

Beaver Canyon: A Sweet Deal
Sahara Kelly and S.L. Carpenter

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Chapter 1

"Hit me."

It occurred to Maggie French that a casino was one of the few places in the world where a woman could say those words and not worry about the results. She rested her arms on the leather edge of the blackjack table and watched as the dealer flipped two cards onto the pair of eights she'd doubled down.

A ten and a four. Not bad. Her brain whirled through the possibilities as she sipped her soda casually.

She'd stand on the eighteen. She tapped the four with a short, unvarnished fingernail and was rewarded for her patience with a nine. *Niiiiice*.

Now all she had to do was wait until the other three players had made their calls, see what the dealer drew, and with any luck she'd be up a couple hundred dollars more.

She fidgeted a little on her chair. Too much soda along with a margarita filled her bladder, and those enchiladas she'd had for lunch were making their presence known by bubbling in her ass. She squeezed her butt tight against a fart, crossed her legs to contain her bladder, and figured she probably looked like an accordion being squished by an enthusiastic amateur musician.

But these inconveniences were minor, and she put them out of her mind. Because Maggie French was, before anything else, a gambler.

Not that anyone would know it to look at her -- no indeed. A quietly dressed woman in clean blue jeans, white shirt unbuttoned over a pale blue tank top, and minimal jewelry. She blended in with the general rabble thronging the tables, and that was just the way she wanted it.

She laughed and cheered with the rest of the table when the dealer bust out, scooping up her chips with all the enthusiasm of a suburban housewife on bingo night. And truthfully, it was a thrill. Small potatoes, a couple of fifty dollar chips and four twenty-five dollar ones, but it was a win.

And winning was what it was all about.

Whether at Trivial Pursuit -- she was good at it unless the category was "sports" -- Monopoly, which occasionally defeated her unless she had all four railroad stations, thumb wars, or any card game ever invented, Maggie played to win.

When she'd discovered poker, Maggie discovered heaven.

And that was why she was sitting in the casino of the Beaver Canyon resort, holding in several bodily functions, and exchanging grins with a seventy-year-old grandmother who'd probably just doubled her social security check for the week.

Maggie was going to win the Poker Championship and go home with half a million dollars.

There wasn't a doubt in her mind.

"Lady, you've either just hit a big jackpot or you've gotta pee real bad." An amused voice sounded from behind her, and Maggie turned in surprise to find herself face-to-chest with a patron of the casino who'd been standing at her back during the last hand.

And fuck it, he was too damn observant. She relaxed a little. He wouldn't have a clue who she was. "Nice guess, Mister. I really do need the little girls' room." She glanced back at the dealer and nodded her thanks, tossing a chip across the table and sliding off the stool.

Blocking her from leaving, the stranger stood motionless. "You ever see Niagara Falls? The water just runs on and on. Sort of like a dripping faucet. You know... drip, trickle, drip. Always made me feel like going to the bathroom myself." He had a shit-eating grin on his face, watching her squirm. "Oh sorry. Am I in your way?"

"Another verse of 'Singing In The Rain' and we'll have golden showers, so *move*."

"Well, when you're done, you want to fill up again by having a drink with me?"

She sized him up. Not too tall, but clean-shaven, a nice smile, tidy clothes... he looked about as threatening as a happy golden retriever. What the hell. He might try to hump her leg but he seemed harmless. A drink couldn't hurt, right? She needed something to take the edge off before tomorrow's game began.

"That sounds good. Thanks. Um... I'll meet you at the bar?"

"Sure." He cocked an eyebrow at her. "You gonna run out on me? It's not like we've been introduced or anything. We can wait to pick out curtains in the morning."

The challenge in his words and the teasing expression got to her. "Nope. You offered a drink. I said yes. I'm going to pee and then I'll be back. Okay?"

He grinned. "Okay."

Shit. He's got a helluva cute smile.

"And wash your hands." He wrinkled his nose and waved his arms around.

Maggie couldn't help it. *What a cute idiot.* She laughed. And then hurried off before the silent fart that finally escaped made its presence known.

* * *

Deuce watched her walk away and smiled. Then he blinked a few times at a seriously foul scent in the air. Sniffing under both arms, he shrugged and turned to the empty spot at the blackjack table.

"Is this seat open?" He pointed to where the woman had been sitting. Nobody complained, so he took the stool, enjoying the warmth that lingered from her ass.

"Hey buddy, I need some chips." Deuce reached behind him to get his wallet and tossed a couple of twenty-dollar bills on the table.

"Sir, there's a fifty dollar minimum here." The dealer looked sneeringly over at Deuce as he reached back again to his pocket. It was a glare that seriously bugged him.

A waitress walked by and Deuce motioned her over. He put a twenty on her tray. "Sweetheart, can you get me a rum and Coke and whatever the sexy woman that was sitting here was having? I'll meet you at the bar in a few minutes."

He turned back to the table and tossed down a handful of bills. "Gimme three one-thousand-dollar chips. This will be quick."

The dealer slid the chips over, and then began to shuffle.

Deuce set two chips on one block and one chip on another. As the cards were dealt face down he looked at the ones on his right.

Ten and a king. *That's good.*

He pushed the cards under the one chip. When he peeled up his second hand under the two chips he smiled. The dealer had an eight showing and as the other gamblers made their plays, he studied them. He watched their twitches, the way they held cards. Deuce might be a funny name for a guy, but he knew cards. And the players who held them.

"I'll stand." Deuce stared impassively at the dealer's sly smirk.

Which got even bigger when the guy flipped over his second card, revealing an ace. "Dealer has nineteen."

The other people groaned, paying the dealer for their nineteens and under. Deuce stood patiently, waiting his turn. He flipped over the ten followed by the king, then turned up the ace of spades to go with his jack for a twenty-one.

"Pay up, peckerhead!" The dealer grudgingly stacked the appropriate number of chips as Deuce produced a twenty and held it loosely in his hand.

The dealer reached politely across the table for it, but Deuce pulled it back. "Whoops, I forgot. There's a fifty dollar minimum. *Asshole.*" He took his chips and headed for the bar.

* * *

His gaze roamed across the large room and he saw her. It wasn't so much the way she dressed or the color of her hair, although both were a definite plus. It was the way she carried herself. It was her calm confidence that attracted Deuce. Along with her nice rack. Deuce was a sucker for a well-stacked pair.

When their eyes met, he saw stars for a second or two. Distracted, he paid no attention to where he was going, and an elderly man rammed hard into Deuce's balls with the arm of his wheelchair.

Deuce cringed in pain and crumpled over.

By accident, he fell into the barmaid holding a tray with drinks on it -- and they spilled all over the leg of his pants. His hand caught on her uniform and ripped the front.

Her 44DD fake breasts popped out and she tripped over Deuce as he fell.

She toppled forward into the old man, surrounding his face with her silicone twins. The wrinkled eyes widened, he cried "*Mommy,*" and began suckling her nipple with his toothless gums.

The bouncer ran over to help the waitress, pushing the old man's head away from her breast.

Unfortunately for the bouncer, he'd pissed off the wrong senior citizen. Once more, the old man rammed the arm of his wheelchair into a set of balls, but this time he sped off as fast as his battery-operated cart would take him.

Deuce finally staggered up to the bar where he could see Maggie holding back a laugh.

"That was graceful."

Deuce winced. "Bartender? A bag of ice?"

Chapter 2

"So what brings you here?" Maggie sipped her margarita.

"Beaver. I'm just a sucker for this place. I love Beaver. Been a fan of Beaver for most of my life. In fact, if it wasn't for Beaver... I wouldn't be here today."

"Cute, real cute." She laughed, she couldn't help it. It was funny and the margarita was going down very nicely.

"I'm just here to try my luck. What the hell, it's a nice place. What about you?" Deuce asked the question casually.

"Pretty much the same." She looked at his leg. "You're wet."

He followed her glance. "Yeah. I feel like a fire hydrant outside a dog show." He shook his leg and a few drops splashed free. "Sorry."

"Don't worry about it. It'll dry off." She sipped some more and licked the salt from the rim of the glass, enjoying the bite on her tongue. "You live in this area?"

"Hell, no. Does anyone?" Deuce looked around the casino at the gamblers. "I doubt there's too many locals playing. Gotta be tourists. Let's take you, for example..."

Maggie raised an eyebrow. "Let's not and say we did."

A small trio struck up some music at the rear of the room, and a few couples moved to the tiny dance floor.

Deuce smiled. "Okay. But I'll bet you're a good dancer."

"Bet, huh?" Maggie smiled back. "What's the bet?"

"Hmm. I'll bet you another drink that if we dance you won't step on my toes once."

Maggie snorted. Some gambler. She could win that one with her eyes closed. "You're on."

He slid from his stool and held out his hand, and Maggie hesitated for only a moment before putting hers into it. "My name's Maggie. Maggie French."

His fingers tightened around hers. "Deuce Whiley."

"You're kidding." She followed him to the small square of parquet flooring.

"Nope. Daddy played cards. Mom lost a bet. I'm stuck with the result."

Maggie giggled. She couldn't help it, and it hid the rather breathless feeling that came over her as Deuce swept her into his arms.

