.

Isaac smiled into his own coffee mug. "So let me see if I've got this straight. You met this woman at The Glass Stripper, she put on a show for you, and now you've got the hots for her. But you don't know her name."

Luke raised his head sadly. "Yeah. That just about sums it up. Stupid isn't it? But Isaac..." He glared at the older man. "It's *not* the hots. It's...it's..."

"It's what, Luke?"

"It's...something else. Something in here." He tapped his chest. "Something that tells me I'm gonna be lost without her. That she's meant for me. That we fit. Just right. And oh *God* do we fit just right."

Isaac cleared his throat. "Yes. I get your drift. No need to go any further in that direction, I think."

Luke blushed. "Sorry. It's just that my mind's so full of her this morning, I can't think of anything else. I want to find her. I want to talk to her. Take her out to dinner. For a bike ride. Walk for hours with her as the sun sets. And then I want to take her home with me and f..." He stuttered into silence.

Isaac blinked. "You've got it bad, son. Sounds to me like you're in love with the girl."

Luke jumped up and started pacing again. "How can I be? It's absurd. I've met her exactly twice. I don't even know her goddamn name. Her real name. To me, she's 'Princess'."

"Your Princess, huh? Still sounds like love to me."

Luke snorted. "What the hell is love, anyway? I wouldn't know. Never tried it."

"Love," said Isaac thoughtfully. "Love isn't something you 'try', Luke. It's something that happens to you, often when you least expect it. It creeps up behind you on quiet little cat feet and then whacks you solidly around the ears. You're in it hip deep before you even know it."

He stared at Luke. "It makes you want to move mountains and sit by the phone for hours. It's like finding the half of you that you didn't know was missing. It's wanting to see, hear, feel and touch someone. All the time. It's getting pissed off at them, and then making up with them, because you can't imagine life without them."

Isaac sighed. "It's a wonderful thing, Luke. It comes in many shapes and ways, and not always with the blaring of trumpets and a grand announcement from massed bands of angels. Fireworks aren't necessarily included. One moment you're fine, then the next...whammo. You're in love."

He looked at Luke. "And you, my boy, have all the symptoms."

Luke leaned his head against the cool glass of the window. It reminded him of his Princess, of the cool glass they'd used to pleasure each other. God, his ass was *still* tingling at the memory.

"So what do I do now? Go over there, hammer on the door and demand to see her? Do an Internet search for 'Princess'? Threaten Mistress Violet with a damn good beating if she doesn't tell me who she is?" He snorted. "That wouldn't work. She'd probably love it and those crazy daughters of hers would beg to be next in line."

He sighed. "Fuck it, Isaac. I don't know what to do."

Isaac straightened his shoulders. "Well, given that it's Monday morning, and we're here at the office, perhaps the first thing we should do is a little work. Take your mind off more important things." He reached for some file folders and pushed his glasses up onto the bridge of his nose. "I note that we have a meeting scheduled at The Glass Stripper on Tuesday afternoon at three. I've requested that all relevant parties be present."

Luke's head jerked up. "You're going to invest?"

"I'm going to call this an exploratory meeting. To see if what I propose might find approval with the principals. It's obvious that they can't go on the way they are. They'll be bankrupt within six months."

"I'll go with you." The words tumbled from his mouth, and inwardly Luke winced. He'd be begging next.

"If you insist."

"Of course I insist. She works there. Her name should be on the list of employees. Something should be there. It's a way to track her down. There'll be some clue about her, I'm sure of it." His heart leaped, even though he could recite the employee statistics of The Glass Stripper by heart. There had to be some clue. And if there was, he'd ferret it out.

He *was* going to find his Princess, even if he had to tear the place apart board by board to do it.

Isaac smiled enigmatically. "Very well. The lawyers are looking over my proposal this afternoon. We'll be ready."

Luke nodded, the adrenaline coursing through his veins along with a hot rush of excitement at the thought of finding her and claiming her as his own.

"Oh, and Luke?" There was a great deal of humor in Isaac's voice.

"Yes?"

"You'd better shave. And wear loose fitting pants or a *really* long jacket."

Chapter 13

Violet stalked into Syndea's apartment on Monday afternoon, looking none the worse for her 'canapé' experiences. In fact, she looked downright pleased with herself, a fact that sent a shudder of apprehension up Syndea's spine.

"Well. Glad to see you're off your ass and doing something for a change," snorted Violet. She sat down and plunked her bottle of spring water on the desk.

Syndea strategically moved the paperwork that had been occupying her time out of the way. She also decided to forgo mentioning of the other twenty-four things she'd already done since breakfast.

"Rayna will be back tomorrow. So I expect to see business pick up. You hear me?"

Syndea nodded at Violet's words. She was tired. Too tired to get into a screaming match with her stepmother. She'd simply like a couple of days of uninterrupted sleep.

Her conscience kicked her soundly. Well, all right. But only if it was interrupted by a certain someone.

"I want the files. The financial shit. You know the kind of thing. Income, output, whatever." Violet waved her hand, dismissing such small irrelevancies as financial statements.

"And tomorrow, I want you gone in the afternoon. I don't care where you go. Put flyers up somewhere. Sweep the streets. Bring in some new business. Strip in the City Plaza if you want, just don't be *here*."

"But...surely as part owner, I should be?"

Violet's neck cracked as she spun around and stared at Syndea. "What the fuck are you talking about? Who told you?"

Damn. Syndea bit her lip. She'd let privileged information slip out without thinking. "I...I...heard rumors, that's all. You know how people love to talk. Especially the girls."

She prayed that Violet would forget that she hadn't seen hide nor thong of either of them all day.

"Well, yeah. Shit. Anyway, it doesn't matter. This is just some exploratory meeting or something. Nothing important. If there is, you can bet your ass I'll let you know."

Yeah right. Let her know as in "sign here or else..."

Syndea sighed. "Sure. Whatever. I'll be out of here." And she meant it too. She just couldn't see Luke again. Not after what they'd shared, and knowing it could never happen again. Their worlds were just too far apart.

"Now, for tonight, I want Pansy to..." And Violet launched into her usual grandiose plans for the evening and kept Syndea busy taking notes. All of which would have to be downsized and turned into something more realistic.

A dull throb started somewhere deep inside her. After Violet left, she went to reach for her aspirin, but stopped. This wasn't a headache. It was a heartache.

Tears filled her eyes, and as she sank down at her small kitchen table, she did something she hadn't allowed herself to do for years.

Syndea Ellerby cried.

[DING]

She raised a tearstained face and sniffled into her tissues. She *really* didn't want this now. She ignored it.

[DING DING]

Oh fuck off. I'm having a crisis here. Let me enjoy it in peace.

[BUUUZZZZZ]

It was no good. She wasn't going to get the solitude she craved. Cyberspace was calling. And being fucking insistent about it, too.

Sighing, and blowing her nose, Syndea settled herself at the keyboard.

"What?" Sure it was snappish. She felt snappish. And miserable too.

[YFG: *cut out that bawling. it makes your eyes puffy. you look like shit*]

"Thank you. I needed that."

[YFG: *dont try that poor little me bit, girlie. aint gonna work*]

"Did you want something? Other than to harass me and tell me I'm ugly?"

[YFG: *oh come on, honey. what's the big deal? youve met the guy of your dreams, right?*]

Syndea sniffed again. "Yeah, and look where it's gotten me. Miserable. I can't have him. And I'm never gonna find another one like him..." The tears returned.

[YFG: *there there, baby. dont cry. itll all work out in the end. trust me*]

"Trust you? I don't even know who you are. Only that you got me into this mess in the first place."

[YFG: *is that what you think? that this is a mess? would you rather have never met him?*]

Syndea's fingers paused over the keys. "Yes. NO. I don't know. I'm so confused."

[YFG: *Syndea. Listen to me.*]

She wiped her eyes and noticed that the punctuation had made a comeback in YFG's posts. Must be important.

"I'm listening."

[YFG: *you're in love with him, right?*]

She sighed. What the fuck. If she couldn't tell the truth to her computer, then who the hell could she tell it to?

"Yes."

And there it was. The blunt and honest truth. Staring her in the face in 10 point font. She was in love with Luke Charmanti. Totally, helplessly, completely in love with him.

[YFG: *ever hear that love will find a way?*]

"Sure. But Violet and her nasty plans probably didn't figure into the equation of whoever wrote that simple-minded little phrase." She snorted.

"And...and..." Her fingers stumbled as her feelings began to overflow onto the keyboard. "And how the hell can love find a way between someone like me and someone like him? We're from totally different worlds. He's a big shot. I'm a little...a little...something...I don't know..."

[YFG: *have faith, Syndea. Trust me. Trust Luke, and above all, trust in your own feelings. Love is too precious a commodity to go to waste.*]

She sighed. "I want to, I really do. But the sensible thing is for me to just let him go."

[YFG: *who said anything about being sensible? Look, sweetheart, he'll be here for the meeting tomorrow, right?*]

"I guess. I don't exactly know."

[YFG: *and you're planning on making yourself scarce, aren't you?*]

How the hell did this person know all these things? Thoughts that were running through her mind seemed to be an open book to YFG. It was really freaky and probably should scare the crap out of her, but right now she didn't have the energy to care.

"Violet gave me very precise instructions to make myself scarce. And yes, I am planning on doing so. Why prolong this agony?"

[YFG: *(GRUNT) fuck violet. no on second thoughts dont. eeeuwww.*]

In spite of herself, Syndea felt the first smile of the day curve her lips. "I have no plans to fuck Violet, let me assure you."

[YFG: *good. first smart thing youve said. now. listen up kiddo. about tomorrow...*]

Syndeas watched, as YFG spelled out some very specific instructions. Packages, she learned would be arriving. Timing would be crucial. The IMs were detailed, precise, and informed her exactly what she should be doing, and where she should be doing it, right down to the minute.