Instead of holding her hand in the usual position, he tucked it into his palm and pulled it close to his chest, letting his other hand heat the small of her back. She felt surrounded, protected, and strangely content. She let her own hand rest comfortably on his shoulder and snuggled in to enjoy the dance.

And win the bet while she was at it.

Maggie *always* won her bets or she didn't take them.

They swayed to the music, and she let herself relax, closing her eyes, allowing her head to rest lightly against Deuce. He smelled good, all man and aftershave with a dash of "Eau de Cocktail" seeping in from his damp jeans.

Their thighs brushed as they moved, and Deuce leaned forward, just touching her head with his lips. "Looks like I'm gonna owe you that drink."

Maggie nodded a little, feeling her hair rub over his shirt. "You *did* bet."

"True. And you didn't say no."

"I like to win." She swallowed. "Can't help it."

His chest rumbled beneath her ear as he laughed. "Me too. I won first place at a belching contest last weekend. The trick is the beer and eggs. If the beer doesn't make you belch loud enough, the smell of the eggs makes the other guy sick." He smiled. "Sorry. Too much info, but yeah. I like to win too."

* * *

Deuce thought about those words as he cuddled this delicious armful of woman, letting the music flow over them. He *did* like to win. At *everything*. Especially cards, and that was the main reason he was here in Beaver Canyon.

He'd been quite honest with Maggie, up to a point, since he was the child of a confirmed card player and had cut his teeth on a short deck instead of a teething ring. Poker was as natural to him as breathing, and the soft whoosh of cards being dealt across a green baize table had orchestrated most of his life.

He hadn't mentioned the tournament. Or the fact that he knew, just *knew*, he'd be heading out after the big game with half a million or so, less taxes, tucked in his wallet.

But that was for tomorrow -- tonight was for him. And *her*, if things went according to the plans his cock was busy making right at this moment. The mission was simple. In the room -- naked, fucking until morning -- leave. Oh, and remember to take a leak before the tournament.

Like a well-used deck of cards, their bodies melded together, shuffling into one tidy package with scarcely a ripple. Her soft spots nuzzled his hard spots, one of which was getting harder by the minute. She was warm, smelled good, liked blackjack, and had a pair of the nicest breasts, which were presently squished against him.

What more could he ask?

If she had a sixty-inch plasma TV he'd propose right now. And she was a gambler, too, responding to the challenge of a bet and the excitement of winning. Yep. His kind of woman, all around. Her butt was "all around", too, he noticed, as his hand slid a little lower and splayed across her nicely shaped ass. *Hubba, hubba*.

She sighed as the music ended and peeled herself from his chest. *Shit*.

"You owe me a drink."

He looked into her eyes and a little tingle of anticipation ran up his spine. Or maybe it was the dampness from his wet pants leg. He didn't know and didn't care. "Did you think I wouldn't pay up?"

She grinned. "Nope. I'd make your life a misery if you welched."

"I don't think *anything* you could do to me would make my life a misery." He still held her in his arms, even though the music had stopped and the dance floor was emptying.

"Let's hope we don't have to find out," she whispered. Her gaze lowered to his lips and she absently licked her own.

Fuck. She had a nice tongue. Perfect for licking all those tender areas. Like his ear or his groin or the base of his ever-growing cock.

He was lost. He leaned forward and kissed her. Like the consummate professional he moved directly... and banged his nose into her eye.

* * *

Maggie blinked a few times and saw him moving in again. She braced herself for his mouth, but was surprised when he just brushed her lips with his. His light touch sizzled on her skin and she wanted more. Wanted to taste him. She moaned a little, then opened her mouth, inviting him inside.

He responded, tugging her close and quickly burying his tongue deep against hers, his tart sweetness mixing with the remnants of her margarita, salt, and him. It was really coooool...

But *shit*, they were in the middle of an almost empty dance floor.

With regret, she pulled back. "Umm. Nice. Thank you."

He snickered. "Thank you? That's a first. Women don't usually thank me for kissing them."

"They should," she muttered. Shivers still ran through her. Damn, the guy knew how to kiss.

"Huh?"

"I was thanking you for the dance, idiot." She choked down what seemed a bad case of lust, forcing a grin. "And I think I need that drink you promised."

Deuce nodded. "Yeah." She saw his Adam's apple move as he swallowed too. "C'mon. I have a bet to pay up. Is it hot in here or is it just me?"

No comment.

They made their way back to the bar, which was getting busier by the minute as the evening wore on. Several busloads of tourists had arrived, to judge by the incredible amount of high-tech camera equipment dangling round the necks of a lot of the

customers. The noise was incredible, and Deuce had a tough time getting the order for their drinks over to the bartender.

He did his best sign language effort, figuring he'd ordered drinks or asked for a hand job. Either way he'd be getting *something*.

Waitresses rushed about laden with trays, looking harassed and being harassed, and handling it all with their usual efficient dignity.

"Wouldn't catch me doing that." Maggie watched as one woman neatly removed her breast from the grasping range of an overweight man in a large cowboy hat while serving him and his buddies another round of beers.

"Me neither." Deuce chuckled.

"I don't think it's quite the same," laughed Maggie.

"Oh no?" Deuce nodded to a handsome croupier who was barely avoiding getting his ass grabbed by several women standing near the bar. "I don't think I could wear heels all day. Stilettos make my feet hurt."

"I take it back." Maggie shook her head.

A loud cheer from the roulette table made everyone's head turn, including some of the customers heading their way.

A crowded bar, loaded trays, and a cheering distraction... It was a recipe for disaster.

Once again, Deuce took the brunt of it.

Two men, eager to see what the fuss was about at the roulette table, shoved past a waitress. She stumbled, tripped on a camera strap that a tourist had left lying out from under his chair, and her tray of beers went flying.

The resultant cascading shower of liquid caught Deuce fair and square in the middle of the chest. This was no dampened jeans leg, this was a full-on dousing.

He sputtered and gasped as his shirt soaked up some of Milwaukee's best.

Maggie bit her lip trying not to laugh. Dear God, the man was a walking spilled-drink-magnet.

"Sheeeit." He stared in disgust down at his shirt, waving away the napkins several helpful people were thrusting at him. "They ain't gonna help. This shirt's toast. I always liked this shirt. It brought me luck." He sighed.

"Is it working?" Maggie smirked.

"Don't know yet. From the looks of things the only thing getting wet is me."

"Wanna bet?" Maggie realized she'd said that out loud. *Whoops*. "You'd better go change. And soak that thing. Maybe the stains will come out." Maggie sighed too. It had been fun, and she regretted ending the evening on such a damp note.

Deuce lifted his head and looked at her. "I don't want to leave you here alone..."

"I'll be fine. Don't worry. I probably won't stay long anyway." She saw his eyes turn hot and wondered what was coming next.

"I have an idea. You like to gamble, right?"

"Um... yes?"

"Okay. Here's the bet." He rummaged in his pocket for a quarter, produced it with a flourish, and wiped it clean of beer gunk with a napkin, slapping it down on a small table.

"Toss of the coin. Heads, I go change and you go wherever it is you're planning on going."

"And tails?"

Deuce smiled. That particularly nice, I-think-my-panties-are-going-to-get-seriously-wet-if-he-keeps-that-up smile. "Tails -- you come to my room with me, while I change."

Maggie stared at him, and then at the quarter. She was no fool and knew damn well where this could lead. And she also quietly admitted to herself she wouldn't mind. Not one bit.

It would be strictly an act of random fate. Her sex life for the next few hours would totally dependent on the flip of a coin. She grinned. The odds were a shitload better than the ones she'd been working with lately. What had she got to lose?

Or, more accurately, what had she got to gain? She looked at Deuce. He was really cute. He had a fabulous smile, he smelled good, and that sure wasn't a stack of poker chips making a nice bulge in the front of his jeans. *Hell, yeah.*

"You're on."

Deuce picked up the quarter and sent it spinning into the air.

Chapter 3

He slid the card key into the slot waiting for it to turn green, all the while aware of Maggie standing behind him. His shirt stuck to his chest, and his jeans were uncomfortably tight. Deuce swore beneath his breath as the damned lock refused to work.

"Goddamn stupid piece of..."

"Oh for chrissake, here... let me do it." She wrenched the card from his hand, slid it downwards, and clicked the door open. She smirked.

Deuce narrowed his eyes. "Don't say a word. Not a frickin' word, okay?"

Silent as the grave, Maggie strolled into the room. Her eyes danced with mirth, but wisely she kept her mouth shut.

He let the door slam shut behind him and grabbed a fresh shirt and jeans from the closet. "I'll be right back."

"Take your time." She walked over to the small table in the generic hotel room and idly picked up the deck of cards that sat next to the water glass and the telephone notepad. As Deuce headed into the bathroom he saw her lay out a hand of Solitaire.

Damned if she was gonna play alone tonight. But he *would* take his time. He liked to take his time... explore her slowly, get her all hot and bothered, and then make her shiver and shudder on the brink until he was ready to let her come.

Hell yeah.

What a babe, he thought. "I hope I have better luck with her slot. Hey, I just made a joke. What do you think, Simba?" Deuce looked down at his cock. The King of the Jungle was waking up from its nap. Maybe it knew it needed a rest before work.

He took the quickest shower on record and was out of the bathroom, freshly dressed, in seconds flat. Nice thing about hotels -- no need to hang up the towels afterwards.