If she followed them, she'd have to see Luke again.

If she didn't...

* * * * *

Isaac and Luke were quiet on the drive over to The Glass Stripper. Two other cabs followed them, containing the usual phalanx of legal minds necessary for these sorts of negotiations.

Luke had glanced over Isaac's proposal. It was fundamentally sound. It would lift the burden of debt from the Ellerby family, and allow them to live well.

It would also shut down The Glass Stripper. Isaac had correctly realized that there was no way that it could continue to operate as it had done, and although its customers might be disappointed, the bottom line had to come first where venture capital was involved. Luke knew the decision had been a hard one for Isaac, and that he regretted it.

Isaac was nothing if not loyal to his friends, and Luke realized he would have liked to know this Syd Ellerby. He must have been one hell of a guy.

Luke sighed. He wondered what his Princess would do when she found herself out of a job. His cock tightened at the thought of consoling her. Of finding her a new permanent position. Underneath *him*.

And beside him. And around him, and bearing his kids, and growing old with him.

Shit. Isaac was right. He had it bad.

He drew a breath and collected his thoughts as the cab drew to a standstill and they got out in front of The Glass Stripper. In daylight, the building was still elegant, and was certainly a perfect candidate for conversion into several very nicely-priced condos. The neighborhood wasn't too high class, but this would keep the asking figure reasonable, and almost certainly guarantee plenty of willing buyers once the project was completed.

Yes, Isaac's proposal was definitely the best they could hope for.

Jake was already opening the door as they climbed the steps.

“Good afternoon, gentlemen. You are expected.” Not by the flicker of an eyelash did he reveal that he’d caught Luke with his pants down less than forty-eight hours ago.

Luke was relieved. Blushing was not something he commonly did during business meetings.

Jake led them up the stairs this time, to a good sized room that had probably once served as a parlor or a dining room. The woodwork glowed with a soft aged patina, and the old marble fireplace was still intact. God, this house must have been lovely in its heyday. Still was, but the glory had faded.

Luke’s mind traveled along roads littered with restoration projects, molding reproductions and floor refinishing. He was just considering the cost of marble refacing when the door opened to admit the ladies of The Glass Stripper and their lawyer.

Luke gulped. Perhaps he should have used the word “ladies” more carefully.

Violet Ellerby was certainly dressed appropriately. Although rather girlishly for a woman her age. A neat suit was topped by a blouse that seemed to spill out around her neck like a clown’s collar. And he wasn’t sure, but he thought that chartreuse might not have been her best color choice.

At least most of her was hidden, unlike the two girls who simpered behind her.

Iris was swathed in something pink. Something *very* pink. There were two pieces of it, too. The top piece barely reached her torso and the bottom...well, Luke assumed they were supposed to be shorts. The ones that hugged the butt cheeks. Sadly, Iris had no butt cheeks for them to hug. The shorts hung there, looking empty and unfulfilled.

Pansy, on the other hand, would have sent those shorts into a frenzy of joy. But she’d decided to present her bounteous charms in some clingy thing that was pushing engineering principles to their limits. Lavender folds rumped over her

body and criss-crossed her breasts. This would have been fine, except for the fact that Pansy must have gone to the wrong sized rack at the clothing store and picked up something that was two sizes too small. Instead of covering her breasts, it was squashing them. Soft pancakes of mammary tissue oozed unappealingly from beneath the fabric.

Luke could have sworn the whole thing groaned when Pansy sat down.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen," crooned Violet.

His attention brought back to the matter at hand, Luke forgot about the dreadful duo, and straightened in his chair.

Greetings were exchanged, introductions made, and the lawyers spread their wares out on the table in a snowstorm of paperwork.

"Mrs. Ellerby," began Isaac. "Thank you for agreeing to this meeting. It's my hope that we can come to some arrangement that will be satisfactory to all parties, today."

Violet showed her teeth.

But before she could respond, Isaac continued. "Are all the relevant persons present?"

"Well," she paused.

Luke sat forward, waiting, wondering if he was finally going to find out the truth about his Princess.

"One of our more popular hostesses, besides my daughters, of course, has just returned from vacation. She will be joining us shortly. Her name's Rayna."

Rayna. That was a nice name. It *had* to be her.

"Our other two girls, Jo and Doreen, are only part time employees, with no financial interest other than a paycheck. They don't matter." Violet waved her hand dismissively.

No, Luke's Princess definitely wasn't a Doreen. She could have been a Jo though, he mused.

One of the lawyers looked up. "I see that an S. Ellerby is listed as co-principal, here, ma'am. Should that person be here?"

Violet snorted. "Oh, you needn't worry about that. I have full power of attorney here."

Luke caught a flicker of Isaac's eyebrow. Something wasn't right.

"You can assure us that all relevant signatures will be obtained if necessary?" asked Isaac.

"Oh absolutely, Mr. Gala," grinned Violet. "You'll have whatever signatures you need. No question. Trust me."

Luke snorted to himself. He'd sooner trust a hungry tiger. That woman had predator written all over her.

A door slammed and footsteps could be heard on the stairs outside.

"Oh here comes Rayna now," said Violet. "Late, of course, but what can one do? Girls will be girls..." She spread her hands in mute and insincere apology.

Luke turned, heart pounding, to watch the door.

It opened and there was a collective gasp as a woman stepped into the room.

Tall, slim and elegant, she made even the jeans and T-shirt she wore look like designer originals.

Jet black hair fell past her shoulders practically to her waist, and her brown eyes sparkled in a face that could have easily been found on any magazine cover.

She was flat-out gorgeous, sexy as all hell, and Luke could well understand the gaping jaws of the lawyers at the table.

For his part, he was unmoved.

It wasn't his Princess.

Chapter 14

For a moment, Luke thought he was going to pass out. Or have a heart attack, or at the very least, cry.

He'd been so *sure* that this Rayna would be his dream-woman. But there was no way she could have made such substantial changes to her appearance.

Rayna's coloring was all wrong. Her skin glowed with a fresh tan, her brown eyes twinkled at the assembled crowd, and when she smiled, she showed an endearing little gap between her front teeth.

Nope. His Princess was completely and totally different.

He heaved a big sigh and returned his attention to the meeting while Rayna found herself surrounded by at least three lawyers stumbling over themselves to pull out a chair for her.

The wicked grin on her face told him she had their number. This was a street-smart woman, no doubt about it, and probably very good at what she did.

But Luke found he couldn't care less what she did. Nor did he want to do it with her. He just wanted his Princess, dammit. He felt like howling.

Instead, he just stared at his paperwork.

"So here's our proposal, Mrs. Ellerby. As you can see, The Glass Stripper cannot continue the way it has. Your balance has been steadily slipping into the red for some time now. We foresee that trend continuing."

Isaac's voice was calm as he recited the cold hard business facts, but Luke noticed that Violet's smile never wavered. She really didn't give a shit.

"Our best recommendation, therefore, and the purpose of this meeting this afternoon, is to discover whether you'd be willing to part with this property completely. To sell it outright to us."

Pansy and Iris pouted. Clearly they'd been trying to follow the conversation, and this bit had sunk in.

"But what about our customers?" said Iris.

"Yeah. What about people like Mr. Overton?" Pansy squirmed and giggled. "He'd be so lost without me to spank that lovely backside of his. Probably wouldn't be able to get it up at all."

The lawyers fidgeted and looked embarrassed.

Violet turned steely eyes on her daughters. "Shut. Up."

Two pairs of eyes fell before that stare. "Yes, mother," they chorused quietly.

Isaac cleared his throat. "Should you care to obtain proper licensing, I suppose your daughters might be able to continue their—er—*activities* in your own home..."

Violet frowned. "I don't think so. I'm planning on selling that too. Interested?"

"But *ma...*" hissed Iris. She looked very unhappy.

Violet's eyes narrowed and her fists clenched.

Iris shut up once more.

Ignoring the by-play, Isaac continued. "I think we'll leave that property out of the discussion for the time being. We are simply here to consider *this* place, and its future potential, in relation to Gala venture capital."

"Sounds good to me. What's the bottom line?" Violet cut right to the chase, catching the lawyers off guard. They looked miserable, as only lawyers can when deprived of the chance to do something lawyerly, like talk for an hour or so.

Isaac wrote something on a piece of paper and passed it across the table to Violet. "This is the figure we have decided most accurately reflects the current value of this property."

Violet scrabbled for the paper and read Isaac's numbers. "Done."

Luke clenched his teeth. He'd quickly checked over his papers again, double checked the legal documents, and was still no nearer figuring out who the hell his Princess was than he had been when he sat down at this damned table.

Violet was reaching for her pen, and he was going to miss out on any chance he ever had if he didn't do something. And quickly.

"One moment, Mrs. Ellerby." Luke stood, drawing everyone's attention. "There is something I'd like settled first."

Violet's eyes drilled into him. She wasn't happy. He didn't give a fuck.

Reaching into his pocket, Luke withdrew the glass cock that his Princess had given him the first night they'd been together. He'd never let it out of his possession since.

He rested it on the table, and suppressed a grin as the lawyers stared at it with wide eyes. They were certainly getting an education today, and very little of it had to do with the judicial system.

"Do any of you recognize this?"

"Oooh, pretty," giggled Pansy.

"Hmm, hard..." added Iris with glee.

"No." Mistress Violet barked out the words.

"Want me to try it?" Pansy grabbed the glass and lifted her skirt, revealing underwear that probably fell under the heading of a C-string. There wasn't enough fabric for a G-string.

"No, I saw it first..." Iris leaped to the table and latched on to Pansy's hands.

"No you didn't..."

"Yes I did..."

"Get off, you bitch..."

"Lemme have it, you fat cow..."

The two women struggled over the glass toy as the rest of the group watched in varying degrees of shock.

Terrified they were about to drop it and shatter it on the wood floor, Luke tried to intervene, but Rayna spoke up before he had a chance to open his mouth.