Running his hands through his damp hair he opened the small fridge. "I have some wine in here... want a glass?" *Perhaps I could pour it over your naked flesh and sip its bounty from your valleys.*

I'm talking to myself again. I need to stop this.

"Sure. That'd be nice." She leaned back in the chair, looking so damned good, Deuce nearly jumped her right then and there. *Easy, Simba, keep your cool.*

He poured two glasses of the white wine, grimacing at the beaver shaped mugs provided. Oh well. It all went down the same way. *God, I hope she does.* "Sorry about the lack of fine glassware. You mind drinking from a beaver?"

"Excuse me?" She looked at the cheap glasses Deuce was holding. Maggie chuckled. "No problem. I have the same trouble myself. All hotel rooms are the same." She sipped. "Mmm. Nice."

Deuce glanced at the cards spread neatly over the table. "So you like cards."

"Duh. This is a *gambling* casino, you know. I wouldn't be here if I had a thing for petunias, now, would I?" Maggie rolled her eyes.

Deuce raised an eyebrow. "How are you at poker?"

She blinked. "I've played some now and again."

"Any good?"

A wicked grin crossed her face. "Haven't had any complaints."

"Hmm. Wanna try a couple of hands? I've played a bit too." And wasn't *that* the truth.

Maggie hesitated, just a second too long for Deuce's comfort. "Well, I don't know. You're probably *much* better than me."

He looked at her. Goddamn, she was playing *him*. He smiled. She was in for one helluva surprise. "Just for fun... no money involved." He reached for the cards and clumsily gathered them into a pile. No point in giving the game away just yet.

"But... we're supposed to bet something, aren't we?" Her innocent expression could have sold crushed ice to Eskimos.

"Well, usually, yeah. Lemme think here..." Deuce managed a thoughtful frown while stroking his chin. Shit, he was really laying it on thick. And it looked like she was buying it, too.

"Oh, wait... I have an idea..." She reached up for her small earrings. "There." She laid them on the table. "Will that do for an ante?"

Deuce found himself repeating his earlier thoughts. *Hell yeah.*

* * *

"Five card stud?"

Stud? Oh yeah, you sure are. Maggie wrenched her mind out of his crotch and nodded at Deuce who dealt the cards with surprising ease. He'd certainly played more than "a bit."

She reached out tentatively and picked up the hand, sorting it absently like a bridge player, gnawing on her lip as she concentrated. Something she'd never do in a *real* game.

Deuce tossed in his watch. "I'm in."

She glanced up at him. "Okay. I'd like two cards, please." She politely discarded two inoffensive clubs face down. Deuce reached for the deck. "And I'll raise... um..." She thought for a moment. Damn. This was fun.

She'd never, in all her life, played strip poker before.

A shoe appeared on the table. "I raise you one shoe."

Deuce frowned at his cards. "You do, huh? I don't have stilettos, hmm..." He looked down at his own feet and tugged off one sock. "There's your shoe." He dealt her the two replacement cards.

"And the dealer takes three."

There was silence for a moment as both players looked at their hands.

Maggie was content. She had a good hand, with two pairs -- nines and sevens. But she continued to look worried. "Oooh. I'm not sure..." A little giggle bubbled in her

throat and she coughed to cover it. "Oh all right. I'm good for the other shoe, and... er... my socks too."

"Confident, are we?" Deuce grinned. "I'll call."

He stripped off his shirt and treated Maggie to a glimpse of a very nice chest. A very nice chest indeed. For once, she was seriously distracted from the poker game.

"You show me yours now."

"Huh?"

"Your cards," said Deuce. "This is where I get to see your cards -- you get to see mine, and we figure out who won."

"Oh. Yes." She dragged her gaze away from his chest and spread out her cards. Two sevens and two nines. "Is this any good?" *Eat my dust, cute chest.*

"Ooooh. Nice. A matching pair." Deuce's eyes weren't on her cards, but her shirt. "And a nice pair of cards as well."

She ignored him. Well, almost ignored him. Pretty much as well as she ignored the tingle of excitement that was jolting her pussy as strongly as an intimate encounter with an electric eel.

He fanned his own cards out in front of her. "Three ladies. Three queens beat two pair. No matter how lovely the pair is." Deuce swallowed, looking up from her chest obviously trying to remain calm.

Maggie hid her shock. *Goddamn it.* He'd *won*. He was putting his shirt back on and leaving her barefoot, tossing her shoes and socks away under the table someplace. She gritted her teeth, forced a smile, and smacked herself upside the ear. "Well, goodness. Somebody's lucky."

"Another hand? Perhaps it'll be your turn this time."

Patronizing bastard. She'd show *him*.

By the end of the third hand, she was more than a little afraid she would. Show him, that is. Just about everything.

She was down to her bra and panties, and Deuce was lounging across from her wearing a smile and his jeans. And whatever he had under them. She'd managed to win his shirt off him, but lost her own in the process.

"You know something, Maggie?" His eyes were hot as they traveled the length of her body.

"What?"

"Let's up the ante."

"Oh?" *Christ, this was it.*

"Yeah. A kiss. Loser of the next hand gives the winner a kiss. And doesn't stop until he says so."

"*He* says so? Maybe *she* says so." Maggie snorted. Arrogant asshole. Like he was gonna win.

"Whatever." Deuce grinned.

"You're on. Deal." *How could she lose?*

And as the cards flew toward her, Maggie realized it didn't matter what the fuck they were. She wanted that kiss. *Real* bad.

Chapter 4

He folded, holding three jacks, and didn't care. Their lips lingered on the sweetness of each other. He had won.

The wine from his glass barely parched the thirst of his mouth as her lips opened the top of a deeper need. An instinctive groan echoed within his throat while he teased her mouth with the tip of his tongue. What a tempting game she played.

For the first time in his life, he couldn't lose a game of cards. She'd uncorked his passion and he was going to overflow within her body.

Maggie pulled back, swallowing a moan, and Deuce damn near came in his pants from the sound of it. His mind spun out of control. *Calm, relax, cock, wet, sex, what the fuck am I doing talking to myself, NOW?*

"You want to draw for high card to see who's on top?" Maggie croaked out the words as he struggled to remember what the hell a high card was.

"Fuck the stupid card game." Deuce gently licked the soft skin where her shoulder merged with her neck.

Maggie closed her eyes and gasped. "No, don't fuck the cards... fuck me instead!"

For a split second, Deuce had to think.

In fact it was less than a split second, it was more of a millisecond. Actually he didn't have to think at all. *JACKPOT!* Bells rang in his brains and his balls rattled around, clanging up cherries all over the place.

The lovers tangled together, falling onto the large bed. A neon No Vacancy sign illuminated the room with flashes of red light.

Deuce fumbled with the clasp on her bra to free her breasts.

"It's on the front, babe," Maggie whispered helpfully into his ear before she nibbled on the lobe.

Her breasts sprang free from their bondage and Deuce buried his face between them. With a growl, he began to lick and suck on them enthusiastically.

Maggie's hand ventured downward, searching for the lever to his slot machine. Finding it beneath his fly, she slid the zipper down and rubbed the hard shaft through the fabric of his boxers. "Mmm, you have a very... er... large prize there for me." The wickedest smile crossed her lips.

"I'm a sucker for a good bet. What's the wager?" Deuce could tell this gambling had quite an effect on her from the hardening of her nipples. At his words, they budded even more against his lips.

"Loser pays the winner's hotel bill." Maggie was breathless as she stripped his jeans away from his legs.

"Whoever comes first loses." Deuce smiled. "I promise I won't fake my orgasm either, okay?"

Maggie shook her head at him. "You're crazy. And I like it. You're on."

She pushed him down on his back. Straddling his tight abdomen she moved down his stomach leaving a trail of her own juices glistening in the dim red light.

God, she was wet. Maggie was on fire and she wanted to fuck. The hell with winning the bet. This was about having this man as a toy for the night. A stranger to play with. And she wanted to play. But the underwear *had* to go.

He raised his hips so she could remove the tighty-whities. She dumped the pair, and matched it with a pair of her own. They were soaked anyway, so who cared? Naked was sooo much better.

His hard cock lay between his body and the wet lips of her pussy. She rolled her hips back and forth, letting her soft folds caress along his shaft.

"Damn, that's good." Maggie licked her lips, breathing deeply.

Her breasts were swollen and her nipples taut and sensitive. She raised her body, reaching between her legs to find Deuce's cock. Her hands were cold and his cock jerked from the shock of her touch.

Angling it straight up, Maggie rubbed the swollen head along her opening. She was teasing him as well as arousing her own desires. She moaned with delight as she lowered herself onto Deuce's thick hot flesh.

"Oh *fuuuuck*, I'm a goner. You are *so* damn tight." Deuce put his hands to his face and stifled a groan.

Her pussy stretched with each inch of her descent. It had been a while since she'd fucked anyone, and she intended to enjoy the shit out of this bet. Her cunt was full -- her slippery juices making her ride even more enjoyable. Each stroke grew easier and more pleasurable. She rocked back and forth along the length of Deuce's cock like the most practiced mechanical bull rider. All that was missing was the "yee haw."

For a moment she forgot about the stupid bet, the poker game, the gambling, and pretty much everything. She lost herself in the pleasure of this man. This one night stand. The joy of feeling wanted and being able to fuck the shit out of some beefcake. Slow contractions of excitement rolled through her.