"Stop it right this *instant*," she shouted. Her command surprised both Pansy and Iris, who froze in mid-squabble.

Rayna eased the toy out away from the clenching hands and held it to the light. "Hmm."

Luke's heart rate increased to triple time. God help him, if he didn't find his Princess he was surely going to have a heart attack. "Does it look familiar, Rayna?" He was amazed he got the question out.

"Well, I can't say I've seen this particular piece before, but I know someone who collects glass pieces. It might be hers..."

"Who?" The word squawked from Luke's throat.

"That would be..." Rayna's words were interrupted.

"No, no, you're wrong." Mistress Violet's loud voice covered the rest of Rayna's answer.

Luke's fury knew no bounds, and he turned on the older woman. "I'm speaking with Rayna. You will please hold your tongue until I'm through." Something in his voice made an impression, and she subsided, muttering, into her chair.

Rayna looked back at Luke a grin in her brown eyes. Luke couldn't help himself. He grinned back. She wasn't his Princess, but she was a real charmer. "Please, Rayna, finish what you were saying?"

"I was just going to say that this piece might come from Syndea's collection."

"Syndea?" Luke breathed the word, afraid to even start to hope that his quest might be nearing its end.

"Yeah, Syndea Ellerby. She runs this place."

"Then why isn't she here?" Luke turned a hot stare onto Violet, who attempted a laugh. It failed.

"She...she...um...she had other business to attend to."

"Other business?" Isaac chimed in. "That seems unlikely. Especially given the nature of *this* business. I assume you're talking about Syd's daughter by his first wife?"

Violet nodded but Luke gave her no chance to answer. "Rayna, you say Syndea collects glass pieces?"

Rayna smiled. "Yup. She showed me some once. Just lovely. This one's Italian, I believe. Very valuable. She must think a lot of you if she gave it to you, Mr. Charmanti."

"I don't know," admitted Luke. "I don't know what she thinks of me." A slight sound behind him caught his attention.

And then a voice spoke, a sultry sexy voice that sent shivers up his back.

"So why don't you ask her yourself?"

* * * * *

Syndea hoped like hell they couldn't see her hands shaking as she neared Luke.

She'd followed YFG's instructions down to the letter, and it appeared her timing, or YFG's timing, had been just about perfect.

"Syndea. I thought you were going to be elsewhere today," said Violet harshly. "What are you doing here? There's no need..."

"Oh but there is," breathed Luke. He was ignoring the older woman who was huffing in outrage.

"Hi Syn," said Pansy.

"Whatcher doin', Syn?" added Iris.

Syndea couldn't have answered to save her life. Luke had turned to face her and she was nailed to the spot by a pair of glowing brown eyes and the emotions she could see roiling inside them.

A slow smile spread across his face. "Hello, Princess."

She swallowed. "Hello yourself."

"Looking good." His gaze briefly traveled over her elegant pantsuit, which she knew was the exact same shade as her eyes. It was perfect, creaseless, and had been delivered by special courier less than an hour before. Thanks to YFG, she felt like a million dollars and for once, could hold her head up and look the world in the eye. Expensive clothes apparently bolstered a woman's ego better than anything. Anything but the look they put in a man's eyes, that is.

"Thank you," she smiled.

"I've missed you," Luke said.

The air between them was vibrating, and for Syndea, the rest of the room could have faded away and she wouldn't have known it. She was here, unmasked, and Luke was looking at her with such...such...*passion*.

She blinked. "You have?"

"Oh yeah," he sighed. "Oh very yeah."

Isaac cleared his throat and jerked everyone back into the present. "Luke? I believe you recognize the name...this is Syndea Ellerby, my old friend Syd's daughter. Annabelle's daughter."

Syndea turned with a smile to Isaac. "You knew my mother?"

"Oh yes, dear, indeed I did. May I say that you look just like her?" He smiled kindly at her.

"Thank you. That's a lovely compliment."

"And totally unnecessary. Syndea, get out. And take that damned thing with you." Violet's angry voice cut through the room like a well-honed blade as she curled her lip at the sparkling toy resting on the table.

"She must mean me. But it's a good idea," said Luke. He grabbed Syndea's wrist with one hand and pocketed the glass cock with the other. "You'll excuse me for a moment, Isaac?"

Syndea gasped as his hand touched hers. He was dragging her to the door before she knew it, and she glanced back to see Isaac laughing, Violet stuttering,

Rayna grinning, and the two girls frowning as they attempted to make sense of what was happening.

Syndea gave up and let Luke pull her from the room.

He slammed the door shut behind them and whirled Syndea into the wall next to it.

"Princess," he groaned.

"I...Luke..." She got no further. Luke crushed her between him and the wall and claimed her mouth with fierce tenderness. She parted her lips and welcomed his tongue, as hungry for him as he apparently was for her.

Her hands slid up his back under his jacket, touching the soft cotton of his shirt and digging through to the muscles beneath.

He moaned, and pressed his cock against her, rubbing and sliding and driving her to the edge of insanity.

"Not here..." she gasped.

"Where?" He growled. His lips found her neck and nibbled as he shoved himself against her even harder.

"Upstairs. My place..."

"You live here?" Luke raised his head, but kept the pressure on her, making it difficult for her to think.

"Yes. Always have. The top floor's mine. I have an office...my room...the security..." She sighed, tipping her head back and letting him find her ear and shove his tongue in it.

She shivered.

"What are we waiting for?" Luke finally peeled himself off her and looked around, pulling her wrist again, but not sure which way to go.

"But the meeting...the lawyers? Isaac Gala?"

Luke laughed. "Fuck 'em all. We have better things to do. Isaac will manage just fine without us."

Syndeia felt her heart soar at his words. He wanted her. He knew who she was and where she lived and he *still* wanted her. And quite badly, too, judging by the hardness in his pants.

Not that she was unresponsive. Her pantsuit was chafing, her nipples were on fire, and she probably could have fucked him right here and now, given half the chance and two more of those extraordinarily hot kisses.

But he was moving, and she let him lead her to the end of the hall, where a small staircase led upwards. He must have had some kind of homing instinct, because it was the right way.

Almost running, they dashed up the stairs to Syndea's apartment, and within seconds, the door was closed, locked, and silence fell.

"Syndeia," breathed Luke, hands busy with her jacket. "I like the name. It suits my Princess. Syndea...Syn...oh yeah, definitely Syn."

Her clothing began falling to the floor.

"You are definitely my Princess of Sin..." His mouth smiled as he unfastened her pants, and she found to her surprise that she was busy stripping him, too.

He bared her from the waist down, pushing her underwear to her ankles and adding to her frustration since she was about to go for his fly. Quickly she stepped out of them and kicked them away, licking her lips as he stood and she could finally free him.

His hands slipped her silk shirt up and off and took her bra with it. He groaned and bent his head, suckling her nipple deep into his mouth.

Her hips pushed forward of their own accord, and she finally felt his cock thrust between her hands.

She sighed, aching for him, wanting him inside her so badly she was ready to scream with it. "Luke, God, Luke..." she whimpered. She was wet, and hot, and torn between the urge to wiggle herself onto that fine upstanding cock of his and lose his mouth at her breasts, or keep his head right where it was and see if she could figure out some way to defy gravity and bend her body in half.

He let her nipple slip from his lips and followed her breastbone up to her neck with his tongue. "Lift your leg," he commanded.

She had always tried to be a good girl and do as she was told. This time, it was no hardship whatsoever. Especially since it brought the hardness between *his* legs right where she wanted it. Between *hers*.

Luke's hands slipped to her buttocks and he lifted her clean off her feet and onto his cock.

With a mutual sigh of pleasure, their bodies melded. Syndea's breath left her as Luke filled her, stretching her and finding all those wonderful places that only he seemed to be able to touch.

They both stilled, and blue eyes met brown.

"I love you, my Princess. Syndea. I can't get you out of my mind. I don't want to. Ever. You're part of me."

Syndea's eyes filled, even as she smiled. "I think it would be more accurate to say that you're part of me right this moment." She flexed her lower muscles around his cock and watched Luke's eyes glaze over with heat. "But Luke? I think I'm in love with you too."

"Think? You only *think* you're in love with me? We'll have to see about that..."

Chapter 15

Luke's cock sang to him as he slowly fucked Syndea up against her living room wall. It was a song of desire, of pleasure, of lust and of love.

Her muscles pulled at him, her heart beat against his, and he had bits of her hair in his mouth. He didn't care. He was where he wanted to be.

She raised a hand and eased the strands away from his lips, replacing them with soft kisses. "Okay, Luke, I lied."

He paused in his thrusting. "What?"

"I don't *think* I love you. I *know*."

He heaved a sigh of relief and resumed thrusting. Well, he would have done anyway, since he was too far gone to ever stop. But this time, he buried himself into her as deeply as he could go, tugging her hips to him, closing the tiny distance between them, and feeling her clit as he lowered her even more onto his cock.

He leaned them against the wall, letting the paneling support some of her weight so that he could free one hand.

Her breasts were squashed against him, warm weights with pointed tips that rubbed his chest with each thrust. His buttocks began to heat as he burrowed his hand between their bodies, seeking the place where they were joined and finding her swollen folds. There it was—her clit—hard and aroused, and her moisture was soaking them both.

Luke could smell her, that particular scent that made his head swim. That sweet, floral, essence-of-woman that had been stuck in his brain ever since the first time he'd plunged his mouth into her and sucked her into an orgasm.

His heat grew and his thighs bunched as he pounded himself into her, claiming her, loving her, fucking her the best way he knew how. Although there were lots of other ways he couldn't wait to try.

But for right now, it was need, pure and simple. The need to make her *his*, to brand her, to take her to new heights and have her carry him right along with her.

She was panting and whimpering a little as he stroked her clit, tugging it, and pressing it and flicking it with his fingers.