Deuce moaned in desperate ecstasy. Needing to feel her, he grabbed her breasts in his large hands. The nipples budded between his fingers and as he squeezed them, Maggie moaned too. Her pussy tightened around him, and he knew he was almost ready to explode. He was a man with great control of his emotions *and* his body, but having a woman take over and fuck him like this was too much. Even for him.

"Let me be on top. I want to fuck you so hard you'll see stars."

"You devil." Maggie let him pop free and slithered down his legs. "Talking like that gets me hotter." She paused, staring at his cock shining with her juices. She lifted a finger and ran it up the hard ridge of vein then circled the purple tip, letting her nail tease the extra sensitive spot right beneath the head.

"Thaaat's not... faaaaiir..." He stuttered the words out as his eyeballs crossed.

Maggie let him go then climbed back up his body. He could feel her nipples brush over every indentation of his muscles as she licked her way up his breastbone. Finally she reached his face and devoured his mouth with hers.

Deuce rolled over on top of her.

Maggie gasped for air as he let her take his weight.

He swayed his hips into the space between her legs as she spread her thighs wide and wrapped her ankles around him.

With a hard thrust, Deuce plunged his cock back into its home. In tandem, they both moaned.

There was almost a fury to this sex and Deuce knew that Maggie's body was amazingly aroused by this uninhibited physical act. Her muscles were trembling beneath him, her lungs heaving as she fought for breath. He let his mind go -- his body took over, feeling the ripples around his cock that signaled she was climbing to her orgasm.

"Ohhhh shit, oh yes, oh God... don't stop..." He could feel it happening. The hot crushing flashes of passion strangling his cock. Her breathless cries of delight. She was almost there. Deuce figured she just needed one last thing to take her over.

And he *knew* what it was even though he was practically beside himself. He was so excited he wouldn't be surprised if he blew the end off of his cock.

Deuce was holding back so much it began to hurt. He didn't want it to end and he didn't want to lose the stupid fucking bet. Just hearing her *say* it would take him over too.

Maggie dug her nails in his back tightening every muscle.

Deuce couldn't hold it any more. He turned to her ear and began to whisper at the same time Maggie turned to say something to him.

Like a carefully rehearsed Greek chorus they spoke the same words.

"*You win.*"

They clung to each other as their orgasms hit. The hot spurts of his seed coating her cunt to overflowing. The convulsions of her pussy milking his cock as her spasms

began to subside. It was an incredible ride, a high that far surpassed any Deuce could remember in a while.

Collapsing in a pile of sweaty flesh they both started to laugh.

Deuce rolled off Maggie, flopping on his back beside her.

Maggie caught her breath and lay still as her breathing returned to normal. With a smile she rubbed her hands together. "Two out of three?"

Chapter 5

Maggie awoke slowly, cozily snuggled into a snoring, grunting body that radiated warmth all down her side. Too much warmth, actually. She was sweaty, sticky, and smothered in the covers Deuce had kicked off after they'd fallen asleep.

And that had been after a marathon sex session the likes of which she hadn't experienced in... in... well, okay, never. He was something *else*.

She smiled and stretched. And then realized something -- she stank. He didn't exactly smell like roses either. He didn't smell bad. Nothing a good brushing of his teeth, shower, and some Old Spice wouldn't cure. She felt rested, relaxed, and in definite need of a shower herself. She eased up on one elbow and peeked over at Deuce. He was sprawled on his stomach, one arm thrust under his pillow, with his face smooshed into a grimace.

Yep. He was out for the count.

Quietly she slid from the tumbled mess of sheets that they'd destroyed earlier and tiptoed into the bathroom. There'd be hotel shampoo and soap. She doubted he'd mind if she borrowed a towel.

And dear God, she needed to pee so bad her back teeth were floating.

The water seemed to make more noise than Niagara, but she was determined to clean up. She stepped into the warm shower with a sigh of pleasure. Her muscles ached a little in odd places, but overall? Damn, she felt good.

Her mood got even better as she soaped away the stickiness their loving had left between her thighs. The same thighs that had been spread apart most of the night. The ones that led to the aching muscles of her pussy, which had been pounded and caressed so many times by the... she found herself getting aroused all over again. Her hand slid between her wet thighs.

The soap cleansed the dirt away but her thoughts brought on a different wetness. One of heat -- one of desire. Her fingers found the right spot, just waiting for a little attention. With gentle deliberation, she began to stroke her slit while the water washed over her flesh. The cleansing stream trickled between her fingers as they massaged the sore folds of her pussy. What minor soreness and burn there was eased very quickly by her juices flowing.

One wild and delightful night with a stranger had awoken the slut inside and she longed to be a slut again... with Deuce. Then a thought slapped her. Hard.

Protection! They'd gone and done a damn stupid thing... they'd had unprotected sex. And it had been fabulous sex too, but shit... how fucking dumb could they get?

She gnawed her lip as she rubbed shampoo through her hair. She knew she was healthy, since she'd had her yearly gyno-plumber exam not long ago. And she was on the pill too. But him? Oh Lord...

Deuce rolled onto his back. He sprawled across the bed like a lazy dog, with his legs spread wide, his balls dangling -- and drooling. *Me very sexy man.*

Suddenly he sat up straight. He waved, half asleep and mumbling. He said something about space aliens invading Taco Bell, then opened his eyes at last.

Yawning, he tossed his legs over the edge of the bed. Following his usual morning routine he sat semi-comatose, wiggling his toes in the carpet while cupping his balls. He smacked his lips together, yawned again, and with great coordination, scratched his balls and blinked at the same time. As always, he wondered if the two areas were linked together in his brain.

The first lucid thought to cross his mind was *I'm hungry.*

Deuce stood up then walked toward the bathroom. His boner bobbed like a symphony conductor's baton. Needing to pee he headed for the bathroom, catching a glimpse of himself in the mirror on the way. "Holy *shit*... talk about a bad hair day!"

Looking more closely at his reflection he noticed nail marks across his shoulders. He twisted around. Yep... on his back too. And there, if he wasn't mistaken, was a wicked bite mark on the meat of his chest as well.

"Cooooool. Battle scars! Maybe I'll go to the tournament in a tank shirt and show these babies off to the guys." He flexed his muscles and grinned at himself in a moment that reeked of testosterone and pure male pride, even in his half-awake state.

He stepped into the lit bathroom without paying much attention to the shower running. Peeing was becoming a desperate necessity, backed up with thoughts of the upcoming tournament.

Helloooo. Who put the fucking seat down?

He lifted it up and focused on peeing directly into the bottom of the bowl. It was a favorite morning trick of his, which he knew would make hundreds of tiny bubbles froth in the porcelain. Part of his mind rolled its eyes at him, but what the hell. Everyone was entitled to a few stupid quirks. After completing his mission, he raised his hands over his head and said "Victory," then flushed the toilet.

"Ahhhhhh, you sonofabitch!"

Maggie. Oh shit, Maggie's in the shower.

Memories bubbled through his sleepy brain like -- like -- those bubbles in the toilet.

Stay calm, be cool, and don't be an asshole about last night. It had been amazingly improbably fabulous. The sort of almost-inhuman sexual experience he'd only read about in erotic romance novels written by that perverted pair of authors, S.L. Carpenter and Sahara Kelly.

He wasn't a great reader, but any guy who wrote a story about midgets, sardines, and redheads was an auto-buy for Deuce's small bookshelf.

"Uhhhhh, *sorry.*" He finally spoke, trying to sound innocent and apologetic all at once.

He grabbed the shower curtain, pulling it back a little, and peeked in. *Oh sweet Jesus.*

He saw her legs, her ass, and lifting his gaze, he saw that great set of breasts. The ones he'd lingered over with his lips, tongue, and lastly, with his cock.

"Deuce?" Her voice trembled a little. "We didn't use anything. You know. Protection."

He stepped into the shower with her. "Well, we *did* try the pulling out method but it made a mess on the sheets." He took her in his arms. "Look... if you're worried about getting pregnant --"

"No, it's not *that*. I'm on the pill. And I'm healthy, Deuce. I just want to stay that way."

He smiled. "I know what you mean. You don't need to worry. I cut myself a while ago, got a couple of stitches and a tetanus shot. They run those tests now at the emergency room... I checked out just fine. They did recommend sex at least twice a day."

Maggie sighed with relief. "Thank God. That was real stupid of us, Deuce."

"Yeah, it was." He held her tightly for a moment. "Can we be stupid again now, please?"

She turned in his arms and rested her back against him, letting the spray rinse away the last of the shampoo from her hair. "I think I'd like that." Maggie threaded her fingers through his. "Let's play."

She let both hands drift over her slick body, tugging Deuce's along with them. She cupped her breasts and let his fingers squeeze tight, the breath leaving her lungs as their combined grasp aroused her all over again. She was already on fire and Deuce was like kerosene to the flames.

The hardness of his body behind her and the feel of his chest rising and falling against her back was a real turn-on. His groan of pleasure as she eased her hands away leaving his on the taut nipples was music to Maggie's ears.

She reached behind her finding his hipbones and slid her hands down to the front of his thighs, scratching softly with her nails as she dragged them back up through the furring of bristly hairs.

Deuce's cock was already stirring against her ass so she pushed back into him, letting his hardness nuzzle between her buttocks. It was her turn to moan. More. She wanted more of this man. He was an addiction and she was hooked.

She stretched her arms as far as she could behind them both and grabbed his ass, pressing him into her, feeling his cock almost breaching her ass. She'd never had sex that way, and up until now hadn't particularly cared for the idea, but now -- with Deuce -- hell, he could stick it in her ear if he wanted.

She didn't care... everyplace he touched her, everything he did, was just fine.

Especially *that*. He slid a hand away from her breast and down over her slick belly, finding her pussy and the heat beneath. Oh yeah, really *really* fine.

As she ground herself against his cock, he caressed her clit, stroking it, teasing it, and making her sob with delight.

"You sore, babe?" His whisper was hot against her ear, and his tongue swiped over the curve in a touch that was scorching to her sensitive skin.

"No... yes... oh God *don't stop...*"

She thrust her hips forward, unable to prevent the reflexive move. Deuce knew he'd found *exactly* the right spot. He rolled his hips down and slipped his cock between her legs. The swollen head parted the lips of her pussy but didn't penetrate. It strained them apart and she moaned. Maggie wanted to just bend over and let him have at it. But this wasn't going to be a simple fuck, this was a release brought on by touch. His touch.

With light but demanding touches, he brought her to a shivering peak and held her there, gasping and shuddering as every muscle in her body tensed in preparation for the inevitable explosion to come.

And come she did.

In massive waves of pleasure, over and over, Maggie surrendered to Deuce's masterful hand. The hot lips of her cunt caressed the thick hardness of his cock.

The tip rested below where his hand stroked her clit. Deuce may have had the occasional semi-clumsy moment, but this was a man who understood a woman's reactions, and right now he was smooth as silk.

Blind to everything but the passion flooding her body, she cried out, surprised when she got a mouthful of water as well as an orgasm.

She coughed and shivered and clamped her thighs tight around his hand. "Oh God..."

"Easy, honey." He winced as he slid his cock free from the vice of her legs. "You okay?" Deuce stepped around her, taking the water on his back. "I'm sorry... I should've thought..."

Maggie raised a shaky hand to his mouth. "It's fine. I'm fine. Better than fine." She smiled and kissed him.

His cock dug sharply into her belly -- she looked down -- then back up at him. "And I think you should be fine, too."

"Whoops." The soap bar squirted from his hands shooting across the shower floor.

She put her hands on his chest, dragging them slowly downwards as she lowered herself to her knees in front of him. "Let me get that. Would that be okay with you, Deuce?"

That's a no brainer. Deuce was becoming aware that he was repeating himself an awful lot with this woman. "Hell yeah." Perhaps it should be his new personal motto. He'd get it made up into a family crest. Or something...

His thoughts evaporated as Maggie reached for his cock and cradled it gently in her hands. He was soooo dead.

Your turn, Simba. Looks like the lion ain't sleeping tonight.

She explored him carefully, sliding her hands along his length, learning the contours of his body and reaching between his legs to cup his balls, squeezing gently. She rolled them in her palm like dice, making him tremble, and when she slid her mouth over him, he surrendered.

He moaned. *"Jesus, Maggie..."*

"Mmmm..." She hummed as she pulled back and then plunged down again, sucking him enthusiastically. "You taste good," she mumbled.

Don't talk, babe. Now is NOT the time for conversation.

She shifted a little, bringing him closer, while grasping the base of his cock in one hand. The other went on a voyage of discovery, checking to see if his balls were still there -- they were -- and venturing on into strange new worlds. Places he'd never realized could send a bolt of lightning up his spine if pressed just right. Just like... *that...*

Fucking A. Where did you learned that little trick? Deuce clamped down on something he figured would be damn near a squeak if he let it out.

She was sucking him deep into her mouth, deeper still, almost to her throat, sliding her lips over him like he was some kind of delicacy. He'd had blowjobs before, but this one -- with Maggie -- was more like a suck-job.

He leaned his head back into the spray of the shower and closed his eyes, losing himself in the passion of her mouth.

Blindly he groped for her head. Not to move her, but to reassure himself that this whole thing wasn't some deliriously incredible dream.

It wasn't. Soft damp curls tickled his fingertips. He threaded them gently through his grasp as she rocked back and forth, still sucking and loving him with her lips.

Her tongue tickled as she slid him out, catching just beneath the head and making him groan aloud once more. *"Holy shit... holy fucking..."*

He grabbed for some control. She was taking him on one helluva ride, but if she kept going, he'd lose the reins of this particular horse.

"Maggie..." He tugged on her hair. *"Honey... if you don't stop now..."*

"Deuce." She breathed the words over his wet and swollen cock. *"Shut up."*

He shut up. *Three of a kind beats two pair. A straight beats a... ummm.* Oh Lord. He couldn't distract his thoughts anymore. He was doomed.

Maggie smiled around him, her lips tightening and her grasp slid down his groin as her mouth pulled the other way. It was heaven and hell and... oh *fuck*.

His spine started to sizzle and his balls damn near danced the Macarena as they tensed between his legs. He was gonna have to let go. "*Maggiieee...*"

He erupted. His cock throbbed and his balls pumped as he shouted her name, spurting deep into her throat. She refused to budge, holding him with her lips and her hands, sucking on him -- milking him until the last spasm eased.

She'd swallowed him, devoured him, and left him a happy, limp shadow of his former self.

And she was grinning.

Come to think of it, so was he.

She stood up slowly, letting the water rinse her face and her body slide along his. "Thank you, Deuce."

He blinked. "For what?"

"For tonight. For this... for everything." She waved her hand in a casual gesture. "Your parents should've named you Ace." She stepped out of the shower and grabbed a towel. "And I have to go."

"But..." Deuce struggled. He was limper than a wet rag, his legs barely holding him up, and he sagged against the wall of the shower, heedless of the fact that the water was chilling now... and she was getting dressed.

"I can't stay," she said. "We both know that." She slipped into her clothes and peeked around the shower curtain. "We'll see each other again, Deuce. That's a sure bet." She grinned. "I never say that, either. Not unless I'm absolutely certain."

She touched one fingertip to her lips then reached out, just brushing his with the same finger. "'Night."

And she was gone, leaving him in the shower, alone, exhausted, and... and... hungry!

Chapter 6

The backs of Maggie's knees were sweating.

She could feel the dampness in her neatly unobtrusive black slacks, but it was the only outward sign of her current state of mind.

She was winning, and winning big.

The tournament had begun at eleven a.m. sharp, the players assembling in the large convention hall, finding their places at the thirty-two tables set up at discreet distances from each other. The eight players at each table then proceeded to do their best to win.

The next several hours had reduced the tables down to sixteen, and Maggie was quite content with the progress of the games so far.

She'd been bluffed, flirted with, avoided a couple of feet that had strayed too close to hers beneath the table, and done it all with her quiet smile and "poker" face. The one that said "Hello. I'm a girl and therefore no threat to you." And it said it right before she raked in her winnings.

The only hand she'd completely blown had been the one she was holding when she caught sight of him on the far side of the room.

Deuce. Damn it, he *was* here for the tournament.

Alone in her room after a night of unbridled sex that had practically melted her thighs, she'd wondered.

He'd been very comfortable with a deck of cards in his hand and played poker with a casual ease that said a lot about his hobbies.

But she hadn't been positive, although she'd certainly considered the notion.

Now she knew. He was there to win, just like she was. *Now* things would get interesting. The sight of him had dazzled and distracted her to the point where she'd checked instead of raising, and blown a couple of grand needlessly.

She'd recovered and gone on to win the table, but it irritated her. It bothered her that one man could pull her mind out of her game -- something that had never happened before.

She sipped a soda as the tables were rearranged and everyone took a much-needed break. Deuce was chatting with some guys across the room -- she didn't even know if he'd seen her. And she shouldn't even be thinking about it, since the next round was about to start and she'd better be damn sharp, since her opponents would no longer be looking for a quick lay on the side. The games were winnowing the players down to the real pros, as opposed to the amateurs.

It was a time for concentration and complete mental focus. Not vaguely unsettled sexual yearnings for a guy three tables over.

Sure, they'd had fabulous sex. Wonderful sex. The best sex in three states, probably, if not ever! She'd never come like that before, or so many times, either. She hadn't known *that* was possible outside of some high-falutin woman's magazine.

So what the hell was it about this guy that rang all the right bells on her private slot machine? Besides the fact that he could do some pretty incredible things with his personal handle?

There was something beyond the obvious, there *had* to be. He was attractive, but not breathtaking. He was fun, but not a stand-up comedian. He was... nice. And he cared. Or at least she thought he did.

She frowned into her glass. He'd treated her with respect, affection, and attention, taking the time to learn her body and seduce her mind.

Damn him.

She shook her head at herself. *This is so fucking stupid.*

The players were called to their seats and Maggie sauntered over to hers, thanking the Gods of Poker Players that she wasn't at Deuce's table. *Yet.*

It seemed pretty inevitable that they'd be playing against each other at some point during the tournament.

They'd played *with* each other last night, that was for sure.

She stacked her chips trying to clear her thoughts. *Tonight*. She'd think some more about Deuce and their games tonight. She just knew she'd see him. Her intuition was holding up large, clearly lettered signs. *He's gonna come back for more*.