His grunts matched his movements, as his lungs struggled for breath. He was a hammer, she was the nail. He was man, she was woman. *His* woman.

His body tensed and his balls tightened. "Syn, Princess, come with me," he urged. He increased his pressure on her clit and felt her muscles shudder in response.

"Yes...yes...YES..."

Her scream rang out just as her body let go, shuddering in his arms and around his cock. It was like being caught in a rhythmic vise, so hard was her climax.

It sent Luke over the edge.

He was vaguely aware of her heel digging into his back and pulling him even deeper, but then he lost all awareness of everything but his cock. It burned, it swelled, and it exploded deep within his Princess.

He could feel his body pumping her full of his come, and knew that his soul was right there, too. He cried out, unable to stop the guttural sound as his orgasm shook him to the core.

He came like there was no tomorrow. Only this moment, only this woman, only a bone-deep need to empty himself inside her.

Finally, the shudders eased and Syndea's leg fell limply back to the floor. She was still leaning up against the wall and staring at him with the most wonderful smile on her face. The one that said "Ohmigod" or maybe "Wow".

"Wow."

Damn, he was good. It had been the latter.

As his brain picked itself up off the floor and dusted off its clothing, a new realization dawned.

"Uh, Luke?" Syndea's voice was still a little shaky. "We...you...um—we didn't use anything."

Luke was just thinking that himself, since he was still buried deep inside her hot cunt and not planning on moving anytime soon.

He grinned. "Don't need to. Wives don't need to worry about that sort of thing."

She froze. "Wives?"

Luke looked at her beautiful blue eyes as they tried to refocus on him. "Yeah, wives. Sweetheart, I hope you don't expect me to go down on one knee right at this particular moment..." He flexed his hips against her, bringing a little sigh to her lips and keeping his cock tucked into her.

"But yeah, wives as in husbands and wives. Wives as in I'm asking you to marry me. To spend the rest of your life with me. To have kids with me. At some point. Maybe not right away..." He paused.

"Yes."

"Yes? Just like that? Yes?"

Syndea's eyes blazed with joy. "Yes," she whispered. "Just like that."

* * * * *

The sound of Luke taking a shower in her apartment brought a smile to Syndea's face. Well, come to think about it, she'd been smiling ever since Luke had screwed her silly up against her own wall.

She'd been smiling when they did it again in the bedroom, and the grin had only gotten wider when Luke discovered the joys of her large recliner and insisted they play there too.

She'd been truly and thoroughly loved, felt a little sore, and couldn't have imagined being as happy as she was right at this minute.

She'd gathered their clothes from the untidy piles scattered around the house, and was about to go and join her man in the shower when a whistle from outside her kitchen window caught her attention.

Curious, she moved over to take a look. There were two men standing in the parking lot beneath.

It was Jake and...and Isaac Gala, and they were waving at her.

They were holding up something. It looked like two pieces of paper, one in Jake's hands and the other in Isaac's.

Squinting against the setting sun, Syndea tried to make out the words scrawled across them.

"Hmm...Good Luck, you two..." She giggled. Those hot tickets. They knew what had been going on up here all right.

"Good Luck, you two..." What was that last bit? "Love ya, YFG"

Oh. My. God.

YFG.

Syndea gaped as the realization dawned on her overheated brain.

The two men nodded at her, blew her a couple of kisses and walked off together like old friends.

Shit. *Of course.* They would have been old friends. Isaac said he knew her parents, and Jake had been around forever, it seemed.

Well, damn. The mystery was solved. She'd had not one but *two* Fairy Godpersons, and they'd been Godfathers, at that.

She grinned, wondering if she could ever repay them, or tell them how much she appreciated what they'd done. How much she was grateful for all the things they'd given her, one of which was humming loudly and off-key in her shower right this minute.

She couldn't wait to get in there and harmonize.

[DING]

Damn. She'd forgotten to shut off her IM program.

Syndea crossed to her desk and sat down.

[YFG: *so. happy girlie?*]

She shivered. It couldn't be. She half-stood and glanced out the window. Jake and Isaac were chatting next to a Chevy. She checked. It was a real Chevy. They were real people. They were out there chatting.

So who the fuck was on her IM?

Her hands shook over the keys. "I don't understand. Who are you? I thought..." She couldn't continue.

[YFG: *Sweetheart, don't try. Can't you accept a little magic in your life?*]

"I...I..."

[YFG: *When things are meant to be, and two people are meant to be together, sometimes it requires a special nudge to get them both going in the right direction.*]

"But...but..." Her fingers were stuttering as badly as her mind.

[YFG: *Look, honey. Don't try and figure it all out. Just take it for what it is. You went to the ball and found your handsome prince. You're going to live happily ever after. End of story.*]

"But this is life. Real life. Not a fairy story..."

[YFG: *Oh yeah? Tell that to your stepfamily. They're going to find out that life can be a fairy story. Unfortunately, theirs isn't going to have such a happy ending.*]

Even though she was still stunned, Syndea couldn't let that one pass. "Oh really? Tell me...please..."