She sincerely hoped so. Maggie sighed deliberately pushing Deuce from her head. It was time to play more poker.

* * *

Deuce was *smokin'*.

Not literally, of course, since he'd quit years ago, but the cards in his hands were hotter than hot. And he was playing them just right. The first few deals took care of a majority of the players at his table and he and one other guy were left to battle it out.

It wasn't much of a battle, either. A couple of bluffs, a nice ace in the river coupled with a jack in the flop, and his opponent was all in and very quickly after that, all done. Yep, Deuce was riding high.

He'd bantered with his companions, contrived to lose the note with a hotel room number on it that a woman had slipped beneath his coaster, and pretended not to notice the waitress's breasts.

The last one had been tough, since they showed every sign of being ready to pop out of her skimpy top and give him a personal "Hoo Rah" if he wanted.

He didn't want. All he could think was "Maggie's were nicer."

And for him, that was odd.

He had seen her, of course, the minute he'd walked into the hall. It was as if he'd expected to see her, since nobody with her finely honed gambling instincts could ignore a tournament like this one. She knew her way around a game of poker, whether betting her socks or her cash, and she'd gotten him more excited in bed than he'd been since he'd scored four aces in a wild game of five card stud several years ago.

And that was also odd. Up to now, Deuce could take women or leave 'em. He'd usually taken them, since fucking was a basic pleasure to be enjoyed as much as any other basic pleasure. Well, okay, probably more since there weren't too many basic pleasures to equal a hot roll between the sheets.

But there was something about Maggie. Maybe it was her uninhibited pleasure or her smile... or that little tremble in her lower lip when she was about to come. He didn't know, didn't care, and decided he'd just have to go see her again and maybe find out just why the memory of last night was stuck in the back of his mind like a warm furry kitten, purring.

He wanted to purr some more. His cock stirred and he frowned. He wanted to play cards right now, not play hide the salami. *Focus, boy, focus.*

Easily winning his way to a spot in the second round, Deuce settled in to do battle with the semi-pros, a couple of whom he recognized from other tournaments. These guys weren't dicking around for fun, they were serious players, and Deuce shoved the image of Maggie shuddering on top of him away. Firmly. Cards now, sex later.

Most definitely sex later.

On that uplifting thought, he picked up his cards and proceeded to remove the piles of chips from the other players with a minimum of problems. Life was good, the cards were running his way, and he was cleaning up.

Hoo Rah.

* * *

Maggie sighed as she stripped off her clothes in her room and glanced at the silver chip that would buy her a seat in the big game.

She'd done it. Made it to the final round.

Tomorrow the big game would be held, one table, four players... and half a million dollars up for grabs at the end of a simple game of five card stud. Staring at it, she plunked her butt down on the side of the bed and wondered why she was more excited at the thought of seeing Deuce tonight than seeing aces tomorrow.

She giggled at her own pun. Jeez, since when had Maggie the poker player turned into Maggie the wanton slut? It wasn't a real tough question.

Since Deuce had gambled his way into her bed, or his bed, or the shower, or wherever... hell, she didn't give a shit. Still buzzed from the thrill of winning the last couple of hands, she was horny, readier than a randy bitch in heat, and couldn't wait.

She took off her bra and panties and wandered naked around the room, tapping one finger against her lips in thought. How to welcome Deuce? A bit of lace, perhaps?

Nah, too obvious. She needed something... unusual. Different. And yet something he'd appreciate. Her eyes fell on the deck of cards resting on the table.

And a rather wicked grin spread over her face. She reached for the phone and called the front desk. Fifteen minutes later, a bellboy delivered her request with an inquiring look on his face.

"Thanks, kid." She tipped him a five-dollar chip from the pocket of her robe. "Put it on black tonight, okay?"

"You got a system, lady?" He looked hopeful.

"Nope. Just a hunch." She grinned. "There's luck coming my way. Tonight and tomorrow. I can feel it."

"Really?" His eyes widened.

"Yep. I'm gonna get lucky. No doubt about it." *No aces necessary. Just a Deuce.*

"You're one of the ones playing in the big game, right?" The bellboy looked at her with something very close to worship in his eyes. "We're all real excited about it. That's a helluva pot."

Maggie nodded. "Yeah, sure is."

"What you gonna do with it if you win, Miss?" His expression told of fast cars, faster women and video games as far as the eye could see.

"Hmm. Let me see." Maggie thought for a moment. "Well, probably get myself a nice red Jaguar, then drive to Hollywood, mingle with some of those studs out there, and... oh yeah... the latest Playstation. Along with a huge plasma TV."

The bellboy sighed. "Will you marry me?"

Maggie laughed. "Sorry, kid. Not tonight."

He shrugged. "Oh well. It was worth a shot, ya know?"

"Thanks for the compliment." She closed the door behind him as he left grinning.

Maggie was grinning too. The rest of the casino might be eagerly anticipating tomorrow's final round of poker, but there was one guest who was looking forward to something a lot more -- intimate. A game for two players only.

Maggie and Deuce.

* * *

Deuce had changed his clothes as well. It had only taken a couple of chips in the right pocket to get Maggie's room number, and he'd had the foresight to get some decent glasses and a bottle of champagne. No drinking from beavers tonight.

Well... check that. There might be drinking from beavers, but *he* was gonna be the one doing the drinking. Maggie would be the one doing the screaming. He grinned and stepped out of the elevator onto her floor.

All was quiet as he found her room and tapped on the heavy door.

"Deuce?"

He heard her call from inside. His smile widened -- she knew he would come. He was gonna make damn sure she did, too.

"Yep, it's me."

"C'mon in. The door's unlatched."

Cautiously he pushed it wide and let it swing shut behind him, locking them both into their own private space.

"Maggie?"

Deuce looked around. The room was mostly dark, and he stepped past the bathroom into the space beyond, putting the bottle and glasses on the desk.

He turned -- and gasped. The only light came from the small bedside lamp. It was shining on Maggie.

At least, he thought it was Maggie. It was her head on the pillow. But the rest of her?

She was completely hidden by hundreds of playing cards, scattered over her body. Only one shapely leg, bent at the knee, rose from her cardboard blanket.

Deuce blinked, dazzled for a moment by the reflection of the low light on so many vibrantly colored cards. She was a visual symphony of reds, blacks, and whites. All his favorite colors playing his favorite melody.

"Deuce?" Her voice was low.

"Uh..." His voice caught somewhere around his tonsils.

"Pick a card."

With lightning speed, Deuce stripped, nearly tripping over his pants as he tried to pull them off over his sneakers. He cursed, struggling to get naked as quickly as possible.

Maggie chuckled. "Smooth move. And to think you're such a good card player."

Oh, you are sooo gonna pay for that one.

Nude at last, he strode to the bed and reached out for an ace, which happened to be trembling on the very tip of one breast.

"Deuce?" Maggie's voice stopped his hand. "There's one condition."

"Huh?" Jesus Christ, he was gonna lose it real quick if she didn't let him play fifty-two card pickup within the next five seconds.

"I know how good you are with cards. But in this game, I'm the dealer." She raised a challenging eyebrow. "So I get to call the play. And the rules are... *no hands.*"

He thought for a second. "What about feet?" Deuce smiled and held his foot up, wiggling his toes in the air.

"Euuwwwww. You're not putting those things on me!"

Chapter 7

Maggie tried to quell the shivers of excitement that sent the cards rippling over her body. The touch of the feather-light cardboard was an arousal in and of itself, enhanced by the really prime piece of Grade-A male beef staring at her with a rather surprised expression on his face.

She didn't dare laugh, or the damn cards would have slid around and spoiled her surprise, although she'd wanted to when he'd wiggled his toes at her with that cute smile of his. She wasn't quite sure if Deuce appreciated her gesture, but his cock was signaling approval very enthusiastically.

"Hmm..." He stroked his chin, ignoring his nakedness, looking her over thoughtfully. "No hands, huh?"

"Yep."

"Think you're pretty cute, don't you?" He grinned at her.

"Yep." She smirked. She couldn't help it. It wasn't like she was going to lie there stark naked and just wait for him to jump her bones. Well, she was, of course, but damned if she was gonna make it easy for him.

He glanced around the room. "Hmm."

"You already said that." She watched him from beneath her eyelashes.

He moved away from the bed. His hand scratched the particular itch most men have before sex -- the ball-scratch. He sighed then strolled over to the bureau, idly touching her perfume bottle, rolling her mascara wand back and forth, and generally messing up her stuff.

"Aha! It's a miniature light saber. Women can lengthen their lashes and destroy phantoms with this. I can see it now." He waved the mascara threateningly at himself in

the mirror. "Surrender, Obi Wan. I am too powerful for you. My lashes are deadly weapons."

"Hey." Maggie rolled her eyes.

"What?"

"That's my *stuff*."

"And your point? Jesus, what you women plaster on your face to look *natural* must cost a damn fortune." He smirked over his shoulder at her.

God, he's got a great ass.

Maggie swallowed. Just looking at him was getting a certain four of diamonds real soggy. Or maybe it was a two of hearts. Who the hell cared? She was getting even hornier watching him browse through her cosmetics.

Deuce turned to look at her with bright red, glossy lipstick horribly smeared across his mouth. "Too much? I don't think it goes with my hair. Maybe I should try the maroon color." He paused and wiped the lipstick off with a tissue. "Maybe I'm a *winter*. I don't know. Where's the Fab Five when you need 'em?" He tossed the tissue into the trash and turned. "Maggie? No hands, right?"

"That's what I said." She blinked.

"Okay. Then close your eyes."

"Huh?" What had he got in mind?

"Close your eyes. I'll play by your rules, but you have to go along with just one of mine. Close your eyes." His voice was firm, and she watched his reflection as he raised his chin and stared at her in the mirror.

What the fuck. She wanted him. *What do I have to lose?* Maggie closed her eyes.

And waited.

For a few moments nothing happened. She felt rather than heard Deuce move up beside the bed, the heat from his body brushing her bare leg. She tensed, knowing he was close.

A searing lick from his tongue branded her thigh and made her squawk.

"Sssh. Eyes closed. If you peek I won't put out tonight." His breath burned her skin.

She had a hard time following his directions when the next sound came and it was incredibly familiar. Her frickin' *hair dryer*.

Set on cold, he aimed it at the spot he'd just licked, letting the air dry the moisture his tongue had left behind and blow a few cards off her at the same time.

"You bastard," she whispered, a smile curving her mouth.

"I actually know my father so technically I'm *not* a bastard." His tongue traced her shinbone down to her instep and the dryer followed, chilling the flesh in contrast to the warmth of his touch.

The cards were sliding off her body, revealing more targets for that devastating tongue and the consequent attack of that killer hair dryer.

God-fucking-damn. Who knew a beauty appliance could be a sexual toy?

When he reached her toes and sucked them into his mouth one by one, she nearly flew off the bed, and cards showered down onto the carpet with soft thuds. "Deuce..."

Cold air met slick wet skin. "Yes?" He was coolness personified, and Maggie could've strangled him on the spot. He was cranking every one of her burners up to "high," yet doing exactly as she'd told him to. *No hands*.

Her legs were bare now, and she trembled, waiting for the next touch of his tongue. Her eyes were squished shut, her body tingling, as she tried to figure out where he was from the sound of the dryer.

Aaaargh. He was at her navel, licking the little bits of exposed skin and then aiming the flow of air with amazing accuracy. She knew the cards were flying off her and spread her thighs apart.

Aim that sucker where I need it, you... you... jerk. Her pussy was wet and hungry and drooling now, but the cool air continued to tease tantalizing the other places Deuce selected. Hot one minute and chilled the next, she shivered and shook, taken aback by the intensity of her reactions.

"Mmm. Now *this* is what I call a blow job."

Maggie could hear the laughter in his voice. Something stirred deep inside her. His humor and pleasure in what he was doing -- *moved* her. She'd enjoyed sex before, and enjoyed the hell out of Deuce last night.

But a realization dawned on her at that particular moment. Sex with Deuce was... *fun*. Hot, sweaty, sticky, wild, and crazy... fun.

She would have liked a few minutes to work this all out in her head, but Deuce had other ideas. His tongue had made its way higher and -- oh God -- he'd reached her nipples.

Maggie was lost. She squirmed as his tongue circled and teased and his mouth suckled her taut and puckered skin. The shot of cold air made her squeak and the rest of the cards flew off, helped along by her movements and sixteen hundred watts of a woman's best friend.

She swallowed, trying to find her voice. "*Deuce...*"

He lifted his head and grinned at her.

"*I fold.*"

* * *

He shut off the dryer and clambered onto the bed. There were no winners or losers, no matter who'd folded. Sure, he'd outplayed her with the hand she'd dealt him, but shit... they were both going to score big time. He'd make damn sure of it.

Settling himself between her legs, he stroked her skin, so soft and rippling with shivers as his fingers brushed along their length. This was what had been lurking at the back of his mind all day. Maggie, spread out ready for him, waiting -- wanting, needing him inside her as much as he needed to be there. It was the only bet he was one hundred percent sure of. That she would be waiting for him tonight.

Deuce pulled back, his hands firmly cupping the cheeks of her ass. His breathing was shallow now, almost panting. He gazed at the open folds of flesh, still dripping from the games he'd played with her body.

He began to understand the meaning of craving. Like a vampire seeking the existence only found in the warm blood of a pulsing vein, Deuce craved the taste of Maggie. She was nourishment. She empowered him.

It also gave him a hard-on so intense he was afraid it would explode on contact.

He had a weakness for going down on women, but this was a little different. Most of his relationships were simple one-night stands, followed by flowers sent to the room and a quick visit to the doctor to make sure he was okay.

Not this time. It wasn't love -- it was more like he had found something precious. They just seemed to click together. His finger slid between the shining folds, making Maggie moan. The slippery flesh wrapped around his finger with each gliding stroke -- in and out.

He watched her mouth fall open as he teased with gentle caresses, spreading the hot honey over sensitive skin, taking Maggie higher with each move.

"Deuce... aaaah... dear God, *Deuce...*"

He bent his head and burrowed his face into her pussy.

Maggie could've sworn steam was coming from between her legs as his saliva mixed with her juices while his tongue seared her already hot flesh. The way Deuce slurped the pre-orgasmic flow of her pussy sent shivers rolling up her spine. She let herself go and arched into his mouth, thrusting herself against him greedily, urging him on, *in* -- deeper and deeper.

All the tension from the daylong poker games had gotten to her and this was exactly what she needed. To be freed from her self-imposed stress levels.

Sure, she was in the finals of the tournament -- against Deuce in fact -- but she didn't want to win at *this*. She simply wanted to enjoy the fuck out of this sexual adventure. And the man sharing it with her. It might be blasphemy to even think it, but the thought was there anyway. *To hell with poker.*

Maggie looked down between her breasts to see Deuce smile and lower his face back between her legs.

Shocks of pleasure streamed up her torso as Deuce found the perfect blend, licking her throbbing clit and combining it with the upward pull of his finger along the inner wall of her pussy. He tuned her like an instrument.

With a long stroke of his tongue he made Maggie sing.

And the song shook her, whirled her out of her mind, and focused every nerve ending she had on the spot Deuce had found. She cried out as she came, pulsing around his face and his hand, shattering inside.

Before the inner convulsions of her orgasm subsided, Deuce climbed up her body. He kissed and licked at the protruding nipples, not wanting to neglect them. They'd been ignored for too long, but his attention had been devoted to her pussy, and a man could only do so much.

His throaty growl made her giggle and he felt like an unleashed animal that had eaten its prey and now demanded to possess it completely. To dominate it.

The stiffness of his cock was obvious as it reached between their bodies. Maggie wrapped her legs around his hips and drew him into her cunt. The extreme wetness of her pussy helped the hard and rigid flesh glide deep inside.

She sighed, letting her body adjust to him as he filled her.

Nestling tight into her, Deuce sighed too. "I've been thinking of you all day. Seeing you only reminded me of last night. The heat, the sex, the way you look naked, the sex, your lips, the sex... I'm repeating myself aren't I?" He dropped kisses on Maggie's neck.

"Just shut up. Shhhh, mmm, just... oh God -- just keep doing *that*..." Maggie closed her eyes, relaxing into her sexual plateau. Deuce burned too as her fingers ran across the muscles of his back, then she spread them apart and tightened as he fucked her. It was bliss. He loved how good she made him feel.

Deuce began to struggle for control. His arms shook and he tried to not drop his weight onto Maggie. Dear Lord she felt so fucking *great*. He cringed in agony, straining to hold back his impending need to erupt inside her.

"Don't hold back, Deuce -- let go. Just let go." This woman sensed his passion.

Incredible. Unbelievable. Deuce's mind gave up looking for adjectives and surrendered to the needs of his cock.

She couldn't miss the tightening of his balls each time he plunged into her since they were slapping against her and driving him insane each time they touched her heat. In, out, harder and faster, over and over he became lost inside of her. He was gasping for breath and so very close to the edge of his control.

The tournament vanished, the world vanished... everything narrowed down to the place where their bodies met and parted only to join again.

With a stifled groan Deuce came. The spurts of his seed coated Maggie's inner flesh and he *had* to, at last, let go. The shudders went on and on and he thrust himself as deep as he could, flooding her with his come.

Finally he lowered his weight down on top of her. Maggie gasped for air and smiled happily, bringing a flood of pleasure to his heart as well as his cock.

This was sex at its finest. A welcoming gush of passion between two people. The warmth of her blood pulsing through her veins heated his own body as she lay beneath him. He felt... content.

Deuce rolled off and snuggled her up next to him, grinning as she rested her leg over his. Her fingers teasingly played with the few strands of hair on his chest as the two of them lay tangled, quietly catching their breath. His muscles eased, his mind cleared, and the world, for a few more minutes, ceased to exist.

With a light touch, he stroked her hair as it spread over his shoulder. The romantic delight of the moment caught him up in its magic enchantment and he knew there was something he needed to say.

"Umm, Maggie? You're dripping on my leg and it's sticky."

Chapter 8

"Ladieees and Gentlemen, it's time to get down..."

Two of the players assembled shared an identical thought. *Too late.*

"And get serious with some Pooookkeerrrr..."

The smooth voice of the Emcee rolled over the crowded room as the lights dimmed. Several spotlights shone over the green baize table around which four people sat quietly.