[YFG: *Ever hear the one about the three wicked witches who got eaten by wild boars?*]

Syndea frowned. "No?"

[YFG: *Good, because I just made it up. (SNICKER)*]

"Oh come on. Seriously. What is going to happen to them?"

There was a pause, and Syndea bit her lip, wondering if she could ever believe what she was seeing, and reading, and wanting desperately in her heart to accept in the concept of a Fairy Godperson.

[YFG: *Weeeeee...*]

God, YFG certainly knew how to yank her chain. She waited impatiently.

[YFG: *Your stepmama is in for a big shock. She won't see much of that cash she just grabbed, since her bills will need most of it. Let's just say that there's a certain retirement home in Florida that has a room with her name on it. A small room. Without air-conditioning.*(GRIN)]

"Oooh." Syndea tried to feel sorry for Violet. She failed in the attempt.

"What about the girls?"

[YFG: *Oh yes, I almost forgot the girls. Well, Syn, sorry to say that they're going to do quite well for themselves. Of course, they'll spend much of the rest of their lives squabbling with each other, but their Internet site will pay off quite handsomely.*]

"Internet site? You've got to be kidding. Neither of those two knows how to turn a computer on, let alone set up an Internet site?"

[YFG: *Well, it seems one of those fancy lawyers they're chatting up right at this moment has some ideas along those lines...*]

Syndea laughed. She couldn't help it. It was the ultimate revenge. Violet would end up alone and suffocating in the heat of a Florida retirement home, while her daughters gleefully paraded their pussies and their whips to any cyber-idiot foolish enough to spend twenty-nine ninety-five for a membership.

"I love it. It has symmetry."

[YFG: *Not a word of this to your guy, there, honey. Strictly between you and me.*]

"I promise, YFG, honest to God. Not a word will pass my lips. They're sealed for eternity." Syndea chuckled.

[YFG: *Well, I can think of a few more things that should pass your lips. And one of 'em is getting impatient in that shower. Go get him, honey. And Syndea?*"]

"Yes?"

[YFG: *Be happy, darlin'.*]

[YFG *logged off at 7:42pm*]

Syndeia leaned back in her chair, mind still reeling over the conversation. Who was YFG? Would she ever know? Would it matter?

Perhaps it was some kind of miracle, or perhaps Jake and Isaac had set up the whole conversation by remote access, or...

Or perhaps it was magic. Plain and simple.

Whatever it was, it had brought her something extra special. Something wonderful. It had brought her Luke.

Who was now emerging from the shower and dripping all over her carpet.

"Hey Princess. I could use a hand with the soap in here. My back. I'm missing a few bits, I think..." His grin was wicked and devilish and everything she'd ever wanted and more.

"I can't see anything missing from here." She laughed back, eyeing his cock which, amazingly, was hard once more.

"Maybe you'd better join me and check," he smiled.

Syndeia stood up, dropped her robe to the floor and walked naked across her room to her man. "I think I will."

Epilogue

Three months later...

A pair of blue eyes followed the lazy path of the ceiling fan as it swirled above the huge bed and stirred the soft sheers next to the open French doors. Beyond them was a spectacular view of the moon shining on the Caribbean as it lapped softly at the beach outside the honeymoon chalet.

The owner of the blue eyes sighed.

"What was that sigh, for, love?" asked her husband.

"Nothing, really. Just thinking." Syndea smiled tiredly. It was a good tired, though. The kind of tired one got from a day spent swimming and snorkeling and a night spent fucking one's brains out.

"About the house?" Luke's question reminded her of the work that was going on to transform The Glass Stripper into condos.

"Not really. We settled all that before the wedding. And it'll be a while before our input is needed again."

Luke nodded. "Yeah, the gut job is the hardest and the dirtiest. I'm glad we're not around to see it." He snuggled her up against his body. "I trust that construction company though. They'll know what to save and what to chuck. That is going to be one gorgeous building when they're done. I promise you."

Syndea nodded in the darkness. "I know. I trust you." She turned over and lay against Luke.

"I just realized something." Her hands trailed over his chest.

"What's that, Princess?"

She chuckled. "It's someday."

Luke blinked. "I don't get it?" He caught her hand and brought it to his lips, just brushing his mouth gently across her knuckles. It was probably using up what little strength he had left. He'd certainly worked hard tonight.

Syndea grinned at him. "Someday. You know. Like in the fairy tale."

Luke shook his head. "Nope. Still not making any sense."

"Well," Syndea propped up her head on her hand. "Remember Cinderella? She had two ugly stepsisters. So do I. She had a really awful stepmother. So do I." She bit her lip. Perhaps in the future she'd tell Luke about YFG, but for now, those messages would remain a secret. He'd never believe her anyway.

She continued. "And so...it's *someday*." She lowered her gaze to Luke's now-softening and gleaming cock which was lying against her thigh.

"And my Prince...has come."

...And naturally they both lived happily ever after.

They did, of course, completely ignore the "Flower Fuckers" website which took the Internet by storm the following year.

THE END

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