Maggie's palms were damp and once again she found herself surreptitiously wiping them on her slacks out of sight of her opponents.

Of whom Deuce was one.

Just looking at him made her pussy twitch, and Maggie dropped her eyes to the hands of the dealer, trying to focus on what mattered this morning. In the cold light of a new day, she had one goal, and one goal only.

To win.

She had to. She simply *had* to. This was why she'd come to Beaver Canyon in the first place. This was the end result of years of playing the game she loved. Her crowning achievement. A vacation in the Caribbean and a nice new home awaited her. Financial security. All the things she'd wanted... *still* wanted.

Deuce hadn't been part of her dreams, and she couldn't afford to think about him now. The sex had been fabulous -- fun, wonderful, orgasmic, and all those high blown things she'd only read about in erotic romance novels by those two crazy authors whose names she couldn't remember right this minute. She'd had no idea such things were possible, let alone attainable. Especially by her.

But with Deuce she'd found a passion that almost matched the one she'd cherished for poker all these years. *Almost.*

However they weren't in bed together now. They were facing each other, the two additional players on either side, ready to go head-to-head in the biggest game of their lives. Well, hers anyway.

Her thoughts veered off into the wrong channel as she thought of going head to head with Deuce. Shit. The guy knew how to use *his* head. And the rest of his associated parts.

No. Bad mind.

She swallowed and closed her eyes for a moment, breathing deeply, and struggled to let go of the sensual images that danced behind her eyelids. She simply had to put them away for a while now. She needed every ounce of focus she had -- these were big time players. This wasn't going to be a walk in the park with the boys downtown. It wasn't going to be a case of a few quick hands and then stroll away with the pot in her pocket.

Uh uh. She was gonna have to work for each and every chip. She needed a clear head and one hundred percent of her attention. On the cards.

Not Deuce.

Across the table, Deuce fought the very same battle.

He didn't dare meet her eyes. Not yet. Not while the scent of her still tickled his nostrils and his cock was all too ready to repeat last night's pleasures. *Down, Simba. Later. It's poker time now. I know you'd like to poke her again but it'll have to wait.*

He mentally slapped himself upside the ear and ordered his mind to get a grip. He could *win* this thing. He had the skills and knew how to use them. She might have control in bed at times but this was *his* domain, his home. He had the experience and the desire.

Desire? Yeah, he had enough of that. More than enough.

No, no. Don't go there. Thinking with the wrong head again.

A round of applause made him jump, jerking him away from his thoughts. He risked a glance across the table and saw her staring at her hands. She looked calm, but he knew better.

She was every bit as tense as he was, and probably for the same reasons.

Shit. He probably shouldn't have indulged in a round of fucking the likes of which had not only managed to shake him but also turn him inside out. It was supposed to be a fun, casual sort of thing, not something that lingered like the soft sounds of a song he couldn't get out of his head.

This was sooo not the time for sex. For thinking about sex, remembering sex, or wondering when he could next *have* sex.

With Maggie.

Screw it.

Deuce bit down on a pang of lust and breathed in slowly, exhaling just as slowly while releasing the part of his mind that knew every single thing there was to know about poker.

That's what today was about. The game. The bets. The cards fate would deal him and the experience he had in using those cards to make the right decisions.

His thoughts cleared, and the table came into sharp focus, the chips bright splashes of color next to each player. He caught the scent of nervousness from the guy next to him and the slight shift on the seat from the one other player at the table.

They were all keyed up and ready to go.

So was Deuce. He knew it was going to be his day. There wasn't a doubt in his mind because he felt the sign he always felt before he was going to score big. He was hungry.

"Can I get an order of chili-cheese nachos?" Deuce smacked his lips together. The dealer shook his head, frowning at Deuce, and shuffled the cards.

"Five card stud, folks. Ante up."

Let's do this.

The crowd was waiting in eager anticipation. They whispered to their neighbors as each player sat silently, eyes swiveling between their own cards and their opponent's body language. The slightest of emotions or a smile could be the difference in a bluff.

It took less than an hour of solid, conservative play to reduce the table by one.

Maggie, Deuce, and an older guy named Vince were the final three, after the flamboyant Lucky Bangera had lost to Maggie's flush. Deuce and Vince had folded earlier, obviously both sharing a hunch that Maggie had a good hand. They were right.

Several hands later, Vince's chip pile had dwindled down to almost nothing. His trademark cowboy hat rested at the back of his balding head and his forehead was damp with sweat.

As the dealer threw out the last card it became apparent to everyone that Vince didn't stand a chance. The nine of hearts wasn't the suit or the card he needed to fill his straight. He had bet it all in a last ditch effort to stay in.

"Well, I'm done. Good luck, you two." Gracious in defeat, Vince tipped his hat to Maggie and shook Deuce's hand.

The dealer cracked open a new deck of cards and flared them across the table, then flipped them with a smooth move, showing off a few tricks of the trade. He'd been a good dealer for the tournament and his own tip stack contained a nice number of chips. "Sir, it's your cut." He held the cards out to Deuce.

"If you don't mind, I'd prefer the lady to cut the deck for me."

Maggie tapped the top card. It was a nice gesture but she'd be damned if she'd take any advantage. Not now. Not when things were so far along in the game.

Deuce wasn't going to let this go. The game was his big enchilada, the big burrito, the... he was hungry now. He realized how tense he was, since he usually thought of food or pussy to relax.

He didn't know if he could stand the idea of another hour or so of pretty equal competition against Maggie. It was down to the two of them. There was nothing more to prove. They were well matched, the best of those who'd come to Beaver Canyon to compete.

He took a breath. This could be the biggest gamble of his life.

Before the dealer started tossing the cards out, Deuce rapped his knuckles on the table and silence fell. "Listen, we're about even here. I say let's not drag this out any more than we have to."

The dealer blinked at him as he continued. "We're gamblers. Let's gamble. All in. *One hand*, all or nothing." His balls tightened at the thought of half a million dollars on one hand of cards. He was either brilliant or out of his fucking mind.

"Ballsy call." Maggie's voice was cool. "But what the hell! I'm up for it." She looked straight at Deuce with no expression in her eyes at all. No sign of what she was thinking, what she was feeling, or any fear whatsoever. It was one hell of a poker face.

Holy shit, I'm in trouble now.

The dealer looked over to the house owner and tournament president. They both nodded their approval and a round of applause from the excited onlookers rolled around the room.

It was quickly followed by a hush of expectancy, as everyone leaned forward in their seats, anxious not to miss a single thing.

For Deuce, time slipped into slow motion as the dealer flipped the cards onto the table in front of them.

A quick peek showed him a king and a jack in the hole. He swallowed. A damn good hand.

He didn't bother to even look down as the dealer glanced around. This was Deuce's tournament. Even his desire for Maggie wouldn't change that. Finding her had been a miracle by anyone's standards, but not even a miracle could stop him now.

Winning would set him up for the next few years. Hell, he could buy any woman he wanted. But he knew he couldn't buy her. She was -- priceless. She was worth the trip to Beaver Canyon, worth the soaked shirt... worth every single minute of their time together. Maybe even worth losing to.

And she looked up at him right at that moment.

For Maggie, this was more than just a poker tournament. She'd never been to this level of play amongst this level of players. Most women didn't survive the first few rounds, let alone make it to the finals. Only six women had entered this particular championship. She had played with the best and beaten them at their own game. It was *her* time.

Deuce broke the stare first, flashing a quick look at the cards lying neatly in front of the dealer.

A jack and a ten. Both hearts.

Maggie didn't even need to look at her cards. She knew what she had. The nine and seven of hearts.

Once more their eyes met. What was next? What would happen after the tournament? Were the men from the IRS waiting outside?

As Maggie tried to ignore all the wild questions running through her mind, Deuce stared at her and crossed his eyes.

That cute smile creased his face, and she smiled back. Whatever happened, she'd met someone who'd changed her life. Someone who had made her smile and scream, and both at the exact same moment. How the hell could she ever put a price on that? What was winning a stupid card game next to that incredible experience?

But the hand had to be played. She swallowed and lowered her eyes to the cards.

This was it... The outcome of the tournament was riding on what happened next. Half a million dollars and who would end up with it was now in the hands of fate.

The crowd sucked in a breath of anticipation as the dealer moved, smoothly taking the next card from the deck.

The *final* card.

He flipped it face up on the table.

THE END

S.L. Carpenter and Sahara Kelly

The writing team of S.L. Carpenter and Sahara Kelly prides itself on being unique. Bringing their humor, passion for writing, and rather twisted thought processes to a shared keyboard, Scott and Sahara have blended their styles, with Sahara writing the heroine and Scott writing the hero. They believe it takes one to know one.

Both have been married for twenty years or so (to other people), have raised families, and have found common ground in the eccentricities of everyday life. Now they bring their experiences together into a wild mix of reality and outrageous fantasy, enjoying themselves enormously along the way. Their spouses are tolerant, and forgive the giggles and odd working hours because they know what the end product will be. A story with laughter, lust, and love. It's a partnership of like minds, a friendship of shared absurdities, and a hell of a lot of fun for both of them. Their mutual goal? To ensure the readers have some fun as well. You can check out some of their other books, both individual and collaborative, at their websites, www.slcarpenter.net and www.saharakelly.com